

## Counting to Pentecost in 2015

The 50 day count to Pentecost generates an annual controversy in order to determine the date of this important Holy Day. In any given year, there are minimally 4 or 5 different dates that are proclaimed to be Pentecost, depending on the counting methodology. One method is derived from the Pharisee protocol which counts from Nisan 16, the day after the First Day of Unleavened Bread, and ends with Pentecost Sunday fixed on Sivan 6. Another method is the Sadducee protocol that counts starting from Sunday after the weekly Sabbath during the Days of Unleavened Bread and ends with Pentecost on a Sunday (or some calculate Monday) 50 days later. Additionally, there are others who count from the weekly Sabbath after the Last Day of Unleavened Bread as well as various permutations of the previous protocols. And finally, there is sometimes a calendar difference in the count to Pentecost as a result of using the Calculated Hebrew Calendar in place of the first visible new moon crescent.

Another dimension of this debate occurs when Passover falls on the weekly Sabbath. In these years, the First Day of Unleavened Bread falls on Sunday and the Last day of Unleavened Bread falls out the following Sabbath (Saturday). In 2015, this is the actual calendar timing for the Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread.

## Calendar Assumptions

This study assumes the following calendar assumptions:

- A new month is declared by the first visible new moon crescent as viewed from Jerusalem.
- The Sadducee counting protocol is assumed with the wave sheaf offering date being determined as the day after the weekly Sabbath during the Days of Unleavened Bread.
- Pentecost always falls on the first day of the week (Sunday).

## The Controversy

In 2015, Passover Abib 14 falls on Saturday, April 4 as confirmed by the first visible new moon crescent in Jerusalem on the evening of March 21 (March 22 is Abib 1). As a result, the Wave Sheaf offering, which initiates the count to Pentecost, could be as early as Sunday, April 5 (the First Day of Unleavened Bread) or as late as Sunday April 12 (the Sunday after the Last Day of Unleavened Bread).

The resultant count to Pentecost can be calculated to be either Sunday May 24 or Sunday May 31. Which day is correct?

The scriptures provide the answer in Joshua 5:10-11.

## Background

*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. He shall wave the sheaf before YHWH, to be accepted on your behalf; on the day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it. (Lev 23:10-11 NKJV)*

- *When you come into the land*
  - The Israelites enter the Promised Land under Joshua's direction Joshua 3, 4, 5
- *Reap its harvest*
  - The instruction is to reap, not sow and reap. The Promised Land was provided "ready for occupancy". All the Israelites needed to do was show up and reap the existing harvest that was prepared by the previous custodian (who were the Amorites on the west side of the Jordan – see Joshua 5:1).
- *He shall wave the sheaf...on the day after the Sabbath*
  - The wave sheaf was offered on the day after the Sabbath exactly as Leviticus 23.11 specifies – see Joshua 5.11. How do we know this was the wave sheaf offering? Read on.

*And I have said I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, to a land flowing with milk and honey. (Exo 3:17 NKJV)*

- The land in Canaan was already being farmed and productive – Ex 3.17, Ex 13.5, Jos 5.6

## Abundant Land - Time of Harvest

The Promised Land was a fertile land and agriculturally abundant. Prior to crossing the Jordan into the Promised Land, the Israelites encountered resistance from the indigenous inhabitants that occupied the areas east of the Dead Sea including Moab and Ammon. As the Israelites proceeded north on the King's Highway (Nu 22.22), they were met with resistance on the east side of the Dead Sea by Sihon King of the Amorites (Nu 21.21). King Sihon possessed fields, vineyards and fresh water:

*"Let me pass through your land. We will not turn aside into fields or vineyards; we will not drink water from wells. We will go by the King's Highway until we have passed through your territory." (Num 21:22 NKJV)*

This was obviously a fertile and agriculturally developed farming community which the Israelites ultimately dispossessed from king Sihon (Nu21.24). Farther north, east of the Sea of Galilee, the Israelites also dispossessed king Og of Bashan (Nu 21.33). King Og was the last of the known giants and was likely 11-12 feet tall. His bed was 9 cubits by 4 cubits which translates to 13.5 feet by 6 feet (Deut 3.11). One big dude!

Before the crossing of the Jordan into the Promised Land, the tribes of Gad, Reuben and the half tribe of Manasseh were pre-assigned their inheritance. As a result of their specific request to Moses, an inheritance on the east side of the Jordan River was granted prior to the dispossession of the inhabitants of Canaan proper (Nu 32.1-33). As a historical marker, the accounts of Balaam's incorrigible mule and Balak's failed conspiracy took place after the ouster of king Og of Bashan (Nu 22-24). These events all occurred before the actual crossing of the Jordan and the arrival of the Israelites at Jericho.

All of these early conquests provided provision and food supply for the Israelites as they prepared to cross the Jordan River. Manna continued as well from YHWH until after the Passover just prior to the fall of Jericho. The bottom line is that locally grown food stores were available to the advancing Israelites. The local food stores became the possession of the Israelites.

The Canaanites were an agrarian culture and when the Israelites came to dispossess the land, there was no shortage of harvest. When Joshua commanded the Israelites to "prepare provisions", they had easy access to the conquered Amorite's food storage supplies on the east side of the Jordan.

*Pass through the camp and command the people, saying, 'Prepare provisions for yourselves, for within three days you will cross over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land which YHWH your Eloah is giving you to possess.'* (Jos 1:11 NKJV)

The events starting in Joshua 1.9 including chapters 2-5 occurred during the spring harvest:

*And as those who bore the ark came to the Jordan, and the feet of the priests who bore the ark dipped in the edge of the water (for the Jordan overflows all its banks during the whole time of harvest)* (Jos 3:15 NKJV)

*And it came to pass, when the priests who bore the ark of the covenant of YHWH had come from the midst of the Jordan, and the soles of the priests' feet touched the dry land, that the waters of the Jordan returned to their place and overflowed all its banks as before.* (Jos 4:18 NKJV)

Old grain was likely available in storage, previously harvested by the previous land owners (Amorites and Canaanites – Joshua 5:1). The early spring crop was Barley and it was ready for reaping after the first fruits wave sheaf offering. The crossing of the Jordan took place at the beginning of the harvest season.

## Passover Falls on Weekly Sabbath

As you will see, the first Passover in the Promised Land fell on a Saturday (Sabbath), just as the 2015 Passover.

*And the children of Israel encamped in Gilgal, and kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the month at even in the plains of Jericho. And they did eat of the old corn<sup>H5669</sup> of the land on the morrow after the Passover, unleavened cakes<sup>H4692</sup> and parched corn<sup>H7033</sup> in the selfsame day. (Jos 5:10-11 KJV)*

- On the day after Passover, Israelites ate of the old corn (grain) and new corn (grain)
  - did eat of the old corn = H5669=kept over, stored, old corn (grain)
  - unleavened cakes = H4692 = mats-tsaw = unfermented cake
  - parched corn = H7033 = kaw-law =toasted or roasted
  - Israelites ate old corn (grain) and new parched corn (grain) on the same day
  - Parched corn (grain) was first fruits new produce that was only to be eaten after the Wave Sheaf offering
- Eat no parched corn until after the wave sheaf – Lev 23:10-14, Lev 2:14 (see reference below)

Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest: And he shall wave the sheaf before YHWH, to be accepted for you: **on the morrow after the sabbath** the priest shall wave it. And ye shall offer that day when ye wave the sheaf an he lamb without blemish of the first year for a burnt offering unto YHWH. And the meat offering... and the drink offering. **And ye shall eat neither bread (from the new harvest), nor parched corn<sup>H7039</sup>, nor green ears<sup>H3759</sup>**, until the selfsame day that ye have brought an offering unto your Eloah: it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.  
(Lev 23:10-14 KJV)

- **On the morrow after the sabbath** - The wave sheaf is accepted on the day after the weekly Sabbath
- **And ye shall eat neither bread, nor parched corn** = H7039 = from H7033; roasted ears of grain, parched corn
- **nor green ears** = H3759 = kar-mel = a planted field, garden produce, full green ears (of corn)
- Do not eat of the new harvest until the same day you perform the wave sheaf offering
- Parched corn is also referenced to be used for first fruits meat offerings:

And if thou offer a meat offering of thy firstfruits unto YHWH, thou shalt offer for the meat offering of thy **firstfruits green ears<sup>H24</sup> of corn dried<sup>H7033</sup>** by the fire, even corn beaten out of full ears. (Lev 2:14 KJV)

- **firstfruits green ears** = H24 = aw-beeb = Abib = meaning to be tender, green, that is a young ear of grain, the name of the month Abib or Nisan, green ears of corn
- **corn dried** = H7033 = same as first fruits parched grain
- Parched corn is a reference to first fruits

The Israelites ate old grain and new parched grain on the same day. The only way they could have done this was for the Wave Sheaf offering to have taken place on this day.

The instructions for the Wave Sheaf specify that it (the Wave Sheaf) takes place the day after the weekly Sabbath (Lev 23.11). The account in Joshua clearly shows the Israelites ate old and new grain on the same day, which was the day after Passover. As a result, the only way the conditions specified in Joshua 5:11 can be reconciled is that Passover fell on the weekly Sabbath and the Wave Sheaf offering occurred the very next day (Sunday on the Gregorian calendar which also was the First Day of Unleavened Bread).

The account in Joshua 5.10-11 literally fulfills the scripture in Leviticus 23.10-11:

Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: <sup>1</sup>**When you come into the land which I give to you, and <sup>2</sup>reap its harvest, then you shall <sup>3</sup>bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest. He shall wave the sheaf before YHWH, to be accepted on your behalf; <sup>4</sup>on the day after the Sabbath** the priest shall wave it.  
(Lev 23:10-11 NKJV)

1. Come into the land
2. And reap its harvest
3. Then bring a sheaf of first fruits
4. On the day after the Sabbath

The example in Joshua 5.10-11 also serves as benchmark for years when the Passover falls on the weekly Sabbath. This is the identical timing for the Passover calendar in 2015. The Passover falls on the weekly Sabbath, April 4, 2015. The next day Sunday is the Wave Sheaf offering (and the First Day of Unleavened Bread) on April 5, 2015. This calculates Pentecost to be the day following 7 subsequent Sabbaths on May 24, 2015.

## Selfsame Day

In the King James Version the terminology "selfsame day" appears in Joshua 5.11 as follows:

*And they did eat of the old corn of the land on the morrow after the Passover, unleavened cakes, and parched corn in the selfsame day. (Jos 5:11 KJV)*

This idiom (selfsame day) appears in eleven witnesses in the Tanakh.

- Gen 7:13 - In the selfsame day entered Noah, and Shem, and Ham, and Japheth, the sons of Noah, and Noah's wife, and the three wives of his sons with them, into the ark
- Gen 17:23 - And Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all that were born in his house, and all that were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house; and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin in the selfsame day, as YHWH had said unto him.
- Gen 17:26 - In the selfsame day was Abraham circumcised, and Ishmael his son.
- Exo 12:17 - And ye shall observe the feast of unleavened bread; for in this selfsame day have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt: therefore shall ye observe this day in your generations by an ordinance forever.
- Exo 12:41 - And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the hosts of YHWH went out from the land of Egypt.
- Exo 12:51 - And it came to pass the selfsame day, that YHWH did bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt by their armies.
- Lev 23:14 - And ye shall eat neither bread, nor parched corn, nor green ears, until the selfsame day that ye have brought an offering unto your Eloah: it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.
- Lev 23:21 - And ye shall proclaim on the selfsame day, that it may be an holy convocation unto you: ye shall do no servile work therein: it shall be a statute forever in all your dwellings throughout your generations.
- Deu 32:48 - And YHWH spake unto Moses that selfsame day, saying,
- Jos 5:11 - And they did eat of the old corn of the land on the morrow after the Passover, unleavened cakes, and parched corn in the selfsame day.
- Eze 40:1 - In the five and twentieth year of our captivity, in the beginning of the year, in the tenth day of the month, in the fourteenth year after that the city was smitten, in the selfsame day the hand of YHWH was upon me, and brought me thither.

This idiomatic phrase "selfsame" comes from the Hebrew word "ehtsem", H6106 as a reference to the importance of the day. You will find H6101, "ehtsem" in 126 scriptures in the Tanakh. Out of 126 occurrences, 115 times H6101 (bones) is in fact translated as "bone" (meaning skeletal bone) as found in the famous prophesy of the "Dry Bones" resurrection chapter from Eze 37. However, there are 11 instances the word is translated as the idiom "same day" or "selfsame day". Why is the word "bone" used in reference to "same day" or "selfsame day"?

- **Selfsame** = H6106 = eh'-tsem = a bone (as strong), the body, figuratively the substance, that is, (as pronoun) selfsame
- The same H6106 (ehtsem) is additionally used 115 times in other scriptures as a reference to the bone of the body. Here are a few examples:
  - *And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, YHWH will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence. (Gen 50:25 KJV)*
  - *A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband: but she that maketh ashamed is as rottenness in his bones. (Pro 12:4 KJV)*
  - *Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts. (Eze 37:11 KJV)*

The significance of this idiom comes from the enduring physical property of skeletal bone. When discovered, a bone provides conclusive evidence that a living organism previously existed. Bones provide long lasting testimony of an animal or human existence. When the flesh has long ago decayed and returned to dirt, the bone survives as a visible testimony of life. When the word "ehtsem" (bones) is translated "selfsame", it suggests a relevant historical remnant of a significant event that presently and/or previously existed.

### Calendar Application

When applied to a calendar date, the idiom references an important event that happened in the past that occurred on the exact same calendar day as a current event. Exodus 12:41 provides an example of this application when compared to Genesis 15:18. The Israelites left Egypt on the selfsame day (ehtsem or bones) which was the very same calendar day the Abrahamic covenant was ratified 430 years earlier (A night to be remembered).

### Current Event Application

When applied to a current event, the idiom "selfsame day" is making reference to the significance of the current episode. The idiom is drawing notable attention to the relevance of the episode or the attributes of the episode. Examples of this application are found in Leviticus 23.14 and Joshua 5.11. The Joshua 5.11 account is calling special attention to the current event by referencing the consumption of old corn and parched corn (new grain) on the same exact day (ehtsem). Leviticus 23.14 is drawing special attention and instructing us not to eat new grain before to the (ehtsem) day of the wave sheaf offering. Of notable interest is that both of these scriptures harmonize together when applied to the calendar, each supporting the truth of the other.

The phrase "selfsame day" found in Joshua 5.11 has two implications:

1. It was the day after the Passover, and the Israelites ate old and new corn (grain) on the same (ehtsem) day. This is obviously historically significant and is intended to highlight a noteworthy event. You will notice all eleven scriptural witnesses that employ this idiom are highlighting events of historical consequence.
2. The other implication is the "selfsame" reference synchronizing with the Torah in Leviticus 23.14 which provides the first fruits instructions for the wave sheaf offering.

### **Conclusion - Is Passover Included in the Days of Unleavened Bread?**

Some would say the Passover is separate and not included in the Days of Unleavened Bread. Therefore if the Passover falls on the weekly Sabbath, it is not to be combined with the Days of Unleavened Bread as a reference day from which to determine the wave sheaf offering. The instructions in Leviticus 23.5-14 and Deuteronomy 16.1-8 provide zero guidance to determine from which weekly Sabbath to juxtapose the wave sheaf offering Sunday. Carefully read Leviticus 23.5-14 for yourself without prejudice, and you will find no such instruction. Interestingly enough, the scriptures in the Torah are conspicuously ambiguous regarding this question.

Even though we have a clear witness in Joshua 5.10-11 that addresses the count for the wave sheaf offering, there are three additional witnesses that substantiate the Joshua account.

*Now on the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Yahushua, saying to Him, "Where do You want us to prepare for You to eat the Passover?"  
(Mat 26:17 NKJV)*

*Now on the first day of Unleavened Bread, when they killed the Passover lamb, His disciples said to Him, "Where do You want us to go and prepare, that You may eat the Passover?"  
(Mar 14:12 NKJV)*

*Then came the Day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover must be killed.  
(Luk 22:7 NKJV)*

These three accounts show us that the Passover is included in the Days of Unleavened Bread with the Passover being identified as day 1 or first day of the feast.

With this in mind, when Passover falls on the weekly Sabbath, it would be counted (included) as the weekly Sabbath from which to determine the wave sheaf offering. In this situation the wave sheaf offering would be performed the following day on the first day of the week (Sunday), just as it was in the account in Joshua 5.10.11.

*These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.  
(Act 17:11 KJV)*

Now you decide!