



HOLY WEEK

2023



BEIT EL JAN 25, 2023 SHOULD CHRISTIANS CELEBRATE THE SPRING FEASTS?

Understanding Holy Week Spring Feasts

Did you know the word Easter is mentioned in the bible, in Acts 12:4 and the Greek word for Easter is Pesach. Therefore, Easter is held on the 14th day of Nissan, the same day as Passover not just any Sunday.

Passover (Pesach) April 5, 2023 meaning freedom and was celebrated when the Jews was delivered from Egypt; they painted the blood of an unblemished lamb over their door posts. When the death angel passed by a house marked with the blood, it passed house by sparing the lives of all who resided. Orthodox Jews celebrate Passover remembering the 10 plagues of Egypt and the crossing of the red sea, as well as the death angel passing over their houses. Messianic Jews and Christians celebrate Passover today in memory of Yeshua when He died as the sacrificial lamb. His death was the ultimate sacrifice, and we no longer are bound by everlasting death, but unto everlasting life. It was fulfilled by the death, burial and resurrection of Messiah (Matthew 5:17, 19, Lev 23:5 & 14 (Pesach is a forever/permanent feast). Though the Apostle Paul tells us not look down on those who do or don't celebrate, for celebrating the feast will not save us or send us to hell, but it is a foreshadow of things to come. Isaiah 66:23 speaks of all peoples during the Millennial will go up to Jerusalem and celebrate the feast. Isaiah is a prophetic word speaking things to come in the future.

Jesus obeyed and fulfilled the moral laws by living a perfect life (integrity/ethics, morals, values); Jesus said, "I didn't come to replace the law but to fulfill"

(Matthew 5:17:20). Jesus fulfilled the ceremonial laws through his death, burial and resurrection. He came to finish the old Covenant and establish the new (Luke 22:14-20).

When Jesus died His blood became the blood that washed believers' sins away. He is the unblemished lamb that was sacrificed so that death may Passover believers today. Just as the Hebrews believe the blood on the posts would protect them from the angel of death, so Christians now believe that Jesus' death and blood protects us from everlasting death; only if we believe He is the Passover blood, the savior of the World.

How to celebrate?

Passover is the fourteenth day of the month Nissan on God's calendar, which is April 5, 2023. Passover is celebrated in Jewish homes or synagogues. Messianic believers and orthodox Jews celebrate with a special meal known as a Seder. The story of Passover is often recounted during the Seder and read from a Haggadah (story book telling the story of the crossing over). Traditionally symbolic foods like Charoset (apples and honey) and Horseradish are eaten. The symbolic foods are placed on a specific plate called a Seder plate/tray. No leavened (bread made of yeast) foods are eaten during Passover. Leaven bread is made of yeast, which makes bread rise. The unleavened bread reminds us to remove sin from our lives, especially the sin of pride which rises within our flesh.

The Passover Seder is a reminder to the Jewish families celebrating of their ancestors suffering in Egypt and of the miraculous deliverance from their bondage. Passover remind Christians and Messianic Jews of Yeshua today how He died and became a sacrifice so that death Passover us forever spiritually and physically.

Seder – is the Passover meal. Usually held the first of the day of the week or the last day of the week or both. Christians and Jews alike share in a Seder meal. The Passover meal was first in Egypt and the last supper of Jesus Christ -- Matthew 26:15. Today the Seder is eaten with bitter herbs, unleavened bread, egg, wine, and a full meat; it is a festive occasion. It's a feast and celebration!

Feast of Unleavened Bread – April 6, - April 13, was fulfilled by Christ and means to be rid of sin. Celebrated seven days beginning the day after Passover and coincides with the Feast of Weeks. One of the traditions of celebrating the Feast of Passover, is the cleaning of one's house of all bread made with yeast. The house represents our body where our souls live and reminds us to also clean our physical bodies of sin. This feast was fulfilled by the righteous character and sinlessness life of Christ, and the blood offered upon his death. Leviticus 23:14 requires the celebration as it is a moedim of God (forever/Permanent feast). Jesus taught us to cleanse our physical house from sin and hatred to righteous living and love. God loves drama and symbolism. This feast reminds us we are nothing but filthy rags and can do nothing without God's grace and mercy. It reminds us to remove pride, arrogance and strive to be perfect.

During the **Feast of Unleavened Bread**, no food with leaven is eaten. In the days leading up to Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread Jewish and believers' families clean their homes of any leaven so as not to cause defilement during the feast. The unleavened bread eaten during the feast is called Matzo. Matzo is pronounced like "Ma-tzah". The first and seventh days are Holy Convocations in which no work is permitted. Therefore, Good Friday is considered a holy holiday. We clean our physical bodies from the yeast of pride, haughtiness, and all those things that makes us puffed up. This is a time to remember Jesus humbled himself when he took the whips, spit, cursing, mocking and hung on the cross for our sake.

Feast of First Fruits – 1st Day of the week after Passover April 9, (Numbers 28:26; Lev 23:11; Lev 23:14). During the months of January – March, the Jews plant trees preparing for harvest season. They place a string around the first trees to remember the first fruits of their crops is to be offered up to God as a thanksgiving offering for God being their provider. Jesus fulfilled the Feast of First Fruits by being the sacrificial lamb and son of God. God gave His only begotten Son as a sacrificial offering. Today, Jews still celebrate First Fruits with their offerings and so do Christians. First Fruits is an individual decision. Christians may not have crops to bring as an offering, but surely

may bring a First Fruit offering of our income. Remember, it's a personal individual decision, therefore you decide to give an hour's pay, a week's pay, a month's pay; it's up to you the believer. We celebrate and give by faith believing God's word. First Fruits is one day not all year round and not in January.

Feast of Weeks May 25 – May 27 Leviticus 23:15-21. Feast of Weeks commemorates the anniversary of the day God gave the Torah to the entire Israelite nation assembled at Mount Sinai. Exactly on the same day Jesus sent the Holy Ghost as promised. Feast of Weeks was fulfilled by the birth of the Church and the Holy Ghost. Also known as Shavuot, the Feast of Weeks is to take place exactly seven Sabbaths and one day or fifty days total from First Fruits. In Hebrew Shavuot means "weeks". Shavuot is often called Pentecost which means "fifty" in Greek. Shavuot, like First Fruits, is a harvest festival in which the Israelites were to present an offering of new grain (in this case wheat) to the Lord in the Temple. Today Shavuot is celebrated in Israel by reading the account of the giving of the Law in Exodus chapters 19 and 20. The book of Ruth is also read because it is a book of harvest and redemption. It is customary to eat dairy foods like cheese during Shavuot. Shavuot is a Holy Convocation in which no work is permitted. Feast of Weeks marks the conclusion of the **Counting of the Omer**, it is the last two days of the counting.

Counting of the Omer (April 6 – May 25) the Israelites counted the Omer to remind them of the Covenant God made with them at Mt Sinai. The Journey from the Red Sea to Mt. Sinai was 50 days, there they received the promise and the covenant. 50 days from Jesus's death they received the promise of the Holy Ghost.

Today Jews and Christians alike count the Omer to remind us of the new Covenant through Jesus Christ. Jesus is the First Fruit, and He fulfilled the Feast of weeks through his resurrection and sending the Holy Spirit. During this time, we are to count out loud daily, meditating on scriptures reflecting who Jesus is and not so much what He has done; we thank God for Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. Being reminded that we can count on Jesus to save us from all. Jesus did not replace the law; He fulfilled the law.

During the feast of weeks, they offered two loaves of bread with yeast, which represented the Jews and Gentiles. Ephesians 2:11-16. Two loaves were to be offered on a single sheet. The Feast of Weeks [*Shavuot*] or Pentecost was fulfilled and became the birthday of the Church, which is composed of both Jew and Gentile believers, united into one Body (Single Sheet). One loaf represents the Jews and one loaf represents the Gentiles, and the single sheet represents the fact that Jewish and Gentile believers are united into one Body ([Ephesians 2:11-16](#); [3:5-6](#)).

The Allowance of Leaven in the Feast – [Matthew 13:24-30](#) teach us to observed from the Hebrew Scriptures in this feast the two loaves were leaven bread ([Leviticus 23:17](#)). Leaven, when used symbolically in scripture, is a symbol of sin. It is Jewish and Gentile sinners who are saved by grace through faith and are brought into this one Body, now called the Church, the Body of Messiah.

Furthermore, these loaves were to be made of wheat. Wheat and harvest are common symbols of evangelism and salvation in the Gospels. In [Matthew 3:11-12](#), the concepts of wheat and harvest are also connected with baptism of the Holy Spirit, which began on the Feast of Pentecost, and by which the Church came into existence. These symbols of wheat, evangelism, and salvation are found again in [Matthew 13:24-30](#). This parable is an elaboration of the [Matthew 3:11-12](#) passage where wheat is again used as a symbol of evangelism and salvation which results in being unified into the Body of the Messiah, born on the Feast of Weeks [*Shavuot*] or Pentecost. Also see [John 4:35-38](#).

Recap

- ▶ Passover was fulfilled by the death of the Messiah.
- ▶ 2. The Feast of Unleavened Bread was fulfilled by the sinlessness of His blood sacrifice and blood offering.
- ▶ 3. Feast of First Fruits was fulfilled by the Resurrection of the Messiah.

- 4. The Feast of Weeks [Shavuot] or Pentecost was fulfilled by the birth of the Church the Body of Messiah, both Jew and Gentile in one body.

You may ask: Should we count the Omer? Why do we count the Omer? What is the significance of counting the Omer?

The idea of counting each day represents **spiritual preparation and anticipation for the giving of the Torah** which was given by God on Mount Sinai at the beginning of the month of Sivan, around the same time as the holiday of Shavuot or Pentecost.

We number off every day of the 49 days that separate Passover, our festival of freedom, from Shavuot, the day we celebrate the receiving of the Torah. Fifty (50) is the number of Jubilee a release, so the Omer also signifies the Season of Liberation, "You shall count from the eve of the second day of Pesach (Passover/Easter), when an Omer of grain is to be brought as an offering, seven complete weeks. The day after the seventh week of your counting will make fifty days, and you shall present a new meal offering to God" ([Leviticus 23:15-16](#)). Counting of the Omer is about being clothed with the Ruach HaChodesh (Holy Spirit), to encounter the resurrected Lord of Glory.

God is symbolic and He loves drama. Each feasts' preparation and celebration have a purpose symbolically pointing to our Savior Jesus Christ's birth, death, resurrection or return in some way. Today, everything we as believers of Christ do should point to the return of the Lord.

- They counted 49 days from the crossing of the red sea to mt Sinai to receive the Torah.
- The disciples counted 49 days and received the Holy Spirit
- We now count 49 days from Passover looking for the return of Yeshua.

Did you know that all of Yeshua's appearances occurred during the 50 days of the counting of the Omer.

- On the first day of the Omer Yeshua appeared to Mary Magdalene Mark 16:9, John 20:16-18; Other women Matthew 28:5-10; Simon Peter Luke 24:34; I Cor 15:5
- On the 2nd day of the Omer Yeshua appeared on the road to Damascus Luke 24:31; at evening on the same day to the 12 Mark 16:14, Luke 24:33-39, John 20:19
- A week later Yeshua appeared to the 12 again John 20:26, eight days later He appeared to Thomas, John 20:24-29, again He appeared to the 12 a third time John 21:1-14
- Later He appeared to the 500 I Cor 15:6; then to James His half-brother I Cor 15:7.
- On the 40th day of the Omer, He appeared again and told His followers not to leave Jerusalem until the promised had been fulfilled during Shavuot Luke 24:49; Acts 1:9-12.
- On the 50th day the disciples received the Holy Ghost as promised and thus was born again and became Apostles Acts 2:1-4.

Everything God does is for a purpose, and it's for our Good. With so much evil running about in the world, we should be happy and look towards celebrating the Holy Feasts and counting the Omer. It's a time to spend with God through the Ruach HaChodesh. It's a time to spend looking for Yeshua. Since we don't know when He will return, we want to always be watching, praying and preparing for His return. By doing these things, it helps to keep us in retrospect; it helps to keep us believing.

All in all, God kept His word to the Hebrews through Moses. God kept His word through Jesus Christ. God shall keep His word to the church through the New Covenant of the blood sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Torah now becomes a matter of the heart. You either believe or not.