

Notes: April 18 2015

Start: 10 AM

Order of service:

1. Meet and Greet
2. Introduction (if new people)
3. Ma Tovv
4. Open in Prayer for service
5. Liturgy – Sh'ma +
6. Announcements
7. Praise and Worship Songs
8. Message
9. Aaronic Blessing
10. Kiddush
11. Oneg

Children's Blessing:

Transliteration: *Ye'simcha Elohim ke-Ephraim ve hee-Menashe*

English: *May God make you like Ephraim and Menashe*

Transliteration: *Ye'simech Elohim ke-Sarah, Rivka, Rachel ve-Leah.*

English: *May God make you like Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah.*

Introduction: The Omer – A Measure of Something More

I don't know if people truly realize the significance of the Counting of the Omer, nor the significance of the time between Passover and Shavuot?

There is more to it than meets the eye.

So, today as we have counted our third Shabbat, let's see what this time is all about and what has happened previously.

I have entitled this sermon “The Omer – A Measure of Something More”

By definition an omer is a measure of something:

It is a tenth of ephah

It is a portion of a harvest – the first fruits

As given by Adonai to Moshe:

Lev 23:10 "Tell the people of Isra'el, 'After you enter the land I am giving you and harvest its ripe crops, you are to bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the cohen.

Lev 23:11 He is to wave the sheaf before Adonai, so that you will be accepted; the cohen is to wave it on the day after the Shabbat.

Lev 23:12 On the day that you wave the sheaf, you are to offer a male lamb without defect, in its first year, as a burnt offering for Adonai.

When we consider the instruction given for Shavuot, it is dependent upon the correct date because from that date you are counting 7 Sabbaths. It is unlike the other Feasts, that fall on a specific date. In order to determine when Shavuot is to occur, you must count. If you start on the wrong day, you will end up on the wrong day.

From Wikipedia - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Counting_of_the_Omer

The idea of counting each day represents spiritual preparation and anticipation for the giving of the Torah^[1] 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. The [Sefer HaChinuch](#) (published anonymously in 13th century Spain) states that the Hebrew people were only freed from [Egypt](#) at Passover in order to receive the Torah at Sinai, an event which is now celebrated on Shavuot, and to fulfill its laws. Thus the Counting of the *Omer* demonstrates how much a Jewish person desires to accept the Torah in his own life.

Meaning, it is more than just an instruction given to follow, but because it requires responsibility, faithfulness and obedience, thus the counting of the Omer takes on a greater presence in a person's life.

So, Shavuot represents the time when Torah was given.

This is believed as to when this happened...

Sivan 1 - Arrival at Sinai

The Israelites finally arrived at the desert of Sinai where Moses was initially commissioned. Note that the question of whether the new moon of Sivan fell on Sunday or Monday is undecided (*Talmud, Shabbat 86b*).

Exo 19:1 In the third month after the people of Isra'el had left the land of Egypt, the same day they came to the Sinai Desert.

Likely referring to the first day of the week.

Sivan 2 - The Day of Distinction, "Yom HaMeyuchas"

On this day Moses ascended Mount Sinai and God told him to tell the people of Israel: "You shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Exodus 19:2-7).

Exo 19:2 After setting out from Refidim and arriving at the Sinai Desert, they set up camp in the desert; there in front of the mountain, Isra'el set up camp.

Exo 19:3 Moshe went up to God, and Adonai called to him from the mountain: "Here is what you are to say to the household of Ya`akov, to tell the people of Isra'el:

Exo 19:4 'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself.

Exo 19:5 Now if you will pay careful attention to what I say and keep my covenant, then you will be my own treasure from among all the peoples, for all the earth is mine;

Exo 19:6 and you will be a kingdom of cohanim for me, a nation set apart.' These are the words you are to speak to the people of Isra'el."

Exo 19:7 Moshe came, summoned the leaders of the people and presented them with all these words which Adonai had ordered him to say.

Sivan 3-5 - the three days of preparation

On Sivan 3 the LORD instructed Moses to "set boundaries" (hagbalah) for the people around the mountain in preparation for the giving of the Torah three days later. (Exod. 19:9-15).

Exo 19:9 Adonai said to Moshe, "See, I am coming to you in a thick cloud, so that the people will be able to hear when I speak with you and also to trust in you forever." Moshe had told Adonai what the people had said;

Exo 19:10 so Adonai said to Moshe, "Go to the people; today and tomorrow separate them for me by having them wash their clothing;

Exo 19:11 and prepare for the third day. For on the third day, Adonai will come down on Mount Sinai before the eyes of all the people.

Exo 19:12 You are to set limits for the people all around; and say, 'Be careful not to go up on the mountain or even touch its base; whoever touches the mountain will surely be put to death.

Exo 19:13 No hand is to touch him; for he must be stoned or shot by arrows; neither animal nor human will be allowed to live.' When the shofar sounds, they may go up on the mountain."

Exo 19:14 Moshe went down from the mountain to the people and separated the people for God, and they washed their clothing.

Exo 19:15 He said to the people, "Prepare for the third day; don't approach a woman."

Sivan 5 - The Covenant is Offered

On Sivan 5 Moses the covenant to the leaders of the Israel, at which the people declared, "All that the LORD has spoken, we shall do and hear" (Exod. 19:8; cp. Exod. 24:7).

Exo 19:8 All the people answered as one, "Everything Adonai has said, we will do." Moshe reported the words of the people to Adonai.

Sivan 6 - The giving of the Torah

On the 6th Sivan, exactly seven weeks after the Exodus, the LORD revealed Himself on Mount Sinai. All of Israel (600,000 heads of households and their families) heard the LORD speak the first two of the Ten Commandments. Following this initial revelation, Moses re-ascended Sinai for 40 days, to receive the remainder of the Torah. This date coincides exactly with the festival of Shavuot.

Exo 19:16 On the morning of the third day, there was thunder, lightning and a thick cloud on the mountain. Then a shofar blast sounded so loudly that all the people in the camp trembled.

Exo 19:17 Moshe brought the people out of the camp to meet God; they stood near the base of the mountain.

Exo 19:18 Mount Sinai was enveloped in smoke, because Adonai descended onto it in fire — its smoke went up like the smoke from a furnace, and the whole mountain shook violently.

Exo 19:19 As the sound of the shofar grew louder and louder, Moshe spoke; and God answered him with a voice.

Exo 19:20 Adonai came down onto Mount Sinai, to the top of the mountain; then Adonai called Moshe to the top of the mountain; and Moshe went up.

Exo 19:21 Adonai said to Moshe, "Go down and warn the people not to force their way through to Adonai to see him; if they do, many of them will perish.

Exo 19:22 Even the cohanim, who are allowed to approach Adonai, must keep themselves holy; otherwise, Adonai may break out against them."

Exo 19:23 Moshe said to Adonai, "The people can't come up to Mount Sinai, because you ordered us to set limits around the mountain and separate it."

Exo 19:24 But Adonai answered him, "Go, get down! Then come back up, you and Aharon with you. But don't let the cohanim and the people force their way through to come up to Adonai, or he will break out against them."

Exo 19:25 So Moshe went down to the people and told them.

All of this is in preparation for what is to be presented in Exodus 20 -

Exo 20:1 Then God said all these words:

Giving 10 commandments, comprised of one statement and 11 instructions.

Question – if this is Shavuot, which I believe it was, where was the offering? Where was the Omer?

Strikingly, we see it both from Adonai and from Israel:

1. How many people accepted the Covenant in Exodus 19:8?

Exo 19:7 Moshe came, summoned the leaders of the people and presented them with all these words which Adonai had ordered him to say.

Exo 18:25 Moshe chose competent men from all Isra'el and made them heads over the people, in charge of thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens.

It was only the leaders that went up, and ultimately accepted the Covenant in verse 8.

Would this not be considered an omer, a measure of the entire community of Israel? An offering of the people of the covenant?

2. How many commandments were given?

I just mentioned that there were 10 commandments, comprised on one statement and 11 instructions.

Let me ask you, is that all of Torah's instructions?

Doesn't Adonai provide Moshe with more instructions to where Rambam counted 613.?

Would this to not considered an omer, a measure of the mitzvots of Adonai?

So, on this first Shavuot, you have an offering of the people who would enter into the Covenant presented to Adonai. In response, Adonai provides an offering of the instructions that are the basis for the Covenant Israel is entering into.

So, on the very first Shavuot, even though they weren't in the land yet, Adonai adhered to the instruction that he had not yet given to Israel in Leviticus 23.

There was a first fruits offering on Shavuot.

I wonder if this remains consistent throughout Scripture?

Most of you should know the other significant occurrence recorded in Scripture regarding Shavuot...Acts 2.

I wonder if the same thing happened here?

Act 2:1 The festival of Shavu`ot arrived, and the believers all gathered together in one place.

Act 2:2 Suddenly there came a sound from the sky like the roar of a violent wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.

Act 2:3 Then they saw what looked like tongues of fire, which separated and came to rest on each one of them.

Act 2:4 They were all filled with the Ruach HaKodesh and began to talk in different languages, as the Spirit enabled them to speak.

Acts 2:1 identifies who were there and ultimately received this initial outpouring of the Ruach ha Kodesh...

This initial outpouring was received by all the believers who had been instructed by Yeshua after His First Fruits resurrection whereby even Yeshua made an omer, offering...

Mat 27:51 At that moment the parokhet in the Temple was ripped in two from top to bottom; and there was an earthquake, with rocks splitting apart.

Mat 27:52 Also the graves were opened, and the bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life;

Mat 27:53 and after Yeshua rose, they came out of the graves and went into the holy city, where many people saw them.

In accordance with Scripture, Yeshua, himself, upon His resurrection brought forth His first fruits offering of the resurrection.

So, what about Shavuot in Acts 2...

Adonai poured out His Spirit upon believers in Yeshua.

In turn, they did as they were instructed...

Mat 28:19 Therefore, go and make people from all nations into talmidim, immersing them into the reality of the Father, the Son and the Ruach HaKodesh,

Mat 28:20 and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember! I will be with you always, yes, even until the end of the age."

To where we read what happens...

Act 2:5 Now there were staying in Yerushalayim religious Jews from every nation under heaven.

Act 2:6 When they heard this sound, a crowd gathered; they were confused, because each one heard the believers speaking in his own language.

Act 2:7 Totally amazed, they asked, "How is this possible? Aren't all these people who are speaking from the Galil?"

Act 2:8 How is it that we hear them speaking in our native languages?

Act 2:9 We are Parthians, Medes, Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Y'hudah, Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia,

Act 2:10 Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome;

Act 2:11 Jews by birth and proselytes; Jews from Crete and from Arabia. . . ! How is it that we hear them speaking in our own languages about the great things God has done?"

Act 2:12 Amazed and confused, they all went on asking each other, "What can this mean?"

And ultimately a first fruits offering on Shavuot is presented to Adonai on this very day...

Act 2:41 So those who accepted what he said were immersed, and there were added to the group that day about three thousand people.

When an omer is given on Shavuot – 3000 are immersed. This is only the beginning.

Hopefully you will realize a few things today..

- The Counting of the Omer is significant.
- The Omer for the first fruits offering has been consistently offered on Shavuot
- The Omer is significant to Yeshua in that it traces the time line of His resurrection, leading up to Shavuot, where Adonai pours out His Ruach ha Kodesh. We see this in Luke's account. From Luke chapter 22 through Acts chapter 2 we have a complete and uninterrupted account, starting with Passover.

In Jewish thought, there are three interpretations regarding Shavuot and the Omer...Let's see if you know which one we adhere to...

- The *Perushim* (Pharisees), on the other hand, believed that "the day after the Shabbat" referred to not the weekly Sabbath but to the first day of Passover (which is a shabbaton or day of work restrictions), and therefore began counting the following day, that is, the day after Passover (which is also the second day of Unleavened Bread). This is supported in Joshua 5:11 - 12 when Israel first entered the land and ate of its firstfruits. Now since Passover always occurs on Nisan 15, this established a fixed date for Shavuot 49 days later on Sivan 6

Jos 5:11 The day after Pesach they ate what the land produced, matzah and roasted ears of grain that day.

Jos 5:12 The following day, after they had eaten food produced in the land, the man ended. From then on the people of Isra'el no longer had man; instead, that year, they ate the produce of the land of Kena'an.

- The *Karaites* rejected both these methods but instead relied upon the sighting of the new moon (Rosh Chodesh) and the appearance of the first sheaves of barley to determine the month of Aviv and the festival of

First Fruits, respectively. After these observations, the wave offering of the first fruits would then be presented at the temple on the day after the weekly Sabbath, and only then would the 49 day countdown to Shavuot begin. Therefore, since the appearance of the first barely sheaves is not constant, the date Shavuot could not be foreknown with any certainty.

- The *Tzaddukim* (Sadducees) believed that the word "Sabbath" was used in its regular sense, as the seventh day of the week, and therefore began the countdown on the first Sunday after Passover (Talmud: Menachot 65). Now since Shavuot occurs 7 weeks later to the day, this implies that it also fell on a Sunday. Moreover, since the day of the week for Passover varies over the year, the date of Shavuot would likewise vary.

Believe it or not, the Tzddukim (Sadducees) were actually on the right path, regarding Shavuot. The ones who denied the resurrection were correct about Shavuot.