

Remembering the Ascension as We Count to Shavuot

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This article was first published as a weekly Shabbat message on Day 26 of Month 2 on the Creator's Calendar, also known as May 28, 2022 on the Roman Calendar.

Of course, as we progress through the year, we continue to see how much the Roman Calendar includes pagan elements.

For instance the month of May is named after the Greek goddess Maia.

Maia was the name of one of the Pleiades, the seven daughters of Atlas and Pleione. She was the mother of the Olympian Hermes by Zeus, as such she features in myths about his birth and early life. Maia is also associated with fertility and growth (particularly in Roman mythology.)

That is why she is often depicted with flowers. I'm sure you have heard the adage - April showers bring May flowers.

The month named after Maia (Maya) was keyed to spring on the Roman solar calendar.

It is interesting that the current Roman Calendar the world operates under is named after Pope Gregory, yet it is remarkably pagan.

That is because the Roman religion of Christianity is a pagan religion. It is not the same faith lived and taught by Yahushua the Messiah.

Instead, it incorporates and assimilates aspects of pagan cultures in order to appeal to the masses. Currently, we see the religion completely misidentifying the name and teachings of the Messiah of Yisrael named Yahushua.

Speaking of Yahushua, we are in a very significant time as we continue the Counting of the Omer.

For those of you still counting, you know that today is day 41 of the 50-day count that leads to Shavuot.

Remember that after the resurrection, Yahushua continued to meet with His Disciples for 40 days, until He ascended.

Those 40 days all occurred during the Counting of the Omer, and today is Day 41, when the Messiah ascended into the clouds after His 40 day period of walking the Earth after His resurrection (Acts 1:3).

I wonder how many Christians are observing this special day?

I would guess very few, because not many of them are counting the days as YHWH Commands.

While many confess with their mouths, very few watch over His Words and diligently obey and guard His Commandments. That is why many will be horrified when they are rejected by Yahushua, because their Christian formula for salvation was wrong and they were not ready. (see Matthew 7:21-23, Luke 13:24-30, Matthew 25:1-13)

If you are new to these weekly messages, you may want to go to our website and read the message titled "[*There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*](#)"

As the saying goes: "Talk is cheap, and actions speak louder than words."

If you truly confess Yahushua as your Master and Savior, it goes without saying that you are going to obey Him. Otherwise you are a liar.

The ascension was a critical step in the restoration and renewal of the Covenant with the House of Yisrael as described in Jeremiah 31:31-33.

Yahushua had to be given the Kingdom by YHWH, and assume His title and position in the Court of Heaven. This occurred after He was taken up in the clouds.

Here is an account provided through Daniel. *"¹³ I was watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. ¹⁴ Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a Kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed."* Daniel 7:13-14

We are given an incredible picture of what happened after the ascension. What an amazing event, that everyone who calls Yahushua Master should be celebrating today.

As important as it was, there are only two accounts of the ascension of Yahushua in the Scriptures. They are found in Luke 24:50-53 and Acts 1:1-14.

In Luke we read *“⁵⁰ And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. ⁵¹ Now it came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven.”* Luke 24:50-51

Here is the account from Acts:

“⁴ And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, which, He said, you have heard from Me; ⁵ for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Set Apart Spirit not many days from now. ⁶ Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, “Master, will You at this time restore the Kingdom to Yisrael? ⁷ And He said to them, It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. ⁸ But you shall receive power when the Set Apart Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth. ⁹ Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. ¹⁰ And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, ¹¹ who also said, Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Yahushua, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven. ¹² Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day’s journey.” Acts 1:4-12

Luke details Yahushua leading His disciples from Jerusalem “as far as Bethany” while Acts has them returning to Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives - “a Sabbath day’s journey.”

So which is it, Bethany or the Mount of Olives?

At first glance, these two accounts seem to conflict with one another. It appears from Luke that Yahushua ascended from Bethany and from Acts it seems to have occurred on the Mount of Olives. It is confusing until you actually look at the physical layout, and geography of the Land.

It is important to recognize that Bethany is on the southeastern slope of the Mount of Olives – so it is technically on the Mount of Olives.

Yahushua travelled from Bethany through Bethpage and into Jerusalem and back daily before His crucifixion. I used to bring my Passover Tour groups to these locations so they can get their bearings, but today it is not possible to follow the direct path that Yahushua took due to the construction of the border wall.

Bethany is “Beit-ania” in Hebrew, and literally means “house of the poor.” It is the place where Lazarus was resurrected from the dead. In fact, today it is a Palestinian Village named al-Eizariya in Arabic, which means “Place of Lazarus.” The name Lazarus is Elazar in Hebrew.

So the Arab village is named after this great event, and you can even visit the Tomb of Lazarus. This was also the home of Mary, Martha and Simon the Leper.

Galilean pilgrims on their way to Jerusalem often avoided potential conflict with Samaritans by travelling south on the eastern side of the Jordan. They would cross the Jordan and then pass through Jericho, and continue up into the highlands to Bethany.

Bethany was therefore a very suitable location for a charitable institution, and due to its distance from the Temple, and the writings

in the Dead Sea Scroll known as the Temple Scroll, scholars agree that Bethany was the site of an alms house for the poor and a place of care for the sick.

The fact that Yahushua chose to dwell in this place, known for helping the poor and the sick, is quite significant.

While Pilgrims were getting ready for the Passover, Yahushua spent His final days leading up to Passover in Jerusalem, teaching by day, but returned to Bethany at night. It is noteworthy that prior to His ascension, He continued to place the focus on this location.

When the texts of Luke and Acts are read together, we understand that, prior to the ascension, Yahushua and His disciples began their journey in Jerusalem and walked “as far as Bethany.”

They did not necessarily go into Bethany, but rather to the border of Bethany. This is confirmed when we read in Acts that they returned to Jerusalem “a Sabbath day’s journey.”

It is important to understand the meaning of “a Sabbath day’s journey.” There is much tradition built around what is and what is not a Sabbath day’s journey. There are some who define it as a certain number of steps or a specific distance of 2,000 cubits (5 furlongs). I believe that the Scriptures are pretty clear, and there is no need to add to them.

Concerning the Sabbath, Exodus 16:29 provides: *“Let every man remain in his place; let no man go out of his place on the seventh day.”* So the question is: “What is a man’s ‘place’ (maqome)?”

We find further insight in Leviticus 23:3: *“Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, a set apart convocation (miqra qadosh). You shall do no work on it; it is the Sabbath of YHWH*

in all your dwellings (moshav)."

So the Sabbath is to be performed in your "place" (maqome) and your "dwellings" (moshav). These Hebrew words reflect that we are to remain in our communities on Shabbat, which makes perfect sense.

If we are travelling on long journeys on the Sabbath, we are probably not resting. Our thoughts and energy are probably focused on the details of the journey, rather than the rest that we need.

So we should remain "in the camp" on Shabbat. There is no defined number of steps or measure of distance provided in the Torah. People are adding to the Torah if they claim or adhere to such a belief.

The Scriptures are actually referring to "borders" and this becomes significant when we consider ascension day – Day 41 of the Counting of the Omer.

We have just enough information in the Scriptures to place Yahushua's ascension right around Bethpage on the Mount of Olives which has deep significance.

You see, Bethphage was considered to be the outer border of Jerusalem, which would have been the extent of a Sabbath Day's journey toward Bethany, and Bethphage borders the region of Bethany.

Bethpage is Beitphage in Hebrew. It means "House (Beit) of Unripened Figs (Phage)." It was one of the two seats of the Sanhedrin of seventy-one members. It was located just east of the western summit of the Mount of Olives. This was very close to the Miphkad Altar where the Red Heifer was slaughtered and burned. It is also where the Yom Kippur sacrifices were burnt. This was a very significant place!

Remember that this was also where Yahushua the King obtained the donkey to ride triumphantly into Jerusalem as prophesied in Zechariah

“¹ Now when they drew near Jerusalem, and came to Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, then Yahushua sent two disciples, ² saying to them, Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Loose them and bring them to Me. ³ And if anyone says anything to you, you shall say, The Master has need of them,’ and immediately he will send them. ⁴ All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: ⁵ Tell the daughter of Zion, Behold, your King is coming to you lowly, and sitting on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey.” Matthew 21:1-5

The prophet referred to was Zechariah. Here is the full text from Zechariah with some amplification.

“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is righteous and having salvation, Lowly (ani) and riding on a donkey (chamor), a colt (ayir), the foal (ben) of a donkey (aton).” Zechariah 9:9

The Kings of Yisrael were not supposed to be like the Pharaohs of Egypt and accumulate horses and chariots. Instead, they were supposed to be humble.

Here are some of the specific commandments for Kings.

“¹⁴ When you come to the land which YHWH your Elohim is giving you, and possess it and dwell in it, and say, I will set a king over me like all the nations that are around me, ¹⁵ you shall surely set a king over you whom YHWH your Elohim chooses; one from among your brethren you shall set as king over you; you may not set a foreigner over you,

who is not your brother. ¹⁶ But he shall not multiply horses for himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt to multiply horses, for YHWH has said to you, You shall not return that way again. ¹⁷ Neither shall he multiply wives for himself, lest his heart turn away; nor shall he greatly multiply silver and gold for himself. ¹⁸ Also it shall be, when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write for himself a copy of this Torah in a Scroll, from the one before the priests, the Levites. ¹⁹ And it shall be with him, and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear YHWH his Elohim and be careful to observe all the words of this Torah and these statutes, ²⁰ that his heart may not be lifted above his brethren, that he may not turn aside from the commandment to the right hand or to the left, and that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he and his children in the midst of Yisrael.” Deuteronomy 17:18-20

There is plenty of evidence that the Kings of Yisrael rode mules, particularly David and Solomon. (1 Kings 1:38)

The reason for this was that YHWH was the One Who fought the battles, not the King and His Army. The King was supposed to remain humble, unlike the kings of the other nations.

It all went wrong during the reign of Solomon. While Solomon began his reign on a mule, he ended up violating the commands for Kings.

Here is how his reign began:

“³⁸ So Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, the Cherethites, and the Pelethites went down and had Solomon ride on King David’s mule (pirdah), and took him to Gihon. ³⁹ Then Zadok the priest took a horn of oil from the tabernacle and anointed Solomon. And they blew the shofar, and all the people said, ‘Long live King Solomon!’ ⁴⁰ And all the people went up after him; and the people played the flutes and rejoiced with great joy, so that the

earth seemed to split with their sound.” 1 Kings 1:38-40

Here is how it ended.

“^{10:26} And Solomon gathered chariots and horsemen; he had one thousand four hundred chariots and twelve thousand horsemen, whom he stationed in the chariot cities and with the king at Jerusalem. ²⁷ The king made silver as common in Jerusalem as stones, and he made cedar trees as abundant as the sycamores which are in the lowland. ²⁸ Also Solomon had horses imported from Egypt and Keveh; the king’s merchants bought them in Keveh at the current price. ²⁹ Now a chariot that was imported from Egypt cost six hundred shekels of silver, and a horse one hundred and fifty; and thus, through their agents, they exported them to all the kings of the Hittites and the kings of Syria. ^{11:1} But King Solomon loved many foreign women, as well as the daughter of Pharaoh: women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, and Hittites - ² from the nations of whom YHWH had said to the children of Yisrael, You shall not intermarry with them, nor they with you. ‘Surely they will turn away your hearts after their gods’. Solomon clung to these in love. ³ And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart. ⁴ For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to YHWH his Elohim, as was the heart of his father David. ⁵ For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. ⁶ Solomon did evil in the sight of YHWH, and did not fully follow YHWH, as did his father David. ⁷ Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, on the hill that is east of Jerusalem, and for Molech the abomination of the people of Ammon. ⁸ And he did likewise for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods. ⁹ So YHWH became angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned from YHWH Elohim of Yisrael, who had appeared to him twice, ¹⁰ and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods; but he

did not keep what YHWH had commanded. ¹¹ Therefore YHWH said to Solomon, Because you have done this, and have not kept My covenant and My statutes, which I have commanded you, I will surely tear the Kingdom away from you and give it to your servant.” 1 Kings 10:26-11:11

What a sad account. Solomon had great wisdom, but he failed to walk and remain on the path of wisdom provided by YHWH. He specifically violated the command not to own/multiply horses, which was one of the reasons for his demise.

He went the way of the Nations, and pride set in his heart.

He actually neglected his own words recorded in the Proverbs: *“When pride comes, then comes shame; but with the humble is wisdom.”* Proverbs 11:2

Interestingly, a mule is the offspring from a male donkey and a female horse. So there is a mixing of species.

The King Messiah would ride on a male donkey.

That is all a very fascinating area of study, but I digress.

Bethany was also where Yahushua cursed the fig tree after leaving Bethany.

Recall the account

“12 Now the next day, when they had come out from Bethany, He was hungry. **13** And seeing from afar a fig tree having leaves, He went to see if perhaps He would find something on it. When He came to it, He found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. **14** In response Jesus said to it, **“Let no one eat fruit from**

you ever again.” Mark 11:12-14

If He was coming out of Bethany on the way to Jerusalem, that would place Him at Bethpage.

The fig tree at Bethpage (House of Unripened Fig) represented the House of Yahudah that had partially returned from Babylon. (see Jeremiah 24)

By cursing the fig tree, Yahushua was rendering judgment upon the House of Yahudah.

The reason that He did this was because the House of Yahudah was not bearing fruit.

While the House of Yahudah, led by the Sanhedrin, was busy with “religion” they were neglecting the mandate of Yisrael.

We are all supposed to be bearing fruit, and Yahushua showed us how to bear fruit through His action and His teachings.

How incredible then that He chose this place to ascend into the Heavens as the resurrected Messiah. He did this all specifically and intentionally, at the border of Jerusalem, right in the face of the elders of Yahudah.

Today you can actually visit the traditional spot of his ascension in Bethpage.

Of course, Day 41 of the Count was significant for a number of reasons. When we look at the number itself, in Hebrew, the word for “border” (gebuwl) actually equals 41.

So there is an emphasis on the “border,” because Yahushua described Himself as “the door” (John 10:7, 9)

He also said *"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."* John 14:6

He is the only way into the Kingdom and as the Passover sacrifice, the Lamb of Elohim, His blood must be applied to the doorposts and the lintel. The entry point to the house.

You don't necessarily recognize some of these things by simply reading books, and unless you actually go to the Land and walk where Yahushua walked you might miss the importance of His actions.

This is also what happens if we only read the Scriptures in English, and never look to the Hebrew language. It all comes down to getting to the "Hebrew Roots" of our faith, including both the texts and the Land.

Messiah was resurrected on [Day 2 of the Omer Count](#) after spending three days and three nights in the Tomb (the sign of Jonah).

Many people are taught that Messiah was raised on "first-fruits" as if "first-fruits" is a specific Appointed Time during Passover that needed to be fulfilled by Him.

While there is a "first" (resheet) barley offering performed that clearly refers to the Messiah as the "et-omer," that offering was made after the first High Sabbath of Unleavened Bread. It was cut, threshed, parched, ground and sifted all on the same day – Day 16 of Month 1.

The "et-omer" of fine flour was then mixed with oil and frankincense, waved and burned. It was not specifically attributed to resurrection day, as many attempt to do, but rather the entire work of the Messiah, the Aleph Taw "et".

This “first” (resheet) offering marked the “beginning” (resheet) of the Omer count to Shavuot, and it is not a separate and unique Appointed Time.

In fact, the Feast of Shavuot is actually the Day of First-fruits. (see Numbers 28:26)

It is when everyone brings their “first-fruits” (bikurrim) grain offerings to Jerusalem to wave it before YHWH.

The resheet barley offering during unleavened bread is intimately connected to the bikurrim wheat offering of Shavuot, and it is all about the harvest of the Messiah (Matthew 3:12).

I know that I am repeating myself from past messages, but these are important concepts that are worthy of further examination, especially since there are new people subscribing each week.

I would encourage you all to remain diligent, and stay focused on the count. It is one of those Commandments and rehearsals that people don't always see the significance or relevance of right away, but the very act of obedience results in a blessing.

In the case of the Counting of the Omer, we focus on the Messiah and what He did for us through the renewal of the Covenant – from His death to His resurrection and from His ascension to the sending of the Set Apart Spirit. This entire count that connects Passover and Shavuot shows us the way from death to life.

Since we are focusing on His ascension, I thought it would be helpful to examine the words that Yahushua spoke.

Here are His last words recorded before He ascended.

“you have heard from Me; ⁵ for John truly immersed with water, but you shall be immersed with the Set Apart Spirit not many days from now.”

and

“⁷ It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. ⁸ But you shall receive power when the Set Apart Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

These were the final words before He ascended, and the last recorded words spoken while His feet were on this Earth.

In the legal realm there is a principle known as “The Dead Man’s Statute.” It is an exception to the hearsay rule and allows the last words of a deceased to be admitted as evidence, in order to determine their intentions or state of mind.

The last words of an individual are deemed to be so important that they are given special weight under the rules of evidence.

In the case of Yahushua, I suppose it would have to be called “the dead and later resurrected and ascended man’s statute.”

Nevertheless, I believe that there is special weight to His final words and deeds.

Look at how the emphasis is on immersion, and being witnesses for Him.

We immerse with water, and then He immerses us in the Spirit. He gives us power so we can be witnesses for Him.

Where are we witnesses? 1) Judea, which is the territory of the House of Yahudah, 2) Samaria, which is the territory of the House of Yisrael, and 3) To the end of the earth – the Nations.

He does not give us power to experience “holy laughter” or to be “slain in the spirit.” That is all selfish nonsense that has led many astray in certain Christian denominations. Sadly, some people are more interested in seeking a thrill or an experience, when they are supposed to be humble and obedient servants.

Remember Yahushua’s final teaching before His crucifixion?

He described the nations being divided between sheep and goats. His sheep are supposed to be helping the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick and the prisoners.

Read what He will say to His sheep.

“³¹ When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the Set Apart Messengers with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His esteem. ³² All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. ³³ And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. ³⁴ Then the King will say to those on His right hand, Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: ³⁵ for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; ³⁶ I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me. ³⁷ Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, Master, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? ³⁸ When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? ³⁹ Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You? ⁴⁰ And the King will answer and say to them,

Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.” Matthew 25:31-40

The sheep are described as “righteous.” That means they are walking in obedience to the Commandments.

So if we are His sheep, it is a good idea to focus on His final words and His mandate.

The timing of this message is very interesting, because I had the privilege of overseeing the immersion of a dear sister in the faith a couple days ago.

We actually discussed some of these issues as we were preparing for her immersion. The immersion is a picture of cleansing, purification and our passage from Egypt to Yisrael - from death to life. We no longer focus on building our own Kingdoms, our focus is now on building His Kingdom.

Yahushua cursed the fig tree at Bethpage because instead of leaving Babylon, the House of Yahudah brought Babylon with them.

Bethany was just beyond Bethpage, yet the religious leaders failed to understand the significance. They were caught up in their hypocritical religious system, when they were supposed to be acting like His sheep.

Yahushua began His work by being immersed in water. He then spent 40 days in the wilderness being humbled, afflicted and tested.

He spent His time among the poor and the sick, and lived without a house or possessions.

Remember His statement that: *"Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head."* Matthew 8:20

He chose to live among the poor and He allowed Himself, an innocent man, to be executed.

He was later resurrected from the dead, and spent 40 days on Earth before ascending.

His time of service was couched within two 40-day periods.

The number 40 is interesting, because it is the numeric value of the Hebrew letter "mem," which means "water."

On his last day on Earth, he left Jerusalem and ascended to the Heavens, revealing an emphasis on immersion, the poor and the afflicted.

Could the message be any more obvious?

This is a good day for us all to assess whether we have truly been immersed in Yahushua, and by Yahushua. When we immerse in His Name (shem), we immerse in His authority. We follow and obey, and His focus becomes our focus.

Are you ready to pass under His rod? Will you be counted among the sheep?

The answer to that depends upon whether you doing the work of the Kingdom, or busy and distracted with the affairs of this life?

If you are one of His sheep, then you have nothing to fear regarding the future. You look forward to the Master's arrival.

Therefore, while we consider the ascension, we should be anticipating the day when He returns in the clouds.

“Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.” Revelation 1:7

We anticipate the time when He rules the world, and judges the nations as described in Micah 4.

Until then, the ones who are immersed in His Name must rely on His power to spread His message and help those in need. That is the message from the ascension.

Berakhot

Todd

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If you have not been immersed in the Name of Yahushua, I encourage you to do so. I have a free Immersion resource on the website that you can download, print and use for an immersion. You can even have witnesses sign it and keep it as a writing (ketubah) – proof of your immersion.

As we consider helping the poor and the needy, you may be interested in participating in the upcoming [Battle Cry event](#).

If you want to find out more, you can watch the video at this [link](#) where I was interviewed regarding the event.

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*