

Two Loaves

“A Firstfruits Offering to YAHUAH [the LORD]”

I. SCRIPTURE

Leviticus 23:15-17 – **“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 YAHUAH [the LORD]. You shall bring from your dwellings two wave loaves of two-tenths of an ephah. They shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven. They are the firstfruits to YAHUAH [the LORD].”**

II. PENTACOST – 5 WEEKS

In case you aren't aware dear family and friends, many churches are celebrating “Pentecost” this weekend. The term Pentecost comes from the Greek word meaning "fiftieth". It refers to the festival celebrated on the fiftieth day after Passover, also known as the "Feast of Weeks" and the "Feast of 50 days". You'll notice in today's scripture, that there is the mention of seven Sabbaths [or seven (7) weeks (of 7 days), or forty-nine (49)] and also the mention of fifty (50) days that are to be counted starting after the first Sabbath.

The original Jewish name for Pentecost is “Shavuot”.

III. SHAVUOT – THE FEAST OF “WEEKS”

Shavuot (or Pentecost in English) is known as the Feast of Weeks. It is the fourth (4th) of seven (7) feasts of YAHUAH [the LORD] listed in Leviticus 23. The first festival, not coincidentally, is the weekly (7th day) Shabbat (Sabbath):

“And YAHUAH [the LORD] spoke to Moses, saying, ‘Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: “The feasts of YAHUAH [the LORD], which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, these are My feasts. The Sabbath “Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, a holy convocation. You shall do no work on it; it is the Sabbath of YAHUAH [the LORD] in all your dwellings.””’ (Leviticus 23:1-3)

So brothers and sisters, if you and I are a “called out” assembly of believers that are here today because of our belief in the first weekly 7th-day Sabbath feast of YAHUAH [the LORD], then you’d think that we should also have a understanding of the fourth (4th) feast of YAHUAH [the LORD]. Right?

The word Shavuot means "weeks" and it marks the conclusion of the Counting of the Omer. An “omer” is an “sacrifice”, or “offering”, represented in this case as an “omer” of grain presented as an offering on the second day of Passover... and thus “Shavuot” is the period of 49 days between the second day of Passover and Shavuot (Pentacost).

The Shavuot date, then, is directly linked to that of Passover: the seven-week Counting of the Omer, beginning on the second day of Passover, that is immediately followed by Shavuot. This counting of days and weeks is understood to express anticipation and desire for the giving of the Torah, which was fifty (50) after the Passover of the people of Israel: who were freed from their bondage to Pharaoh. So, on Shavuot, they were given the Torah and became a nation committed to serving God.

IV. GFAN – GOSPEL FAN

(Mental break: discuss the new in-process “GFAN” URL... “Fan of the Gospel” or “Gospel Fan” and new telephone number.)

And speaking of Gospel for All Nations as GFAN, or a Fan of The Gospel, you should also already know that our “called out” body’s motto is “To The End of The Age”... which comes from YAHUSHA [Jesus]’s last words (in red-letters) recorded in Matthew : **“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of *all nations*, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the RUACH HA’QODESH [Holy Spirit], teaching them to observe *all that I have commanded you*. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age”** (Matthew 28:17b-20).

V. GFAN – THE 49 AND 50-DAY CALCULATION

I assume that each of you remembers that our local US GFAN body celebrated Passover, or what we now what we in the years of our Lord lovingly refer to as “YAHUSHA [Jesus]”’s [or [“the LORD]”’s Supper. This year, per the Jewish calendar, at sundown Wednesday, April 8, we celebrated this solemn second (2nd) of seven (7) feasts of feast YAHUAH [the LORD] (also listed in Leviticus 23).

After personal prayer and fasting, and during a of COVID-19 “stay-at-home” period of time, I was very pleased that every single “baptized” *one* of our local previously regularly-attending body of believers attended this significant event. As so now, as we count the seven (7) weeks, or 49 days from the second day after YAHUSHA [the LORD]’s Supper we held on April 8, then we come to yesterday: May 28, the GFAN body’s 2020 Shavuot feast.

As we now ponder what all this means to each one of us, please keep in mind what might be the significance of these things to you personally, and our body:

Consider now:

- *Our* mission to “go” and “make disciples of *all nations*” (Matthew 28:19).
- *Our* mission of “baptizing *them* in the name of the Father [YAHUAH], and of the Son [YAHUSHA], and of the RUACH HA’QODESH [Holy Spirit]” (Matthew 28:19).
- *Our* mission of “teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you”, [i.e. My commandments] (Matthew 28:20).
- The worldwide COVID-19 pestilence (epidemic)
- *Our* local sickness leading up to April 8 (Passover): a time of learning for our local body?
- *Our* April 8 (Passover): the end of our personal sickness and a peak in COVID-19 cases.
- *Our* Friday May 29 (Shavuot) feast, followed by the 7th Day Shabbat (Sabbath) feast as a time of providing *your* “new grain offering to YAHUAH [the LORD]” (Leviticus 23:15)…, and bringing *your* two (2) wave loaves of fine leavened bread as a “firstfruits” (offering) to YAHUAH [the LORD]” (Leviticus 23:17).
- *Your* Post COVID-19 reemergence “from *your dwellings*” (Leviticus 23:17).

VI. THE MEANING OF SHAVUOT

Shavuot has a double significance, agricultural and spiritual.

1. Agriculturally it marks the all-important wheat harvest in the Land of Israel (Exodus 34:22), and
2. Spiritually it commemorates the anniversary of the day when YAHUAH [God] gave the Torah to the nation of Israel assembled at Mount Sinai.

A. FIRST SHAVUOT TRADITION

Shavuot was not the only holiday of firstfruits. It eventually became known as the anniversary of the giving of the Torah on Mt. Sinai. There was a popular legend that before YAHUAH [God] gave the Torah to Israel, He first offered it to the other nations of the world in their own languages. But for various reasons, they all declined to receive the Torah, except for Israel who eagerly received it.

The story recounted in Acts 2 tells how the disciples of YAHUSHA [Jesus] were gathered in Jerusalem when a sound like wind came through their house, while something looking like tongues of fire appeared over them. As the disciples began to speak: “now there were dwelling [that is, staying there for the holiday—Shavuot, or Pentecost] in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. And they were amazed and astonished, saying, ‘are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians—we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God. And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, ‘What does this mean?’” (Acts 2:5-12)

If the legend about the giving of the Torah was known in the first century, it must have made many people think the legend was coming to life. After all, the wind-like sound and the tongues of fire were reminiscent of the thunder and lightning that accompanied the giving of the Torah at Mt. Sinai. Some may have thought, could God be speaking in a similar way once again—especially on the anniversary of the proclamation of the Torah to Israel?

B. SECOND SHAVUOT TRADITION

King David was born and also died on Shavuot. Peter, one of the apostles of Jesus, quotes from Psalm 16 saying:

“Brothers, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. But he was a prophet and knew that YAHUAH [God] had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. Seeing what was ahead, he spoke [in Psalm 16] of

the resurrection of the Messiah, that He was not abandoned to the grave, nor did His body see decay. [But] YAHUAH [God] has raised this YAHUSHA [Jesus] to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact (Acts 2:29-32).

If this tradition was in place in the first century, Peter was taking what was on the minds of many people to make his point about the Messiah. This is always the thrust of the New Testament: that YAHUSHA [Jesus] is intimately connected with the hopes, dreams and traditions of the Jewish people.

C. YAHUSHA [Jesus]'s PLACE IN SHAVUOT

During this festival, 50 days after Passover, when the people thanked YAHUAH [God] for giving them grain and for giving them His law, YAHUAH [the LORD] gave the RUACH [Spirit] of life (Acts 2:1-4). YAHUSHA [Jesus] rose from the dead the first day after SHABBAT [the Sabbath] during Passover (Matthew 28:1-10).

The firstfruits offered to YAHUAH [the LORD] in ancient times anticipated the fuller harvest to come. The resurrection of YAHUSHA [Jesus] anticipates the bodily resurrection of His people first promised under the old covenant (Job 19:25-27) and in the new covenant (1 Corinthians 15:20-23): “but now MESSIAH [Christ] is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep ... for as in Adam all die, even so in MESSIAH [Christ] all shall be made alive” So, YAHUSHA [Jesus] is the firstfruits of those who will be raised from the dead and His resurrection fulfilled the Feast of Firstfruits.

VII. THE IMPORTANCE OF SHAVUOT FOR THE BODY OF YAHUSHA [Jesus]

For believers in Yeshua, Shavuot becomes an archetype of what happened seven (7) weeks after the crucifixion and resurrection of YAHUSHA [Jesus].

Because of the great power displayed upon The Initial call-out assembly, the Jewish body who were sequestered (in the upper room, at Pentecost... some regard this day as celebrating the advent of the RUACH HA'QODESH [Holy Spirit]. But I'm not so sure that this is quite the case. We read in John 20:22 that the risen MESSIAH [Christ] breathed on each of the disciples and filled them with the RUACH HA'QODESH [Holy Spirit] weeks before Pentecost! So wouldn't this event of the upper-room Pentecost really be the “birthday” of the Church—the welding together of RUACH [Spirit]-filled disciples into one organism—the living body of MESSIAH [Christ]?

At Pentecost, the RUACH HA'QODESH [Holy Spirit] moved upon each of the disciples to bring about the united story of the Body, the Church. Just as the giving of the Law at Sinai formed the constitution of the spiritual commonwealth of Israel, so the visible manifestation of the RUACH HA'QODESH [Holy Spirit] upon the disciples signaled the constitution of the spiritual community of faith in YAHUSHA [Jesus].

In the first case, Israel was brought together by the law (rules of constitution): The Law. But in the latter case, believers were brought together not by rules – The Law... but by a love of The Law, that could only be brought about by the RUACH HA'QODESH [Holy Spirit]... Who could be received by them, and was received by them... *because* each one of them had sequestered themselves – “all together in one place” (Acts 2:1)... and each and every one of them collectively... so that “all (100%) continued with one accord in prayer and supplication” (Acts 1:14)... so that the result was that...

VIII. ... in that upper room, the “early” rain – this early outpouring of the RUACH HA'QODESH [Holy Spirit] – was given to prepare the ground, to soften the ground for the gospel seed that was to be planted... to be sown by them... going out into all the world: to Jerusalem, to Judea, to Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the earth... for the purpose of teaching of YAHUAH [God]’s Kingdom, and making disciples of YAHUSHA HA'MASHIACH [Jesus Christ] (reference prior week’s “The Rain” presentation).

The entire spring religious season of Israel, from Passover to Pentecost, speaks of YAHUAH [God]’s plan to harvest a holy people for Himself.

First, YAHUSHA [Jesus] died as the perfect, sinless sacrifice. Then, He arose and became the firstfruits from the dead as described by the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:20.

Seven (7) weeks after the resurrection, the dynamic manifestation of the RUACH HA'QODESH [Holy Spirit] among the early Jewish believers became the catalyst for many to put their faith in YAHUAH [God]’s Son, as the Messiah [Christ].

And, the Jewish pilgrims at Jerusalem who heard and received the good news of salvation joyfully brought it back to their native lands... where it was received by the Gentiles as well as by other Jews, and the Body, the Church became established abroad.

IX. THE TWO LOAVES

Just as that original Messianic Jewish body in the upper room were meant to testify to the wider Jewish and Gentile communities at home (Jerusalem) and abroad – to Jerusalem, to Judea, to Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the earth... nowadays the Messianic bodies, including the GFAN body, are meant to testify to **“all nations (that includes the Jewish community), baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the RUACH HA’QODESH [Holy Spirit], teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you,”** including His Law given at Mt Sinai with help from the newly poured-out RUACH [Spirit].

To understand this issue better, let’s look again at today’s scripture. In it, we read that YAHUAH [God] required us to bring an unusual offering at Shavuot. He tells us: **“You shall bring from your dwellings two wave loaves of two-tenths of an ephah. They shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven. They are the firstfruits to YAHUAH [the LORD]”**.

While the amount of flour (“two tenths of an ephah”) is mentioned for other Feast days (for example, for Passover in Leviticus 23:13), this issue of two (2) loaves is something recorded only and distinctly on Shavuot. So, we ought to ask: why two (2) loaves?

The number “two” became a consistent picture for witness in the Scriptures; namely, it took two (2) witnesses for an acceptable court testimony (Deuteronomy 19:15). This principle finds a variety of applications within the New Covenant. Congregations are not to allow an accusation to be made against an elder unless there are at least two (2) witnesses (1 Timothy 5:19). Messiah sent out His disciples two (2) at a time (Mark 6:7). There will be two (2) witnesses against the anti-Messiah (Revelation 11:3-11). Also, in marriage there needs to be agreement between both spouses for prayer to be accepted by YAHUAH [God] (1 Peter 3:7). Without two (2) witnesses, we have merely opinions. So...

...what does all of this have to do with the two (2) loaves? Note that the offering of the loaves accompanied several other sacrifices, including a peace offering (Leviticus 23:19). This is crucial. When the Apostle Paul speaks to Gentiles at Ephesus, commenting on this offering, he say “but now in Messiah YAHUSHA [Jesus] you who are far off have been brought near by the blood of Messiah. For He Himself is our peace, who made both into one and broke down

the barrier of the dividing wall ... so that in Himself He might make the two (2) into one (1) new man, thus establishing peace” (Ephesians 2:13-15).

[Mention of the secondary outpouring of the early rain on Cornelius (a centurion, a Gentile in Acts 10, who sends a delegation to Peter, while Peter is experiencing a dream (three times) of unclean animals coming down from heaven, that he is told to eat... where ultimately Cornelius and his Gentile household received the rain of the RUACH HA'QODESH [Holy Spirit] (Acts 10:45-46) as Peter has received earlier did in the upper room.)

X. OUR MISSION: EACH OF YOU AND ME

Today, on this special 2020 4th “Shavuot” feast of YAHUAH [the LORD]... today, on this special 2020 1st 7th—day “Shabbat” feast of YAHUAH [the LORD]...

... we need to know that MESSIAH [Christ] is our peace offering. We need to know that it is only through Him... with the help of the RUACH HA'QODESH [Holy Spirit] that both YAHUSHA [Jesus] and His Father YAHUAH [God] are so “jealous” that we should accept and possess instead of our own ruach [spirit]... that the two (2) loaves... the Jews and Gentiles together... will become the two (2) witnesses, who will bear the reality, the truth of a totally “united” body of MESSIAH [Christ]: a “Church” that can only be found in the one and only YAHUSHA HA'MASHIACH [Jesus Christ), the cornerstone and founder of our faith.

And since YAHUAH [God] desires now that we reach the whole world with His Gospel, through our testimony of MESSIAH [Christ], that we are here at this time and at this place for a special purpose: to “go”... “go” to “*all nations*”... as One Body... united... regardless of whether we are Jews or Gentile... because we serving the same one (1) true YAHUAH [God]. Amen? Yes! Today you and I can be part of the unified latter-day Church... and energizing by the latter rain of YAHUAH [God]... where we are energized by the power and unity of the one God YAHUAH, but comprised of the three (3): “*the Father and of the Son and of the RUACH HA'QODESH [Holy Spirit]*”. So especially today, let’s keep our “children of the King” status in mine as we consider our purpose going forward:

- To “go” and “*make disciples of all nations*” (Matthew 28:19),
- To “*baptize them in the name of the Father [YAHUAH], and of the Son [YAHUSHA], and of the RUACH HA'QODESH [Holy Spirit]*” (Matthew 28:19),

- and to **“teaching them to observe** (all the law, as it was received at Mt Sinai,) ***all that I have commanded you.*** (Matthew 28:20).

Yes, as we on this special first “7th Day Shabbat (Sabbath)” feast...
 ... as we emerge post COVID-19 “from our dwelling” (Leviticus 23:17), and
 providing *our* “new grain offering to YAHUAH [the LORD]” (Leviticus 23:15)...

...it is really ourselves that we are offering to Him as our “new grain offering”.
 So that through His latter rain, we can fulfill our mission of “bringing *our* two (2)
 wave loaves of fine leavened bread as a “firstfruits” (offering) to Him: YAHUAH
 [the LORD]” (Leviticus 23:17).

XI. CONCLUSION

Today in conclusion, I would have you supplicate, and profess with me that...
 although you and I are separate parts of His chosen body, we are nevertheless
 united through the RUACH HA’QODESH [Holy Spirit]... and are a part of the
 YAHUAH [God]’s household:... the Kingdom of YAHUAH [God]... because you
 and I have both “built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets... and
 profess that Messiah [Jesus] Himself is the Corner Stone, in whom our whole
 body is fit together... and we are growing into a holy temple in YAHUAH [the
 Lord]... in whom we are being built together into a dwelling of YAHUAH [God]
 through the indwelling RUACH [Spirit]. (Ephesians 2:19-22).

I pray that YAHUAH [God] blesses and leads each of you into the path that He
 has for you going from today forward. Amen.

References & Credits:

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