

Pentecost - - “Dress Rehearsal” for Coming Events

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Summary: We'll cover a lot: The active, daily counting of the Omer up to Pentecost. “Feasts” or Divine Appointments? Many examples to illustrate God’s holydays are “dress rehearsals” of important future events. Events leading to Pentecost. Sheaf or container of flour? The first Pentecost and Wedding Supper with the Eternal God in the Old Testament. Important details about the Feast of Weeks. You’ll probably see Pentecost in new light after this sermon.

Greetings, everyone. As I record this on the Sabbath in May 2009, we are on DAY 36 of the counting of the Omer to Pentecost. As many of you hearing this would know, Pentecost means to “count 50.” I hope you were aware of the count, and actively counting day by day, as we approached the 50th day of Pentecost. Fifty is a very special number to Israel: it’s freedom, it’s the same number as the Jubilee – usually tied to Atonement, but the number 50 is very meaningful.

I think you’re going to like this message. Today, I want to specifically look at the run-up to Pentecost in this sermon, tying it back to Passover, with the many symbols that are used which picture true and stunning past and future events. Some of what I’ll cover was recently new for me, and I pray and hope you’ll gain a stronger appreciation for Pentecost after this sermon. Ideally, one would hear this or study this just before Pentecost. I hope also that each of you hearing or reading this will gain a stronger appreciation for, and devotion to, our Savior, the Messiah.

The coming holyday of God is also called “The Feast of Weeks” – 7 weeks in all, plus the next day = 50; it’s also sometimes called “the Feast of Firstfruits.” We know it’s a 50 day count, but most holyday keepers in the church of God groups just use the “50” to figure out which day on which to observe Pentecost and nothing more. But, we are supposed to be aware each day of the 50 day count where we are in the 50 days. Are we on day 10, 22, 35, or what? What day are we on? It’s an active count, not a passive one. This way, as we understand what the 50th day means, and portends in the future, we’re getting more and more excited about it by the 50th day. But, the way it is for most people, they just show up for Pentecost and it’s just another holyday meeting. It should be much more than that.

So greetings, brothers and sisters in our Master, Yeshua the Messiah – or as most people say, in Jesus Christ. Let me digress for just two minutes about why I sometimes say “Yahweh” as the name of God. I’m not a fanatic in the Sacred Names movement. No, I still use the names and words like “Jesus, Christ, God” and so on – but I am also trying to use the name the Almighty revealed as His personal name: Yahweh. [Note: for full explanation, check out the 2 sermons in late 2011 on the Name of our Creator.] But knowing our Creator is more than just knowing His name. We must be sure we truly know Him and He knows us – as part of His flock.

Anyway, soon the children of the Living God will be worshipping Yahweh on this very special Divine Appointment. I’ve shown many times before how the early Christians kept the holydays. If they hadn’t assembled for Pentecost in Acts 2, they would not have experienced that stunning

miracle of the Holy Spirit and speaking in other unlearned languages. They kept Passover and the days of Unleavened Bread. So, we don't keep Easter, but we do keep God's holydays.

In fact, unless we keep God's holydays, we won't understand the outline of God's plan of salvation for all mankind. Yahweh is not losing the war to Satan. If this time is the only time God is working with people's eternity, then you'd have to say Satan has won, hands down. But, that's not the case.

On this day of Pentecost, the 120 disciples who gathered spoke in other tongues or languages. The King James Version adds the word "unknown" – unknown tongues – but that was not in the original. Those who were present from around the world heard them speaking in their own language, in known tongues. I won't dwell on that aspect of this day today because I will soon record an in-depth sermon on Speaking in Tongues. You should find on this website – www.Lightontherock.org near or after this year's Pentecost. I'm not discussing "Pentecostalism" at all. It's not the same thing described in Acts 2. Most Pentecostals or "charismatics" don't even observe the *Feast* of Pentecost.

Let me give credit where due: some of the material for this sermon came from a DVD called "The Feasts of the Lord" put out by El Shaddai Ministries and pastor Mark Biltz. I am not a part of their church or ministry, but enjoyed this particular DVD and the information it contributed.

Yahweh's holydays are in 2 groupings – the Spring/early summer holydays and the autumn holydays-- tied to the 2 main harvests of Israel: the spring-summer barley-wheat harvest, then the fall harvest of fruits, vegetables, grapes, and the big Ingathering in the fall. Pentecost is the last of the spring-summer holydays. The **book of Ruth** is traditionally read on Pentecost – as it pictures the spring-summer harvest.

Now get this: ***The spring holydays tell us about the FIRST coming of Messiah as you shall see, and the Fall holydays tell us about the SECOND coming of this same Messiah*** —this time to stay and rule the world in peace. The first group consists of events that have already been accomplished; the 2nd group mostly consists of prophecies yet to happen. If you grasp and remember that, it helps put the holydays neatly in one's mind. Jews missed Jesus, or Yeshua, as the promised Messiah because they didn't recognize that scripture talked about two distinctly different "comings."

Why do we call them "feast" days?

Now, let's examine the term "**feast days.**" Why do we call these days "Feast days?" The easy answer is that the word "Feasts" is what we find in our English Bibles. Be turning to Leviticus 23 please. God's special days can and should be a spiritual and physical feast, but it's much more. Israel certainly feasted on the holydays (except Atonement), but there's more to this word.

If I say the word "Feast" – what do we think of? Many of us would think of lots of food and drink. At the "Feast" of Tabernacles, we certainly do eat and drink. That's fine, but is that the main meaning? On top of that, if we say "*festival*" – our culture thinks of partying, hoopla, like a German beer fest. And certainly the Feasts were celebrations as well, but not drunken ones! But, did you know the original Hebrew word has much more to do with something other than just feasting?

Leviticus 23:1-2

'And Yahweh (the LORD) spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'The feasts of Yahweh, which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, these are My feasts.'

Let's note a few important points right off the bat:

- These are "My Feasts" – says Yahweh. They're HIS, not the Jews'. And they're not holidays, but His HOLY days, his feasts.

"Feast" = is the Hebrew word "moed" – which can also mean "appointment." The "feasts" of Yahweh are not just days of eating and drinking, but are literally Divine appointments with the true God, and they picture events in the past and future when Yahweh wants us in attendance to be there to either rehearse the dramatic things He's already done – or to be there to witness the stunning things that are yet to happen. He wants us in attendance.

Here's what Strong's Concordance says about *moed*, word #4150 in the Old Testament:

OT:4150 mowed` (mo-ade'); or **moed`** (mo-ade'); or (feminine) **mow`adah** ([2 Chronicles 8:13](#)) (mo-aw-daw'); from [OT:3259](#); **"properly, an appointment, i.e. a fixed time or season; specifically, a festival; conventionally a year; by implication, an assembly (as convened for a definite purpose); technically the congregation; by extension, the place of meeting; also a signal (as appointed beforehand)"**

The Complete Jewish Bible translation has Leviticus 23:1-2 this way ---"the designated times..." (where we see the word "feasts" in our English versions).

Leviticus 23:1-2

Adonai [original is YHWH] said to Moshe, ² "Tell the people of Isra'el: 'The **designated times** of Adonai which you are to proclaim as holy convocations are my designated times'"

Apologetics Study Bible says:

The LORD spoke to Moses: ² "Speak to the Israelites and tell them: These **are My appointed times**, the times of the LORD that you will proclaim as sacred assemblies.

So, think of "feasts" in terms of the original Hebrew word *moed* – as being appointments with the Almighty. Yahweh is saying "these are dates and times I want you to mark in your calendar and reserve to be with Me. They are appointments for us to meet." He doesn't want a no-show, doesn't want to be stood up. He wants us to take these divine appointments seriously and be prepared.

Holyday offering

On these divine appointments we are to be prepared with a holyday offering, such as on Pentecost. We come with an offering that is not first tithe, but an offering, that we purposed in our heart ahead of time, that we prepared, that we prayed about. It has become almost a ritual to some and it should not be. We are commanded not to come empty handed. Have something to offer as a thanksgiving, and it is to be done three times a year – at days of Unleavened Bread, Feast of Weeks (Pentecost) and Feast of Ingathering (Feast of Tabernacles).

I'll get some flak for this, but I do not see anywhere where God is requiring a personal holyday offering at all of the holydays, but only in the three specific ones mentioned here. Pentecost is one of those. Some church groups took the extra step to say it meant "3 seasons" – and so apply the requirement for the extra offering on all 7 holydays. I don't think that is supported clearly in Scripture so I teach what Scripture teaches: bring a holyday offering on those specific holydays – at the Days of Unleavened Bread, Pentecost (Shavuot) and Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot).

Deuteronomy 16:16-17

16 "Three times a year all your males shall appear before the LORD your God in the place which He chooses: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, at the Feast of Weeks, and at the Feast of Tabernacles; *and they shall not appear before the LORD empty-handed.* **17** *Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD YOUR God which He has given you.*

2 Corinthians 9:6-7

But this *I say*: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. **7** *So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.*

So, come prepared. But, back to *moed*, feast, appointment: I like to consciously think “God’s Appointment of Pentecost” or “The appointment of Temporary dwellings” (Feast of Tabernacles) or The Appointment or Day of Covering – Yom Kippur (Feast of Atonement – which has no food or drink, but is also one of the “*moed*” – a divine appointment day.

This is also why the issue of the calendar is so important: if you and I make an appointment to meet with the great King of the land, it is important that we all expect to meet on the same particular day.

Dress Rehearsals/convocations

Leviticus 23:2-3 goes on to call these days “**Holy convocations.**” I always thought a convocation was “a commanded assembly” and I’ve taught it that way. That’s certainly a huge part of its meaning, but it means even more in Hebrew – something akin to “**dress rehearsal.**” I just want to introduce this concept for now and we’ll be talking about the rehearsals all the way through this sermon.

“**OT:4744 miqra'** (mik-row'); from **OT:7121**; something called out, i.e. a public meeting (the act, the persons, or the place); *also a rehearsal*”

But, what’s a “dress rehearsal?” (Describe the college entertainment we’d put on... and since we wanted it to be perfect on the night, we would have “dress rehearsals” – where we wore what we were going to wear on the night and performed as if it was the real night. Why? So on the exact day – we all knew our parts, our roles and when to come in and when to leave and what to do.)

If we are all properly “dress rehearsing,” we should know what comes first and what follows and what comes after that – or at least the outline of events. Paul told the Thessalonians that “the day of the Lord” should not catch them unawares. We are to be rehearsing God’s plan so well, so regularly, that we recognize important events when they happen.

The Heavenly Lights for Signs and...

The one Creator God gave us the sun and moon, both, together – to come up with a correct calendar.

Genesis 1:14-15

Then God (Elohim) said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for *signs and seasons*, and for days and years;

Here again, the Hebrew means something different than what we think of. When we read the English word “season” – what do we think of? We think of spring, summer, fall and winter. Four seasons. But, the word translated here as “seasons” is once again *moed* – the same word that in Leviticus 23:1-2 is translated as “feast day.” Did you know that?

Genesis 1:14; Apologetics Study Bible, the only one I’ve found so far to translate it literally:

14 Then God said, “Let there be *lights* in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night. They will serve as *signs for festivals* and for days and years.

The Scriptures translation says “let them be for signs and **appointed times**, and for days and years”. The word “seasons”, from the Hebrew *moed*, is translated as “festivals” or “appointed times” in those 2 translations.

So Yahweh is saying the sun and moon are there to help you and me show up at the right time for His Divine appointments to keep His feast days.

Sometimes there’s debate over whether God’s months begin with the dark of the moon or the light of the moon. To me Genesis 1:14 makes it clear that the new moon which begins each month in God’s calendar is the first visible *light* of the moon. Yahweh says the light will be the signal that the feast was here. So the light was the sign, not the darkness, according to God’s own words.

Back to Leviticus 23:2. It goes on to say we are *to proclaim* these *moed*, or divine appointments. The Hebrew translated as “proclaim” is *qara* (kaw-raw) – with the meaning of “grabbing someone’s attention, to call out, to announce, and even to accost someone you meet.” God is basically saying, “Shout these from the rooftops be sure people know about their divine appointments with Me,” in effect. It’s a divine “Hear ye, hear ye” from Yahweh!

The Wedding Supper of Matthew 22:3-4 was like that. The guests were to be found and told “the wedding is ready, come, you’re bidden to be at the wedding right now.” But, when we read the account in Matthew 22, one can’t help but get the idea the guests were caught off guard. They weren’t prepared to go to a wedding. Have you thought of it that way? It wasn’t that they didn’t want to go so much, as that they had made other plans. They weren’t ready.

Beware, lest that be describing us, and our attitude. I think too many of us go to our congregations more for the fact there are friends there, and our children have other children to play with – and they can become social clubs. If we’re not careful, we can find ourselves not zealously seeking to know our Creator and honor Him.

Passover and Pentecost are Connected; what our Savior did

So the Feasts – Yahweh’s divine appointments – begin with a set series of events. We’ll do a quick high level overview first, and then backtrack for more detail. Next spring, I’ll go into even more – much more- detail about the Passover and First Fruits.

Pentecost is intrinsically tied to Passover, so we have to review a few things here too. I’m sure you’ll hear something new to you today, so listen carefully. Turn to Exodus 12 please. Keep in mind that Adam was traditionally created on the 1st day of what is now the 7th month, commonly called Rosh Hashanah, which means “head of the year” or “first of the year.” Scripture never uses that

term. Scripture calls the Feast of Trumpets “Yom Teruah” – which means Day of blowing, day of shouting. Perhaps it was the original “new year.” It is still celebrated as a new year by Jews. But, in Exodus 12, Yahweh changes the New Year to the spring. I will speak in much more depth next spring about Passover and the Waiving of the First Fruits during the Days of Unleavened Bread – but let’s do a high-level review.

Exodus 12:1-3

Now Yahweh spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, ² “This month *shall be* your beginning of months; it *shall be* the first month of the year to you. ³ Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: ‘On the tenth of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of *his* father, a lamb for a household.

- The first month was originally called Abib, then later, even before Ezra’s day, began to be called Nisan. *Abib refers to a stage of spring barley showing it had matured enough to be soon harvested. It means more than “green ear.”* There had to be barley ripe enough to be ground into the fine flour in a measured amount – the *omer*-- that would be raised to heaven symbolically by the High Priest on the Wavesheaf offering day soon after Passover. If enough barley would not be ripe enough in time, then a 13th month was added to keep God’s calendar in synch with the seasons. I have a good friend who makes a point to personally inspect the stage of barley in Israel every year.
- The first barley to ripen is a variety with markedly red stripes on it, according to Brian my friend. Isn’t that amazing? He showed me some just south of the temple mount in Israel. I’ll speak more on that next spring. But, red stripes on the first barley strain? Hmm... You know whom the first barley pictures, right?
- The next step was to select and then present a perfect 1 year old male lamb or goat on the 10th day of Abib – and it was to be inspected and approved over that 4 day period. During this time we all also deleaven our homes, or “the Father’s house” (remember that) of all leavened products and all leavening agents.
- Next: they would slay the Passover Lamb on the 14th of God’s first month, exactly at the right time, on the right day. Yahweh himself offered *His* Lamb and He was slain on the 14th for us. The Passover lambs were a dress rehearsal for the actual event on Golgotha.
- Following that, on Saturday night the barley was cut down by the priests – released from the earth so to speak, and ground into fine flour to be presented on the next day, on the day after the weekly Sabbath (Sunday) which was also the First of the Weeks – Plural – *not* just the first day of the week, but “the first of the weeks.” I know it refers to the weekly Sabbath also because Jesus likewise ascended on a Sunday. At the very instant, like a dress rehearsal, when the priest was raising the omer of finely sifted barley flour of the first fruits, on that Sunday morning – which was the first of the weeks – Yeshua was fulfilling what they were dress rehearsing. At the very instant Yeshua was raised to heaven *to be accepted on our behalf* (see Leviticus 23:9-11), or “for you.” It’s not about barley so much as about what the barley pictured.

That Wavesheaf – the first fruit “omer” measure of fine barley flour – was to represent and sanctify the entire harvest to follow. That is exactly what Yeshua was doing on our behalf. We should not forget this Wavesheaf day. I call Wavesheaf Day the forgotten divine appointment. It’s not a holy convocation, but we should at least be aware of it on that day and pray and praise Father on that day. I have a full fledged sermon on this – see April 2007.

Now let’s back track a bit for more detail.

Abib 10th-14th events – and the Christ; Presenting the Passover Lamb

The lamb was picked out on the 10th day of the first month (Exodus 12:3-6), and the Israelites were to keep it for 4 days and slay it on the 14th. I will show in far more detail next spring, that it was on this very day, the 10th day of Nisan or Abib, that Jesus came from the Mount of Olives and entered the temple mount riding on a white donkey or foal of an ass, just as He was prophesied to do (Matthew 21:3-11). The Jews were singing Psalm 118:25-26 – the last part of the Hallel. This was God the Father presenting the Lamb He had chosen. The lamb was kept for 4 days. We understand that the Messiah was selected from the foundations of the world, around 4,000 BC. A thousand years as a day, so that’s also another way to see the 4 days.

All this was just before the Passover (Matthew 26:2; John 12:1—the anointing was 6 days before Passover – then all of John 12 happens after that but before John 13 the Passover).

Also on the 10th of Nisan, all the sheep – which were mostly raised in Bethlehem by the way – would be brought to Jerusalem’s “Sheep Gate,” which was on the sides of the north, as the people would sing Psalm 118, one of the Halley chapters that are traditionally sung at Passover and other holydays. The Halley includes Psalms 113-118, and they are typically joyously sung and recited. Hallel – where we get the word “hallelujah.” In Aramaic, “hallel” means “Praise.” So, Hallelujah means “Praise Yah,” usually translated “Praise the Lord” in the New King James Version.

The “jah” or **Yah**, the last syllable in Hallelujah is the first part of the Tetragrammaton – the sacred personal name of the Living God. Some English Bibles leave the phrase untranslated – they just write “hallelujah” – but it should be translated “praise Yah, you people” or as NKJV has it: “Praise the LORD.” But again, Yah is the first part of the personal name of the true God. It doesn’t mean Lord, it doesn’t mean Yah – it is his personal name. Its closest translation would be “the Everliving one” or “the Eternal,” “I am, was, and will be” or “I am who I am,” or simply “I am.” But those are translations. His name is Yah, or more completely Yahweh. Part of the Psalm 118 says “Hosanna – blessed is he who comes in the name of Yahweh.”

So, they’re already all **singing the Hallel** as the sheep are being brought in from the north gate, but Yeshua now enters in from the East gate, from the Mount of Olives. So, the Lamb of God is being brought into the temple area – but from the East – at the same time the thousands of lambs were being brought in to be inspected for Passover as well.

It was on the 10th of Nisan/Abib when the Messiah overthrew the money changers in the temple. What was going on? Starting with the 10th, the rabbis and priests were “inspecting” Jesus – trying to find fault with him for the next four days. They even sought false witnesses – but found no fault, no blemish in Him. “Yet they found none” – He was a blameless lamb.

We'll go into much, much more depth next spring holydays 2010, I promise you. I'm just hitting the high points right now.

What do we do next before Passover? We deleaven our homes. Would Jesus do any differently?

Luke 19:45-46 (verse 41-44 He weeps over Jerusalem, probably from Mount of Olives, then....)

Then He went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in it, ⁴⁶ saying to them, "It is written, 'My house is a house of prayer,' but you have made it a 'den of thieves.'"

Jesus was cleaning and deleavening His Father's house – which they had turned into a den of thieves! Had you thought of His actions that way before as “deleavening His Father's house” before Passover? He cleansed the temple area of the hypocrisy, sin, thievery, over-charging, dishonest weights and measures, as well as the stealing going on. The business of selling the temple lambs for sacrifice was overseen and even run by—you guessed it -- the priests. Did you know that? No wonder they got upset!

After Jesus upsets the priests – guess what happens? They examined him, tried to find ways to entrap him, even to the point of hiring people to lie against Him, but they found no fault; He was faultless – He was without blemish, as the perfect Lamb should be. The Lamb of God had been examined, and was found without blemish. Even Pilate –days later says, after examining this Lamb of God, “I find no fault in him.”

After presenting the lambs comes the Passover observance itself: the Seder followed by the Passover meal. Jews – and some scriptures – call the entire 7 day period of unleavened Bread “the Passover.” It was observed differently than it was at the first Passover in Exodus 12. This time at Jesus' last Passover instead of standing up with a rod in hand and sandals on their feet, they are lying down relaxed, no rod in hand, and probably sandals off their feet in a relaxed manner. I'll speak much more about Passover in the spring sermons next year 2010, God willing. We'll address the table layout, which disciples sat where and how we know where each sat. Also: the FOUR cups of wine that are consumed at the Passover Seder and meal, the Passover meal itself, and what each aspect means – and why Jesus said He could not drink of the last cup, or not until the Kingdom. I've spoken on parts of this before, but you'll have to wait til next year – because I want to focus on Pentecost today.

After the footwashing ceremony Yeshua instituted, the new emblems of bread and unleavened bread, they hymned – they didn't just sing one psalm, no, brethren. They sang several psalms. Some translations have Mark 14:26 as saying “after singing psalms”... plural, many joyous psalms. They did not sing Psalm 51, for indeed by the time we're eating the Passover our sins have been forgiven and we're free, we're happy, we've been redeemed.

Yahweh sees the blood of the Lamb and passes over our sins. If you review Ex 12, you'll see there was no “death angel”. It was Yahweh HIMSELF who inspected to see whose homes were covered by the blood of the Lamb (Ex. 12:23,29). That's a joyous thing to remember and to praise. True, we are also commemorating the passion of the Christ – so we have a guarded joy in a sense – but brethren, I've felt for years that Passover should not resemble or feel like a funeral service, but, instead, should resemble the release from prison! A solemnly joyous time. A time when we are to

have peace in our hearts – not guilt. Even Yeshua said during Passover, “My peace I give you” (John 14:27).

One of the Psalms they would regularly sing was Psalm 118:21-24 – v. 21 – which speaks of Salvation, which in Hebrew is Yeshua – which is what His name meant: Salvation. “You have become my Yeshua – my salvation” (Psalm 118:21).

It goes on in the next verses to speak of the stone which they rejected now being the chief cornerstone. Wow! Are you getting the significance of these hymns? They were singing about the Lamb of God, our Yeshua, our Salvation, our Savior. And I think *we* should be singing Psalms 113-118 at the Passover.

The rest of Psalm 118 goes on to speak of the “right hand of the Lord does mighty things.” ***Who is on the right hand of Yahweh in the highest?*** Why – Yeshua Himself is depicted as now sitting on the right hand. So, when you read of Yahweh’s right hand, remember that is speaking directly of Yeshua – Jesus! [note: I give a full length sermon on “Yeshua hiding in plain sight” in Dec 2011.]

Psalm 118:16 – the last of the Hallel or praises sung at Passover and the holydays – it says “the right hand of Yahweh is exalted...” God’s right hand is Yeshua, Jesus. He is the One exalted and now sits at the right hand of the Holy Father in Heaven (Mark 16:19; Acts 2:33; Matthew 26:64).

Gethsemane: The Olive Press

Let’s move on: Yeshua – our salvation – is taken captive that night in garden of Gethsemane, which means “The Olive Press”. There were many olive trees there, and still are. Now that garden should take on more meaning if you study “olive press.” The Olive Press itself was a huge heavy stone that was used to crush the juices out of the olives. What did our Savior experience that night as He agonized and went over the battle plan with Abba, His dear father? He was in His own emotional olive press. He sweated blood. The pressure He was feeling was intense (Luke 22:44).

Next, Yeshua is tried illegally, sentenced to die instead of Barabbas. Barabbas means “son of the father.” Isn’t that amazing? The true son of the Father was the one crucified – and that was Jesus of Nazareth (See Matt. 27:20-26). I will amplify on this next spring.

The Lamb for the Nation

The rehearsal – and reality – continues: at 9 am, “the 3rd hour” – they were binding the national Passover lamb to the horns of the altar. At this very moment, 9 am, is when they were binding and nailing Yeshua to the cross (Mark 15:24-25). I hadn’t tied those two together before. Now, it all is so clear: the lamb tied to the horns of the altar was just a dress rehearsal for the real thing. The lamb for the nation was tied to the horns of the altar at 9 am and then killed at 3 pm, “the 9th hour.”

It got very dark from the 6th hour to the 9th hour according to John’s Roman reckoning – meaning noon to 3 pm. At the 9th hour – 3 pm – Yeshua says, “It is finished.” I think He said those words precisely as the High Priest was saying the very same words. You see, the High Priest would slay the Passover Lamb for the nation at 3 pm, then as the lamb died, he would also say, “It is finished, the Lamb for the nation” (John 19:30). So, as the lamb’s blood was pouring out, as the lamb for the

nation died, and as the High Priest said those very words, at that very instant our Savior, OUR High Priest, was saying those same words on the tree or cross – and died, as a Roman soldier pierced his side, and out flowed blood and water (John 19:34 – describes a past event, “had pierced” more correctly). The “dress rehearsal” going on at the temple was being fulfilled at that same instant for real on that dark overcast hill of Golgotha outside the city walls.

John 19:30

So, when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.

To the very second and minute, Jesus fulfills the reality of the Lamb for the Nation being sacrificed. Do you see the “dress rehearsal” being fulfilled?

The rest of the plan of salvation cannot and will not happen until we each accept and observe the meaning of each of the holydays from start to finish. We must accept Passover – the Lamb slain for us – we must deeply repent, have His blood cover us, and appreciate it so deeply, before we can take the next step. There is no resurrection unless there is first the death.

All this is also pictured by the tabernacle or temple service. You accept the call and go up to the house of Yahweh. There you come to the altar and sacrifice an innocent lamb in your behalf. No blood, no entrance into the temple. If you're a former believer who has slipped back, repent – repent deeply – and come back to a strong relationship with your Savior. If men have offended you, let that go. But, don't ever let go of what you've been offered by your Savior. Don't let anyone take your crown. Don't let any offense or stupid things humans do, (even me!) cause you to veer off the course of first coming to the sacrifice of the Son of God for you and then building an ever closer relationship with Him.

But, once you accept the death of the Lamb of God for you – you can also celebrate His resurrection and ascension to be accepted in your behalf – and the rest of the plan of salvation continues – as you walk with God for the rest of your days.

Feast of Barley Firstfruits, 1ST of the Weeks, the Count of the Omer Begins

Turn now to John 20:1. There's a gross mistranslation that you can see if you look it up in an interlinear. The translators did not understand that our Master's ascension to heaven had everything to do with the Feast of Weeks, or Sabbaths, as it can also be translated. That day began the omer count, it was “the first of the Sabbaths”, or first of the seven weeks of the count up to 50.

The word “*day*” is not in the original Greek. And the word “*week*” is plural in the original Greek – weeks – and can also be translated “Sabbaths.”

So, “**on the first of the weeks**” – that's what the original Greek actually says in John 20:1-2 – Yeshua shows himself alive and well after being dead for three days and three nights. Just as the barley was being cut from the earth the night before in the “dress rehearsal” for the real event, Yahweh was *being resurrected* and came out of the tomb, released from the earth, before sunrise, while it was still dark (John 20:1). But the barley for the Wavesheaf omer had to wait until morning, as it was ground into fine flour. Jesus/Yeshua likewise had to wait until the right moment to be “waved” to God Almighty to be accepted for us.

John 20:1-2

Now the first *day* of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb *early, while it was still dark*, and saw *that* the stone had been taken away from the tomb. ² Then she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him."

But here's what Young's Literal Translation of the Bible has to say about John 20:1:

John 20:1

And on the first of the Sabbaths, Mary the Magdalene doth come early (there being yet darkness) to the tomb, and she see the stone having been taken away out of the tomb..."

Christ is risen. The tomb is empty. Hallelujah, praise the Eternal.

1 Corinthians 15:20 says Christ is what the dress rehearsal of first fruits pictures! He is the "first of the firstfruits", as in Exodus 23:19. He's what's pictured by the barley first fruit.

We are also a kind of the firstfruit (James 1:18; Romans 8:23)– represented by the *Wheat* First fruits 50 days later. The 144,000 are also called "First fruits" (Revelation 14:4).

The first fruits are not the whole harvest – just the first part of the harvest. So, if you carry that over to the spiritual harvest, it becomes clear: God is converting a few now, each man in his own order as 1 Corinthians 15 says. Then, He'll convert the rest of the world later – mostly during and after the Millennium. For that matter, we have the wheat harvest in the early summer –picturing those being called now – and the rest of the world is pictured by the Feast of Ingathering in the Fall, also called the Feast of Tabernacles.

Christ is resurrected – right on schedule, pictured by Yahweh's appointed dress rehearsals – and then exactly 50 days later, the 120 first fruits of the spiritual harvest were ready to be presented to Yah on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2. But, I'm getting ahead of myself.

Easter sunrise services come from paganism, honoring Ishtar, the sex goddess – hence the rabbit eggs and all that. By sunrise, Messiah had long been resurrected already, long before! The other gospel accounts seem to indicate she came right at sunrise – but the point is, the tomb was already empty. Later that same morning, Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene (John 20) and the other women (Matthew 28:9-10) with her – and told Mary not to cling to Him, for He had yet to be accepted by the Father.

Waving the "Sheaf"-- Which Was an "Omer", a Measured Quantity

Scripture says – in English – to wave a "**sheaf**", which makes us think of a bunch of barley stalks being held together. But, once again, that's not what the Hebrew means. Sheaves were cut, but the word for "sheaf" is "omer." An omer is a unit of measure defining a specific quantify of fine flour to be presented to Yahweh, the Eternal Living God.

At the very moment the High Priest was raising the bowl of firstfruits barley flour ground very fine, to the One Living God in heaven on behalf of the rest of the harvest to follow – Jesus ascended to heaven to be accepted on our behalf. The Complete Jewish Bible and Apologetics Bible both say of Leviticus 23:9-11 – "to be waved so you will be accepted."

Let that sink in. Jesus was raised on high to sanctify the rest of the harvest (that's us, and those yet to follow). This is not primarily about barley. It's not about wheat. It's about what the barley and wheat *represent* – especially the first sheaf – the omer – that is presented to God for the rest to be accepted.

It has everything to do with the sermon series I gave in 2008 about the very deep concept of how we are “in God,” in Him. He is not only in us, but we are also in Him and dozens of verses say so. Now as you keep in mind the barley first fruits being raised to heaven to be accepted for the rest of the harvest – listen to what Paul says in Colossians 3 and how are in the Living and loving God:

Colossians 3:1-4

If then you were raised (waved?) with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. **2** Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. **3** For you died, *and your life is hidden with Christ in God*. **4** When Christ our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

Did you get that? **We are given the Holy Spirit, making our bodies the spiritual Holy of Holies of His presence, when God dwells in us by His spirit.** But, when we accept Christ, we become part of Christ's Body by His Spirit – and since Christ is in the Father, our “life is hidden with Christ in God” (Colossians 3:3). He is now our new life. He is now our righteousness and wisdom (1 Corinthians 1:30-31). Be sure to hear my series on “In Him” as well as the series on “God's Righteousness or Ours.”

Remember Leviticus 23 says this first omer of barley is “to be waved on your behalf” or “to be waved so you will be accepted.”

I am accepted by my holy Father because, and only because, I am in Christ. My life is hidden with Christ in God (Colossians 3:3). It is not about me, but everything about my Savior and how he is saving me and living in me and changing me – “Until Christ is formed in you” (Galatians 3:19).

One more thing: God wants harvests. He is more interested in spiritual harvests than physical ones. Are we as concerned with being able to present our Father with new first fruit from the works of our labors in His vineyard, in His field? Or are we content to just maintain the status quo? Brethren, too many of us are sleeping! The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few (Luke 10:2). Too many of God's children are sleeping, instead of sowing and developing more harvests.

There are really two feasts of firstfruits. The first one is the barley firstfruits – offered as a container of fine barley flour at the beginning of the barley harvest. This first day of barley first fruits is not a holyday, but is mentioned as a very important part of the plan – or the next step can't happen. It is “the first of the weeks,” the first of the 7 weeks plus a day, of the Omer. But again, as the high priest was dress rehearsing by waving the omer to heaven on that day after the Sabbath, at that very moment, Yeshua ascended on High on our behalf.

So, starting with the Sunday that falls between the first and last day of Unleavened Bread, we are to count up to the 50 days –not count down – to the very exciting meaning of the Feast of Pentecost. To observant Jews, each day is a day of reflection and analysis of *keeping* sin out of our lives – how appropriate right after deleavening.

Pentecosts in Old and New Testaments

The first Pentecost in the Bible- in the Old Testament – is quite different from the 1st Pentecost in the New Testament.

But first note this: the Passover, the Wavesheaf of firstfruit – was the barley harvest. This was fine flour, no leaven in it, and pictured the One and only who never ever sinned: Yeshua the Messiah.

THE 2 LEAVENED LOAVES

50 days later, Pentecost was another type of first fruits – but this was 2 *leavened* baked loaves of wheat. Much discussion has been made of the 2 large leavened loaves and who they represented. I feel the 2 loaves depict Israel and Gentiles – now offered before God as first fruits of the spiritual harvest – pictured by Boaz marrying the Moabite Ruth. Jew and Gentile becoming one. The House of Yahweh was to be a House of Prayer for ALL nations, remember (Mark 11:17; Psalm 86:9).

There were a very special series of ceremonies in preparing these 2 large wheat loaves made from 1 gallon of fine wheat flour. Each loaf is about 24” by 15” in size approximately. The grain was not threshed in the common way you would all other grains. Instead, the stalks and grains to be used for the 2 large *leavened* loaves were hand rubbed and then smashed or beaten by hand – then sifted through numerous sieves until the flour was very, very fine. Do you ever feel beaten and rubbed out? Hmm. Perhaps there’s an obvious lesson here.

Interesting that they are leavened. This is the only leaven that was ever allowed in the temple area – EVER. Everything else was unleavened, including the shewbread. Some say that proves it must be picturing God’s people, since leaven is pictured in the Bible as sin, hypocrisy, vanity, false doctrine and so on. We’ve certainly sinned. And yet, if we have put on Christ, we are to “be done with sin” (1 Peter 4:1-2) and be overcoming, truly changing, “until Christ is formed in you” (Galatians 3:19). That’s a tall order. So, what’s with the leaven symbolism?

Here’s an idea I have about the 2 leavened wave loaves. Many assume it pictures us, as the sinful human bride of Christ. But, please remember brethren: scripture says there is now no condemnation to those who are in Christ (Romans 8:1). Though we still sin, as Paul explains in Romans 7, it is no longer the “New us” who is doing the sinning, but the old sinful carnal nature that still resides in us.

After the resurrection, this corruption will put on incorruption spiritually as well as physically. We are waved or elevated up to our Father – just as they did on the Dress Rehearsals of Pentecost for millennia now. At that point, Scripture says we will be presented spotless, without blame or sin. When we stand before God, we will stand before him faultless (**Jude 24 and Revelation 14:5**), having put on the righteousness of Christ, “the Lord *our* Righteousness.”

So, we are a new lump, a new loaf, but perhaps there’s more. Think of this: once a loaf is leavened – and baked – the leaven in that baked loaf is done leavening. It can’t leaven anything else. **If leaven pictures sin, and if we’re the first fruit leavened loaves, perhaps it pictures how- though we were sinners – we’re now done with a life of sin. Hallelujah!** We had been leavened, had been sinful, but we’re done with it now, at least as a way of life, as we all still sometimes sin.

Even to the problematic Corinthians, Paul says “For you are unleavened” (1 Corinthians 5:7). We are a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17), a new man (Colossians 3:10) created in Christ for and in holiness (Ephesians 4:24). As we put on the Christ, we make no provision any longer for the flesh (Romans 13:14). We don’t cave in so easily – and don’t have to, if we stir up the Holy Spirit in us.

1 Peter 4:1-2

Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for **he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin**, ² that he no longer should live the rest of *his* time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God.

In HIM we can do all things. “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” – Philippians 4:12. If we continue to live a life of sin, with little or no fight, we don’t know Him, for we are not walking as He walked (1 John 2:4-6). We’ve been called to obedience and a new walk.

Remember, the Father – when welcoming the repentant *Prodigal son back* (and that son has definitely been me, and perhaps you too) – what did Father do then and continues to do today to modern-day prodigals? Father orders they put on his son “the best robe,” and sandals on his feet and a ring on his hand” (Luke 15:22).

What’s the “Best robe?” It is what was given to us to clothe us. We are clothed with Yeshua Himself (Galatians 3:27). There’s no better “robe”. The sandals refer to the fact of restoring sonship. A barefoot man was a slave. Father says in effect, “You’re my son. Put sandals on your feet.” The ring was the family insignia – restoring authority and position in the family.

I hope you’re getting it. God’s spirit allows Christ’s righteousness to cover us. It empowers us to want to obey and to be able to obey if we stir it up. It opens us up to the mind of God by His Spirit. It gives us in essence His very DNA if I can liken it to that by analogy – His seed, his genetic code if you will. It makes us the child of God, and by His spirit He leads us – but we must follow. His spirit intercedes with God even as we pray. It gives us access to the greatest of all power in the universe, if we would only believe. It changes us. It emboldens us – look at Peter going from a scared denier – to, after receiving God’s spirit, one who said “we must obey God rather than men” as he now boldly proclaims His Master.

OK, back to the story of what happened:

The priest then “waved” or raised to heaven these 2 leavened loaves on the Day of Pentecost – along with pieces from the 2-lamb offering that accompanied it. (Leviticus 23:19-21). There was also a goat that was offered as a sin offering on this day. Then the priests in the temple area ate small portions of the 2 large loaves and the 2 lambs.

The lifting up of the loaves, too, is very significant. I’ll show in a moment how Israel said their “I do” to Yahweh at Sinai. I believe strongly that we will participate in the Marriage Supper on a future day of Pentecost. Not here on earth, but in God’s presence on the real Sea of Glass in the throne room of God, which is a massive, massive structure. It is probable that the streets, the buildings, the thrones are not physical – but of a spirit nature. Spirit doesn’t age or corrode and cannot be destroyed. Whatever, we’ll find out soon enough.

KEY: *at that very moment that the High Priest was lifting the 2 leavened waive loaves to Yahweh, at 9 a.m., at that very moment was when the new Christians heard the strong wind and were given the Holy Spirit in Acts 2.*

Back to the story:

God is not trying desperately to save all humanity right now; or else he's losing badly, which can't be the case. So, God is calling a few first fruits now – few are chosen – and this time He is working not just with one physical nation that rejected His Son and don't obey Him – but He's chosen to work with people from ALL nations who bow their knee to Him.

The rest of the harvest comes in the fall – with the grapes, the fruits, nuts, the vegetables.

Old and New Testament Pentecosts Contrasted

So, they're counting up on the Omer to the 50th day. The Pharisees counted from the 1st day of unleavened bread, which is what Jews do today, but the priests and Sadducees, who actually controlled the Temple and the wave loaves, started the count the way we do: from the weekly Sabbath in between Passover and the last day of Unleavened bread. So, the Pharisees would have kept Pentecost a few days earlier than the priests. Do you now see in Acts 2 :1 what its getting at when it says, "***When the day of Pentecost was FULLY come...***" ?

Traditionally, though not clearly stated so in scripture, the first Pentecost was Exodus 20, the giving of the Torah at Mt Sinai. So, this feast, or divine appointment, is also called "The Festival of the Giving of Torah." The Jews say the Law could not be given while they were in Egypt. Interesting concept: we have to come out of sin, Egypt – before we see the need or will hear God's teachings or Torah. They also teach that even though they were freed by the Passover, the redemption from slavery is not complete until we receive the Torah – the Living God's teachings.

It was at Mt Sinai that they came together as a holy nation, a nation of laws and culture, as one. Yahweh says so in Exodus 19.

Exodus 19:3-6

And Moses went up to God, and the LORD (YAHWEH) called to him from the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: **4** 'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and *how* I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself. **5** Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth *is* Mine. **6** And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These *are* the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel."

In the same way, the giving of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2 fused the separate personalities of the 120 into a holy priesthood, the new nation of God, the *spiritual* Israel that He is now working with even more than He is the physical nation of Israel. They were once not a people, but were now the "people of God" (1 Peter 2:9-10). We are living stones in a new living temple (1 Peter 2:5). We are the Israel of God (Galatians 6:16). We are, in fact, now the *naos*, the new spiritual inner Holy of Holies in which resides the Spirit of Abba Himself.

All of this – because there was first the Passover on Golgotha, the Wavesheaf of firstfruit barley on the first of the weeks after Passover, then the count of the omer to 50th – the giving of Torah and the Holy Spirit, and the betrothal of the Lamb to His church in Acts 2 – to be followed I think with the actual marriage in the future, on the very sea of Glass in heaven, also on Pentecost.

This new holy nation is to be actively proclaiming the Kingdom, actively sowing new seed, actively harvesting the harvest – and the gates of hell will not stand against us if we do! We're not defending against Hell. Gates are for defense, for hiding behind. Jesus said we are the ones doing the attacking. We are attacking hell's gates, and we're supposed to be awake, alert, in a fight against the forces of evil—actively so – and if we are, the gates of hell can not stand against us.

Let's read Israel's acceptance of the covenant to marry the Living God.

Exodus 24:1-8

Now He said to Moses, "Come up to the LORD, you and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, and worship from afar. ² And Moses alone shall come near the LORD, but they shall not come near; nor shall the people go up with him."

³ So Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD and all the judgments. And all the people answered with one voice and said, "All the words which the LORD has said we will do." ⁴ And Moses wrote all the words of the LORD. And he rose early in the morning, and built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and twelve pillars according to the twelve tribes of Israel. ⁵ Then he sent young men of the children of Israel, who offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen to the LORD. ⁶ And Moses took half the blood and put *it* in basins, and half the blood he sprinkled on the altar. ⁷ Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read in the hearing of the people. And they said, "All that the LORD has said we will do, and be obedient." ⁸ And Moses took the blood, sprinkled *it* on the people, and said, "This is the blood of the covenant which the LORD has made with you according to all these words."

Then, look at what happens: Reading it carefully seems to be depicting a wedding feast. The nation of Israel had just said their "I do." So, 70 elders plus Moses, Aaron, and Aaron's 2 sons – 74 in all – partook of that wedding supper. Let's read it in Exodus 24.

Exodus 24:9-12

Then Moses went up, also Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, ¹⁰ and they saw the God of Israel. And *there was* under His feet as it were a paved work of sapphire stone, and it was like the very heavens in *its* clarity. [a portable "sea of Glass"?] ¹¹ But on the nobles of the children of Israel He did not lay His hand. So they saw God, and they ate and drank.

¹² Then the LORD said to Moses, "Come up to Me on the mountain and be there; and I will give you tablets of stone, and the law and commandments which I have written, that you may teach them."

You know the rest. The children of Israel could not, and did not keep the Law and Moses himself literally broke all ten of the commandments by dashing the 2 small tablets written with the hand of Yahweh on to the rocks --- as Moses went into a rage (Exodus 32:10-15). So, even Moses broke all 10, literally, in other words. Yahweh had to have Moses come back up and God re-wrote the 10

commands, called “the 10 words” by the Jews – on to these 2 new tablets. I had thought someone in Israel had told me that Moses put the broken tablets into the ark, and someone also said they thought Moses carved out the 2nd set himself – but Scripture clearly says Yahweh hand-wrote both sets – the first one as well as the replacement ones. See Exodus 34:1-3, 28. If I stated otherwise last time, then I base it on scripture that Yahweh wrote both sets with His finger.

Anyway, the first Pentecost was traditionally when the Word spoke the 10 commandments on Mount Sinai. Soon after the giving of the law – some days after -- how many *died*? 3,000 (Exodus 32:26).

But, on the Feast of Pentecost in the New Testament, how many were given the spirit of life as they were baptized after Peter’s sermon (Acts 2:41)? Three thousand. That was followed by “as many as were being saved” (verse 47), and then by five thousand (Acts 4:4) more.

Jews today, on Pentecost, will read Exodus 19 about how Yah came down to Sinai in fire. They also read Ezekiel 1 – which speaks of a great whirlwind, fire unfolding itself, “and the spirit took me up” and a great rushing sound (Ezekiel 1:1-4 – whole chapter). So, the concept of fire and wind on Pentecost was already familiar to the Jews.

I’m out of time, but I hope we are keeping Pentecost with renewed zeal to not only be the spring-summer harvest, but to continue sowing the seed of the word so the harvest of souls continues.

Quick review of highlights of what we’ve covered, not necessarily in this order (this outline is not mentioned in the audio—I ran out of time):

- God’s “feasts” are moed – divine appointments with Yahweh. Don’t let Him be stood up.
- We should be doing the daily count up of the omer to Pentecost. Each day leading up to Pentecost we should know what day we’re on, on the counting up.
- Convocation includes the meaning of a “dress rehearsal” – so we are ready for the real thing
- The Lights in the sky were given as signs to know when the divine appointments/feasts are
- Jesus was resurrected on the first of the weeks, or first of the Sabbaths, not “on the first day of the week.” The word “day” is not in the original Greek.
- The holydays are in 2 large groups. The Spring-Summer holydays are about the first coming of the Messiah. The Autumn holydays are about the 2nd coming of the Anointed (Messiah).
- If you’ve quit obeying and worshiping on the holydays, come back to the Eternal and make your divine appointments
- Prepare your holyday offerings. “As you’ve purposed in your heart.”
- God presented His Lamb on the 10th day, as Jews sang the Hallel.
- Jesus (Yeshua) deleavened His father’s house before the Passover (cleansing the temple).
- The barley was cut down (released from the earth) on the Sabbath late afternoon, just before sundown, at the precise moment Jesus in fact, was being resurrected. (Remember He was put in the tomb just before sunset 3 days and 3 nights earlier)

- The first barley to ripen each year, according to Brian Convery, is a variety that has red stripes on it. Red stripes? The first barley = the Messiah.
- The Lamb for the nation was tied to the horns of the altar at 9 am on Passover day – at the very moment Yeshua was being nailed to the cross.
- 2 firstfruits. The first was firstfruit barley = Christ; the 2nd was firstfruit wheat 50 days later = God's people (2 leavened loaves).
- Leavened bread is leavened – but no longer has power to leaven. It pictures us being DONE with sin. (1 Peter 4:1-2).
- The first Pentecost was the giving of the Torah (teachings) at Mount Sinai. Israel became a holy nation of God and married God on this day (Exodus 24:1-8).
- Moses, Aaron and his sons and 70 elders had a “wedding supper” with God (Exodus 24:9-12).
- On the first Pentecost of the New Covenant God gave His spirit – his Arrabon (“earnest”) – his engagement ring to His children.
- Probably the Wedding of the Lamb will once more occur on Pentecost, in heaven, on the heavenly sea of Glass. (See 2004 – “Mystery of the Wedding”)

Remember these dress rehearsals... and be sure next year you count up to the 50th day, very likely marking a future wedding day when you and I will all be together on the sea of Glass, and as part of the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. God hasten that day.

On the first Pentecost in the Old Testament, the people were given God's teachings – that if they would live by them, they would have been a light and example to the nations and would have a long, happy life.

On the first New Covenant Pentecost, they were given the spirit of power to have God's law written in their hearts, they were given the power to obey that law, and they were given the seed of God's own nature making us His children. Now we can have faith that by the power of the Holy Spirit we will be resurrected just as the Messiah was (1 Corinthians 6:14). Now we can do great things – not by OUR power but by the very power of the Almighty working in us, if we would only believe.

Yeshua told them to remain in Jerusalem “for you shall receive power from on high” (Acts 1:8).

Acts 1:7-8

⁷ And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. ⁸ But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

We must be careful not to “deny the power thereof” – 2 Timothy 3:5.

We would rather be weak in our own power that the power of the Living God be evident in us. Sometime read what Paul said in 2 Corinthians 12:7-10 about that.

In fact, God made us live in these “earthen vessels so that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us” – 2 Corinthians 4:7. We want whatever good we’re doing, whatever wonderful things happening, be to Yahweh’s glory and not ours. We should be feeling very empowered, if we truly receive, use, and have faith in the power of God. The kingdom of God is not in words, but in power (1 Corinthians 4:20).

Brethren, be thankful you’ve been chosen to be a first fruit.

A word to any of you who have gotten discouraged and have kinda dropped out of the picture: God chose you for HIS reasons. He’s not done with you. Go back to a 2-part sermon I gave “Why YOU were called.” You have too much at stake to fall away now.

If you’re in that category, call me, and let’s pray together about it, let’s talk together about it. I’ve often become discouraged too. I know it well. Perhaps we can study together the grace that has been offered to us so we can be – and stay being – a useful vessel in the Master’s hands. Don’t give up the extremely high calling we’ve been given. The reward and blessing will be worth it.

Call me. Let’s pray together – and get you back among Yahweh’s covenant people, preparing for and talking about the return of our King!

You are God’s first fruit of the wheat harvest, a chosen vessel for the Master’s use. Praise Yahweh for it, and I hope and pray this sermon will have inspired and fascinated you enough about the divine appointments and dress rehearsals – to rekindle your fire and zeal.

I hope you all will have a wonderful feast of Pentecost each year.

‘Til next time – this is Philip Shields, your brother in the Anointed One.

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