

On what day is the Day of Shavuot?

By Roly Buys



Some questions have been asked of us during the past few weeks regarding which day is the correct day to celebrate Shavuot?

1. *Do we count from the first day after Pesach?*¹

Or ...

2. *Do we count from the first day after the weekly Shabbat that falls in the seven-day period of Pesach?*²

At face value, the passage in Leviticus 23 would seem to indicate that we are referring to the weekly Shabbat.

Leviticus 23:9–14 “9 And the Lord said to Moses, 10 Tell the Israelites, When you have come into the land I give you and reap its harvest, you shall bring the sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest. 11 And he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, that you may be accepted; on the **next day after the Sabbath** the priest shall wave it [before the Lord]. 12 You shall offer on the day when you wave the sheaf a male lamb a year old without blemish for a burnt offering to the Lord. 13 Its cereal offering shall be two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil, an offering made by fire to the Lord for a sweet, pleasing, and satisfying fragrance; and the drink offering of it [to be poured out] shall be of wine, a fourth of a hin. 14 And you shall eat neither bread nor parched grain nor green ears, until this same day when you have brought the offering of your God; it is a statute forever throughout your generations in all your houses.”

However, let's take note of the following ...

¹ Since Pesach always falls on the 14th of Nissan, this would mean that we count from the 15th, resulting in Shavuot always falling on the 6th day of Sivan.

² Since we always count from the first day of the new week, it means that Shavuot will always fall on a Sunday.

Strong's Hebrew 7676: shabbath (992a); from 7673a; *sabbath*:— every sabbath(2), sabbath(73), sabbaths(32).

This word means not only the weekly Shabbat, but every Shabbat. All “Holy” days are also Shabbat, as it is decreed that you “will do no customary work on it”.



Leviticus 23:7–8 “7 On the first day you shall have a holy “calling together;” you shall do no servile or laborious work on that day. 8 But you shall offer an offering made by fire to the Lord for seven days; on the seventh day is a holy convocation; you shall do no servile or laborious work on that day.”

These two verses make both the first as well as the seventh day of the Feast – for Pesach, this is the 14th of Nissan and the 21st of Nissan – irrespective of which day of the week they fall, to be a Shabbat.

The Israelites, at this point in time in history, are an agricultural people. They would have harvested the previous year’s crop at the time of Shavuot, and have lived through the summer and winter of the year. At this time of year [spring], the Israelites would have planted the barley, which is ripening, ready for harvest of the following year.

Leviticus 23:14 “14 And you shall eat neither bread nor parched grain nor green ears, until this same day when you have brought the offering of your God; it is a statute forever throughout your generations in all your houses.”

This passage tells us that we **cannot eat of the new produce** until the same day, that we have brought our firstfruit offering to the priest in order that it be waved before the LORD. A critical part of this Feast is that:

- We are aware of the cycle of the moon,
- And we have planted our barley at the right time in order that we can bring a firstfruit offering [*Yom Ha'Bikkurim*] is always celebrated on the day which follows Pesach.



This means that we can make our *matzah* [unleavened bread] from fresh flour for the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread.

The principle of counting from the day that you begin to harvest the barley is confirmed for us in:

Deuteronomy 16:9–12 “9 *You shall count seven weeks; begin to number the seven weeks from the time you begin to put the sickle to the standing grain.* 10 *Then you shall keep the Feast of Weeks to the Lord your God with a tribute of a freewill offering from your hand, which you shall give to the Lord your God, as the Lord your God blesses you.* 11 *And you shall rejoice before the Lord your God, you and your son and daughter, your manservant and maidservant, and the Levite who is within your towns, the stranger or temporary resident, the fatherless, and the widow who are among you, at the place in which the Lord your God chooses to make His Name [and His Presence] dwell.* 12 *And you shall [earnestly] remember that you were a slave in Egypt, and you shall be watchful and obey these statutes.”*

Logically, we see the completion of this firstfruit cycle when we bring the next firstfruit offering of the wheat and corn harvest on Shavuot³.

³ If the firstfruit offering is on the day of Shavuot, then counting back fifty days will bring us to the firstfruit of Pesach.

Numbers 28:26 “26 Also in the **day of the firstfruits, when you offer a cereal (wheat) offering** of new grain to the Lord at your Feast of Weeks, you **shall have a holy [summoned] assembly; you shall do no servile work.**”

The firstfruit is a concept about life after death.

We are told to bring the offering “when we come into the land” – that is, clearly **after we have left the land of Egypt** [death].

Leviticus 23:10 “10 Tell the Israelites, When you have **come into the land I give you and reap its harvest, you shall bring the sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest.**”



This is another example of Paul’s “Law of Parallels”, of an action in the physical before the spiritual realization can manifest. Y’shua’s [Jesus] death is followed by His resurrection into life.

1 Corinthians 15:20–23 “20 But the fact is that Christ (the Messiah) has been **raised from the dead, and He became the firstfruits** of those who have fallen asleep [in death]. 21 For since [it was] through a man that death [came into the world, it is] also through a Man that the resurrection of the dead [has come]. 22 For just as [because of their union of nature] in Adam all people die, so also [by virtue of their union of nature] shall all in Christ be made alive. 23 But each in his own rank and turn: Christ (the Messiah) [is] the firstfruits, then those who are Christ’s [own will be resurrected] at His coming.”

Finally, these passages leave some room for interpretation. It therefore does mean that we should give more than a little room for others to have a different opinion.

Critically, both Pesach and Shavuot are not only about a time which God has set aside ... but equally important is the fact that I must have set my heart to keep God's Commandments in such a manner that pleases Him. He requires that I should have planted, cared for, and harvested in time in order to present a handful of wave offering. Those who love God [Matthew 22:37–38], will be blessed [Proverbs 3:9–10].

Matthew 22:37–38 “37 And He replied to him, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind (intellect). [Deut. 6:5.] 38 This is the great (most important, principal) and first commandment.”



Proverbs 3:9–10 “9 Honor the Lord with your capital and sufficiency [from righteous labors] and with the firstfruits of all your income; [Deut. 26:2; Mal. 3:10; Luke 14:13, 14.] 10 So shall your storage places be filled with plenty, and your vats shall be overflowing with new wine. [Deut. 28:8.]”

Let us see this as a time and place to seek God's Face, so that whatever date you finally decide to remember God on, will be blessed.

Shalom!