

# **FIRST SHEAF**

**by Avram Yehoshua**

**THE SEED OF ABRAHAM**



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b> .....	<b>iii</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>THE PROCEDURE</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>THE CHURCH IGNORANT</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>YESHUA AS THE FIRST SHEAF</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Other Uses of First Sheaf in Scripture</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>THE TECHNICAL PROBLEM</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>TALMUD—CAN WE TRUST IT?</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>CONCLUSION</b> .....	<b>14</b>



# INTRODUCTION

A special ceremony in the spring of every year is mentioned in Leviticus 23:10-14. It acknowledges Yahveh for what He had given to Israel—the Promised Land; a land flowing with milk and honey (i.e. a land of abundance), and what He would give to Israel—the coming year’s harvest (food to sustain life):

Lev. 23:10: “Speak to the Sons of Israel and say to them, ‘When you enter the Land which I am going to give to you and reap its harvest, *then* you shall bring in the sheaf of the first sheaf (*aka* first fruits; barley grain) of your harvest to the (High) Priest.’”

Lev. 23:11: ‘He shall wave (הָנִיף *elevate*)<sup>1</sup> the sheaf (עֹמֶר *omer*)<sup>2</sup> before Yahveh *for you to be accepted*. **On the day after the Sabbath** the Priest shall wave (elevate) it.’

Lev. 23:12: ‘Now on the day when you wave (elevate) the sheaf (*omer* of barley grain), you must offer a male lamb one year old without defect for a burnt offering to Yahveh.’

Lev. 23:13: ‘Its grain offering shall then be two-tenths of an *ephah*<sup>3</sup> of fine flour mixed with oil, an offering by fire to Yahveh for a soothing aroma, with its drink offering; a fourth of a *hin* of wine.’<sup>4</sup>

Lev. 23:14: ‘*Until this same day, until you have brought in the offering of your God, you shall eat neither (new) bread, nor roasted grain, nor new growth*. It is to be a perpetual statute throughout your generations in all your dwelling places.’

The year old male lamb offered to Yahveh in v. 12 pictured Yeshua dying in the prime of His life (at age 33), offering Himself up to His Father for us. The burnt offering (v. 12) is a picture of total surrender and dedication to Yahveh, which of course, Yeshua exemplifies. Both the flour and oil of v. 13, and the wine, were once part of things that needed to be *crushed* in order to be transformed for Israel to eat. The fine flour was crushed from whole kernels, the oil for olives, and the wine from grapes. These all picture Yeshua being crushed or crucified that we might be able to eat of Him as the *Matza* (Unleavened Bread) and Blood of Life, filled with the Oil of the Holy Spirit. Just as the Hebrews couldn’t eat of the new grain until this ceremony was done (v. 14), so too, we could not eat of the Bread of Life until He had been crushed and risen from the ground (grave) and presented Himself to His Father as the First Fruits (First Sheaf) to rise from the dead (1st Cor. 15:20, 23). **Then** we became *acceptable* to God the Father (Lev. 23:11) and could eat of the Bread of Life, for He made us so. As we surrender and dedicate ourselves to Yeshua, He crushes us that His glory within us (the Holy Spirit) might flow out and touch others.

---

<sup>1</sup> The Hebrew word הָנִיף (*nuf*) generally is translated as ‘wave,’ as in ‘wave offering’ for Lev. 23:11-12. Milgrom presents “significant evidence to translate it as ‘elevate,’” which makes more sense since both the sheaf and Yeshua *rose* from the ground; they didn’t wave. Jacob Milgrom, *The Anchor Bible: Leviticus 1-16* (New York, Doubleday, 2001), pp. 461-473 (see Herb Solinsky, [Treatise on the Biblical Calendar](#) April 3, 2009, p. 259).

Also, Ludwig Koehler, Walter Baumgartner, and J. J. Stamm, authors; M. Richardson, translator, *The Hebrew-Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Accordance Bible Software; Altamonte Springs, FL: OakTree Software, 2011), 2001, 2.682, has ‘elevate’ as one of its secondary meanings for הָנִיף (‘to bring in something while holding it up’), and R. L. Harris, editor; Gleason Archer, Jr. and Bruce Waltke, associate editors, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, vol. II (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), p. 565, has *elevate* (i.e. ‘lift’) as part of a secondary meaning: ‘lift, wave, shake, wield.’

<sup>2</sup> C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary On The Old Testament*, vol. 1: *The Pentateuch* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2001), p. 368. About five pints (about two pounds or a kilo).

<sup>3</sup> W. H. Bellinger, Jr., *New International Biblical Commentary: Leviticus, Numbers* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 2001), p. 122. An *ephah* was a dry measure of weight of about 20 quarts (20 liters). Two-tenths of an *ephah* would be about four quarts or four liters.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. A *hin* of wine weighs about six pints (three quarts or three liters).

# THE PROCEDURE

On the Sunday of Passover Week, known as First Sheaf (and First Fruits), the High Priest would be presented with an *omer* of finely crushed barley (about two pounds or a kilo). He would,

1. scoop up a handful of the grain mixed with olive oil,
2. place some incense on it (symbolic of the prayers of the High Priest for Israel) and elevate it, lifting it up before Yahveh, which symbolized dedication of not only the spring harvest, but also the summer and autumn harvests as well, for this was the first fruits/grain to come forth from the ground.
3. Then he would bless Yahveh and acknowledge that:
  1. Yahveh had brought the Hebrews into the land of Canaan, as He had promised the Fathers, and
  2. He had made them as many as the stars of the heavens and
  3. He had provided food for them, *this* grain being symbolic of all the grain of the year.
4. Then he would cast the handful of grain and incense upon the fire of the bronze Altar of Sacrifice, thus dedicating it and all to follow to Yahveh, and so Israel was acceptable to God.

The elevating of the offering up to God of the first sheaf in Hebrew is *omer raysheet* עֹמֶר רֵאשִׁית. It literally means the *first omer*. It's from this term, *omer*, and the offering of it up to Yahveh on Sunday, that set in motion what is called, 'the counting of the *omer*.' From the day the barley flour was offered, Israel counted 50 days to the next feast, *Shavu'ot* (Pentecost; Feast of Weeks). The Hebrew for Leviticus 23:15, the verse after the *omer* is elevated, reads:

'Then you are to count from *the day after the Sabbath*, the day you brought the *omer* (sheaf) elevation offering, seven Sabbaths.'

This is where we get the phrase, 'the *counting of/from the omer*.' The relationship of the *omer* to *Shavu'ot* is that on the day the first sheaf (*omer*) is elevated before Yahveh, the High Priest would count 50 days inclusive, and that 50th day, another Sunday, would be *Shavu'ot*, the annual summer holy Sabbath thanking God for the summer crop/s. The High Priest, in his blessing Yahveh, thanked God for His faithfulness in *keeping His Word* to Fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob concerning their sons and the giving of the Land of Israel to them and that Yahveh would be their God forever. The promises are seen in Genesis:

Gen. 15:5, 7: "And He took him outside and said, 'Now look toward the Heavens and count the stars, if you are able to count them.' And He said to him, 'So shall your descendants be...and He said to him, 'I am Yahveh who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this Land to possess it.'"

Gen. 17:2, 4: 'I will establish My Covenant between Me and you and I will multiply you exceedingly...As for Me, behold, My Covenant is with you and you will be the Father of a multitude of nations.'

Gen. 17:7-8: 'I will establish My Covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting Covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you. I will give to you and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession and I will be *their* God.'

Now, Israel was eating the 'fruit' of the Land that Yahveh had given them, a Land flowing with milk and honey (Dt. 6:3; 11:9). The grain used for First Sheaf would be barley as it ripens four to six weeks before the summer wheat harvest (which would be offered on *Shavu'ot* and is usually in early June). First Sheaf is usually in April.

The elevation offering of the first harvest pictured it and the other harvests (summer and fall) that were to follow. They would all be dedicated or holy because *the first* was offered up to God. This made Israel acceptable to Yahveh as it speaks of Yeshua being sacrificed and risen so Israel would be made acceptable:

1. The elevating by the High Priest of the finely crushed barley grain mixed with olive oil, the first sheaf, with a handful thrown onto the Altar fire, pictured Yeshua, filled with the Holy Spirit (the oil), ascending to Papa God after the resurrection.
2. The incense on that handful of flour that was thrown into the fire pictures the prayers of Yeshua as our High Priest for His people Israel, ascending to God the Father in the Flames of the Holy Spirit (the flames of the bronze Altar of Sacrifice).
3. The High Priest, thanking Yahveh for the harvest and His faithfulness to His promises for Israel, pictures Yeshua as our High Priest thanking His Father for giving Israel their promised Messiah, their Savior and their King, the pure grain/Bread of Heaven, which will sustain them for eternity, the first to rise from the dead glorified.
4. The priests would then eat the grain that was not thrown onto the fire of the Altar. This pictured the body of Yeshua being given to His priests as food for us (Jn. 6:53; Heb. 13:10).

God has been faithful to His Word. He has provided everything Israel needs—from literal food to the Bread (*Matza*) of Life—Messiah Yeshua.

## THE CHURCH IGNORANT

When the Bishop (Pope) of Rome in 120 AD severed himself and all those Christians under his influence (primarily in Italy and Greece) from walking out their faith in Christ through all Mosaic Law that applied to them, and brought in pagan days and pagan ways to replace it (e.g. Sunday, Easter and the eating of unclean animals), all the Gentile and Jewish believers of Asia Minor (modern Turkey) and all points east (e.g. Israel and Syria) continued to keep the 7th day Sabbath, Passover and the Mosaic dietary laws, etc. There was much turmoil in Christianity over that for centuries. The Bishop had intentionally rebelled against God's Word and His Ways. First Sheaf is one such Way. John 20:16 records the encounter between Miryam (Mary) and her risen Savior: Yeshua said to her, 'Miryam!' She turned and said to Him in Hebrew, 'Rabboni!' (which means, 'my beloved Rabbi').

The reason this sentence is in Scripture is because God wants us to realize that Yeshua's *first appearance after* His resurrection has Him keeping the ceremony of First Fruits (First Sheaf). His fulfilling of it doesn't mean it has been done away with, but on the contrary, now when we celebrate it, and celebrate it we must because God says the Feasts of Israel are forever (Ex. 12:24; Lev. 23:14, etc.), we know this ceremony thanks God for providing food for His people Israel in both the natural and spiritual realm.

First Sheaf was the Sunday of Passover Week and Yeshua was in process of fulfilling it. That's why He tells Miryam, in the very next verse, not to cling to Him:

“Don't cling to Me, for *I have not yet ascended* to the Father, but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God.'” (John 20:17)

Yeshua had *not yet* ascended to the Father, but *obviously*, He had *already* been resurrected. He said that to Miryam because He was about to ascend to His Father and thank Him for being faithful to Israel, paralleling the earthly ceremony of First Fruits. As the High Priest in Jerusalem was offering up the first grain *to rise* from the Earth, barley grain, so the heavenly High Priest, Yeshua, was appearing before His Father as the First Grain to rise from the dead, from the Earth/ground (Jn. 12:24; 1st Cor. 15:20, 23). This was a

reason why the earthly ceremony was established—to point to the heavenly reality. They are both valid for picturing what God has done for Israel. Now that Messiah has come, when we enter into the First Fruits we have both understandings of what they mean for us as Christians. Both the heavenly and the earthly will remain until the New Jerusalem is established (Ezk. 40–48; Mt. 5:18; Rev. 21:1ff.).

Many followers of Jesus claim that He rose on Sunday, *and because of that*, Christianity has Sunday assembly or a ‘Sunday Sabbath,’ as some erroneously call it, but there’s nothing in the New Testament that even remotely states that Sunday has replaced God’s 7th day Sabbath because of the resurrection or any other reason. One of the definitions of ‘Sabbath’ is ‘end,’ as in ‘the end of the biblical week,’ and that’s why it’s the 7th day. Sunday begins the week and is the biblical first day of the week and so it can never be a sabbath or end of the week.

Yeshua is first seen on this Sunday of First Fruits, which is why God set it up this way, for Yeshua ascends as the First Sheaf (Fruits) of all the Harvest of God’s resurrected people to come. This does not sanctify all Sundays during the year, as interestingly enough, First Fruits is not an annual holy Sabbath (like the first and seventh days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, for instance; Lev. 23:6-8).<sup>5</sup> In other words, even with Yeshua rising on Sunday there is nothing in the New Testament that says *because of His resurrection* Sunday is now the new weekly day of assembly, or that Sunday is the ‘new Sabbath,’ or that Sunday is holy and blessed as the 7th day Sabbath was in Creation Week (Gen. 2:3).

If Sunday had replaced the seventh day Sabbath we would expect to find numerous passages in the New Testament testifying to this. After all, Israel had been keeping the Sabbath for 1,500 years. Theologians cite two texts in support of Sunday.<sup>6</sup> These two proof texts are used to justify the replacement of the Sabbath by unthinking Christians, but this only reveals how misguided theologians are in trying to justify Sunday replacing God’s 7th day Sabbath. Christians were born into this (Roman Catholic) tradition and ‘think it’s Gospel,’ but it’s only a tradition that nullifies God’s Word. Hello Christian Pharisees?!

“Yeshua said to them, ‘All too well you reject the Commandment of God that you may keep your *tradition*.’” (Mark 7:9)

Yeshua’s first appearance and ascension on the Sunday of Passover Week doesn’t give biblical warrant for Sunday observance over Sabbath, either, as *that* Sunday was placed within the Feast of Unleavened Bread for the express purpose of both offering the first grain of spring to God in thanksgiving, and having a day when Yeshua would complement the earthly reality as the first to rise from the Earth as the New Creation.

As the offering of the first fruits (barley grain) to the Father meant that the harvests to come (summer and fall) would also be acceptable to God, so Yeshua’s appearance before the Father as the First Fruits to rise from the dead meant that *all who follow Him are acceptable* to the Father. Yeshua ascended to the Father on First Fruits and was raised from the dead on that Sunday, the *first day of the week*, paralleling the first day of Creation Week. In other words, as God began His creation on the first day of Creation Week, He also began His New Creation on the first day of the week, with Yeshua being raised from the dead, the first of the New Creation (the glorified God-Man), so that Yeshua would have preeminence in all things:

“And He is the Head of the Body, the Church, who is the Beginning, the Firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.” (Colossians 1:18)

“But now Christ is risen from the dead and has become the First Fruits of those who have fallen asleep...But each one in his own order: Christ the First Fruits, *afterward* those who are Christ’s at His coming.” (1st Corinthians 15:20, 23)

---

<sup>5</sup> The first annual Sabbath, on Passover night, commemorates the crucifixion of Yeshua, and hence, why its an annual Sabbath. The second annual Sabbath or 7th day of Passover Week is a Sabbath because it pictures the completion of what Yeshua’s sacrifice entailed—the holy and sinless glorification of His Body (i.e. Christians).

<sup>6</sup> The texts after the resurrection that speak of the first day of the week (i.e. Sunday) are Acts 20:7 and First Corinthians 16:2. See [The Feasts of Israel as Time Markers After the Resurrection](#), pp. 20-25; 10-20.



Yeshua is first seen alive on First Fruits, but *no one sees Him resurrect* on Sunday, and there is no authoritative Scripture to support a Sunday resurrection,<sup>7</sup> and so I used to think that He rose late on the 7th day Sabbath, as He is Lord of the Sabbath (Mark 2:28), but as I've just brought out, Yeshua, as the First Fruits to rise from the dead, rose from the dead *on First Fruits, the first day of the biblical week* (i.e. any time from Saturday night at dark, after the Sabbath ended, to Sunday while it was still dark; Jn. 20:1). Obviously, then, there's no need for either a *weekly* Sunday assembly that has replaced the Lord's holy 7th day Sabbath and no need for (pagan) Easter or 'Resurrection Day' (as many call it, wanting to try and steer clear of the paganism that is Easter). Easter Sunday and Resurrection Day are always celebrated on the same Sunday because Resurrection Day is just another name for Easter Sunday, but the point is that most of the time they aren't celebrated on the Sunday when Yeshua rose from the dead because the calculation for Easter Sunday is different from First Fruits.<sup>8</sup> The Lord wants His people to keep His Ways, not the Ways of the Pope.

## YESHUA AS THE FIRST SHEAF

For Yeshua to be resurrected was no great miracle. He was God the Son and He gave life to Lazarus and others who had died. The real miracle is that *He prefigures our glorified resurrection*. We shall be like Him, the glorified God-Man, to the eternal praise of God our Father.<sup>9</sup> 1st Cor. 15:22-23 reads,

'For as in Adam all die, so also in Messiah all will be made alive, but each in his own order—Messiah the First Fruits (Sheaf/Omer), after that those who are Messiah's at His coming.' (1st Cor. 15:22-23)

"For our citizenship is in Heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Yeshua the Messiah, who will *transform our lowly body* that it may be *conformed to His glorious body...*" (Philippians 3:20-21).

Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread and First Fruits picture the death, burial, resurrection and first ascension of Yeshua. As the Lamb of God He dies on Passover, the first day of *Matza* (Unleavened Bread; 15 *Aviv*), the day when the firstborn of Egypt died in order for Israel, God's Firstborn Son (Ex. 4:22), to be released from Egyptian slavery (Exodus 12:12f.; Num. 33:3). At Yeshua's crucifixion the sky reverted *into a nighttime scene of darkness*, even though it was noon, most likely because God wasn't pleased with His Son's treatment, and Egypt's firstborn died in the darkness at midnight (Ex. 12:29-30) on 15 *Aviv*:

'It was now about the sixth hour (noon) and *darkness* fell over the whole land until the ninth hour.' (Yeshua dies at 3:00 PM; Luke 23:44; cf. Mt. 27:45-56; Mk. 15:33-34)

As the Grain of Heaven He falls into the Earth on the first day of *Matza*. This is (still) 15 *Aviv*. This is the day when Israel was actually set free from Egyptian slavery and the day when you were set free from slavery to Satan. Yeshua dies on the day Israel was set free from Egypt because of the death of Egypt's

---

<sup>7</sup> See [The Resurrection and Mark 16:9](#).

<sup>8</sup> Passover is calculated from the first new moon on or after the Vernal (Spring) Equinox. From that new moon, which is the first day of the biblical month and also the first day of the biblical New Year, one counts 15 days until the night when the Passover meal is eaten (15 *Aviv*), which also begins the seven day Feast of Unleavened Bread. Generally, the Sunday of Passover Week is First Sheaf/Fruits (but, as in 2019, First Sheaf fell on the Sunday immediately after the last day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread).

On the other hand, Easter or 'Resurrection Day' are calculated this way: after the Vernal Equinox the first full moon becomes the marker from which the following Sunday becomes Easter Sunday. In practical terms Easter and the Sunday for First Sheaf sometimes coincide, but they can be off by a week or two, or even a full month.

<sup>9</sup> See [Salvation—The Promise!](#)

firstborn sons:

‘These are the journeys of the Sons of Israel by which they came out from the land of Egypt by their armies under the leadership of Moses and Aaron. Moses recorded their starting places according to their journeys by the command of Yahveh and these are their journeys according to their starting places. They journeyed from Rameses in the first month, *on the fifteenth day of the first month*<sup>10</sup> (on the next *day* after the Passover)<sup>11</sup> the Sons of Israel started out boldly in the sight of all the Egyptians.’ (Num. 33:1-3)

“So you shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread, for *on this same day* I will have brought your armies out of the land of Egypt! Therefore, you shall observe this day throughout your generations as an everlasting ordinance!” (Ex. 12:17)

On the same day that Egypt’s firstborn sons died, God’s only begotten Firstborn Son dies. Yeshua cried out, “It is finished” (the redemption/salvation of Israel; Jn 19:31). God had brought Israel out of Egyptian slavery 1,470 years earlier.<sup>12</sup> Both times Israel was redeemed through the sacrifice of the Passover Lamb. This *day* is the first day of the Feast of *Matza*, an annual Sabbath, 15 *Aviv* (Nisan in Judaism’s calendar).

As the New Harvest, the first of many, Yeshua *ascends* at the exact time that the High Priest was thanking God and elevating the new barley grain before Yahveh: the first sheaf elevation offering, confirming that all Israel would be acceptable to Yahveh. Yeshua told Miryam not to cling to Him because He was going to appear before His Father as the heavenly First Sheaf to rise from the ground/burial/death. The High Priest might have said on that day something like this:

‘Thank You, Yahveh, for your love and compassion toward us. You are faithful and true to Your Word! You promised our Fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, that their Seed would be as many as the stars and that they would be given this Land, and You have kept Your promise. Here we are, their Seed, in the Land that you promised to give them, and now, here is the first portion (first sheaf/omer) of the Land that will feed us. We thank You!’

With that, the High Priest took a handful of the finely ground barley mixed with olive oil, placed some incense upon it and tossed it upon the Altar to go up in holy smoke to Yahveh. Just before that, Miryam had left Him (John 20:17) and He had ascended to His Father as the First Sheaf to rise from the dead. He might have said:

‘Thank You, Father, for your love and compassion toward Israel. You are faithful and true to Your Word! You promised our Fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, that their Seed would be as many as the stars and that they would be given this Land, and You have kept Your promise of giving Israel the Messiah-Savior. Here I am, their Seed of which there shall be many, and I am their Bread of Life on which they shall eat forever, and also their portion of land in the New Jerusalem. Here am I, the first portion (first sheaf/omer) of what is to come; who they are to be. Thank You, Father!’

*This* ascension is Yeshua fulfilling the picture of the First Sheaf on the *first day* of the week...He is a new Creature—the God-Man *glorified*. It parallels the *first day* of Creation when God spoke and said, ‘Let there be Light!’ (Gen. 1:3) and from within the eternal depths of the Father and the Holy Spirit came the Word, the Son, the Light of the world, slain from before the Foundation of Creation (Rev. 13:8).<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> The 15 of the month is the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

<sup>11</sup> The *next day after the Passover* refers to the day the Passover lambs were slain in Egypt (14 *Aviv*).

<sup>12</sup> Many theologians believe that it was the year 1440 BC when Israel left Egypt. Adding 30 years to that, when Yeshua was crucified, makes a total of 1,470 years.

<sup>13</sup> See [Yeshua—God the Son](#) for how Yeshua is both deity, humanity, and God the Son.

## *Other Uses of First Sheaf in Scripture*

There are a number of times in the New Covenant that the term ‘first sheaf’ (or ‘first fruits,’ which has the same meaning) are used. The Apostle Paul uses the term to apply to Yeshua as the first to be raised from the dead, and that in fact, Yeshua had been raised from the dead (1st Cor. 15:20, 23). Another use of the term is seen when Paul describes the Holy Spirit within us—our pledge from God the Father that He will do for us as He has promised: glorification on the Day of Judgment:

‘And not only this, but also we ourselves having the *first fruits* of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.’ (Rom. 8:23; cf. Phil. 3:20-21)

Paul uses *first fruits* as a general concept of something that comes first, and not a direct reference to the ceremony of First Fruits. James<sup>14</sup> gives a slightly different meaning for the phrase, but still within common sense:

‘In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the Word of Truth, so that we would be a kind of *first fruits* among His creatures.’ (James 1:18)

James (actually Jacob) is the half-brother of Yeshua and the Prince (*nasi* from the Hebrew, sometimes erroneously translated as ‘president’) of the Assembly of all the Jews in Jerusalem who believed in Yeshua (Acts 12:17; 15:13; 21:18; Gal. 1:19; 2:9). He’s saying he considers the Jewish-Christians who have come to Yeshua in his lifetime as the *first fruits* of the heavenly Harvest, coming immediately after Yeshua, which might align itself symbolically with the ‘summer’ harvest of Pentecost or Shavu’ot.

In Rev. 14:1f., the 144,000 Israelis are also seen as first fruits:

‘These are the ones who have not been defiled with women, for they have kept themselves chaste. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These have been purchased (redeemed) from among men as *first fruits* to God and to the Lamb.’ (Revelation 14:4)

That these 144,000 refer to the natural Seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob has support from this verse:

‘And I heard the number of those who were sealed—144,000 sealed *from every Tribe of the Sons of Israel.*’ (Rev. 7:4)

Gentiles who love the Lord are also present. It’s interesting that they have palm branches in their hands, as this is peculiar to the last great *harvest* feast, *Sukote*—the Feast of Tabernacles:

‘After these things I looked, and behold! A great multitude, which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes, peoples and tongues standing before the Throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes and palm branches were in their hands.’ (Rev. 7:9)

Moses says of the Feast of Tabernacles:

‘And you shall take for yourselves on the first day the fruit of beautiful trees, branches of palm trees, the boughs of leafy trees and willows of the brook, and you must rejoice before Yahveh your God for seven days.’ (Leviticus 23:40, 33-44)

You and I are more like the End Time Harvest (than the ‘us’ or ‘we’ in James 1:18). Our ‘time’ or picture

---

<sup>14</sup> The Hebrew name of James should have been translated into English as Jacob, but because of anti-Semitism in the ancient Roman Catholic Church, a foreign, a non-Jewish sounding name was used (from the Latin; i.e. James). It’s interesting that John 4:6 speaks of *Jacob’s* well, and not James’ well, affirming that the half brother of Yeshua should be called Jacob in English Bibles.

is in the autumn of salvation history, and yet, we are also ‘Firstborn Sons of God:’

“For you have not come to a Mountain that can be touched and to a blazing Fire and to Darkness, gloom and whirlwind, and to the blast of a Shofar<sup>15</sup> and the sound of Words, which sound was such that those who heard begged that no further word be spoken to them. For they could not bear the command: ‘If even a beast touches the Mountain it must be stoned!’ So terrible was the sight that Moses said, ‘I am afraid and trembling,’ but you have come to Mount Zion and to the City of the Living God, the heavenly Jerusalem and to tens of thousands of angels; to the General Assembly and Congregation of the *Firstborn* who are enrolled in Heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect; and to Yeshua, the Mediator of a New Covenant, and to the sprinkled Blood which speaks better than the blood of Abel.” (Heb. 12:18-24)

The Congregation of the Firstborn is a throwback to Yahveh calling Israel His Firstborn Son, and Yeshua, too, for He is truly the Father’s only begotten Firstborn Son (Ps. 2:7; Jn. 1:18). The concept is seen in Yeshua speaking of His followers as being ‘chosen’...

‘You did not *choose* Me, but I *chose* you and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit and that your fruit would remain so that whatever you ask of the Father in My Name He may give to you.’ (Jn. 15:16)

Both times that Yeshua mentions *choose* and *chose*, the Greek parallels the Hebrew for *The Chosen People*, and here it speaks of Yeshua *choosing* them. Of course, Yeshua wasn’t speaking Greek, but Hebrew, and so the words He used would have come from the Hebrew *bachar* בָּחַר (to choose).<sup>16</sup>

Finally, Paul uses a general conceptual framework of ‘first fruits’ taken to be a person or a family outside of Israel who was the first to respond to the Message of Life in Yeshua the Messiah:

‘Likewise, greet the assembly that is in their house. Salute my beloved Epaenetus who is the *first fruits* of Achaia unto Christ.’ (Rom. 16:5)

‘Now, I urge you, brethren (you know the household of Stephanas, that they were the *first fruits* of Achaia and that they have devoted themselves for ministry to the saints).’ (1st Cor. 16:15)

## THE TECHNICAL PROBLEM

In the seven day Feast of *Matza* (Unleavened Bread) there will naturally always be a Sunday. On this Sunday the High Priest elevated a handful of finely crushed barley grain from the spring crop. It symbolized Israel’s recognition that Yahveh, the Owner of the Land, had provided food for His people Israel and that the first portion of it goes to Him, making the rest of the spring crop and also the summer and fall crops that followed, holy. First Sheaf always falls on a Sunday, the day after the seventh day weekly Sabbath in Passover Week (the Feast of Unleavened Bread Week),<sup>17</sup> contrary to what the Pharisees taught, and what the Rabbis and unfortunately, all the Messianic Jews who blindly follow the Rabbis, practice today. The Rabbis, writing more than a hundred years after the destruction of the Temple (70 AD), said

---

<sup>15</sup> In the Hebrew text the word is shofar (ram’s horn), not trumpet. It’s the heavenly Shofar.

<sup>16</sup> Thayer, *Thayer’s Greek–English Lexicon of the New Testament*, n.p. “ἐκλέγομαι...the Septuagint for *bahar*; to pick out, choose; in the NT...to pick or choose out for oneself...one from among many (of Jesus choosing his disciples), John 6:70; 13:18; 15:16; Acts 1:2.”

<sup>17</sup> Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread are used interchangeably in Scripture (Lk. 22:1, 7; Mt. 26:17; Mk. 14:1).

that the priests (Sadducees) followed *their* rabbinic way of thinking on religious matters, which is a lie, for those Rabbis and Pharisees revised history to suit their own understanding and agenda.<sup>18</sup> On the other hand, the Sadducees (Priests) determined when First Sheaf, and consequently, Shavu'ot were, and understood that First Sheaf was always the Sunday in Passover Week after the seventh day Sabbath. They correctly understood that, 'the day after the Sabbath' of Lev. 23:11 speaks of the weekly Sabbath in Passover Week:

“He shall elevate the sheaf before Yahveh, to be accepted on your behalf, *on the day after the Sabbath* the (High) Priest shall elevate<sup>19</sup> it.” (Lev. 23:11)

In the seven day Feast of *Matza* there are three Sabbaths: the annual Sabbaths of the first and seventh days of Unleavened Bread, and the 7th day Sabbath (which comes after every Friday).<sup>20</sup>

The Pharisees believed that 'the day after the Sabbath' (Lev. 23:11) referred to the day after the first annual Sabbath of Unleavened Bread, which is always 16 *Aviv*. This teaching is untenable, but has been adopted by Judaism because the Rabbis are the spiritual descendants of the Pharisees, who ousted the Sadducean Priests as the leaders of the people because there was no Temple for the priests to conduct their God ordained sacrifices and work. In other words, the Levitical Priests were out of a job and fell into obscurity. With the Pharisaic/Rabbinic belief that 'the day after the Sabbath' referred to the annual Sabbath of 15 *Aviv* (today called 15 *Nisan*), 50 days after that is always 6 *Sivan*. That's when Orthodox Judaism (and Messianic congregations) celebrate *Shavu'ot* (Pentecost; the Feast of Weeks; Ex. 34:22; Num. 28:26; Dt. 16:10, 16), and it can fall on any day of the week (e.g. Sunday, Monday or Tuesday, etc.).

The problem with the Pharisaic *interpretation* is seen in that both First Sheaf and *Shavu'ot* 50 days later, unlike all the other Feasts in Lev. 23, **are never given any date in Scripture**. The reason for that is because they can't be given a date as their dating changes every year, as determined by when Passover is, and therefore, when the weekly Sabbath within Passover Week is, which makes the date for the next day, Sunday, different every year.

If the counting of the 50 days would always commence the day after the first annual Sabbath of *Matza* (16 *Aviv/Nisan*), as the Pharisaic Rabbis and Messianics teach, then *Shavu'ot* would **always** fall on 6 *Sivan*, which it does for them, but neither of these dates (16 *Aviv* and 6 *Sivan*) are ever mentioned by God nor anyone else in Scripture for First Sheaf and the Feast of Weeks (*Shavu'ot*), respectively. That's because the dates for First Sheaf and *Shavu'ot*, *which spins off of First Sheaf 50 days later*, are 'floating dates,' meaning that they *change every year* due to what day the Passover meal (15 *Aviv*) falls on. In other words, the dates for the two days (First Sheaf and *Shavu'ot*) *cannot* be given, and **this** is the reason why God says to count 50 days *after* the (7th day weekly) *Sabbath of Passover week*. First Sheaf, and consequently *Shavu'ot*, 50 days later, always change dates from year to year, depending on what **day** of the week the Passover meal is eaten on. Yes, it's always the night of 15 *Aviv*, but the **day** of the week changes every year, which makes the day after the 7th day Sabbath a different date every year.

God gives the dates for *all the other Feasts* (Lev. 23), but He never gives a date for the annual Sabbath of *Shavu'ot* (or First Sheaf, which is not an annual Sabbath). This is the biblical key to properly understanding that the Sadducees were right, and that the Pharisees, Rabbis and Messianics are wrong. The Scripture for *Shavu'ot* (literally 'sevens' or 'weeks,' which refers to the seven weeks [49 days plus one, as it's an inclusive count, meaning that First Sheaf is counted as day one], that one must wait or count 50 days to

---

<sup>18</sup> The Mishna–Talmud was written by the Rabbis after the destruction of the Second Temple and places the Pharisaic view of when First Fruits should be, and therefore, 50 days later when *Shavu'ot* would be, as the practice of the Second Temple. Many other things were similarly 'revised.' See, *The Talmud—Can We Trust It?* p. 13f.

<sup>19</sup> Most English Bibles have that he shall “wave” it, but the Hebrew word means to elevate it.

<sup>20</sup> If either the first day or the last day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread coincides with the seventh day Sabbath then, for all practical purposes, there are only two Sabbaths because one of the annual Sabbaths coincides with the 7th day Sabbath.

celebrate it), states:

‘You shall also count for yourselves *from the day after the Sabbath*, from the day when you brought in the Sheaf of the elevation offering. There shall be seven complete Sabbaths (or weeks). You shall count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath. Then you shall present a new grain offering to Yahveh.’ (Lev. 23:15-16)

Easy, right? You might say it seems pretty clear: ‘the day after the *seventh Sabbath* should obviously always be a Sunday, and seven *complete Sabbaths* seems pretty clear too, but the way that it’s worded in English doesn’t take into account that the Hebrew word for ‘Sabbath’ can also mean a ‘week’ (a full seven day period), and not necessarily just the 7th day Sabbath. This is the way the Pharisees, modern Judaism and Messianic Judaism take it: ‘seven complete weeks’ and ‘the day after the seventh week.’ This understanding doesn’t have biblical validity, or make any sense because it would have been not only very easy for God to give the *dates* for both days, but it would have also been incumbent upon Him to give those two dates IF they fell on the same dates every year. This is why we know that Judaism and Messianic Judaism are wrong.

Just like your birthday, which is always the same *date* every year, but falls on a *different day* of the week every year (e.g. Monday or Tuesday, etc.), so too, with the Passover meal. It’s always 15 *Aviv*, but 15 *Aviv* can fall on a Monday night or a Tuesday night, etc. Now, First Sheaf, biblically, will always be the Sunday of Passover Week, but that Sunday’s date will change every year (e.g. that Sunday can be 16 *Aviv*, 17 *Aviv*, or 18 *Aviv*, etc.) That’s why God couldn’t give a date for either First Sheaf or *Shavu’ot*—every year the dates change, and this reveals that the Sadducees had the correct interpretation and understanding for Lev. 23:11, 15-16—*the day after the (7th day) Sabbath of Passover Week*, always being a Sunday.

1. The Passover sacrifice of the lamb happens about sunset on 14 *Aviv*. What is the Passover? The Passover is not a day *per se*, but most often in Scripture Passover refers to the sacrifice of the Passover lamb, around sunset on 14 *Aviv*.<sup>21</sup>
2. About 45 minutes later, after dusk, at dark the biblical day changes to 15 *Aviv*, the beginning of the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (an annual Sabbath no matter what day of the week it falls on). This is the first day of the Feast of *Matza*, beginning in darkness (cf. Gen. 1:1-5f., for darkness is when the biblical days begins, not sunset).<sup>22</sup>
3. About 8:00 PM the lamb would be eaten during the Passover ceremonial meal (Ex. 12:1f.), on the first day of *Matza*, 15 *Aviv*.
4. At dawn it will still be the first day of *Matza*, 15 *Aviv*. When darkness comes it will begin 16 *Aviv*; the second day of *Matza*. The daylight of 16 *Aviv* is when the Pharisees and modern Rabbis and Messianics teach that the First Sheaf would have been offered up to God.

The Sadducees, who became a sect after the Babylonian captivity, were mostly made up of the priests, who had been ordained by God to teach Israel, and they were in charge of the Temple, and therefore, *when* Israel would celebrate the Feasts. They taught ‘the day after the Sabbath’ was the day after the seventh day weekly Sabbath,<sup>23</sup> and on the next day, Sunday, the High Priest would offer the First Sheaf (quantity of barley grain known as the *omer*). This is biblically correct.

*Aviv* 21, the seventh day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, is also an annual Sabbath, as the Feast of

---

<sup>21</sup> Ex. 12:21, 27; Luke 22:7-8, 11, 13, 15; Mk. 14:12, 14; Mt. 26:17-19. In the days of Yeshua the Passover lambs would be sacrificed beginning about 1:00 PM at the Temple because there were about 100,000 lambs that needed to be sacrificed. That’s why the earlier time than if each household did it by their homes, as it was biblically done in Egypt.

<sup>22</sup> See [When Does The Sabbath Begin?](#)

<sup>23</sup> Friday night dark until Saturday night dark is the biblical Sabbath, not sunset Friday night to sunset Saturday.

*Matza* is from 15 to 21 *Aviv*; seven days. The community comes together for holy assemblies on the first and seventh days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Ex. 12:16).

If the counting for the *omer* began on the day after the first annual Sabbath of Unleavened Bread, as the Pharisees, modern Judaism and Messianics contend, First Sheaf would *always* be on 16 *Aviv* and *Shavu'ot* would *always* be on 6 *Sivan*. Two days, two dates, very simple, *but we never see them in Scripture*, yet God gives us the dates for all the other Feasts. Unless one is ready to say that God forgot to give the dates, or that He is intentionally trying to be deceptive, one is left with the fact that God didn't give the dates because the dates for both days couldn't be given, as they change every year depending on what *day* of the week the Passover lamb was slain (or the night the Passover meal was eaten; 14 and 15 *Aviv* respectively):

1. If 14 *Aviv*, the Passover, when the sacrifice of the lamb took place, fell on a **Sunday** at sunset<sup>24</sup> then the Feast of Unleavened Bread, 15 *Aviv*, would begin at darkness that night and the lamb would be eaten Sunday night. The date for the following Sunday, the day *after* the seventh day (weekly) Sabbath, would be **21 Aviv**. This would be both First Sheaf and the concluding annual seventh day Sabbath of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the *last day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread*. Fifty days later would be *Shavu'ot* on day 11 of the third biblical month.
2. If 14 *Aviv*, the Passover, when the sacrifice of the lamb took place, fell on a **Monday** at sunset then the Feast of Unleavened Bread, 15 *Aviv*, would begin at darkness Monday night and the lamb would be eaten on Monday night. The date for the following Sunday, the day *after* the seventh day (weekly) Sabbath would be **20 Aviv**. This would be First Sheaf that year. Fifty days later would be *Shavu'ot* on day 10 of the third biblical month.
3. Simply put:
  1. If the Passover meal is eaten on Tues nite (15 *Aviv*), First Sheaf is on Sunday, 19 *Aviv*. Fifty days later would be *Shavu'ot* on day 9 of the third biblical month.
  2. If the Passover meal is eaten on Wed nite (15 *Aviv*), First Sheaf is on Sunday, 18 *Aviv*. Fifty days later would be *Shavu'ot* on day 8 of the third biblical month.
  3. If the Passover meal is eaten on Thurs nite (15 *Aviv*), First Sheaf is on Sunday, 17 *Aviv*. Fifty days later would be *Shavu'ot* on day 7 of the third biblical month.
  4. If the Passover meal is eaten on Friday nite (15 *Aviv*), First Sheaf is on Sunday, 16 *Aviv*.<sup>25</sup> Fifty

---

<sup>24</sup> I have used sunset as the time when the lambs would have been sacrificed, and this would be the approximate time when Israel would have sacrificed them at the First Passover in Egypt. The Scriptures say that the sacrifice was to take place, literally, 'between the two evenings' ('twilight;' Ex. 12:6). This is between sunset and dusk.

<sup>25</sup> A Friday night Passover meal is the only time when the two different interpretations of the Sadducees and the Pharisees, dovetail. 16 *Aviv* (Pharisee) would be that Sunday, and that Sunday would also be 'the day *after* the weekly seventh day Sabbath' (Sadducee). It seems that Joshua, when he brought the Sons of Israel into the Promised Land, celebrated that first Passover meal in Canaan on a Friday night, with First Sheaf on Sunday. This would account for the Scriptures stating that Israel kept the Passover (sacrifice) on the 14th day and that they 'ate of the produce of the land *on the day after* the Passover' (i.e. the day after they ate of the Passover meal, the first day of *Matza*; 16 *Aviv*)...and the Manna ceased the day after they had eaten of the produce of the land (Monday, 17 *Aviv*; Joshua 5:10-12). For Israel to eat of the produce of the land on the day after 16 *Aviv* means that the Passover meal was eaten on Friday night and First Sheaf was offered up on Sunday, for it states that one wasn't to eat of the new barley crop until the first sheaf had been dedicated to Yahveh (Lev. 23:10-14).

Some proponents of the Pharisaic interpretation point to Joshua 5:10-12 to try and prove that the Pharisaic-Rabbinic concept is right, but all it proves is that the Passover lamb was slain on Friday at sunset and Israel ate the meal on Friday night (Sabbath evening). That year the Pharisaic interpretation coincided with the the Sadducean understanding. If the Passover Meal is on any other night (other than Friday night) the two concepts separate. Only a Friday night Passover meal brings the two concepts together, but the main point is that God didn't give the dates for either First Sheaf or *Shavu'ot*, yet He gave the dates for all the other feasts. The Rabbis and Messianics are wrong.

days later would be *Shavu'ot* on day 6 of the third biblical month.

5. If the Passover meal is eaten on Saturday nite (15 *Aviv*), First Sheaf falls outside the seven days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and on Sunday, 22 *Aviv*.<sup>26</sup> Fifty days later would be *Shavu'ot* on day 12 of the third biblical month.

In 2015 First Sheaf fell outside the Feast of Unleavened Bread. First Sheaf was on Sunday, the day after the Feast of Unleavened Bread ended. This happened because the Passover ceremonial meal was on Saturday night (April 4, 2015). This meant that the 7th day Sabbath of Passover Week was the last day of the Feast and that First Sheaf would be one day after that, when the Feast of Unleavened Bread had already ended on Saturday night, April 11, 2015. First Sheaf is always the day *after* the weekly 7th day Sabbath *within* Passover Week, except when the Passover meal falls on Saturday night.<sup>27</sup>

Depending on what week night the Passover meal is eaten determines the actual Sunday *date* for First Sheaf in Tabernacle and Temple times. Consequently, *Shavu'ot* 50 days later, will always have a different date every year too. Because of this 'floating date' God couldn't give dates for either First Sheaf or *Shavu'ot*. This reveals that the 'day after the Sabbath' (Lev. 23:11, 15-16) is the day after the weekly 7th day Sabbath in Passover Week.

First Sheaf *cannot* be the day after the first annual Sabbath of Unleavened Bread, as the Rabbis and Messianics claim. If it was, First Sheaf would *always* be on 16 *Aviv/Nisan*, and 50 days later *Shavu'ot* would

---

<sup>26</sup> If the Passover meal is eaten on Saturday nite, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, 15 *Aviv*, begins at darkness on Saturday night and First Sheaf will be on the Sunday outside of the Feast's 7 days. The weekly 7th day Sabbath of the Feast will also be the last day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread—the 7th day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. This is the only time when First Sheaf falls *outside* the seven days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. One has to wait a week until the weekly 7th day Sabbath comes *within* the Feast of Unleavened and so, First Sheaf actually takes place the day *after* the Feast ends on Sat. nite, which means that First Sheaf is on Sunday, 22 *Aviv*.

Some Christians teach that First Sheaf should be offered on the Sunday that coincides with the annual Sabbath of the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, but this cannot be because the day before, which is the weekly 7th day Sabbath is not part of the Feast of Unleavened Bread Week and that Sunday is only 15 *Aviv*. Those Christians don't want First Sheaf to fall *after* the Feast of Unleavened Bread is over, and so they disregard Scripture, which says First Sheaf must be the day *after* the weekly 7th day Sabbath within Passover Week. Their teaching is both biblically wrong, as First Sheaf must take place *after* the weekly Sabbath within Passover Week, and theologically wrong. Yeshua makes us acceptable to God *when* He ascended, not on the day He was sacrificed. The year that Yeshua died the Passover meal (15 *Aviv*) was eaten on a Wednesday night, and He was crucified on a Thursday (still 15 *Aviv*). Two days later the weekly 7th day Sabbath within Passover Week came, and the next day, First Sheaf, was when He rose from the dead. First Sheaf is when we became acceptable to God the Father, not the day of His sacrifice, which also has incredible significance. In other words, those who trample over God's instruction in Leviticus as to when First Sheaf should be the day *after* the weekly 7th day Sabbath within Passover Week, symbolically have the death, resurrection and ascension occurring on the same day (Sunday, 15 *Aviv*). God though, doesn't make any provision nor exception in Scripture for the Passover meal being eaten on Saturday night, saying that First Sheaf should then be on the next day, Sunday, which would coincide with the first day of the Feast of *Matza*, picturing the death of Yeshua. God speaks of it being *after* the 7th day Sabbath of Passover Week: "He shall wave the sheaf before Yahveh, *to be accepted on your behalf*, on the day *after* the Sabbath the High Priest shall wave it. ...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. Count fifty days to the day *after* the seventh Sabbath. Then you shall offer a new grain offering to Yahveh" (Leviticus 23:11, 15-16).

There isn't any biblical reason why First Sheaf cannot fall on the Sunday after the last day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The last day of the Feast would be both the seventh day weekly Sabbath and the second annual Sabbath of the Feast itself, closing out the Feast. The Feast of *Matza* would end on Saturday night at dark and the next day, Sunday, would be the day after the 7th day Sabbath within Passover Week, 22 *Aviv*, when First Sheaf would take place. Israel came out of Egypt the day when the lamb was eaten (15 *Aviv*), and we came out of the Darkness of Satan's Kingdom when Yeshua died, but we only became *acceptable* to God when Yeshua ascended, the day after the weekly 7th day Sabbath of Passover Week, which that year would have been 18 *Aviv*.

<sup>27</sup> The Passover meal also fell on a Saturday night, April 20, 2019 and April 16, 2022.



always be 6 Sivan. These two days though, are *not* seen in Leviticus 23, *contrary to every other feast* in Leviticus having their dates. God couldn't give the dates for First Sheaf and *Shavu'ot* because they're 'floating dates,' changing every year. That's how we know the ancient Sadducees were right about the Sabbath in question and the Pharisees, Rabbis and Messianics today are wrong.

Some Christians who keep the Feasts think that First Sheaf should always fall within the week of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, but obviously when the Passover meal is on a Saturday night it cannot happen. The only 7th day Sabbath *during* that week of Unleavened Bread is the last day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Hence, the reason why First Sheaf falls on the Sunday after the Feast *ends* that year.

Alfred Edersheim, a 19th century Jew who became the world's leading authority on Jesus and Talmud, affirms that the Sadducees were right and the Pharisees were wrong in when the counting of the Omer was to begin. He wrote,

“the Sadducees would have interpreted Lev. 23:11, 15, 16 as meaning that the wave-sheaf (or rather the *Omer*) was to be offered on ‘the morrow after the *weekly* Sabbath...which would have brought the Feast of Pentecost always on a Sunday (Lev. 23:15, 16); while the Pharisees understood the term ‘Sabbath’ of the festive Paschal day”<sup>28</sup> or the day after the Passover meal was eaten; always 16 Aviv.

## TALMUD—CAN WE TRUST IT?

Most scholars today, both Jewish and non-Jewish, agree that Second Temple practices were in the hands of the Levitical Priests. Things like *when* First Sheaf, and therefore, *Shavu'ot* occurred, followed the Sadducean understanding, and not that of the Pharisees. This disagrees with the Talmud, but Jacob Neusner, ‘an internationally recognized authority on the Talmud and a conservative Jewish scholar,’<sup>29</sup> states that the Talmudic writings which refer to the Second Temple period are, “Sayings and stories...*made up* and attributed to prior times or authorities.”<sup>30</sup>

Neusner teaches that historical facts didn't get in the way of (the Pharisees and Rabbis) *rewriting* what actually had transpired during the Second Temple period and after the Second Temple was destroyed, and that there was no ‘one around to argue with’ the Pharisees who could stop them from this:

“Ample evidence, in virtually every document of rabbinic literature, sustains the proposition that it was quite common for sages to *make up sayings and stories* and attribute the sayings to, or tell stories about, other prior authorities. *Considerations of historical fact did not impede the search for religious truth: the norms of belief and behavior.* That is why, if all we want are historical facts, we *cannot* believe everything we read except as evidence of *what was in the mind of the person who wrote up the passage*: opinion held at the time of the closure of a document.”<sup>31</sup>

David Kraemer, a Jewish professor at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America in New York City, wrote that it is *impossible* to determine from the Talmud what actually went on during the Second Temple period:<sup>32</sup>

---

<sup>28</sup> Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus The Messiah* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Pub., 2000; Accordance Bible Software), paragraph 1,414, note 59: Men. 10:3; 65a; Chag. 2:4.

<sup>29</sup> See Herb Solinsky, [The Hail Plague and the First Biblical Month](#), p. 41.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid. Jacob Neusner, *Rabbinic Literature & the New Testament* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1994), p. 13.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid. Neusner, *Rabbinic Literature & the New Testament*, p. 68.

“Scholars, mostly Jewish, but also non-Jewish, have been using Rabbinic sources for historical study for well over a century. These studies...have been, almost without exception, what Jacob Neusner terms ‘gullible.’ They have assumed, in other words, that the Rabbinic record can, more or less, be taken at its word and that, once one has determined the ‘original version’ of a teaching and discounted obvious fabulous material” (meaning gross exaggerations of the Rabbis), “one may accept that teaching as historically reliable.”

“By this stage in the development of Judaic scholarship, *the folly of these earlier habits is broadly recognized*. Neusner and others have pointed to a variety of crucial and even fatal flaws in the approach just described, and there is hardly a scholar writing today about the history of Jews in late antiquity who does not at least pay lip service...to the much repeated critique...Can we believe Rabbinic attributions for purposes of dating a tradition? Why should we believe what any given tradition reports? and so forth...I will conclude that *these obstacles are effectively insurmountable*, and that most sorts of political, social, or religious histories *cannot be constructed on the basis of Rabbinic testimony*.”<sup>33</sup>

William Green confirms that all the Feast dates were in the hands of the Aaronic Priesthood, not the Pharisees:

“*Before the fall of the Jerusalem temple in AD 70, the priests proclaimed the sacred times of the year*. In the aftermath of the temple’s destruction, the new rabbinic movement appropriated that priestly task to itself.”<sup>34</sup>

Neusner affirms Green and declares:

“The Pharisees before 70 *did not* control the Temple and *did not* make laws to govern its cult (the Levitical priesthood). But afterward, they made plans for the conduct of the Temple when it would be restored.”<sup>35</sup>

What this means is that what the Talmud says about First Sheaf taking place on 16 *Aviv* is not to be taken as historical or factual. It’s the product of deceitful Rabbinic minds who rewrote the history and practices of the Second Temple period to suit *their* teachings and religious practices. The Sadducean priests controlled the Temple in the days of the Apostles and Yeshua celebrated First Sheaf and *Shavu’ot* according to the Sadducean dating. Their concept is the biblical model. In the days of Messiah Yeshua First Sheaf and *Shavu’ot* were always on Sundays. This means that *Shavu’ot* of Acts Two happened on a Sunday. The Apostles of the Lord were drenched in the Holy Spirit on the annual Jewish feast of *Shavu’ot*, also known as Pentecost.<sup>36</sup>

Today, Judaism, which is a direct linear offshoot of the Pharisees, is wrong on their dating for First Sheaf and *Shavu’ot*, and so too are all the Messianic believers who blindly follow the Rabbis and their Hillel calendar and dating for those two days. The Lord warned us not to follow Pharisaic teaching when He said to His Apostles:

“Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees’...‘How is it you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread?!—but to beware of

---

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., pp. 41-42.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 42. David Kraemer, *Rabbinic Sources for Historical Study, Judaism in Late Antiquity*, part 3, volume 1, (edited by Jacob Neusner and Alan J. Avery-Peck. Leiden: Brill, 1999), p. 201.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid. William Scott Green, *Storytelling and Holy Man, Take Judaism, for Example* (edited by Jacob Neusner. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1983), pp. 35-36.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid. Jacob Neusner, *In Search of Talmudic Biography* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1984), p. 81.

<sup>36</sup> See [Pentecost—Shavu’ot](#), for why God chose it to immerse Israel in the Holy Spirit.

the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.’ Then they understood that He did not tell them to beware of the leaven of bread, *but of the teachings of the Pharisees and the Sadducees.*”<sup>37</sup> (Mt. 16:6, 11-12)

## CONCLUSION

First Sheaf is the day when a handful of the new spring barley crop would be offered up to God in thanksgiving by the High Priest of Israel, for all the spring crops (and the coming summer and fall harvest). The High Priest would have finely ground barley grain, with oil and incense, in a quantity known as an *omer* (about a dry quart or liter). He would offer a prayer to Yahveh, thanking Him for all that God had done for Israel, in bringing her into, and giving her the land of Canaan, the land that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had wandered over, and which God had promised to them and their descendents. The High Priest would thank Yahveh for the many people of Israel, and for supplying Israel with food, symbolized in the offering up of the First Sheaf to God who had brought it up from the land. Israel could not eat of the new grain until the High Priest had offered up a handful of the *omer*. Then Israel became acceptable to God. It was only after Yeshua ascended to God the Father that His followers could eat of Him and become acceptable to the Father.

Christians have no understanding of this, nor of course, practice it, but First Sheaf, as Paul the Apostle clearly states, refers to Messiah Yeshua as the first of the dead to rise, never to die again, glorified (1st Corinthians 15:12-24f.). It is this ceremony that the Church should be celebrating in honor of Messiah’s resurrection, not Easter Sunday or ‘Resurrection Day,’ which most often doesn’t even fall on the correct Sunday of the resurrection nor does it have anything to do with the resurrection because the Church doesn’t use the biblical calendar. Jesus is called the (Passover) Lamb of God (Jn. 1:29), not the chocolate Easter bunny.

The problem with the Pharisaic/Rabbinic/Messianic interpretation of *when* First Sheaf, and therefore, *Shavu’ot*, 50 days later, would be celebrated centers around their incorrect interpretation of which Sabbath God meant when He said, the day *after* the Sabbath, for when the First Sheaf is to be offered. The Pharisees and Rabbis, etc., interpret that Sabbath to be the first annual Sabbath of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which is always 16 *Aviv*, and therefore, always produces the date 6 *Sivan* for *Shavu’ot*. This is easily seen as wrong because God never gives those dates as they’re ‘floating dates,’ changing every year. That’s how we know the ancient Sadducees were right and the Pharisees (Rabbis and Messianics today) are wrong for their dating of First Sheaf and *Shavu’ot*.

Seeking to justify the keeping of the Pharisaic/Rabbinic/Messianic concept, many turn to the Talmud, but the Talmud is not an honest broker in this area. What is in the Talmud concerning Second Temple practices is not what actually transpired during Second Temple times. The Rabbis literally rewrote history according to how they wanted it to be, and in that, almost two millennia of Jews, and some Christians and Messianics who follow the Rabbis today, have been deceived and celebrate First Sheaf and *Shavuot* on the wrong dates.

First Sheaf is always on the Sunday within Passover Week, unless the Passover meal is on a Saturday night. Then First Sheaf falls on the Sunday after the last day of the Feast, which is the 7th day Sabbath and also the 2nd annual Sabbath of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

First Sheaf is not a holy day (unless it coincides with the seventh day annual Sabbath of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. It should, though, now that we know the significance of it, be celebrated as a time of

---

<sup>37</sup> Some Sadducean teachings we shouldn’t follow are their belief that there was no afterlife nor angels nor the resurrection of the dead (cf. Acts 23:8).

feasting and thanksgiving unto the Father for keeping His promise to Israel, and unto the Son who has made us acceptable in His Father's eye. Glory to the Passover Lamb who was slain and lives forever! What a mighty King we serve!<sup>38</sup>

---

<sup>38</sup> Revised on Saturday, June 4, 2022.