

Wavesheaf Day – Christ IS RISEN!

Day of firstfruits

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by Philip Shields

www.LightontheRock.org

All scriptures are unless noted otherwise.

Summary:

ON the 1st day of the week after Yeshua's crucifixion, He ascended as the Wavesheaf offering, sanctifying the rest of the harvest of souls so that WE could be accepted by Father. It's not a holyday, but IS a significant day. We were forgiven and reconciled by His death – but we are SAVED by the power of HIS resurrection (Romans 5:10). HIS life, lived in us, is what saves us. Learn about the exciting meaning of Wavesheaf day.

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A warm sabbath greetings once again to my family in Yeshua, children of the House of YHVH. This day pictures a very, very exciting day. Peter the apostle said we are to “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior (2 Pet 3:18). Tonight, sabbath evening just before sundown, is the anniversary of when our Savior rose from the dead!

Welcome, all of you from around the world. Many of you come from the Philippines, Malaysia, China, Japan, Mexico, Russia, Australia, and of course the USA and Canada.

Yes, folks, you heard me right. The resurrection was NOT on a Sunday, could not be – or our Yeshua was an impostor! The ONLY sign he gave that he is Messiah is that he would be 3 days and 3 nights in the earth before he was resurrected (Matthew 12:39-40). Yeshua was put into the tomb just before sunset, so just before sunset is when he *had* to be resurrected. And in fact, we find that *by* sunrise Sunday morning, the tomb was already empty. So the resurrection occurred sometime *before* Sunday dawn – as the tomb was already empty.

In John 20:1 it says, 3 days after the crucifixion and burial of our Savior:

John 20:1-2

Now the first [day] of the week[s], Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was **still dark**, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb.

Nonetheless, that day – Sunday of that year – was still very profound for what was going to take place later that morning. We'll explain in this sermon.

I'll explain “first of the weeks” in the minute. I won't focus on technicalities right now as that can take us away from what was just said. The TOMB WAS EMPTY! Our Lord was NOT there! Mary of Magdala didn't understand! She thought they had stolen his body away. It was confusing, frightening. She had seen the beaten, tortured and pierced body of her Lord – and she had seen him put into the tomb, a large stone sealing it, a Roman guard placed around it.... And now somehow early on the first day of the weeks, it was empty!

And instead of singing her “hallelujah’s” – IF she had remembered and believed what He had said on several occasions that he would be seen again, that he would be interred for 3 days and nights... she just saw what she saw.

Now notice in your KJV and others, the word “day” is in italics. The word “day” wasn’t in the original. The original KJV translators thought it must mean Sunday, so they said “First *day* of the week”. THAT particular year he died it WAS a Sunday, but it was – more importantly – *the first of the sabbaths, the first of weeks, the first* of the 50 day count to Pentecost, the FEAST of weeks. We always start the count to Pentecost on the first day after the weekly sabbath (see Leviticus 23:15-16.

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. 16 **Count fifty days** *to the day after the seventh Sabbath*; then you shall offer a new grain offering to the Lord.

In the year Christ died, that Sunday began a 50 day count to Pentecost, which occurs in Acts 2. But also on this day, the day after the weekly sabbath the year Christ died, the tomb is EMPTY, he HAS RISEN. Hallelujah!

This is a BANNER DAY! BY Sunday morning, the TOMB was empty! If Christ had not risen sometime before that, you and I would remain dead, and would remain in our sins. *Putting all our sins upon Him – at Passover – was only effective IF Jesus rose from the dead, confirming that Father in Heaven had accepted Him as our Sin Offering in our stead, and had raised Him – confirming he is also our LIFE.*

We are reconciled and forgiven by His death. But we are SAVED by His LIFE (Romans 5:10). How? Because it is HIS life, His perfectly righteous life that will be the life that allows you and me entrance into the Kingdom of our father. If it were my life I was counting on for saving me, I would be of all men, most worried. And so should you. I’m not my own savior. No sir, HE is the one and only Savior and the one and only possible way into the kingdom of God.

Much more will be said on this as we go along. But let’s understand what a day of VICTORY this day pictures. **It’s not a holyday, not a feast day, but it is a VERY significant day**, and one on which we should be giving thanks with great JOY. I think those of you who understand the pagan roots of Easter might be shying away from celebrating the resurrection of Messiah. Don’t do it as part of Easter, but as part of what the Bible actually says. But do, do it!

1 Corinthians 15:13-19

But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. 14 And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty. 15 Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up — if in fact the dead do not rise. 16 For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. **17 And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins!** 18 Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. 19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.

So are you getting how IMPORTANT this day is?

Today, in 2014 – April 20 IS WAVESHEAF DAY, day of firstfruits. Yeshua is the first of the firstfruits. THIS day is entirely about HIM and him alone. Then 50 days later is the FEAST of firstfruits, also called Feast of Weeks and Feast of Pentecost – about the REST of the early harvest, culminating in the WHEAT harvest of Israel.

We’re going to talk all about that today. It will get clearer. This day is not a holyday, but it is a VERY significant day. I don’t keep Easter. You shouldn’t either. Easter was the way the Catholic church was able to bring in many pagans by continuing a pagan celebration of Easter but re-labeling it as Christian. Now it wasn’t to the pagan goddess of sex and fertility (hence the rabbits and eggs), but supposedly now a commemoration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

And in 2014, Wavesheaf Sunday – the true day the Bible speaks of, and Easter – happen to fall on the same day! So this is NOT an Easter Sunday sermon, but a sermon about our great Savior and His resurrection and ascension to be accepted in our behalf, explained correctly from the viewpoint of the Wavesheaf day and the harvests of Israel! Hallelujah.

Now, those of you of the household of Abba in heaven: maybe we have minimized this day because we want nothing to do with Easter’s pagan roots. God forbid! This day pictures Yeshua, God’s Firstfruits of His spiritual harvest. HE was the first wavesheaf, or omer, of barley.

So today I’m going to talk about new life, resurrection, the empty tomb, Christ risen – but NOT in context of Easter, but in context of what the Bible teaches: Christ the Firstfruits; the Wavesheaf of the firstfruits of the Barley harvest in the Promised Land which began the seven sabbaths to the Feast of Pentecost.

Plan of YHVH CENTERS AROUND THE HARVESTS

PASSOVER

Our heavenly father has a plan of salvation – pictured by the feasts of Israel. You can find these feasts and holydays listed in Leviticus 23. They are called there “The Feasts of YHVH”, not the feasts of Israel or “the feasts of the Jews.” The holydays are divine appointments with Yah (the shortened form for YHVH).

The first day that is mentioned is the Passover, when the Son of God came and died for us, for our sins. The day Yeshua died on the tree or cross, was a Wednesday, and that night started a “high day” – a holyday, beginning the first day of 7-day Feast of Unleavened Bread. Though Passover DAY is the 14th, and the Days of Unleavened Bread were days 15-21 of the Hebrew first month of Abib (also called month of Nisan), the entire feast was called by the Jews as “Passover Week” or “the Feast of Passover”. Actually even in scripture it is referred to that way in Ezekiel 45:21, not commonly referred to by Passover-keepers:

Ezekiel 45:21

"In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, you shall observe the Passover, a feast of seven days; unleavened bread shall be eaten."

As I’ve pointed out in other sermons, our Messiah was killed on Passover day at 3 pm, at the time of the evening sacrifice, at the precise moment the Lamb for the nation was being sacrificed on the altar at the temple.

At that precise moment, at a place called Golgotha, Yeshua the Son of God shouted, “**FINISHED**”, just as the High Priest said the precise word, as he slit the throat of the Passover lamb on the altar. All the sins of all of humanity, in all of each sin’s horror, in the putrid disgusting and awful cesspool of sin, pain and death that Messiah took upon himself - FOR us – were now paid for in full.

I believe now that all the despicable feelings sinners feel – **HE felt**, as all our sins were being piled on to him, on to His one righteous life. All the rejection, all the feeling of self-loathing, all the depression, all the discouragement, all the feeling of being despised and rejected that WE all felt as we sinned – HE was feeling.

This makes him such an effective High Priest (Hebrews 4:14-15). He’s probably thinking during that crucifixion, “Wow, so this is what rejection feels like! It’s awful! Wow, this is what an adulteress feels, or a murderer feels, or a rapist feels....” Folks, ALL the sins and all the feelings of loathing that go with the sin, HE felt, for us. He took all of it upon himself. Not just the sin, not just the guilt, not just the condemnation - -- but also the separation from his father, feeling despised. All of it.

Then in his worst moment, he felt something He had never experienced before. Abba had to separate himself from His son. He had to turn away from the presence of such sin. Now for the first time, 167 times before this in the 4 gospels he almost always referred to God in heaven as the “Father” or “Abba”. Yeshua didn’t normally call him “God”. But now, separated from Him, feeling for that day at least being cast out as a sinner, he cried out – NOT to “Abba”—but to “My God”. “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

He felt it! The horror, the rejection, what a foul sinner feels separated from God. He had never experienced that before. It was a horror to be separated for the first time in eternity, for he was typifying what it was like to have all sins ever committed piled on to him.

Have you ever realized that before? Yeshua for a time had to give up being able to call him Abba, dear Daddy/Father – so you and I, the real sinners, could call him “Abba, Father” through Christ (Galatians 4:6-7). Christ called him “my God”, so you and I could call Him “Father”. In other words, Yeshua went through the separation of sin, our sin, so we could feel the closeness of being “Beloved”. Turn to Psalm 69. Yeshua KNEW rejection!

Look at what HE said in Psalm 69:20-21, a prophecy for the crucifixion:

Psalms 69:19-21

You know my reproach, my shame, and my dishonor;
My adversaries are all before You.

20 Reproach has broken my heart, And I am full of heaviness;

I looked for someone to take pity, but there was none;
And for comforters, but I found none.

21 They also gave me gall for my food,

And for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.

He took all those feelings on to himself, so we no longer have to feel those! **In Luke 4:17-19**, for example, when Yeshua began his ministry he quoted **Isaiah 61:1** and the first thing he came to heal – “the brokenhearted”. Once we no longer feel rejected, condemned and despised, we can move on to new life.

Much illness, much of our mental and physical ailments start from a feeling of rejection, abandonment, being rejected by our friends and family or the society in general. Yeshua felt all that. All humanity, even his own fellow Jews, rejected him. Yeshua came to heal all that by starting with the inside, with our heart.

Passover is about our heavenly father transferring on to his beloved Son ALL our sins and everything that cause us to be separated from him – so that we could now come as His beloved, His children, and draw close to Him. Passover is about making a way possible to have a joyous heavenly FATHER who wants to hug and kiss you and accept YOU as his child.

This was the day when GOD – in the form of the man Yeshua – died FOR you and me.

Passover was the day when **God demonstrated he loved you so much that he would rather die for your sins than have you die.** And believe me, God the Father had a very, very rough day in heaven, on Passover day. That day became dark from noon to 3 pm as the Son of God hung on a stake as a common criminal. Light left the area. There were storms and earthquakes. Oh yes, it was a dark day for Abba too.

So the Father’s plan of salvation begins with Passover with the sacrifice of Yeshua, His perfect son. Without Calvary, without Golgotha and the crucifixion of Passover, there are no firstfruits. Without the death of crucifixion, there is no resurrection, no Bride of Christ, no kingdom of God. So that is why the Good News message *must* include the story of Yeshua. HE was and is the solitary doorway, the way into the kingdom that he preached.

SO Yeshua died at 3 pm. **That night began a “high day” – an annual sabbath.** Those days were not the weekly sabbath but the annual holydays of Leviticus 23. Days began at sundown. So what day was it? It was the first day of Unleavened bread, a high day, starting at sundown the day Yeshua died. In Exodus 12:41-42, it was called “the night to be much observed” or KJV: “a night of solemn observance”. The death of Egypt’s first born broke the will of Pharaoh and they were freed. The death of GOD’S first born broke sin’s hold on us!

So that night was the beginning of a ‘high day’ and an annual “sabbath”. A “high day” would not be a weekly sabbath, but a holy day, which could fall on any day of the week. See Luke 23:50-54 also. Jews did not like condemned men hanging on the crosses during the sabbath, so they asked their deaths be hastened and bodies taken down before sunset. I focus on v 31, 38+.

John 19:31-42

Therefore, because it was the Preparation Day, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (**for that Sabbath was a high day**), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. 32 Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who was crucified with Him. 33 But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. 34 But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out. 35 And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may believe. 36 For these things were done that

the Scripture should be fulfilled, "Not one of His bones shall be broken." 37 And again another Scripture says, "They shall look on Him whom they pierced."

38 After this, Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus; and Pilate gave him permission. So he came and took the body of Jesus. 39 And Nicodemus, who at first came to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of **myrrh** and aloes, about a **hundred pounds**. 40 Then they took the body of Jesus, and bound it in strips of linen with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is to bury. 41 Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. 42 *So there they laid Jesus, because of the Jews' Preparation Day, for the tomb was nearby.*

So it wasn't sundown yet, but minutes before sundown, the body of our Savior is entombed, after they wrapped him in white linen and some myrrh and aloes, a lot of it. Remember what one of the gifts of the wise men was, who had come to see Yeshua? Gold, incense, and MYRRH – which is associated with the **holy anointing oil** (Exodus 30:23-25), **perfume** (Psalm 45:8; Song of Songs 4:6), as a medicine and **anesthetic** (Mark 15:23), and for **embalming** and preparation for burial. Nicodemus and Joseph bought 100 pounds of this very expensive ointment.

THE ONLY SIGN YESHUA GAVE TO PROVE HE WAS WHOM HE SAID HE WAS

The ONLY sign Yeshua gave that he would be the true Promised Messiah, was that he would be three days and 3 nights in the earth. He was buried Wednesday night, and resurrected Saturday night just before sundown, which would be exactly 3 days and 3 nights. You cannot get a 72 hour period from a Friday night burial to sunrise Sunday resurrection. Cannot.

Matthew 12:39-40

But He answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. 40 For as Jonah was three days AND three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."

Anyway, the "Night to be observed", on the eve of the 15th of Nisan, is usually a festive occasion recalling the night they left Egypt, no longer as slaves. Can you imagine what this night would have been like the year Yeshua died? I'm sure they were not in a festive mood.

This Night to be Observed also starts **7 Days of Unleavened Bread**, picturing how we must take in Jesus, the bread of Life, completely and totally in our new lives while putting out the leaven of all sin – which is commandment breaking (**1 John 3:4**) and sin includes pride and vanity, hypocrisy, drunkenness, adultery, sabbath breaking, idolatry and so forth.

As we observe the 7 day spring feast, we must not forget its point: **Christ is our bread of life, He is our righteousness which we receive by faith in Him, while we show our appreciation by living a new way. to God's glory.** We now make a concerted effort to keep leaven, all sin, OUT of our lives, with God's help, after we have accepted God's forgiveness for past sins. It is

HIS righteousness that will be seen by God, but neither will our Father accept anyone who callously and casually sins, disrespecting the body of His Son. Focus on Christ, not on yourself.

So these holydays also show us that people who continue to live a way of life of sin do not know God (**1 John 2:3-6**) and will not be in God’s kingdom (**1 Cor. 6:9-11**). We are called to be overcomers through Christ. HE does it in us, HE gets the glory.

So now Messiah has been crucified, he is dead, he is buried... Wednesday night of that year. Praise be to God, the story doesn’t end there.

Now John 20:1, etc. make sense – “First of the weeks...”

So with that background, let’s now read again John 20:1 – and all the other gospel accounts of the resurrection will have the same information:

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.”

Here and in all the other accounts like Matthew 28:1, Mark 16:2 and Luke 24:1, where they all say “on the first day of the week”, the word “*day*” is **NOT in the original**.

The word translated “*week*” here is the plural Greek word “*sabbaton*” meaning “sabbaths” or “weeks”.

It should read therefore, “on the first of the sabbaths” or “on the first of the weeks”, plural — why? OF course! *Because this was day #1 of the 50 day count to Pentecost*. This also shows the Pharisees were wrong on their calendar of starting the count from the day after the first holyday of the days of unleavened bread.

Here’s what VINE’S Expository Dictionary says about the Greek word “*sabbaton*”, under the article “WEEK”. They know the meaning of the Greek better than you and I do. And note what they specifically say about the gospel accounts:

“sabbaton NT:4521 is used (a) in the plural in the phrase “the first day of the week,”
Matt 28:1; Mark 16:2,9; Luke 24:1; John 20:1,19; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor 16:2.”

In other words, Vine’s admits it should be translated “first of the weeks” or “first of the sabbaths”. Remember we count seven sabbaths or seven weeks to PENTECOST (Lev. 23:15).

What are John, Mark, Matthew and Luke all saying?

They’re saying, on this day when Jesus is revealed as resurrected, it was Wavesheaf Sunday, Firstfruits Sunday, when the 7 Sabbaths and 50 days could start to be counted. Notice this was also a Sunday, the day after the *weekly* Sabbath, not the day after the annual Sabbath.

Now let’s talk about the topic of this message: the forgotten and ignored day (at least forgotten by all too many!)

WAVESHEAF DAY: THE FORGOTTEN and IGNORED DAY

During these days of Unleavened Bread is when we remember another day – what I call the forgotten day: the Wavesheaf of the Firstfruits. After the waving of the wavesheaf by the high priest, the barley harvest could begin around the land and this was a regular work day. It has always been a regular work day in my life. But I do think we should pause at least and remember it, thanking YHVH and our King Jesus (Yeshua) for what God did for us with this day.

Easter is the pagan counterfeit of what we're supposed to do, but fellow Christians – do you remember Wavesheaf Sunday at all? Do you at least have a brief solemn thank you prayer with your family on this day? Or is it, as I say – "the forgotten day"? If so, beware! God says not to forget it!

Leviticus 23:9-11 BARLEY WAVESHEAF during the days of Unleavened Bread

"And YHVH spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'When you come into the land which I give to you, and reap its harvest, then **you shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest.** 11 He shall wave [raise] the sheaf before YHVH, **to be accepted on your behalf**, on the day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it. ..."

Are you hearing it? The firstfruits of the barley was to be raised up on the day after the sabbath, on the first day of the week, so the rest of the harvest could be accepted. But first, God had to accept the first fruits being offered up. "To be accepted on YOUR behalf". He was accepted for us, then the rest of the harvest could begin.

COUNT 50 FROM...

The Bible says a lot about "firsts". **Of all the grains planted in the winter, the first to ripen – or mature-- and to be harvested was BARLEY.** The barley firstfruits represent the First to be presented to the Father to consecrate the rest of the harvest. The firstfruits of barley picture Christ. The REST of the early maturing harvest could picture Christians in the new covenant who have come to spiritual maturity sooner than the others to be harvested. *God said to present the barley firstfruits "on the day after the Sabbath".*

Then 50 days later on Pentecost, the firstfruits of the WHEAT harvest was presented as 2 leavened loaves. So Pentecost and Wavesheaf day 50 days earlier are connected. But Wavesheaf is the first of the barley, and Pentecost is the wheat harvest. Later in the fall comes the great harvest. All this pictures how our God is calling and saving the world in stages – first Christ the firstfruits, then we who are called now, then the rest of humanity, each in his own order as 1 Cor. 15 says.

The Pharisees, ancestors of modern Orthodox Judaism, taught that "the sabbath" they were to use as the day before the count began, meant the first high day of the feast of Unleavened bread, so their Pentecost always comes on the same predictable date – Sivan 6 of the Hebrew calendar. There would be no need to count 50 days if you know the end point.

But we believe, as did the ancient Sadducees and Karaites, that the sabbath of Lev 23:11 refers to the weekly sabbath. That means you have to count the 50 days, and that means it will always end up with a Pentecost on a Sunday. Day 1 is the Wavesheaf Day, and that's why it is called "the first of the weeks" in the original Greek, in John 20:1.

What is an OMER or “sheaf”? What was “waved” - a sheaf?

Also be aware that when we read “sheaf” it really comes from the Hebrew word “omer”. That word “omer” can be *a unit of measure* – such as “so many omers of manna”, as in Exodus 16:16, 31-34 or it **can be sheaves** and stalks of grain, as used in other scriptures.

If we compare **Numbers 15:17=21**, we find the command to bring **the first of their ground meal** before God. So what they did was harvest the first fruit of barley and then grind it into very fine flour – and wave – raise-move it from side to side – raise it to God as an offering, and that sanctified the rest of the harvest. And we know from historical records that they always raised an amount of very finely ground FLOUR from the cut stalks – but they didn’t raise the cut stalks or sheaves themselves. I know, I know. We keep seeing graphics of sheaves being waved. But historically that is not what happened.

Numbers 15:17-21

17 Again YHVH spoke to Moses, saying, 18 "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'When you come into the land to which I bring you, 19 then it will be, when you eat of the bread of the land, that you shall **offer up a heave offering** to YHVH. 20 You shall offer up a **cake of the first of your GROUND MEAL** as a heave offering; as a heave offering of the threshing floor, so shall you offer it up. 21 **Of the first of your ground meal** you shall give to YHVH a heave offering throughout your generations.

The wavesheaf (omer) of first fruit barley could also point to “the best of” – and it had to be the first, of course (1 Samuel 2:29).

As time went on, the Jews set aside a specific field just outside Jerusalem where barley was grown naturally and then the first ripening sheaves were carefully marked and bundled by members of the Sanhedrin – but still uncut. These were to be the firstfruit barley presented for the nation. But individual families of Israel also brought their *own* firstfruits of their own crops as well.

Interesting: For most years, the first strain of barley to ripen is **a red-strained barley**. I’ve seen it with my own eyes. A barley expert – Brian Convery – showed me some in Israel in March 2009. This particular barley has red stripes all over it and it’s the first ripen. Think about that! Red stripes. It was so obvious to me that this strain of barley was a picture of our Savior.

The 50-day period of time from the Wavesheaf to Pentecost was called “Counting the Omer”. *When Yeshua died, keep in mind that the priests were in charge of what went on in the temple, and so they effectively ran the calendar. They counted, correctly, from the day after the weekly Sabbath.*

What the Jews would do – and did the same year Jesus died (waiving the omer or sheaves):

At sundown on the weekly Sabbath after Passover, 3 selected men wielding sickles would proceed to the specially selected standing barley, firstfruits that had been carefully marked. After asking several prescribed questions, they would cut down the firstfruits to release them from the earth, right at sundown.

Now think about this carefully! I got this material from several books on the subject as well as from other research.

Remember again why they’re doing this:

Leviticus 23:9-11

“And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 10 *“Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘When you come into the land which I give to you, and reap its harvest, then you shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest.’* 11 He shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, ***to be accepted on your behalf***, on the day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it.”

PREPARING the Omer of firstfruit barley

Next the barley sheaves would be brought to the temple court and threshed with rods and then parched over an open flame and then winnowed to remove any chaff. Then they milled the grains and put them through an *intensive* sifting process until sifted very fine. This was done until it was so fine that your hand could be placed in the flour without any flour sticking to your hand. Then one omer, about 5 pints, was mixed with some olive oil and some frankincense and waved (raised up high) before YHVH by the priest as the first fruits to God.

Some believe the sheaves (“omer” = “measure” remember, not necessarily “sheaf” as we westerners think of it) were standing sheaves of grain that were cut and then raised up to heaven as sheaves, but everything we can see in history and documentation says otherwise.

So think of what this tells us:

- **The barley firstfruits were pre-selected**, as Christ was before the foundation of the world (Rev. 13:8), and slain FROM the foundation of the world.
- They were released from the earth when the sickle was put to them, at sundown at the end of the Sabbath - - exactly 3 days and 3 nights after Jesus was entombed.
- early the next morning, on Sunday the first day of the week, these first fruits of barley was raised up high by the priest to God to be accepted on our behalf, and of course to consecrate the rest of the harvest as well (Lev. 23:11). *The harvest of human lives could not really begin until Messiah had been released from the earth (resurrected) and lifted up to heaven to **be accepted** on our behalf.*

*The words “to be accepted” – wow. Family of YHVH, the Hebrew here is rason—meaning “Pleasure, delight, desire, favor, accepted.” **THROUGH YESHUA, and IN Him, you and I become a PLEASURABLE, delightfully favored and accepted child of the Highest. Amen? Hallelujah!***

Ephesians 1:3-6

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, **who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ**, 4 just as He chose us **in Him** before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, 5 having predestined us to **adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself**, according to the **good pleasure of His will**, 6 to the praise of the glory of ***His grace, by which He made us accepted [HIGHLY honored and greatly favored] in the Beloved.***

- *Once this had been done, the barley harvest could begin. Yeshua is the firstfruits, had to be accepted first, and then HE consecrates the rest of the harvest. YOU are also now accepted in the Beloved. Amen and hallelujah.*

Now keep all this in mind as we see what scripture says about Jesus.

Only *after* the firstfruits were presented to God, could the REST of the harvest be presented.

1 Corinthians 15:20-23

“But now **Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits** of those who have fallen asleep. 21 For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. 23 **But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, *afterward*** those who are Christ's at His coming.”

Remember I said the harvest starts after the first fruit wavesheaf of barley was offered – picturing Jesus Christ, or YESHUA. The *spiritual* harvest of *people* being called and converted and brought into God's family, also starts with Jesus being offered up first of all, FOR us – and “afterward those who are Christ’s at His coming.”

The barley wavesheaf of firstfruits on wavesheaf day pictures Christ and Him alone. He alone is the first of the firstfruits (1 Cor. 15:20). He sanctifies the rest of the harvest (Lev. 23:12). On the Sunday during the Days of Unleavened Bread, the first sheaves of barley are presented – or waived – to God, to be presented in behalf of the rest of the harvest, and actually as Lev. 23:11 says, “*to be presented on YOUR behalf...*”, which began the barley harvest.

This harvest lasted for 7 weeks plus a day, 50 days total, to end on a Sunday Pentecost.

So Wavesheaf Day, always on a Sunday, is not a feast day, is not a holyday, but in fact pictures the start of the barley harvest. It is a work day. Having said that, what my wife and I customarily do is to have a quiet and joyful prayer of thanksgiving together, thanking God for the resurrection of Messiah and asking Him to give us perfect faith in His sacrifice, in His life, and His saving sinless righteous life which we claim now by faith.

What else does it picture – the fact it’s a WORK day? Yeshua at one time said “The harvest is ready but the laborers are few” and He admonishes us to work while it is day. It seems clear to me that the fact **Wavesheaf Day is a work day points to Father’s desire that we labor in the harvest, spreading the good news,** spreading the word of what The Savior has done and of His coming kingdom.

Matthew 9:35-38

Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. 36 But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. 37 Then He said to His disciples, “*The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. 38 Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.*”

Luke uses this teaching at the sending out of the 70 disciples. Perhaps Yeshua said it more than once – the other one is in Luke 10:1-4.

How seriously are we taking this message – that we are spiritually in a work day of harvesting lives for God? You can also read how in **Acts 8:3-4** as believers were scattered due to persecution and imprisonment, it says in Acts 8:4, “Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word.”

Those are regular believers, not preachers. The apostles stayed in Jerusalem. You be willing to show some excitement that the tomb is empty and our Savior is in Heaven, alive and working in our behalf and coming back to earth soon. And we are now in HIM, a part of Him, we now belong to him. Everywhere He is, we are with him if we are in him.

You belong to Christ, not to church groups. *Pastors, tear down these walls that you have erected keeping brethren from their brothers and sisters.* Let the family of God mix and mingle with their brothers and sisters.

The FEAST of Firstfruits refers to Pentecost

So 50 days later, the Feast of Firstfruits (of wheat) refers to the Feast of Pentecost, and that feast pictures those of us being called and converted now. *Those of us being called now, in this life, are now called Firstfruits of God.* You can check out **James 1:18, Revelation 14:4**. That’s pictured by Pentecost. [NOTE: I went over this section quickly in the audio for time’s sake.]

James 1:18 “Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, *that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.*”

In Numbers 28:26 the Feast of Pentecost is referred to as Feast of weeks, day of Firstfruits. (On Wavesheaf day, 50 days earlier, Christ ALONE is the first of the firstfruits.)

Any time someone was the first to be called and converted from a particular region, Paul called them “the firstfruits of Achaia” (Romans 16:5 – Epaenetus), and Stephanas was “the firstfruits of Achaia” (1 Cor. 16:5).

You can read more about Pentecost if you wish in Leviticus 23:15-17, but that’s not the focus of this sermon, though I want to be CLEAR that Pentecost and Wavesheaf Day are absolutely connected together. The firstfruits of the new church began on Pentecost, in Acts 2.

What does this mean? This is God’s pledge of a future harvest yet coming. That’s pictured by the other harvests of wheat and later in the Fall, the great harvest that comes in (pictured by the whole world coming to Yahweh in the Millennium). Praise the Eternal.

The TERM “feast of firstfruits” refers to the Feast of Pentecost, which is the firstfruits of the WHEAT harvest, which starts a few weeks after the barley harvest starts. This feast, 50 days after Wavesheaf Sunday, is called by different names: Pentecost, Feast of Weeks, Feast of Harvest (Ex. 23:16); Feast of Firstfruits. “*Pentecost*” is Greek for “fiftieth”. The Hebrew word used is *Shavuot*, or “weeks”.

THE RISEN CHRIST IS WHO THE BARLEY FIRSTFRUITS PICTURED

So we know now that Christ is the FIRST OF THE FIRSTFRUITS, then afterwards those who are HIS at his coming (1 Cor. 15:20-24). We no longer are required to offer physical firstfruits because Christ is the reality of it – plus there is no physical temple and physical priests to offer them to, today! But if you wish to give first fruits to your pastor, be my guest.

Remember how for the ritual of the wavesheaf some stands of barley firstfruits were preselected? Yeshua was also pre-selected long before the wavesheaf was actually offered. He was as good as "slain from the foundation of the world" (Revelation 13:8).

WHEN he was to be sacrificed was carefully prophesied in Daniel 9:27, be turning there. When Yeshua was crucified, His sacrifice made an END to sacrifice as Hebrews 10 teaches us. It says in Daniel 9 that it was in the **middle** of the 7-DAY week. **That would be DAY #4 in the week**, which is a Wednesday, which is exactly when Yeshua died. A Friday crucifixion does not give you 3 days and 3 nights, and certainly was not the middle of the week.

Now I realize Daniel 9:27 is also a yet future prophecy of the time coming when the reinstituted sacrifices in a future temple in Jerusalem will be stopped, halfway through a 7 year period. But it is interesting that it mentions the end of sacrifices being in the middle of the week, which would be a Wednesday. That also allows for a perfect 3 days and 3 nights, resurrection at sundown Sabbath night, and the tomb already empty.

Daniel 9:27

"Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week;

But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering.

And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate,

Even until the consummation, which is determined,

Is poured out on the desolate."

Hebrews 10:11-14

And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. 12 But this Man, **after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God**, 13 from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool. 14 **For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.**

Hebrews 10:18

Now where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin.

So Daniel 9:27 is clearly speaking of a middle of the week Passover when Christ put away forever the need for any further animal sacrifices. He was buried before sundown Weds night, and then resurrected 3 days and 3 nights later – sabbath afternoon just before sunset, he was resurrected, and by Sunday morning the tomb was already empty. Of course! He had RISEN.

What was he waiting for? The 9 am ritual service when the High priest would wave, or raise, the fine refined barley omer of flour to heaven – and then he lowered his arms back down. Yeshua went to FATHER at 9 am and came back the same day, at evening (John 20:19).

YESHUA IS RISEN, Yeshua LIVES!!!

IMAGINE with me what the scene was in heavenly Jerusalem when OUR KING went home. It was a long 30+ years, or 33, and each day seemed like a thousand years when you had been together all the time. The heavenly choirs, the processional parade of millions of angels, the cherubim, the seraphim, the 24 elders all casting their crowns before Him – and praising Him in song and reverent worship. God the son of the Father had come home.

And what was it like between Abba and our Yeshua!? WOW! All the victory recognition parades and White House presentations would pale in comparison. What you see in movies, would pale in comparison. The greatest battles, the greatest contests and wars had been fought, and Yeshua – though battle scarred – had crushed the Serpent’s head.

Hallelujah! Hallelujah!! I’m celebrating that on wavesheaf day! Join me in joyful worship and prayers of gratitude to our AWESOME KING and hero – He’s our god, he’s our king, he’s our friend – and brother. And he’s not ashamed of us, even after all we have done.

Accept it, brethren. Receive it. Love the message. Focus on Him, not on yourself. Part of the meaning of this day is that Yeshua has made you accepted in the beloved. Highly favored, loved, cherished and a source of joy for God – in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen? Hallelujah!

BEFORE 9 a.m., Yeshua sees Mary Magdalene, and asks her not to cling to him as he had to go to his father and her father, his God and her God (John 20:17) to be accepted in our behalf, sanctifying the harvest of souls. Hallelujah.

Get excited about it. We get excited over stupid football games or basketball games. Get excited about this! Make it real! People who SAW Yeshua after his resurrection were willing to die for him because they SAW him, saw the future in Him and with him. Some rough times are coming; let’s start “Seeing” Him better too.

Revelation 1:17-18

“And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, “Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. **18 I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen.** And I have the keys of Hades and of Death.”

THE MESSAGE of the RISEN Christ was CENTRAL to the APOSTLES’ TEACHING

This message about the death and resurrection of the Son of God became a part of the complete true gospel, the good news, of God. For those who believe Jesus preached only the kingdom of God and not about Himself, go back and read the gospel of John again, the 7 “I Am” statements, and you will see He said A TON about himself. For HE is the way, HE is the Door, He is the Life, HE is the portal to the kingdom of God. Without Him, there is no kingdom, no future, no resurrection, no life, no nothing!

We know Jesus came preaching the kingdom of God. But we can have no kingdom without a king. For example, if I was teaching on the kingdom of the Roman Empire, it would be incomplete if I didn’t also tell you all about Julius Caesar and the other Caesars.

So what do we find the apostles preaching? They preached Christ (see Peter’s first sermon in Acts 2). Remember they were told to preach the gospel and they did, but they sure did not

leave out the message about the kingdom’s king. See these verses also – how they **“preached Christ”** -- Acts 8:5; Acts 5:42; Acts 9:20-22; 18:5, 28; Acts 26:21-23; Acts 28:31; 1 Cor. 1:23; Phil 1:15-16.

Now Paul in a couple places makes clear that the gospel HE preached was centrally based around the king of the kingdom – Yeshua, Jesus Christ.

Romans 1:1-5 (especially verse 3)

“Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, **separated to the gospel of God** 2 which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, 3 **CONCERNING His Son Jesus Christ our Lord**, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, 4 and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead”

1 Corinthians 15:1-4

“Moreover, brethren, **I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you**, which also you received and in which you stand, 2 **by which also you are saved**, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you -- unless you believed in vain.

3 For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: **that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures,...**” -- all in context of verse 1: defining the very gospel Paul preached.”

The gospel of the Kingdom goes nowhere without the risen King! The gospel of the Kingdom won’t ever come to reality without the life, death and resurrection of our Savior. Paul warned about preaching some other Jesus than he preached. Paul preached Jesus, in other words.

Let’s praise God for this resurrection.

You know what else? We are redeemed by His blood sacrifice – but it is His LIFE that saves us. His life being lived again in us, giving us HIS righteousness, is what actually saves us.

Romans 5:10-11

“For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, **we shall be saved by His life**. 11 And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.”

And so that is why I focus so much on Gal. 2:20 – that the life we NOW live is actually Jesus living in us. Jesus and Father have come to reside in us. Through God’s spirit, we become the body temple of God. Brethren, all of this is now possible, because of Wavesheaf Sunday and the Resurrection of our Lord.

Christ is now our life.... All because of wavesheaf Sunday! That’s the life Paul wanted. All he wanted was to know Christ and the power of HIS resurrection.

Philippians 3:9-11

“**and be found IN HIM**, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, **the righteousness which is from God by faith**; 10 **that I may know Him** and the **power of HIS resurrection**, and the fellowship of His

sufferings, being conformed to His death, 11 if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

Yeshua should be walking the earth now by the thousands, in all of us who are letting him live in us, changing us, washing us, transforming us to be more and more like him. But still, the life God sees is the life of His perfect son, since we are in Him. WE no longer live, but the life we live is Christ (Galatians 2:20-21).

2 Cor 4:9-11

"persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed -- 10 always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, **that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.** 11 For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh."

Colossians 3:3-4

"For you died, and **your life is hidden with Christ** in God. 4 When **Christ who is our life** appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory."

And with Christ as our life, we can go on to verses 5-6 and put down the carnal desires that pull us down.

John 14:19-20

"A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. **Because I live, you will live also.**"

NO wonder Paul said in **Philippians 3:9-11** that what he wanted more than anything else was to "KNOW HIM, and the power of HIS resurrection". WOW! Knowing the power of HIS resurrection in us. Now that's really living. That's real righteousness. That's real power.

Brethren, that's all for now. God bless you and remember this day. Without it, all the others would never happen.

Til next time, this is your brother Philip, saying walk with God and praise Him for Yeshua, THE first fruit, the first of the first fruits. May our loving Father grant you to receive Yeshua as your personal Savior, your KING to obey, your Husband to love, and your LIFE to live in you.

[Closing prayer imploring the Father's presence and help and blessings – and thanking our Abba in heaven and Yeshua our Savior.]

In Yeshua's mighty, wonderful name – Amen and Amen.

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