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## Counting the Omer Leviticus 23: 15-16

**The countdown of the omer is a countdown to Shavu'ot.**

Among Gentile believers today **the same festival** is known as **Pentecost**, which comes from the Greek word **“fifty”** because **the feast** is **fifty** days after **Hag ha'Matzot**. **From the day after Shabbat, that is, from the day you bring the omer for waving, you are to count seven full weeks** (literally **Sabbaths**), **until the day after the seventh week; you are to count fifty days; and then you are to present a new grain offering to ADONAI (Leviticus 23:15-16).**



**The Torah** commands us to begin counting **omer** the day after shabbat, which is Sunday, or Resheet (**to see link click [Ea](#) - Resheet**). The Messianic implications of **the omer** and the subsequent countdown are great. Just as **the first omer of barley** was brought as **a first fruits** of the whole harvest, so too **Messiah's** resurrection was **a first fruits** of the resurrection of the dead. This is the imagery Paul invokes with the words: **Messiah has indeed been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep** (see the commentary on **First Corinthians [Dt](#) - Messiah: The Firstfruits of Those Who Have Fallen Asleep**). Just as **the first fruits of the barley** harvest made all the rest of the harvest kosher for harvest, so, too, the resurrection of **Messiah** makes **the resurrection of the dead** possible.

Because of the resurrection and the connection to **Shavu'ot** (see [Ec - Hag Shavu'ot](#)), counting **the omer** is a precious mitzvah for believers. **According to Jewish tradition, the counting is done in the following manner. After the evening prayers, a blessing is recited: "Blessed are You, LORD our God, King of the Universe, Who has sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us to count the omer."** Then the counter simply states, **"Today is one day of the omer, or two days of the omer, or three days of the omer, and so on.**

This formal counting is followed by the recitation of **Psalm 67** and a few short petitions for spiritual cleansing and renewal. **Psalm 67** is recited because it is composed of exactly 49 Hebrew words which correspond to the 49 days of **the omer** count. The **Psalm** is seasonally appropriate because of its harvest motif. It is spiritually appropriate because it speaks clearly of **God's** salvation (in **Yeshua**) being made known over all the earth.

The countdown of **the omer** is a countdown to **Shavu'ot, which has traditionally been celebrated as the time of the giving of the Ten Words to the nation of Isra'el** (see the commentary on [Deuteronomy Bk - The Ten Words](#)), **seven weeks after their miraculous exodus from Egypt.** As such, it is a spiritual journey of preparation. It is a journey that is begun with **Pesach** (pointing to the death of **Messiah**), and completed at **Shavu'ot** (pointing to the permanent giving of **the Ruach Ha'Kodesh** and the birth of the Church). The days between the two festivals should be a time of spiritual reflection, growth, purification and preparation.<sup>442</sup>

**In Judaism, the first thirty-three days of the omer are treated as days of semi-mourning in commemoration of several calamities from the early AD. The following activities are curtailed during the period of mourning: marriages and wedding celebrations, cutting of one's hair, listening to instrumental music, and purchasing and wearing new garments.**<sup>443</sup> **The thirty-third day of the omer is a semi-festival on which the mourning is suspended.**

Our **Master's** resurrection makes the counting of **the omer** a season of special significance and joy for **His** disciples. It is a time for us to remember the resurrection of **Yeshua** among us. All of **His** post-resurrection appearances fell within the days of counting **the omer**. On the fortieth day of counting **the omer**,

some Messianic communities celebrate **the Master's** ascension. This is sometimes accomplished with a special service, but more often the occasion is marked with a gathering of a time of song, teaching and inspiration.<sup>444</sup>

Use this **God**-given time to:

**Focus on the promises of God:** The promise of the Spirit's presence in our lives to lead us in **God's** righteous ways; **God's** unconditional acceptance of us through the blood of **the Messiah**; and the promise that the good work that **He** has begun in us, **He Himself** will bring to completion.

**Reflect on God's redeeming power:** The power of **God** is behind every righteous choice to perform it; the power of **the Word of God** to change lives; and the power of **the Ruach Ha'Kodesh** to equip, lead and guide us.

**Anticipate the coming harvest:** Anticipation of our new found freedom to walk in **His** righteousness; anticipation of great joy as we walk in our new found freedom; and anticipation of worship and praise of **the One** who set us free.