

Matt. 28:1 – exploring the timing of Yeshua’s crucifixion and resurrection

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<p>Matt 28:1 – Now after the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to look at the grave.</p>	<p>Mark 16:1–2 – When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, bought spices, so that they might come and anoint Him. 2 Very early on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen.</p>	<p>Luke 24:1 – But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared.</p>	<p>John 20:1 – Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came early to the tomb, while it was still dark, and saw the stone already taken away from the tomb.</p>
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An axiom I developed for myself for journalism – and it work in investigation of anything – is, “facts without context are suspect.” In other words, accurate facts are true by themselves, but the interpretation of them can turn truth into error if the facts are removed from contextual factors such as the following:

1. History. This itself can be subject to corruption over time unless the earliest witnesses are considered.
2. Train of thought of the witness. The danger of proof-texting or regarding facts out of context can arise from here.
3. Bias of the witness. Not all bias is devious, but partiality must be taken into consideration.
4. Facts agree with each other to create a logical account of the concept or event.
5. Language. Do the terms the witness is using mean to the witness what we interpret them to mean.

In Matthew 21–27 and parallel accounts from the other Bible writers, we see a sequence of events that illustrates the days and hours before Yeshua is crucified and buried. The accounts of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John all include specific time references related to:

- “in three days,” “after three days” (Matt. 27:63 & Mark 8:31) and “until three days” – between death and resurrection
- “three days and three nights” – “sign of Jonah”
- “third hour”
- “sixth hour” – crucified
- “ninth hour” – Yeshua cries out and dies.
- “preparation day”
- “Sabbath was about to begin” and “the next day was the Sabbath”

Why is there so much emphasis on time?

1st Cor. 15:1–7, 20–21 – Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, 2 by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. 3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, 5 and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. 6 After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep; 7 then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles; 8 and last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared to me also. ... 20 But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. 21 For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead.

According to which Scriptures did Messiah die for our sins, was buried, and rose “on the third day”?

- Isaiah 53, especially the part about “see the light (of life)”
- Psalm 22
- Psa. 16:10 – For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol; Nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay.

We see examples of Yeshua’s death, burial and resurrection paralleling Pesakh, the Feast of Unleavened Bread and the Wave Sheaf offering:

Yeshua	Passover, Unleavened Bread & Firstfruits
<p>Yeshua enters Yeshushalayim on the 10th day of the first month of the year He was crucified (John 12:1, 12).</p>	<p>The Pesakh (Passover) sacrifice was to be a male lamb or kid selected on the 10th day of the first month, made sure not to have blemishes, and be kept until the 14th day (Ex. 12:3, 5).</p>
<p>Yeshua is arrested at night on the 14th day (Matthew 26).</p>	<p>The Sanhedrin selects the first sheafs of the barley harvest on the 14th day and binds them for harvest (Mishnah, Menach. viii. 1, 2).</p>
<p>Yeshua dies at the ninth hour – reckoned after sunrise at 6 a.m. – on the 14th day of the first month, or 3 p.m.</p>	<p>The Pesakh lamb was to be killed “at twilight,” or literally “between the evenings,” on the 14th day (Ex. 12:6). The first evening began at mid-day and the second at twilight. Usually the evening sacrifice and the Passover sacrifice were killed in the middle or around 3 p.m.</p>
<p>Yeshua was buried quickly because the shabbat was approaching.</p>	<p>The Pesakh was to be eaten quickly and consumed totally before morning (Ex. 12:10).</p>

Yeshua rises from the dead sometime before the early hours of the “first of the *sabbat*own.” He ascends to His Father to present Himself.

The sheaf for the wave offering was harvested at the end of shabbat and lifted before God in the temple the next morning.

From this brief comparison of type (the appointed times of the LORD) and antitype (the fullness of the appointed times in Messiah Yeshua), it is clear that time does matter to God.

- Indeed, Yeshua was sent as a baby “in the fullness of time” (Gal. 4:4).
- He said many times during His work on earth that “my time has not come” when He was being pressured into showing His glory (John 2:4; 7:6, 8).
- The LORD set a memorial in time for His role as Creator and Redeemer was a sign that He was the One Who set Israel apart from the nations as His priests, His ambassadors (Gen. 2:2; Ex. 19:6; Ex. 20:8–11; Ex. 31:13; Ezek. 20:12, 20).

This importance of timing being a sign of God’s power and the specificity of Yeshua’s being the Messiah, the Lamb of God, we should look at a question of timing that is at least 2,000 years old.

- The question has divided Pharisee from Sadducee and Essene, Passover-keepers from Easter-keepers, Shabbat-keepers from Sunday-keepers.
 - The early Jewish sect of the Pharisees held that the wave offering was conducted on the 16th day of the first month, based on the idea that “on the morrow of the shabbat” meant the morning after the first shabbat of Unleavened Bread, which was the 15th day. The Sadducees and the community of Qumran understood the “morrow of the shabbat” to mean the morning after the seventh-day Shabbat, with the Qumran group taking it to mean the week following. The rabbinical practice is observed in Judaism today.
 - The wave offering omer was reaped just after the 15th day, the first shabbat of Unleavened Bread, and offered in the temple on the 16th day, according to first-century historians Philo and Josephus.¹
 - According to the third to first century B.C. Greek translation of the Bible, called the Septuagint and abbreviated as LXX, the wave offering was presented to God “on the morrow of the first day,” with the “first day” identified in verses 6 and 7 as the 15th day of the first month.²
 - “On the morrow” means “the next day,” because morrow is derived from *morwe* in Middle English, which came from *morgen* in Old English. *Morgen* in German means “morning.”³
 - In what became known as the Quartodeciman controversy at the Council of Nicea in A.D. 325, a note of contention was that the congregations of what is modern-day Turkey and into Palestine held that Passover should be kept on the 14th day of the first month, hence the name quartodeciman. The overseer of Rome, Victor, excommunicated the eastern congregations over this practice. The congregations of Rome and Alexandria contended that the celebration of the resurrection was to be held on Easter Sunday, citing a practice of the congregation of Rome going back to the time of overseer Sixtus (A.D. 116-125). The Sunday Easter contingent won out on the Easter Sunday issue and a tide of anti-Judaism eventually led to the exalting of Sunday as a weekly celebration of the resurrection. The Quartodeciman camp didn’t have a separate celebration of the resurrection beside celebration of Yeshua’s sacrifice on Pesakh.⁴
 - At the Council of Nicea and afterward the spirit of anti-Judaism was seen in distancing the church away from anything related to Judaism, whether the observance predated Pharisaism or not.
- So, we may not find answers to all our questions about timing today, but we will at least have explored the mind of God in setting such clear historical patterns in which are teachings about what He is doing to reconcile man to Himself.

One division that has come among followers of Messiah comes down to when Yeshua rose from the dead.

- Yeshua said that His miracles and actions showed He was Messiah, but He also gave those who wanted even more proof a cryptic sign to watch for, the “sign of Jonah.” What is this sign?

Matt. 12:38-42 — Then some of the scribes and Pharisees said to Him, “Teacher, we want to see a sign from You.” 39 But He

1 “But within the festival of Pesach there is another festival following directly after the first day.” (*Works of Philo*, Spec. 2: 29 & 162). “The feast of Unleavened Bread succeeds that of Passover and falls on the 15th of the month and continues seven days wherein they feed on unleavened bread on every one of which days two bulls are killed and one ram and seven lambs. Now these lambs are entirely burnt beside the kid of the goats which is added to all the rest for sins, for it is intended as a feast for the priest on everyone of these days. But on the second day of Unleavened Bread, which is the 16th day of the month, they first partake of the fruits of the earth for before that day they do not touch them. and while they suppose it proper to honor God from which they obtain this plentiful provision in the first place, they offer the first fruits of their barley.” (Flavius Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, 10:5).

2 The Septuagint predates the two main manuscripts used for the Hebrew Scriptures by 1,000 to 1,300 years. Lev. 23:5–16 LXX — “In the first month, on the 14th day of the month, between the evening times is the Lord’s passover. 6 And on the 15th day of this month is the feast of unleavened bread to the Lord; seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread. 7 And the first day shall be a holy convocation to you: ye shall do no servile work. 8 And ye shall offer whole-burnt-offerings to the Lord seven days; and the seventh day shall be a holy convocation to you: ye shall do no servile work. 9 And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 10 Speak to the children of Israel, and thou shalt say to them, When ye shall enter into the land which I give you, and reap the harvest of it, then shall ye bring a sheaf, the first-fruits of your harvest, to the priest; 11 and he shall lift up the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted for you. On the morrow of the first day the priest shall lift it up. 12 And ye shall offer on the day on which ye bring the sheaf, a lamb without blemish of a year old for a whole-burnt-offering to the Lord. 13 And its meat-offering two tenth portions of fine flour mingled with oil: it is a sacrifice to the Lord, a smell of sweet savour to the Lord, and its drink-offering the fourth part of a hin of wine. 14 And ye shall not eat bread, or the new parched corn, until this same day, until ye offer the sacrifices to your God: it is a perpetual statute throughout your generations in all your dwellings. 15 And ye shall number to yourselves from the day after the sabbath, from the day on which ye shall offer the sheaf of the heave-offering, seven full weeks: 16 until the morrow after the last week ye shall number 50 days, and shall bring a new meat-offering to the Lord.” (English translation of the *Septuagint* by Sir Lancelot Charles Lee Brenton, originally published by Samuel Bagster & Sons, Ltd., London, 1851. Accessed March 12, 2008, at www.ccel.org/bible/brenton/index.html.)

3 Entry for “morrow.” *Oxford English Dictionary*. Oxford University Press, New York, 2008.

4 Bacchiocchi, Samuele. *From Sabbath to Sunday*. The Pontifical Gregorian University Press, Rome, 1977. pp. 198–207.

answered and said to them, “An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign; and yet no sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet; 40 for just as ‘Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster,’ so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. 41 “The men of Nineveh will stand up with this generation at the judgment, and will condemn it because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, something greater than Jonah is here. 42 “The Queen of the South will rise up with this generation at the judgment and will condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.

Jonah 1:17 – 3:10 — And the LORD appointed a great fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the stomach of the fish three days and three nights. 2:1 Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the stomach of the fish, 2 and he said, “I called out of my distress to the LORD, And He answered me. I cried for help from the depth of Sheol; You heard my voice. 3 “For You had cast me into the deep, Into the heart of the seas, And the current engulfed me. All Your breakers and billows passed over me. 4 “So I said, ‘I have been expelled from Your sight. Nevertheless I will look again toward Your holy temple.’ 5 “Water encompassed me to the point of death. The great deep engulfed me, Weeds were wrapped around my head. 6 “I descended to the roots of the mountains. The earth with its bars was around me forever, But You have brought up my life from the pit, O LORD my God. 7 “While I was fainting away, I remembered the LORD, And my prayer came to You, Into Your holy temple. 8 “Those who regard vain idols Forsake their faithfulness, 9 But I will sacrifice to You With the voice of thanksgiving. That which I have vowed I will pay. Salvation is from the LORD.” 10 Then the LORD commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah up onto the dry land. 3:1 Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the second time, saying, 2 “Arise, go to Nineveh the great city and proclaim to it the proclamation which I am going to tell you.” 3 So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, a three days’ walk. 4 Then Jonah began to go through the city one day’s walk; and he cried out and said, “Yet forty days and Nineveh will be overthrown.” 5 Then the people of Nineveh believed in God; and they called a fast and put on sackcloth from the greatest to the least of them. 6 When the word reached the king of Nineveh, he arose from his throne, laid aside his robe from him, covered himself with sackcloth and sat on the ashes. 7 He issued a proclamation and it said, “In Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles: Do not let man, beast, herd, or flock taste a thing. Do not let them eat or drink water. 8 “But both man and beast must be covered with sackcloth; and let men call on God earnestly that each may turn from his wicked way and from the violence which is in his hands. 9 “Who knows, God may turn and relent and withdraw His burning anger so that we will not perish.” 10 When God saw their deeds, that they turned from their wicked way, then God relented concerning the calamity which He had declared He would bring upon them. And He did not do it.

- One group of thought based on the passage in Matthew says that the period refers to at least 72 hours, starting during daylight hours and ending during dark hours. So the crucifixion was not on the sixth day of the week, i.e. Friday, but on the fourth day, i.e. Wednesday, giving a full three days and three nights in the grave. ⁵
- Another group of thought says that the period refers to parts of three days, starting the afternoon of the first day and stretching to either the evening (beginning) or dawn of the third day.

Facts for and implications of a literal “three days and three nights”	Facts for and implications of “in three days”
“three days and three nights” is mentioned once (Matt. 12:42) referring to the “sign of Jonah”	“in three days,” “until three days,” “on the third day”
The sign of Jonah is related to “three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.” The common interpretation of “heart of the earth” is the grave, so Yeshua was to be in the grave for up to that amount of time.	The sign of Jonah is mentioned without the time reference or “heart of the earth” in Matt. 16:1–4 and in Mark.
The seven days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread includes a festival shabbat and the seventh-day Shabbat. The festival shabbat and the weekly Shabbat could be on different days.	
The wave offering was presented “on the morrow of the shabbat”(Lev. 23:11 NASB). That can mean the weekly Shabbat.	The wave offering was presented “on the morrow of the first day” (Lev. 23:11 LXX), or the 16 th day of the first month.
Starting the count on the	
	Manna arrived double on the sixth day, none on the seventh, and returned again on the first day.
	The freewill peace offering was to be eaten by the third day.
	On the third day after purifying the assembly of Israel was to go up to the mountain.

⁵ “Three Days and Three Nights.” *Fundamental Beliefs of the United Church of God.* www.ucg.org/booklets/FB/threenights.htm. Accessed Feb. 26, 2008.

Did Yeshua rise from the dead on the “first day of the week,” “first of the sabbaths” or “first of the weeks”?

- This is a complicated question, because the Greek passages regarding Yeshua’s resurrection by all four gospel writers uses *sabbatoun* σαββατων, the transliteration of the Hebrew word *shabbaton* שַׁבָּת.
 - *Shabbaton* can refer to one or more shabbats.
 - *Sabbatoun* in Greek is a plural form, which literally would mean “shabbats.”
 - The singular form *sabbatou* σαββατου is used in Mark 16:9 — “after He had risen on the first of the σαββατων” — but that is in a section (verses 9–16) most scholars say was a latter addition to the gospel because of linguistics. Another example of the singular is Luke 18:12 “I fast twice a week [*sabbatou*].”
 - σαββάτων *sabbatoun* is used as a singular or plural in Greek, e.g. ἡμέραν τῶνσαββάτων *hemeran toun sabbatoun* “remember the Sabbath day” (Ex. 20:8 LXX) and ἐπι σάββατα τρία *epi sabbata tria* “on three Sabbaths” (Acts 17:2).
 - The plural form is used dozens of times in the gospels to refer to the weekly Sabbath.
- The resurrection timing passages are more perplexing because the word *sabbatoun* is used twice, as it is in Matt. 28:1, which literally reads “at the end of the *sabbaton*, at the dawn of the first of the *sabbaton*.”
- The translation could be “first day of the week,” because a common way of rendering the names of days of the week at the time was in relation to the Shabbat, i.e., the first day of the week was the “first day of the Shabbat.”⁶ Thus, the Greek is conveying Hebraic time reckoning.
 - *Didache*, a late first century or early second century writing by a Jewish-Christian, noted that, “Judeans fast δευτ ἔργ σαββάτων και πέμπτη ‘on the second and fifth days of the week’ (Monday and Thursday).”⁷
 - So “first of the Shabbat,” “second of the Shabbat,” “fifth of the Shabbat,” etc. referred to days of the week.
 - Does that mean that Acts 20:7–12 shows that Paul and the early believers moved the Shabbat to the first day of the week? No. The passage clearly indicates that this was on the nighttime portion of the first day of the week, i.e. a traditional Saturday night *havdalah* service to close the Shabbat:

“On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul began talking to them, intending to leave the next day, and he prolonged his message until midnight. 8 There were many lamps in the upper room where we were gathered together. ... he talked with them a long while until daybreak, and then left. 12 They took away the boy alive, and were greatly comforted.”
- It could also mean “first of the weeks,” in addition to “first day of the week.” In other words, it could have been a conjunction of the first of the seven weeks of the Feast of Weeks.
 - For example, “first of the weeks” could be the context of 1st Cor. 16:1–9:

“Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I directed the churches of Galatia, so do you also. 2 On the first day of every week each one of you is to put aside and save, as he may prosper, so that no collections be made when I come. 3 When I arrive, whomever you may approve, I will send them with letters to carry your gift to Jerusalem; 4 and if it is fitting for me to go also, they will go with me. ... 8 But I will remain in Ephesus until Pentecost; 9 for a wide door for effective service has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.”
 - However, another rendering of this passage is “on one Shabbat” or “on one week.”

Was Yeshua in the grave for “three days and three nights,” or did He rise “in three days”?

- “Three days and three nights” is mentioned once (Matt. 12:42) relating to Yeshua and the “sign of Yonah” (Jonah).
 - The sign of Jonah is mentioned without the time reference or “heart of the earth” in Matt. 16:1–4 and in Mark.
- “On the third day” and its equivalents “after three days,” relating to Yeshua’s death and resurrection, often with the parabolic reference to tearing down and rebuilding “this temple,” i.e., His body.
 - “third day” — five references
 - “on/after/until three days” and “three days later” — 11 references
- Does “three days and three nights in the heart of the earth” refer to Yeshua’s time in the grave?
 - If “heart of the earth” refers to the grave, then the period couldn’t have been literally three days and three nights.
 - Psalm 16:10 — “For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol; Nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay.”
 - Hosea 6:2 — “He will revive us after two days; He will raise us up on the third day, That we may live before Him.”
 - If “heart of the earth” refers to Yerushalayim and its environs, a literal three days and three nights of confinement would have been Yeshua’s time spent in the city and nearby between His entry to the city on Lamb Selection Day, or the 10th day of the first month, and His being crucified.

Was the firstfruits of the harvest waved “on the morrow of the Sabbath,” i.e. the first day of the week, or “on the

6 Lightfoot, John. "Commentary on Matthew 28." *John Lightfoot Commentary on the Gospels*. www.studylight.org/com/jlc/view.cgi?book=mt&chapter=028. 1675.

The Jews reckon the days of the week thus; One day (or the first day) of the sabbath: two (or the second day) of the sabbath: "Two witnesses come and say, The first of the sabbath this man stole, ... , and, on the second day of the sabbath, judgment passed on him." The third of the sabbath: "A virgin is married on the fourth day of the week; for they provide for the feast the first day of the week. The second day of the week: and the third day of the week." "On the fourth day of the week they set apart him who was to burn the red heifer." On the fifth of the sabbath. "Ezra ordained that they should read the law publicly on the second and fifth days of the sabbath, ... He appointed that judges should sit in the cities on the second and fifth days. Ezra also appointed that they should wash their clothes on the fifth day of the sabbath." The sixth day they commonly called the eve of the sabbath: "To wash their clothes on the fifth day of the sabbath, and eat onions on the eve of the sabbath." On the fifth day of the sabbath [or week], and the eve of the sabbath, and the sabbath.

7 Bauer, W., F. W. Danker, F. Arndt, and F. W. Gingrich, eds. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature* (BDAG). Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000. On σαββάτων, citing *Didache* 8:1.

morrow of the first day,” i.e. the day after the first day of Unleavened Bread, or the 16th day of the first month?

- The question has divided Pharisee from Sadducee and Essene, Passover-keepers from Easter-keepers, Shabbat-keepers from Sunday-keepers.
 - The early Jewish sect of the Pharisees held that the wave offering was conducted on the 16th day of the first month, based on the idea that “on the morrow of the shabbat” meant the morning after the first shabbat of Unleavened Bread, which was the 15th day. The rabbinical practice is observed in Judaism today.
 - The wave offering omer was reaped just after the 15th day, the first shabbat of Unleavened Bread, and offered in the temple on the 16th day, according to first-century historians Philo and Josephus.⁸
 - According to the third to first century B.C. Greek translation of the Bible, called the Septuagint and abbreviated as LXX, the wave offering was presented to God “on the morrow of the first day,” with the “first day” identified in verses 6 and 7 as the 15th day of the first month.⁹
 - “On the morrow” means “the next day,” because morrow is derived from *morwe* in Middle English, which came from *morgen* in Old English. *Morgen* in German means “morning.”¹⁰
 - The Sadducees understood the “morrow of the shabbat” to mean the morning after the seventh-day Shabbat.
 - The Samaritans understood the phrase to mean the first day of the week.
 - The Samaritans had names for the seven weeks¹¹:
 1. "Week of the crossing of the (Red) Sea" (Ex. 14:26-15:21)
 2. "Week of the changing of the water of marah" (Ex. 15:22-26)
 3. "Week of elim, where they found 12 water springs and 70 palm trees" (Ex. 15:27-16.3)
 4. "Week of the man, which fell down upon them from heavens in the desert" (Ex. 16.4-36)
 5. "Week of the welling out of water from the rock" (Exodus 17.1-7)
 6. "Week of the battles against 'Amaleq" (Exodus 17.8-17)
 7. "Week of standing at Mt. Sinai" (Exodus 19.1 ff.)
 - The Qumran group considered it to mean the day after the weekly Shabbat following Unleavened Bread.
 - In what became known as the Quartodeciman controversy at the Council of Nicea in A.D. 325, a note of contention was that the congregations of what is modern-day Turkey and into Palestine held that Passover should be kept on the 14th day of the first month, hence the name quartodeciman. The overseer of Rome, Victor, excommunicated the eastern congregations over this practice. The congregations of Rome and Alexandria contended that the celebration of the resurrection was to be held on Easter Sunday, citing a practice of the congregation of Rome going back to the time of overseer Sixtus (A.D. 116-125). The Sunday Easter contingent won out on the Easter Sunday issue and a tide of anti-Judaism eventually led to the exalting of Sunday as a weekly celebration of the resurrection. The Quartodeciman camp didn't have a separate celebration of the resurrection beside celebration of Yeshua's sacrifice on Pesakh.¹²
 - At the Council of Nicea and afterward the spirit of anti-Judaism was seen in distancing the church away from anything related to Judaism, whether the observance predated Pharisaism or not.
- So, we may not find answers to all our questions about timing today, but we will at least have explored the mind of God in setting such clear historical patterns in which are teachings about what He is doing to reconcile man to Himself.

Suppose the offering of firstfruits was waved on the first day of the week or on the weekly Shabbat.

- This view would be warranted because:
 1. Leviticus 23 refers to the firstfruits being waved “on the morrow of the shabbat,” referring to the weekly Shabbat.
 2. Firstfruits and the Feast of Weeks are the only among God's appointed times that are not set to a given day of a given month. If the Firstfruits always were to be offered on the 16th day of the first month, the command would have been such.
 3. Early writings of believers in Messiah Yeshua, both advocates for the weekly Shabbat and those for the first day of the week, say that He rose from the dead on the “first day of the week.”
 4. Sadducees rejected rabbinical tradition and held to the Tanakh, and the Tanakh only.

8 “But within the festival of Pesach there is another festival following directly after the first day.” (*Works of Philo*, Spec. 2: 29 & 162).
“The feast of Unleavened Bread succeeds that of Passover and falls on the 15th of the month and continues seven days wherein they feed on unleavened bread on every one of which days two bulls are killed and one ram and seven lambs. Now these lambs are entirely burnt beside the kid of the goats which is added to all the rest for sins, for it is intended as a feast for the priest on everyone of these days. But on the second day of Unleavened Bread, which is the 16th day of the month, they first partake of the fruits of the earth for before that day they do not touch them. and while they suppose it proper to honor God from which they obtain this plentiful provision in the first place, they offer the first fruits of their barley.” (Flavius Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, 10:5).

9 The Septuagint predates the two main manuscripts used for the Hebrew Scriptures by 1,000 to 1,300 years. Lev. 23:5–16 LXX — “In the first month, on the 14th day of the month, between the evening times is the Lord's passover. 6 And on the 15th day of this month is the feast of unleavened bread to the Lord; seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread. 7 And the first day shall be a holy convocation to you: ye shall do no servile work. 8 And ye shall offer whole-burnt-offerings to the Lord seven days; and the seventh day shall be a holy convocation to you: ye shall do no servile work. 9 And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 10 Speak to the children of Israel, and thou shalt say to them, When ye shall enter into the land which I give you, and reap the harvest of it, then shall ye bring a sheaf, the first-fruits of your harvest, to the priest; 11 and he shall lift up the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted for you. On the morrow of the first day the priest shall lift it up. 12 And ye shall offer on the day on which ye bring the sheaf, a lamb without blemish of a year old for a whole-burnt-offering to the Lord. 13 And its meat-offering two tenth portions of fine flour mingled with oil: it is a sacrifice to the Lord, a smell of sweet savour to the Lord, and its drink-offering the fourth part of a hin of wine. 14 And ye shall not eat bread, or the new parched corn, until this same day, until ye offer the sacrifices to your God: it is a perpetual statute throughout your generations in all your dwellings. 15 And ye shall number to yourselves from the day after the sabbath, from the day on which ye shall offer the sheaf of the heave-offering, seven full weeks: 16 until the morrow after the last week ye shall number 50 days, and shall bring a new meat-offering to the Lord.” (English translation of the Septuagint by Sir Lancelot Charles Lee Brenton, originally published by Samuel Bagster & Sons, Ltd., London, 1851. Accessed March 12, 2008, at www.ccel.org/bible/brenton/index.html.)

10 Entry for “morrow.” *Oxford English Dictionary*. Oxford University Press, New York, 2008.

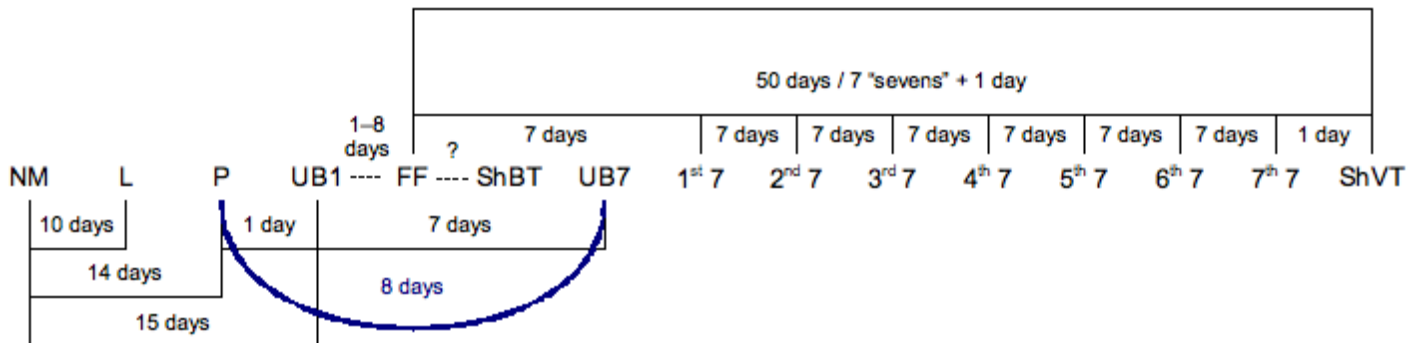
11 Powels, Sylvia. *A Bibliography of the Samaritans*. Alan Crown, editor. Scarecrow Press, Metuchen, N.J., 1984.

12 Bacchiocchi, Samuele. *From Sabbath to Sunday*. The Pontifical Gregorian University Press, Rome, 1977. pp. 198–207.

- If that passage refers to the first day of the week, then:
 - The Firstfruits offering always is waved on the first day of the week.
 - The count of the seven “shavuot” starts on the first day of the week and ends on the first day of the week 50 days later.
- If that passage refers to the weekly Shabbat after Passover, then:
 - Firstfruits are offered always on a weekly Shabbat.
 - The count of the seven “shavuot” starts on that Shabbat hits six successive weekly Shabbats, ending on a weekly Shabbat.

What does the Bible tell us about the timing of the LORD’s spring appointed times?

Assuming Firstfruits is offered the morning after or the morning of the weekly Shabbat



NM = New Moon. L = Lamb selection day. P = Pesakh/Passover. UB1/UB7 = 1st and 7th days of Unleavened Bread. FF = Firstfruits. ShBT = Shabbat. 1st 7 – 7th 7 = seven “sevens” of the Feast of Weeks. ShVT = Shavuot/Pentecost.

Sources for timeframes: Exodus 12, Deuteronomy 16 and Leviticus 23.

All time spans are inclusive of start and end dates.

- Problems with Shavuot being on the weekly Shabbat after Passover.
 - Why would there be a prohibition from doing “laborious work” on Shavuot (Lev. 23:21 NASB) if it were always on the weekly Shabbat? The LORD already said one cannot do “any work” on the Shabbat (Lev. 23:3).
- Problems with Shavuot being on Sunday after Passover.
 - The LORD told Israel to wash and prepare themselves for three days before going up to Sinai to meet God and receive His Law (Ex. 19:1–17). How could one of those three days have been the Shabbat? The LORD already had taught Israel about the sanctity of the Shabbat (no manna that day, Exodus 16).

Suppose the offering of firstfruits was waved on the 16th day of the first month.

- This view would be warranted because:
 1. It is called the Feast of Weeks (Ex. 34:22; Num. 28:26; Deut. 16:9–11; 2nd Chron. 8:13), not the Feast of Sabbaths.¹³
 - Deut. 16:9–11 — “You shall count seven weeks [*shavuot*] for yourself; you shall begin to count seven weeks from the time you begin to put the sickle to the standing grain. 10 Then you shall celebrate the Feast of Weeks [*shavuah*] to the LORD your God with a tribute of a freewill offering of your hand, which you shall give just as the LORD your God blesses you; 11 and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God, you and your son and your daughter and your male and female servants and the Levite who is in your town, and the stranger and the orphan and the widow who are in your midst, in the place where the LORD your God chooses to establish His name.”
 2. *Shabbat* and *Shabbaton* can refer to the weekly Shabbat or the sabbaths of the appointed times.¹⁴
 - Ex. 16:23 — “[T]hen he said to them, ‘This is what the LORD meant: Tomorrow is a sabbath observance [*Shabbaton*], a holy sabbath to the LORD. Bake what you will bake and boil what you will boil, and all that is left over put aside to be kept until morning’” ().
 - Ex. 35:1-2 — “Then Moses assembled all the congregation of the sons of Israel, and said to them, ‘These are the things that the LORD has commanded you to do: For six days work may be done, but on the seventh day you shall have a holy day, a sabbath of complete rest [*Shabbat Shabbaton*] to the LORD; whoever does any work on it shall be put to death.’”
 - Lev. 23:3 — “For six days work may be done, but on the seventh day there is a sabbath of complete rest [*Shabbat Shabbaton*], a holy convocation. You shall not do any work; it is a sabbath to the LORD in all your dwellings.”
 3. The Septuagint, the Scriptures the apostles often quoted from and predate the most complete version of the Hebrew Scriptures, the Masoretic text, by an eon, say that the understanding of Lev. 23:11 regarding Firstfruits was the 16th.

¹³ McKee, J.K. “Sadducees, Pharisees and the Counting of the Omer.” Accessed from www.tnnonline.net. Jan. 17, 2008. p. 6.

¹⁴ McKee, p. 8.

- Does the Hebrew phrase translated as “on the morrow of the shabbat” in Lev. 23:11 — ממחרת השבת — mean “morning/day after the shabbat” or “morning of the shabbat”?
 - מחרת comes from the verb מחר, which is not used in the Bible but means “be in front of,” “meet,” “receive”¹⁵
 - מחר means “to-morrow,” “in time to come” or “time in front”¹⁶
 - Ex. 16:22-23 — “Now on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread [manna], two omers for each one. When all the leaders of the congregation came and told Moses, then he said to them, “This is what the LORD meant: Tomorrow [מחר] is a sabbath observance, a holy sabbath to the LORD. Bake what you will bake and boil what you will boil, and all that is left over put aside to be kept until morning [עד־הבקר].”
 - 1st Sam. 20 — “5 So David said to Jonathan, ‘Behold, tomorrow is the new moon [מחר חדש], and I ought to sit down to eat with the king but let me go, that I may hide myself in the field until the third evening. ... 18 Then Jonathan said to him, ‘Tomorrow is the new moon [מחר חדש], and you will be missed because your seat will be empty.’ ... 27 It came about the next day, the second day of the new moon [ויהי ממחרת החדש השני], that David’s place was empty; so Saul said to Jonathan his son, ‘Why has the son of Jesse not come to the meal, either yesterday or today?’ ”
 - מחרת means “on the morrow”¹⁷
 - Gen. 19:34 — “On the following day [מחרת], the firstborn said to the younger, ‘Behold, I lay last night [אמש] with my father [Lot]; let us make him drink wine tonight [הלילה] also; then you go in and lie with him, that we may preserve our family through our father.’ ”
 - Ex. 18:13 — [Yitro visited Moshe at Sinai and ate with the elders.] “It came about the next day [ממחרת] that Moses sat to judge the people, and the people stood about Moses from the morning until the evening.”
 - Ex. 32:5-6, 30 — “Now when Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made a proclamation and said, ‘Tomorrow [מחר] shall be a feast to the LORD.’ So the next day [ממחרת] they rose early and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play. ... 30 On the next day [ממחרת] Moses said to the people, ‘You yourselves have committed a great sin; and now I am going up to the LORD, perhaps I can make atonement for your sin.’ ”
 - Num. 11:32 — “The people spent all day and all night and all the next day [כל יום המחרת וכל הלילה וכל היום ההיא וכל הלילה וכל היום ההיא וכל הלילה וכל היום ההיא] and gathered the quail (he who gathered least gathered ten homers) and they spread them out for themselves all around the camp.”
 - Num. 17:23 — “Now on the next day [ממחרת] Moses went into the tent of the testimony; and behold, the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi had sprouted and put forth buds and produced blossoms, and it bore ripe almonds.”
 - Num. 33:3 — “They journeyed from Rameses in the first month, on the 15th day of the first month; on the next day after the Passover [ממחרת הפסח] the sons of Israel started out boldly in the sight of all the Egyptians ...”
 - Would this be translated “on the morning/day of the Passover”? No, Passover comes “between the evenings” of the 14th day.
 - Josh. 5:11-12 — “On the day after the Passover [ממחרת הפסח], on that very day, they ate some of the produce of the land, unleavened cakes and parched grain. The manna ceased on the day after [ממחרת] they had eaten some of the produce of the land, so that the sons of Israel no longer had manna, but they ate some of the yield of the land of Canaan during that year.”
 - Does the Greek phrase translated as “on the morrow of the first day” [τῆ ἐπαύριον τῆς πρώτης] mean “the day/morning after the first day” or “the morning of the first day”?¹⁸

Word	Root	Part of speech	Translation
τῆ	ὁ	Article, feminine, singular, dative	the, who, which
ἐπαύριον	ἐπαύριον	Adverb	tomorrow
τῆς	ὁ	Article, feminine singular, genitive	the, who, which
πρώτης	πρώτος	Adjective, feminine, singular, genitive, no degree (ordinal)	first, prominent, former

 - The same Greek phrase is used in 1st Chron. 29:21 to translate לְמָחָר הַיּוֹם “on the next day” (NASB) or “on the morrow after that day” (KJV).
 - The Greek word for “on the morrow” or “tomorrow” — ἐπαύριον *hepaursion* — is used 17 times in the Apostolic Scriptures.
 - Many of the uses don’t specifically indicate the the time of day.
 - One use (Acts 10:9) specifically states that it was “about the sixth hour,” or noontime prayer.
 - What would the Greek phrase be for “that morning” or “the same morning”?
 - The English phrase “that day” in the 27 verses in which it’s used in the NASB is the translation of ἐν ἐκεῖνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ *en ekeine te hemera*.
 - “So when it was evening on that day, the first *day* of the week” (John 20:19) comes from Οὐσῆς οὐβ

15 Brown, Driver & Briggs Hebrew lexicon, entry for root verb מחר, p. 563.

16 *ibid.*, entry for מחר, Strong’s 4279, p. 583.

17 *ibid.*, entry for מחרת, Strong’s 4283.

18 Accordance Bible software syntax chart.

ὄψιας τῆ ἡμέρα ἐκεῖνη τῆ μιᾷ σαββάτων.

● ὄψιας *opsias* refers to “the period between late afternoon and darkness”¹⁹.

■ “Now it was the Sabbath on that day.” (John 5:9)

○ That Greek phrase is the Septuagint translation for “that day” or “same day” in 330 verses:

■ הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה בְּעֶצְמָם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה “on that same day” (Exod. 12:51, about the Exodus the morning after the Passover; Lev. 23:30, about no work on Yom haKippurim)

■ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא “on this same day” (Lev. 22:30, on eating a *zebakh* offering of thanksgiving before morning)

■ So, had the understanding of Lev. 23:11 had been “on the morning/day of the Sabbath” it would have been rendered:

● בַּבֹּקֶר הַשַּׁבָּת *ba-boker ha-shabbat* “on the morning of the Sabbath”

● בְּיוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת *b’yom ha-shabbat* “on the Sabbath day”

● מִן הַבֹּקֶר הַשַּׁבָּת or מִהַבֹּקֶר הַשַּׁבָּת *min/mi-ha-boker ha-shabbat* “from the morning of the Shabbat”

○ מִן הַבֹּקֶר *min ha-boker* “from the morning” (Ex. 18:13)

○ מִבֹּקֶר *min boker* “from morning” (Ex. 18:14)

○ מֵהַבֹּקֶר *mey-ha-boker* “from the morning” (2nd Sam. 24:15)

○ מֵאַזְ הַבֹּקֶר *mey-az ha-boker* “from [then] the morning” (Ruth 2:7)

● מִן הַיּוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת or מִהַיּוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת or מִיּוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת *min/mi-ha-/m’yom ha-shabbat* “from the Shabbat day”

○ מִיּוֹם הַבִּיאָכָם אֶת עֹמֶר הַתְּנוּפָה *mi-yom ha-bi’akhem et-omer ha-t’nufah* “from the day when you brought in the sheaf of the wave offering” (Lev. 23:15; or “from the day of the bringing in of the ...”)

4. Israel approached Sinai to meet God and receive His Law seven sevens of days plus one after leaving Exodus. That points to the count of the 50 days starting “on the third day” from the Passover.

■ Israel left Egypt during the night (beginning) portion of the 15th day of the first month.

■ Israel arrived in the environs of Sinai on the same day three months later (Ex. 19:1).

● Does that mean the same day of the month or the same day of the week?

○ If it were the same day of the month, then it would be longer than seven sevens of days plus one from the 15th day of the first month.

○ If it were the same day of the week, that would fit with the seven sevens plus one, because it puts the final day on the same day of the week as the starting day because of the seven-day week.

■ Moshe told the people to prepare themselves to approach the mountain to meet the LORD “on the third day” (v. 11).

● Some may question the accuracy of these time statements:

○ Given that Israel arrived 50 days after the 15th day, then “on the third day” could be interpreted to mean that the count of the 50 days started on the 17th day of the first month.

○ It could be that Israel arrived near Sinai 50 days after the 14th day of the first month.

■ Messiah Yeshua, the Lamb of God, died on the stake on the afternoon of the 14th day of the first month, i.e. at the time of the Pesakh sacrifice.

5. Paul was a self-described strict Pharisee who was the primary first teacher of Messiah Yeshua to the nations. Pharisees held to Firstfruits being on the 16th day of the first month.

6. The correlation between the Firstfruits command and the experience of Israel’s first Passover before entering the Land, eating produce of the Land the day after the Passover and the *manna* going away the day after.

■ Joshua 5:10–12 — “While the sons of Israel camped at Gilgal they observed the Passover on the evening of the 14th day of the month on the desert plains of Jericho. 11 On the day after the Passover, on that very day, they ate some of the produce of the land, unleavened cakes and parched grain. 12 The manna ceased on the day after they had eaten some of the produce of the land, so that the sons of Israel no longer had manna, but they ate some of the yield of the land of Canaan during that year.”

● “Doing the Pesakh” (Deut. 16:1) stretched from “between the evenings” of the 14th day (Exodus 12) into the 15th day, because none of the Pesakh offering was to be left at dawn on the 15th (ibid.).

● There was no firstfruits to offer at the first Passover, because Israel was still in Egypt and not in the Promised Land.

■ Lev. 23:14 — “Until this same day, until you have brought in the offering of your God, you shall eat neither bread nor roasted grain nor new growth. It is to be a perpetual statute throughout your generations in all your dwelling places.”

● If Lev. 23:11 refers to the 16th day of the first month, then:

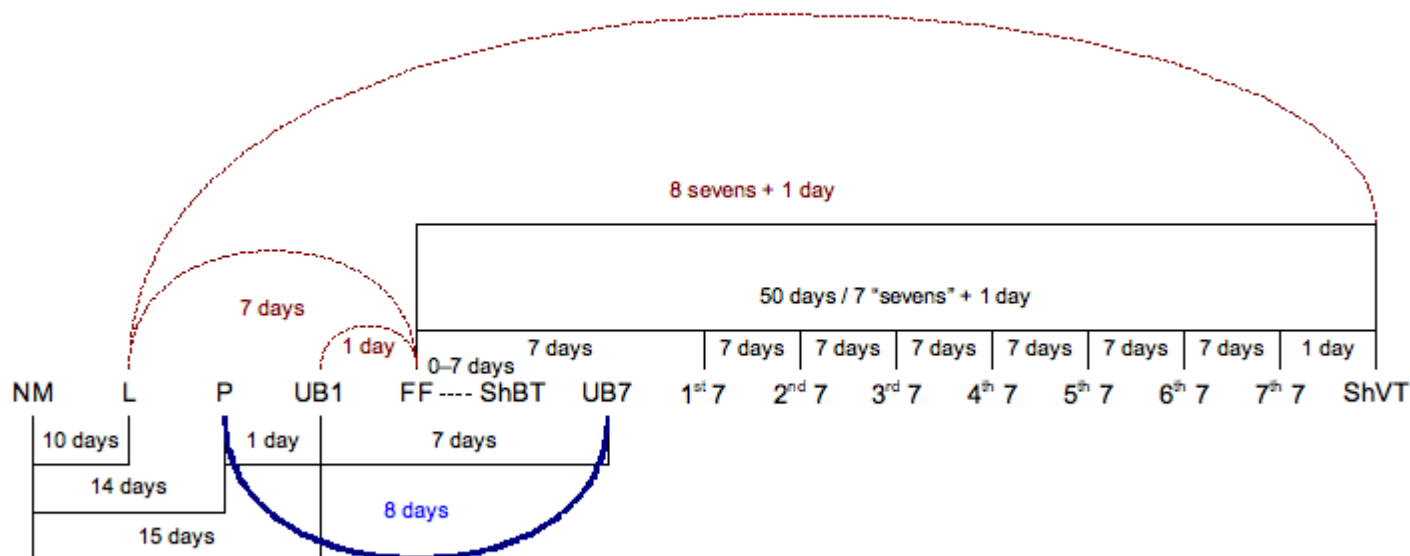
○ The time from Pesakh to Firstfruits always is three days.

○ The time period from Lamb Selection Day, the 10th day of the first month, to Firstfruits, the 16th day, always is seven days.

19 BDAG.

What does the Bible tell us about the timing of the LORD's spring appointed times?

Assuming Firstfruits is the 16th day of the first month



NM = New Moon. L = Lamb selection day. P = Pesakh/Passover. UB1/UB7 = 1st and 7th days of Unleavened Bread. FF = Firstfruits. ShBT = Shabbat. 1st 7 – 7th 7 = seven "sevens" of the Feast of Weeks. ShVT = Shavuot/Pentecost.

Sources for timeframes: Exodus 12, Deuteronomy 16 and Leviticus 23.

All time spans are inclusive of start and end dates.

- God's three pilgrimage appointed times, and the weekly appointment, are based on patterns of sevens.
 - The weekly Sabbath is the seventh day of each week.
 - God rested from creation of the world (Gen. 2:2).
 - We have rest from our separation from God through Messiah's death and resurrection (Hebrews 4).
 - The Feast of Unleavened Bread is seven days, from the 15th day of the first month to the 21st.
 - God delivered Israel out of Egypt, symbolizing bondage to "lusts of the flesh," on the 15th and likely through the Red Sea, symbolizing death and rebirth, on the 21st.
 - The celebration actually is eight days long with Passover on the afternoon of the 14th day.
 - The Feast of Weeks is seven *shavuot*, Hebrew for "sevens," of days long.
 - It begins with the presenting of the firstfruits of the first harvest of the year.
 - Yeshua is the Firstfruits from the dead.
 - Yeshua likened this time period to a harvest of people for the kingdom of God, i.e., God finds them acceptable for His kingdom.
 - The celebration actually is seven "sevens" plus one day with the shabbat of Shavuot (Pentecost).
 - If the time from the choosing of the lamb to Shavuot were eight "sevens" plus one, it would tie the selection of the Pesakh lamb to some new beginning for Israel related to the Feast of Weeks.
 - th day was instrumental in a household's:
 - Surviving the judgement of the 10th day and the evening beginning of the 15th
 - That release made Israel homeless and later Egypt was spurred to pursue, putting Israel in the mercy of God.
 - Israel passed from death to life by passing through the Red Sea. The sea was death to the Egyptian army.
 - Believers in Yeshua are counted as if their sinful life was dead and buried to God.
 - Israel were sustained on bread from Heaven during the journey to Sinai.
 - Yeshua said He is the "bread of life" and the "bread that came down from Heaven."
 - Israel received water from the rock during the journey to Sinai.
 - Yeshua said He is the "living water" that will keep one from ever being thirsty for truth and fellowship.
 - Israel received God's 10 Words of life, a commission as God's ambassadors on earth and entered into a covenant with God at Sinai, most likely on the Feast of Weeks.
 - God's spirit came in power on the Feast of Weeks following Yeshua's death and resurrection. Believers in Yeshua as Messiah became "ambassadors of Messiah," taking the message of God's reconciliation with may mankind to all they met, first to the Jew who know the background of God's plan and then to all who would hear with their hearts as well as their ears.

- The Feast of Tabernacles is seven days, from the 15th day of the seventh month to the 21st.
 - God repeatedly said He wants to dwell with His people.
 - One of the names of Messiah is *Immanuel*, Hebrew for “God with us.”
 - John 1 describes Yeshua as the Word of God made flesh Who “tabernacles” with us.
 - The prophets, Yeshua and the apostles repeatedly wrote about God coming on the Day of the LORD being His time of coming to be with His people to dwell and to put down evil.
 - The celebration actually is eight days long with the Eighth Day shabbat on the 22nd.
 - The eighth day is associated with new birth, based on when males were circumcised, dedicated to God and named.
- What would have been completed between Lamb Selection Day and Firstfruits?
 - It is important to acknowledge that this could be a comparison of “apples and oranges,” which in this case would be lambs and grain.
 - The Pesakh lamb selected for each household or group of friends was to be perfect, without blemish. The lamb would die so that its blood would block the Destroyer coming for the firstborn sons in Egypt in the 10th plague.
 - Yeshua’s blood blocks God’s wrath on those who rebel against Him as Creator and Lord of the Universe (John 3:16; Col. 2:16–17).
 - The grain selected for Firstfruits was to be the representation of the first harvest of the year and offered to God before any of the rest of the harvest could be brought in and eaten. This connected the sustenance of the first crop of the year to God’s provision, i.e., He followed through with the blessing of a new year of crops.
 - Yeshua rose as the fruitfruits of the dead. “Harvest” of the dead is assured.
 - Yeshua also brings us life, because we’re under the death penalty of violating God’s law.
 - Conviction by a court of the assembly after witness testimony was required for death under Torah.
 - God says that loyalty to Him must be observed in the heart. He witnesses the secret things of our hearts and the actions, hidden or obvious, that result.
- The seven-sevens count always starts on 16th day of the first month and ends the day after the seventh week 50 days later.
 - Because the lunar month is 29.5 days with two days allowed for the observance of the New Moon, the 50th day can be the 6th day of the third month, but it doesn’t have to be.