



June 03, 2022

Counting Pentecost (or Feast of Weeks), the Wave Sheaf, and First Fruits

Warm hellos friends, brethren, co-workers, spiritual family, and scattered children of God, from here on the Gulf Coast. My wife and I pray and hope this finds you all doing well, and that again your week has been blessed.

As I often mention, "it seems as one ages, time moves more quickly!" In speaking of quickly, how often we've also heard "my how time flies!" Tomorrow we'll be celebrating the weekly Sabbath that precedes the annual Sabbath - the Feast of Weeks, or Pentecost.

The Feast of Weeks is the only appointed time that does not fall on a fixed day of the month. One must *make a count* to arrive at the proper time to observe Pentecost, from the Greek *pentekoste* which means "the fiftieth day."

The instructions we're given in Leviticus 23 concerning making the count, begin with the reaping of a sheaf of grain (barley in this case) and winnowing it to provide an omer - about 2 liters of kernels. This representative amount of the firstfruits of the harvest was waved vertically by the high priest on the day after the weekly Sabbath - "*on the day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it.*" (Leviticus 23:11)

The time of day was most likely in the morning. The instructions concerning this wave sheaf (or omer) follow the instructions related to celebrating the Feast of Unleavened Bread. This implies some connection of the days of Unleavened Bread with the timing of the wave sheaf ceremony.

Joshua 5 provides the key for determining which Sabbath is the one following which the wave sheaf ceremony took place. The events of Joshua 5 explain that the Passover had to take place on a Sabbath that year because the wave sheaf

(always offered on the first day of the week) was offered on the day after the Passover, and that a small scale harvesting of the grain took place on that day to provide additional food to celebrate the first day of Unleavened Bread. The wave sheaf ceremony therefore must take place on the first day of the week (Sunday) that falls *during* the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

Counting Pentecost (or the Feast of Weeks) is directly connected with the day the wave sheaf was offered. "*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.*" (Leviticus 23:15)

Here is where counting enters in. Seven perfect weeks are counted off (weeks that begin with the first day of the week and end with the seventh day of the week). The number of days here counted off equals $7 \times 7 = 49$ days. The instructions continue. "*Count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath; then you shall offer a new grain offering to the LORD.*" (Leviticus 23:16) $7 \times 7 + 1 = 50$.

Pentecost always falls on a Sunday (but can fall on several different days at the beginning of the third month Sivan). The Jewish community erroneously begins the fifty days with the annual *Sabbath* of the first day of Unleavened Bread, (Abib 15). But with alternating 30 and 29 day months, their fiftieth day always falls on Sivan 6. ($30 - 14 + 29 + 6 = 50$) This contradicts the instruction to count seven weeks. It also doesn't make sense to me since there simply are not 7 first days of Unleavened Bread in the year.

The instruction says to count seven Sabbaths (*ha shabbat*). There is another word in Hebrew that means week or a seven day period, and that word is *shabua*.

In our weekly Bible Basics online discussion we often refer to "The Plan of God". The LORD of the harvest has a plan and a schedule for beginning and completing the harvest. God has been calling individuals both during the time of the Old Covenant and during this present time of the New Covenant. One of my favorite chapters in God's word is Hebrews 11 where it lists some of the individuals who will be declared faithful and part of the first resurrection. Many more have been

added and will be added to that number. The time period during which the firstfruits are being called and made ready will end at the blowing of the seventh trumpet and the coming of Christ to gather the elect.

The apostle Paul writes of this. *"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming."* (1 Corinthians 15:22-23)

The fifth seal refers to the dead saints remaining in their graves *"until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed."*

The Feast of Weeks reminds us of the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of the firstfruits and God, putting His laws in their mind and writing them on their hearts. (Hebrews 8:10) This work has been done over a period of time and will continue until the initial harvest of firstfruits is completed.

The meaning of Pentecost connects Passover and Unleavened Bread with the Feast of Trumpets. Might we all carefully study what I have mentioned above so we understand it hopefully more clearly? I can't help but reflect on how blessed you and I are to be included in that special group called to be part of that first spiritual harvest! That harvest is coming!

Arms up friends! Our prayers and thoughts are with you daily. Please do pray for us as well.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Scott Hoefker', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Scott Hoefker
Pastor, CGM

Church of God Ministries (CGM)
(Ministerios de la Iglesia de Dios)

tshoefker@cogministries.org

www.cogministries.org

P.O. Box 983

Daphne, AL 36526-0983

251-930-1797 Office