ספירת העומר *Sefirat Ha'omer* Counting the Omer
Exodus 33.12-34.26 /
Numbers 28.19-25 /
Ezekiel 37.1-14 /
Song of Solomon

עומר Leviticus 23 describes each מועד *moed* appointed time/feast to meet with God. Passover is the 14th of Nisan. The 15th of Nisan is a special Shabbat. Verses 10-11 says to wave the עמר (or עומר) *omer* sheaf of grain (barley) before יהוה *YHVH* The LORD after the Shabbat. Leviticus 23.15-16 says to count 49 days from the day after the Shabbat to שבועות *Shavuot* Weeks/πεντηκοστή *Pentekostē* Pentecost/Fiftieth.

Which Shabbat? Pharisees and Sadducees disagreed over which Shabbat marked the day before counting the עמר, the special Shabbat after Passover, the 15th of Nisan, or the next regular Shabbat, a floating date. The Pharisees held to the special Shabbat after Passover. Counting the Omer after that date fixes the 6th of Sivan for שבועות. If שבועות were always on that date, it would seem unnecessary to count the עומר except in anticipation. The Sadducees said that counting begins after the regular Shabbat. This would result in a floating date for שבועות. Today, rabbinic Judaism practices the first method and Karaites the second.

Jewish tradition says that ישראל *Yisra'el* Israel was freed from Egypt in order to receive תורה *Torah* Law/Instruction at Mt. Sinai, which occurs on שבועות, and to practice תורה in the land of ישראל. Counting of the עמר is deemed an indication of a person's desire to receive תורה.

The Counting of the עמר is both joyful and sober, a time to prepare hearts for receiving תורה. The normal prayer said each day is, "Blessed are You, יהוה our God, King of the Universe, who has sanctified us with Your commandments and commanded us concerning the counting of the עמר. Today is the ____ day of the עמר." Hebrew Roots believers may substitute, "Blessed are You, יהוה our God, King of the Universe, who has sanctified us by Your commandments and commanded us to be a light to Your nations, and who has given us ישוע *Yeshua* Jesus our Messiah, the Light of the World. Today is the ____ day of the עמר."

A Prayer for All Nations Next the custom is to read Psalm 67, which in Hebrew has 49 words, one for each day of counting the עמר.

א לַמְנַצֵּחַ בִּנְגִינֹת, מִזְמוֹר שִׁיר.	1 For the Leader; with string-music. A Psalm, a Song.
ב אֱלֹהִים, יְחָנֵּנוּ וִיבָרְכֵנוּ; יָאֵר פָּנָיו אִתָּנוּ סֶלָה.	2 God be gracious unto us, and bless us; may He cause His face to shine toward us; Selah
ג לָדַעַת בָּאָרֶץ דַּרְכֶּךָ; בְּכָל-גּוֹיִם, יְשׁוּעָתֶךָ.	3 That Thy way may be known upon earth, Thy **salvation** among all nations.
ד יוֹדוּךָ עַמִּים אֱלֹהִים: יוֹדוּךָ, עַמִּים כֻּלָּם.	4 Let the peoples give thanks unto Thee, O God; let the peoples give thanks unto Thee, all of them.
ה יִשְׂמְחוּ וִירַנְּנוּ, לְאֻמִּים: כִּי-תִשְׁפֹּט עַמִּים מִישֹׁר; וּלְאֻמִּים, בָּאָרֶץ תַּנְחֵם סֶלָה.	5 O let the nations be glad and sing for joy; for Thou wilt judge the peoples with equity, and lead the nations upon earth. Selah
ו יוֹדוּךָ עַמִּים אֱלֹהִים: יוֹדוּךָ, עַמִּים כֻּלָּם.	6 Let the peoples give thanks unto Thee, O God; let the peoples give thanks unto Thee, all of them.
ז אֶרֶץ, נָתְנָה יְבוּלָהּ; יְבָרְכֵנוּ, אֱלֹהִים אֱלֹהֵינוּ.	7 The earth hath yielded her increase; may God, our own God, bless us.
ח יְבָרְכֵנוּ אֱלֹהִים; וְיִירְאוּ אוֹתוֹ, כָּל-אַפְסֵי-אָרֶץ.	8 May God bless us; and let all the ends of the earth fear Him.

Salvation in verse 3 is ישוע. God is gracious in making ישוע known throughout the earth! Click on the link and scroll down to see all the verses where salvation/ישוע is written in the Tenach and think about God wanting us to see His Son. Counting the עמר is done in anticipation of receiving תורה at שבועות and making ישוע known. Imagine the disciples' anticipation as they read Psalm 67 every day, seeing the name of ישוע, who had told them before He ascended to wait for the gift from God, which arrived on שבועות! Also, Jews pray 50 days in a row for the salvation of the nations. Do you know any Gentile that prays consistently for the salvation of the Jews?

Other daily readings include Psalm 119 (one section per day for 22 days), Ruth (4 chapters), Exodus 19-33 (15), Ezekiel 1-4 (4), and Ezekiel 35-39 (5) for a total of 50 days.

Anticipation Using the day after the regular weekly Shabbat for starting the Counting of the עמר, that would be the same day ישוע rose from the dead, the feast of First Fruits.

Here are some of the passages that refer to ישוע in the 40 days between First Fruits and Ascension. Imagine how anticipation would build for the disciples, knowing that a promise of ישוע will be fulfilled soon—and just 10 more days till שבועות:

- John 20.15-19 Mary Magdalene sees ישוע, and then He appears to the disciples
- John 20.26 ישוע appears to His disciples again a week later with Thomas present
- John 21.1-11 While the disciples are fishing, ישוע appears to them for the 3rd time
- 1 Cor. 15.6-7 ישוע appears to 500, then James, then all the apostles
- Acts 1.1-11 ישוע tells His disciples about the Holy Spirit and He ascends at 40 days

Flesh and Blood of Life ישוע says in John 6.51 that His σάρξ *sarx* flesh is the bread which comes down from heaven, and anyone who eats it will live forever. ישוע offers this flesh as a sacrifice and He says at the Passover Seder, "Take and eat, this is My body," Matthew 26.26.

In Genesis 2.21, God takes one of Adam's ribs, and then closes up the בשר *basar* flesh. In Isaiah 41.27, God promises to send One who will bring בשר *basar* good news. In Isaiah 52.7, בשר is the good news of ישועה *yeshuah* salvation/deliverance that says, "Our God reigns!"

At Passover, God tells Moses in Exodus 12.8 that the people are to eat the בשר of the lamb as part of the salvation ritual. את, untranslated, points to the direct object. א *aleph* and ת *tav* are the first and last letters of the Hebrew alef-bet, so together Alef and Tav mean a title of God, which in Greek we recognize as the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last. In Revelation 2.8 and 22.13, this expression is used of ישוע. So when Exodus 12.8 says to eat את-הבשר *et-habasar*, it symbolically means the flesh of God/flesh of ישוע/gospel of ישוע which points directly back to the words of ישוע at Passover. Similarly, in Exodus 12.13 God says that when He sees את-הדם *et-hadam* the blood/symbolically blood of God/blood of ישוע, He will pass over that house.

God Knows the End from the Beginning The Counting of the עמר, Leviticus 23.15-16, is 7 weeks or 49 days from the day after the Shabbat after Passover to the 50th day, שבועות. And Leviticus 25.8-10 describes counting 7 times 7 years for the announcing of the 50th year, Jubilee. There is another hidden place where 49 and 50 play an important role.

In Genesis 1.22-26, God blesses the creatures of sea and sky, creates the animals of the land, and finally sets about creating man. Yet in this first chapter of the Bible, even before the Fall, God reveals the name of the man who will carry the promised Seed that brings ישוע and ישועה. About 2,000 years later in Genesis 17.5, God tells אברם *Avram* Abram that his name will be changed. God borrows a ה *hey* from His own name, יהוה, and changes אברם to אברהם *Avraham* Abraham. See how in this first chapter of Genesis, beginning with verse 22, God spells out אברהם on a 49-letter skip, every 50th letter (Equidistant Letter Spacing, ELS), just like the Counting of the עמר and the Year of Jubilee, and inserts another name of God, אלהים *Elohiym* God, between each of the letters of אברהם. (Hebrew reads from right to left.)

ו	ו	ב	ר	ו	ו	ר	פ	ר	מ	א	ל	**ם**	**י**	**ה**	**ל**	**א**	ם	ת	א	ך	ר	ב	י	ו
א	ב	ב	ר	י	ף	ו	ע	ה	ו	ם	י	מ	י	ב	ם	י	מ	ה	ת	א	ו	א	ל	מ
ו	י	ש	י	מ	ח	ם	ו	י	ר	ק	ב	י	ה	י	ו	**ב**	ר	ע	י	ה	י	ו	ץ	ר
מ	ל	ה	י	ח	ש	פ	נ	ץ	ר	ט	ה	א	צ	ו	ת	**ם**	**י**	**ה**	**ל**	**א**	ר	מ	א	י
ו	ה	נ	י	מ	ל	ץ	ר	א	ו	ת	י	ח	ו	ש	מ	**ר**	ו	ה	מ	ה	ב	ה	נ	י
מ	ל	ץ	ר	א	ה	ת	י	ח	ת	א	**ם**	**י**	**ה**	**ל**	**א**	ש	ע	י	ו	ן	כ	י	ה	י
ה	ש	מ	ר	ל	כ	ת	א	ו	ה	נ	י	מ	ל	ה	מ	**ה**	ב	ה	ת	א	ו	ה	נ	י
ו	ב	ו	ט	י	כ	**ם**	**י**	**ה**	**ל**	**א**	א	ר	י	ו	ו	ה	נ	י	מ	ל	ה	מ	ד	א
מ	ד	כ	ו	נ	מ	ל	צ	ב	ם	ד	א	ה	ש	ע	נ	**ם**	י	ה	ל	א	ר	מ	א	י
י	מ	ש	ה	ף	ו	ע	ב	ו	ם	י	ה	ת	ג	ד	ב	ו	ד	ר	י	ו	ו	נ	ת	ו
ר	ה	ש	מ	ר	ה	ל	כ	ב	ו	ץ	ר	א	ה	ל	כ	ב	ו	ה	מ	ה	ב	ב	ו	ם
																	ץ	ר	א	ה	ל	ע	ש	מ

"Who told of this from the beginning, so we could know, or beforehand, so we could say, 'He was right'? No one told of this, no one foretold it, no one heard any words from you. I was the first to tell Zion, 'Look, here they are!' I gave to Jerusalem a messenger of בשר."

Isaiah 41.26-27.

God Does Not Change, Malachi 3.6 It seems that evolutionary thought has crept into the Church. Many in the Church think of the "God of the Old Testament" as mean and just waiting to throw lightning bolts. Then religion "evolves" and we have the "God of the New Testament," who sends His one and only Son to die for us. This "new" God of love is much more desirable.

But the Bible says that God does not change.

In this portion we have Exodus 34.5-8:

And יהוה descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of יהוה.

And יהוה passed by before him, and proclaimed:

"יהוה,

יהוה,
God,
merciful
and gracious,
long-suffering,
and abundant in goodness and truth;
keeping mercy unto the thousandth generation,
forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin;
and that will by no means clear the guilty;
visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children,
and upon the children's children, unto the third and unto the fourth generation."

And Moses made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped.

י *yod* hand, ה *hey* reveal, ו *vav* nail, ה *hey* reveal

יהוה The Hand Revealed, The Nail Revealed

God is same yesterday, today, and forever!

Glossary, in order of appearance

מועד	*moed*	appointed time to meet with God, usually translated feast
עמר	*omer*	sheaf of grain
יהוה	*YHVH*	The LORD, the divine name of God unpronounced by Orthodox Jews, Adonai substituted
שבועות	*Shavuot*	Weeks, refers to the Feast of Weeks, also known as…
πεντηκοστή	*Pentekostē*	Pentecost, means "the fiftieth," refers to counting the עמר
ישראל	*Yisra'el*	Israel
תורה	*Torah*	Law/Instruction
ישוע	*Yeshua*	Jesus/salvation
σάρξ	*sarx*	flesh
בשר	*basar*	flesh/good news/gospel
את	*et*	not translated/points to the direct object first and last letters of the Hebrew alef-bet symbolically: Alef and Tav, First and Last, Beginning and End
את-הבשר	*et-habasar*	symbolically: flesh of God or the flesh of ישוע/gospel of ישוע
את-הדם	*et-hadam*	symbolically: the blood of God/blood of ישוע
אברם	*Avram*	Abram
אברהם	*Avraham*	Abraham
אלהים	*Elohiym*	God