



May 3, 2024

Why We Do what We Do

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

We are now well into the time of year here in lower Alabama where the temperatures have warmed up considerably, breezes are warm, and the grass and flowers are growing ever so quickly. The trees are mostly finished budding, and with that the green dust of pollen on most everything is subsiding. We've finally received some much need precipitation over the last day and one half which was a blessing!

I am reminded, that just as there is a slight change of seasons here where we live, our Father too expects us to change...and be continually growing in our desire to become more like Him and our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Reflect on this with me, as we enter into God's day of rest...are we constantly striving to change, continue to remove sin as we focused on during the Days of Unleavened Bread, and let Christ live in us?

Over the years, the question often arises, worded generally something like this. "How Did We Come to That?" or "Why Do We Observe these Days on this Specific Date?" or "Why Do We Do What We Do?"

Last time we began to examine determining the timing of the Feast of Weeks or Pentecost. It is a subject that has involved a fair amount of controversy over the decades. We concluded that the wave sheaf was to be offered "*on the day after the Sabbath*" (Leviticus 23:11) or on the first day of the week. The children of Israel were instructed to bring a sheaf of the first grain harvest to the priest

before they completed the rest of the harvest they had sown. In the Middle East this grain would be the barley harvest that began to ripen during the month of Abib. The word translated "sheaf" is the Hebrew word *omer*. It refers to what a harvester would have in his hand after cutting a swath of grain. Bible references show that it measured right at about 2 quarts.

The priest was to take the omer brought to him and wave it in the air to be accepted "on their behalf" on the day after the Sabbath. The word is *shabbath* in Hebrew and is the same word used for the seventh day weekly Sabbath in the first part of Leviticus 23. Logic would imply that this Sabbath after which the sheaf of grain was waived is a weekly Sabbath associated with the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Thus the Wave sheaf day was not on a fixed date of the month.

A problem arises when the fourteenth of Nisan (Abib) falls on a weekly Sabbath. In this case the First Day of Unleavened Bread would be observed on Sunday (Nisan 15). Under the Old Covenant, sacrifices were offered every Sabbath. Jews circumcised their sons on the eighth day even when the eighth day was a Sabbath. There is no reason to suppose that the Passover sacrifice would not have been offered on the fourteenth of Nisan even when that date fell on a weekly Sabbath.

If the Passover falls on the weekly Sabbath then the people would have already removed the leavening from their homes, since removing the leavening would constitute work. So, in this case, they are actually keeping eight days of Unleavened Bread instead of seven. This actual possibility indicates the season for counting Pentecost rightly begins with the fourteenth of Nisan, the day of the paschal sacrifice.

Neither the Pharisees nor the Sadducees acknowledged this principle. The Sadducees objected to the fact that the Pharisees believed that the Wave sheaf offering could occur on a day other than Sunday (the morrow after the Sabbath). The Pharisees objected to the fact that, on occasion, the Sadducees would offer the Wave sheaf outside of the Days of Unleavened Bread. Beginning the season

on Passover day best harmonizes the scriptures. This approach assures that the Wave sheaf is always offered on Sunday and that it is always offered within the Days of Unleavened Bread. This understanding requires that if the first Holy Day of Unleavened bread is a Sunday, it will also be the day of the Wave sheaf offering.

There has also been controversy over the decades of the church in interpreting the instructions in Leviticus 23:15-16 "*And you shall count for yourselves from the day after the Sabbath . . . 'Count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath.'*" The count was to be "from" a specific date "to" another specific date, with a set period of time in between. An analysis of the Hebrew expression "*from the morrow*" (AV) will provide a better understanding of how the count was to proceed.

According to Strong's, this word *mochorath* is used 32 times in the King James Version of the Old Testament. 29 times it is translated "morrow" and 28 of them contain the preposition *mi* in front of the word. The overwhelming evidence is in favor of beginning the count on the morrow after the weekly Sabbath. But when it (the Hebrew 'mi' or 'min') is translated as 'from' (instead of on) and is used in conjunction with the element of time, it is always used inclusively, and never exclusively.' This being true—that is, in the Hebrew, when in relation to time, it (mi) should never be translated into the English 'from,' but 'beginning on.' Therefore the count begins on *the day* after the Sabbath not two days after it...

May you and I continue to be about diligently studying the Bible, drawing close to our Father through prayer, and not just assuming we know everything, or remember it all when it comes to God's Word. I've personally found that sometimes decades can go by where we simply don't go back and review what God's Word instructs us. I realize some of these things we discuss from time to time are technical, but hopefully helpful as to why we as God's children "do what we do".

Arms up friends! Our sincere prayers and thoughts are with you daily. Thanks in advance for your heartfelt prayers for us.



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