

Counting the Omer



What is the Omer?

The "Omer" (literally, "sheaf") was grain from the first harvested barley that was brought to the Temple as a first fruits offering. The counting begins on the day after the Sabbath during Passover week when the first omer of barley was harvested and brought to the Temple.

When to count the Omer:

Leviticus 23:5-11 In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month in the evening, is the LORD's Passover. On the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread to the LORD. Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. In the first day you shall have a holy convocation. You shall do no regular work. But you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD seven days. In the seventh day is a holy convocation: you shall do no regular work." The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to the children of Israel, and tell them, 'When you have come into the land which I give to you, and shall reap its the harvest, then you shall bring the sheaf of the first fruits of your harvest to the priest: and he shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted for you. **On the next day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it.**

Leviticus 23:15,16 "You shall count from the next day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven Sabbaths shall be completed: even to the next day after the seventh Sabbath you shall number fifty days; and you shall offer a new meal offering to the LORD.

The question is, does the count always begin on the 16th of Nisan, the day after the 15th, which is a Sabbath being the first day of the feast of Unleavened Bread or does it always begin on the first day of the week after the 7th day Sabbath of Passover week? If it always begins on Nisan 16 then Shavuot will always be on Sivan 6. If the feast of firstfruits always begins on the first day of the week, the day after the 7th day Sabbath then there will never be a set date for firstfruits or Shavuot. Amazingly, nowhere in the Scriptures does it ever give a date for firstfruits or Shavuot suggesting that there never was a set date like there is for every other feast given in Scripture. From a Messianic point of view you can never get 3 days and 3 nights from 3pm on 14th of Nisan to the morning of the 16th of

Nisan. Since the 14th of Nisan moves during the days of the week over the years Messiah had to die in a year where the 14th of Nisan had to fall on a Wednesday. This also is a direct connection to the original Exodus when Nisan 14 fell on a Wednesday. Therefore the counting of the Omer always begins on the first day of the week after Passover.

Why Count the Omer for 49 days?

God commanded it:

Leviticus 23:15,16 And you shall count to you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf (Omer) of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete: Even to the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall you number fifty days;

The Torah commands that during this time each year we count 49 days or 7 weeks from the day after the Sabbath of Passover week. The 50th day is the Feast of Shavuot, which means "weeks" from the counting of the 7 weeks. In Christianity is known as the Feast of Pentecost! The first Pentecost was actually celebrated every year for 1,500 years before the book of Acts. Pentecost celebrates the giving of the Torah on Mt Sinai. To this day the Jewish people still keep the Feast of Pentecost every year.

The foremost reason to obey the LORD is that the count demonstrates our thrill for the impending occasion of receiving the Torah, God's loving instruction. Just as a child often counts the days until the end of school or an upcoming family vacation, we count the days to show our excitement at again receiving the Torah. Counting in anticipation of an exciting event is quite understandable. Also it is not a countdown but a count up as we ascend the mountain of the LORD.

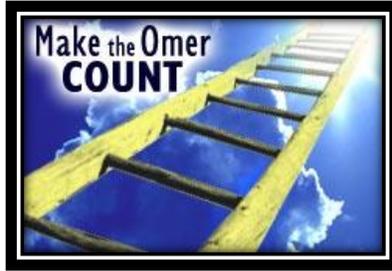
To better understand, we first need to answer a more basic question: Why did God wait 50 days after the Jews left Egypt before giving the Torah? Why didn't He simply give it to them in Egypt, or immediately after their departure?

The answer is that the Jews were not yet spiritually equipped to receive the Torah. For over 200 years, they had been living in an Egyptian society known to be the world center for immorality and vice.

The high-impact adventure of the Exodus — 10 miraculous plagues and the splitting of the Red Sea — launched the Jews into physical freedom. Yet a one-time experience, as powerful as it is, does not permanently change anyone's emotional attitude.

Spiritual growth, like climbing a ladder, must be one step at a time. The growth that occurs during this time is akin to a marathon. We pace ourselves and seek to improve day by day until we reach the day that we again receive the Torah.

But life is not a race to beat the other guy; life is only a race to conquer your inner self. As we climb the ladder, it's more important in which direction we're headed rather than which rung we're on. Don't just count the Omer make the Omer count!



The Master's resurrection makes the counting of the Omer a season of special significance and joy. For his disciples, it is a time to remember the resurrected Yeshua. All of his post-resurrection appearances and ascension fell within the days of the Omer count. He ascended on the 40th day of the counting of the Omer.

How to Count the Omer

The Omer is counted every evening after nightfall.

Before counting though, we stand and say the following blessing:

BA-RUCH A-TAH ADO-NAI E-LO-HE-NU ME-LECH HA-
OLAM ASHER KID-E-SHA-NU BE-MITZ-VO-TAV VETZI-
VA-NU AL SEFI-RAT HA-OMER.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ
בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ עַל סְפִירַת הָעוֹמֵר:

"Blessed are You LORD our God, King of the Universe who has sanctified us with his commandments and commanded us concerning the counting of the Omer.

Today is the ____ day of the Omer."

We add:

Blessed are You, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who has sanctified us by Your commandments and commanded us to be a light to Your nations and has given us Yeshua our Messiah, the light of the world.

Psalm 67 is also recited because it is composed of exactly 49 Hebrew words that correspond to the 49 days of the Omer count. The Psalm is seasonally appropriate because of its harvest motif. It is spiritually appropriate because it speaks clearly of God's salvation (Yeshua) being made known over all the earth.

Psalms 67:1-7 God be merciful to us, and bless us; and cause his face to shine on us; Selah. That your way may be known on earth, your saving health among all nations. Let the people praise you, O God; let all the people praise you. O let the nations be glad and sing for joy: for you shall judge the people righteously, and govern the nations on earth. Selah. Let the people praise you, O God; let all the people praise you. Then shall the earth yield her increase; and God, even our own God, shall bless us. God shall bless us; and all the ends of the earth shall fear him.

I also recommend reading over the time of the count from the following:

Read 8 verses a day from Ps 119, which is about David's love for Torah.

