

The Wave Sheaf Ordinance

by
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A passage of Scripture that is rarely discussed among commandment keepers, although pertinent to establishing the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost), is Leviticus 23:9-21. Let us read that passage carefully and determine for ourselves why it figures so prominently within the corpus of instructions concerning the feasts of Yahweh.

“And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them, When you have come into the land which I will give to you, and shall reap the harvest of it, then you shall bring the sheaf of the first-fruits of your harvest to the priest: and he shall wave the sheaf before Yahweh, to be accepted for you: on the day after the sabbath the priest shall wave it. And in the day when you wave the sheaf, you shall offer a he-lamb without blemish a year old for a burnt-offering to Yahweh. And the meal-offering of it shall be two tenth parts of an ephah of fine flour mingled with oil, an offering made by fire to Yahweh for a sweet savor; and the drink-offering of it shall be of wine, the fourth part of a hin. And you shall

eat neither bread, nor parched grain, nor fresh ears, until this very day, until you have brought the oblation of your Elohim: it is a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.

“And you shall count from the day after the sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave-offering; seven sabbaths shall there be complete: even to the day after the seventh sabbath shall you number fifty days; and you shall offer a new meal-offering to Yahweh. You shall bring out of your habitations two wave-loaves of two tenth parts of an ephah: they shall be of fine flour, they shall be baked with leaven, for first-fruits to Yahweh. And you shall present with the bread seven lambs without blemish a year old, and one young bullock, and two rams: they shall be a burnt-offering to Yahweh, with their meal-offering, and their drink-offerings, even an offering made by fire, of a sweet savor to Yahweh. And you shall offer one he-goat for a sin-offering, and two he-lambs a year old for a

sacrifice of peace-offerings. And the priest shall wave them with the bread of the first-fruits for a wave-offering before Yahweh, with the two lambs: they shall be holy to Yahweh for the priest. And you shall make proclamation on this very day; there shall be a holy convocation to you; you shall do no servile work: it is a statute forever in all your dwellings throughout your generations.”

Now let us ask ourselves some important questions regarding this passage. In this way we will be able to comprehend more completely the intention of Almighty Yahweh for inserting it in His Word.

• **How important is the understanding of the wave sheaf ordinance?** It is the only method set forth in the sacred Scriptures for counting toward the Feast of Weeks. The Greek word for the Feast of Weeks is **Pentecost**, meaning to count 50 days.

• **What is its meaning?** Under the agrarian system of ancient Israel, the Feast of Weeks, or Pentecost, meant the thanksgiving for the firstfruits of the grain harvest. Under the New Testament or Covenant, it indicates the firstfruit harvest of the people of this earth

who have been saved. Remember, Yahshua the Messiah is the firstfruit of those to be resurrected, 1 Corinthian 15:20, 23.

- **How was it observed?** The first ripe sheaf of grain was cut and waved before Almighty Yahweh in thanksgiving for the new harvest. In this New Testament age, Yahweh's ministers preach a sermon wherein we remember the resurrection of Yahshua the Messiah, who comprises the firstfruit of the harvest of this earth.

- **Who is to observe this wave sheaf ordinance?** It is to be observed by all Israelites (presently the spiritually begotten True Worshipers, the **overcomers**, Galatians 6:15-16), Leviticus 23:10.

- **Why is this wave sheaf ordinance to be observed?** It is to be kept in remembrance of the one wave sheaf representing Yahshua the Messiah. He was the beginning of the human harvest of the earth, pointing toward those first True Worshipers to be resurrected through the life-giving power of Yahweh's Holy Spirit when Yahshua the Messiah returns. These are the firstfruits described in Revelation 14:1-5.

- **Is this a commanded observance?** The obvious answer is yes, although it is not designated as an annual Sabbath.

- **Is this observance to be a permanent institution or ordinance?** Almighty Yahweh wants us to understand that it is indeed permanent. He said, **"...it is a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings,"** Leviticus 23:14.

The relationship between the firstfruits offering, counting toward the Feast of Weeks, and the resurrection of Yahshua the Messiah, is unmistakable. Yahshua was resurrected in the end of the Sabbath, Matthew 28:1. He was the firstfruit of the resurrection of the human race to be given the status of being born again into the family of Yahweh. We read throughout the books of

the evangels, especially in the book and the epistles of John, that it is through Yahshua the Messiah and in His Name that the Holy Spirit is given (John 14:26 and 1 John 4:13-17).

Notice that when the firstfruit (Hebrew, #1061, *bikkur*) wave sheaf offering is brought to the priest, and he waves it before Yahweh, He will accept it for His people. Yahshua the Messiah symbolically was accepted for us, as He ascended to Almighty Yahweh where He sits today at the right hand of Yahweh.

The restriction is included that new grain (either bread, parched corn, or green ears) is not to be eaten until Yahweh's people have given thanks to Him for the firstfruits. This means that Yahshua the Messiah precedes, is the firstborn, among many brethren. The subsequent two additional resurrections could not occur until the resurrection of Yahshua the Messiah, who symbolized the firstfruit of all who slept. Only after Yahshua the Messiah had experienced this resurrection from the dead could His Assembly participate in the spiritual harvest.

Notice again how important it is to **COUNT SEVEN COMPLETE WEEKS** toward Pentecost, from the very day the wave sheaf offering is brought to the Temple of Yahweh. A complete week begins with its first day, and terminates with its seventh day, which is the scriptural Sabbath. Just as we read in a preceding passage, we must terminate our count on a weekly Sabbath, and, thus throughout the seven weeks. The following day, which is the 50th day, constitutes the annual holy day when our Heavenly Father has directed that His people should gather for a holy convocation of worship.

The only correct way to count the 50 days and still end on the first day of the week is to begin the count on the day following the Sabbath, on the first day of the week. The Sabbath designated to begin our count either falls on Passover or during the

seven days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. We will then complete 49 days or seven full weeks, ending with a weekly seventh-day Sabbath. The following day is Pentecost, the first day of the week, the 50th day.

Observe how the wave sheaf offering of ripe grain also affects the setting of the Feast Days of Unleavened Bread. It also determines when the Passover Memorial occurs.

"Seven weeks shall you number to yourself: from the time you begin to put the sickle to the standing grain..." Deuteronomy 16:9. The center column in most Bibles gives the accurate translation, ***"Begin to number the seven weeks from such a time as thou beginnest to put the sickle to the STANDING GRAIN."*** This specifies that we may not cut down a sheaf of grain earlier than on this particular day and allow it to dry. This grain must have come to ripeness by itself. It must be standing in the field when the wave sheaf is to be offered.

Here, again, we can see the fulfillment in type by Yahshua the Messiah. He was standing, **IN THE RESURRECTION**, at the beginning of the first day of the week, after spending the seventh-day Sabbath as His third day of rest in the tomb.

We are directed to cut the standing grain when it is ripe. We cannot offer the unmaturing stalks with no ripe grain on them. Should the grain still be slightly moist, soft, or doughy when thrashed, Almighty Yahweh has made special provisions in allowing it to be parched (dried over a heat source), Leviticus 2:14-16. This is the harvest that Almighty Yahweh wishes us to recognize.

In Deuteronomy 16:1 we find a significant instruction. Translated literally from the Hebrew text, we read, "Watch for the new moon of green ears..." The new moon (first visible crescent) that appears after the barley (which is the earliest grain crop in Israel) has brought forth green heads, comprises the

month of green ears or **Abib**. This is the firstfruit of the land each year. We must watch for the appearance of these green ears because we need ripe grain several weeks later to comply with the offering of the wave sheaf. The barley is a crop that ripens quickly after the heads of grain have emerged from the boot.

In the month of Abib we are instructed to number or count the days toward the Feast of Unleavened Bread and Pentecost. If there are no green ears of barley on the stalk, we cannot begin to number the days of Passover, since it will not be the month of Abib. Exodus 12:2 says, ***"This month shall be to you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you."***

When Israel was approaching the Passover in Egypt, the early grain harvest of barley was almost ripe. This is explained in Exodus 9:31-32. ***"And the flax and the barley were destroyed, for the barley was in the ear, and the flax was in bloom. But the wheat and the spelt were not destroyed: for they had not grown up."*** Therefore, the month in which we are directed to keep the Passover is the month of Abib, the new moon crescent that appears over the "green ears of barley."

Have you noticed how much visual observation is connected with the keeping of the feasts of Yahweh? First of all, we must observe the time when green ears of grain appear upon the stalks. Then we must look to the heavens and watch for the first new crescent of the spring moon to appear. This is something each Israelite can do for HIMSELF and be accurate in observing the first pilgrim feast of Yahweh. We are never told how we are to establish the first month of the year, except in Deuteronomy 16:1. This is a sign based upon the ripening firstfruits of the harvest of Israel, and tied firmly to the first new crescent of the moon that appears over the green heads of barley.

The wave sheaf (firstfruits of harvest) was to be waved at a specific time and on a certain day. This is another significant aspect of watching for the first grain to ripen. If there is no ripe grain, there can be no wave sheaf or firstfruits of the new harvest offering to Yahweh. Consequently, we would not be in the first month of the new year.

The children of Israel were constantly reminded of the importance of this month over any other. They came out of Egyptian bondage in the first month of the year, and it was important for them to remember it as a memorial forever. They were told emphatically never to forget it. The Passover Memorial must be held each year at the season when Israel was released from Egyptian bondage. See Deuteronomy 16:6.

The Jews, however, have instituted a system to establish the annual holy days differently from what the Bible directs. Today, the Jews set their holy days according to a calculated moon. They have instituted the system of calculation in the hope that all of the Jewish people around the world would be more unified in observing the same holy days. Conceivably, this would have been beneficial for the Diaspora before rapid communication was possible. However, calculation of Yahweh's holy days is not found in the written Torah (Law). Although they have supplanted the biblical visual setting of the holy days with a method based on calculation, the Jews have paradoxically not been able to unite all of their brethren around the world. The Karaites continue to observe the barley harvest and the visible new moon to set their holy days. Also, so that the correct holy day is not missed, several of the sacred seasons have been increased from one to two days by the Rabbinical authorities.

Why did ch-rchianity begin setting their spring holidays by the vernal equinox? Genesis 1:14 de-

clared that the heavenly bodies (sun, moon, and stars) were placed there "for signs, and FOR SEASONS, and FOR DAYS, and YEARS." Most people consider the word "seasons" to mean the four seasons of the year: spring, summer, fall, and winter. However, the term *seasons* in Hebrew is **moedim**, as translated in Genesis 1:14. **Moedim** means **appointed times**. It has nothing to do with the climate of the various seasons. Rather, it specifies the sacred seasons as set forth by Almighty Yahweh. The word **moedim**, in Genesis 1:14, would have been better rendered *appointed times* or *sacred seasons*.

Edicts of Constantine

Setting the holy days by the vernal equinox was begun by Constantine, who was irritated that the Messianic believers continued to be regulated by the "Jewish" Passover. Furthermore, he discovered that various groups were occasionally observing the Memorial of the Savior's death in different months of the year. Since he placed heavy emphasis upon the Easter celebration, it was his intention to supplant the observance of the Savior's memorial on Passover day with the celebration of the Messiah's supposed resurrection on Easter Sunday.

Constantine concluded that, in order to unite all of his people in observance of Easter, he should establish the resurrection day by an edict (law). This edict commanded that Easter be observed on the first Sunday after the full moon following the vernal equinox. In this way it could always be calculated. Apparently he disliked the way some of the Israelites were still watching for the new moon, waiting for the ripening grain to appear, and then counting the days toward the Passover Memorial. Isn't it strange that some years Easter (which is said to symbolize the resurrection) is ob-

served a month before the Passover Memorial, which is on the day He died? Remember, the name Easter is not found in the Bible (not even in Acts 2:4 where the Greek term is an Aramaic loan word—*Pasca*). Easter was once a pagan mighty one of spring, also pronounced as *Ostera*.

To please his wife, who belonged to a pagan group that was keeping the first day of the week, Constantine also set forth a command for all Messianic believers to stop observing the weekly seventh-day Sabbath. In this way he hoped to establish a “universal church” and keep the first day of the week instead of the scriptural Sabbath. Those who continued to observe the scriptural Sabbath and holy days were designated as heretics in various ancient ecclesiastical histories, and they were quite harshly persecuted, even martyred.

Constantine was not baptized into the Roman Catholic Church until he was on his deathbed. Nevertheless, his regal authority made him the champion of the Roman Catholic Church, or, as some have put it, the father of Roman Catholicism. Ironically, the heretics who were put to death were executed for obeying Yahweh! They refused to accept humanly devised rules and laws which were at variance with the scriptural commandments.

Tragically, today there are still some groups of commandment-keepers who submit to the edict of Constantine as their method of setting the holy days of Leviticus 23. They use the **NEW MOON NEAREST** the vernal equinox, which can be up to 14 days before the equinox. However, we must understand that using the vernal equinox is not scripturally commanded, but is merely an expedient guide in some years. We are told specifically in Yahweh’s Word to watch for the new moon of green ears and then keep the Passover unto Yahweh, along with the first-

fruit thanksgiving ordinance of the new harvest. Nowhere in the Bible do we encounter the term *vernal equinox*, or any other astronomical term. Yahweh’s clear instruction calls for His people to follow simple, plain, agrarian instructions.

The Intercalary Month

In certain years an addition of an intercalary, or added, month is necessary to keep the scriptural calendar in harmony with the agricultural season. After a number of years of careful watching, it has become obvious that a supernatural phenomenon takes place whenever the 13th month of the year is to be added. Spring is late that year. For example, this year spring is right on time to coincide with Yahweh’s sacred season. Last year (2005) the harvest season in Israel was early; therefore, the 2006 sacred seasons are regulated by the 13th month intercalary month that was added in February-March, 2006. This was the year for the intercalary (13th) month to be added to scriptural calendar.

Actually, the Bible does not specify that a year shall have 13 months, but neither does it specify that a year shall have 12 months. Such an assumption is in error. We are told to watch and observe. This commandment in the Word of Yahweh cuts us loose from man-made rules and regulations. We cannot rely upon the U.S. Naval Observatory, or British Observatory regulations, nor on the **Farmer’s Almanac**. To do this would be unscriptural. The little horn of Daniel 7:25 is the one who devised such man-made systems, thinking to change times and the Law. We must be in total harmony with the Bible and keep the commandments of Yahweh correctly and faithfully.

The wave sheaf ordinance actually sheds light on understanding the New Testament sequence of

days in Yahshua’s last week. We are, therefore, enlightened about when His last supper, death, and resurrection occurred. Yahshua the Messiah was Yahweh’s true Passover Lamb. He also became our wave sheaf offering when He arose from the grave, ascended, and was accepted by the Heavenly Father. He was without blemish. Therefore, He could not be touched (partaken of) like the ripe grain has been prohibited until the thanksgiving sheaf was offered, John 20:17.

Miriam mistook Yahshua the Messiah to be the gardener. Could the reason for this mistaken identity have been that Yahshua the Messiah was carrying a sheaf of grain (the last one to be cut under the sacrificial law)? As we read John chapter 20 again, it becomes obvious that Yahshua the Messiah carried out this mission as our High Priest. He fulfilled the last wave sheaf offering and then presented Himself to Almighty Yahweh in heaven on the first day of the week, known as the time the wave sheaf was offered. It is on this day that we must begin our count toward the completion of seven full weeks and our observance of Pentecost (the Feast of Weeks—Shavuoth), occurring on the 50th day after the resurrection. Actually, it is Yahshua’s resurrection, ascension into the heavens, and His acceptance by Yahweh that paved the way for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Pentecost Day of Acts chapter 2.

It is our prayer that all True Worshipers will search the Scriptures more thoroughly as modern, noble Bereans. Those who do will find an amazing harmony in Yahweh’s Word! The various observances and doctrines are interwoven together, forming sound doctrine, a solid framework which will never collapse, even under the most concentrated assault by the Adversary.