

The Feast of Unleavened Bread

HAG HAMATZOT, THE WAVESHEAF OFFERING & THE RESURRECTION OF YESHUA

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Hag HaMatzot (The Feast of Unleavened Bread): A Basic Overview

Hag HaMatzot or the Feast of Unleavened Bread is the second annual festival event on YHVH's sacred calendar occurring on the fifteenth day of the month of the *Abiv*, which is the day immediately following *Pesach*. Because both events are back-to-back the Jews often refer to Passover and Unleavened Bread simply as *Passover Week* or some similar term that places the main emphasis on the Passover event. But it must be noted that though related these two festivals are separate in meaning and purpose. Passover pictured Israel coming out of Egypt and then once out of Egypt YHVH commanded them to put all leavened food products out of their houses and to eat unleavened bread (flat bread) for seven days. The first and seventh days of this week-long event are Sabbaths and YHVH commanded his people to hold a "set-apart" convocation on these days.

What, you may ask, is the purpose of putting leavening out of one's home and eating unleavened bread products such as *matzoh* for one week? Once again, YHVH was/is teaching his people an object lesson, for this was the next step in his plan of redemption, which will make perfect sense once explained. Israel had just left Egypt and we know that Egypt represents the world and Satan. It may be easy to "get out of Egypt," but now begins the arduous process of "getting Egypt out" of the life of the new Believer. The old sin habits die hard and lie waiting to be exposed and cast out from the recesses of one's mind, will and emotions—one's spiritual houses. This is not an easy process, not unlike ridding our physical homes of leavening products, such as bread crumbs, which find their way into the nooks and crannies of our homes. In Scripture, leavening usually represents sin, pride, hypocrisy and false doctrine.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread lasts seven days. Seven in YHVH's spiritual economy represents completion or perfection. YHVH has given man 7000 years on this earth to get rid of sin completely and totally in preparation for admission into his eternal kingdom as revealed in Revelation 21 and 22. For 6000 years YHVH has left man to his own sinful devices. The seventh thousand-year time period, called the Messianic Age or Millennium, will be different than the previous 6000 years, for Yeshua will be ruling over the earth with a rod of iron as King of kings and Lord of lords, Satan will be bound in the pit for this time period and all flesh on earth will be taught the Torah-truth of YHVH Elohim without the evil influences of the devil and the world as we know it today. During the Messianic Age the earth will be at peace and rest, men will love YHVH with all their heart, mind and strength and their neighbor as themselves. This time of peaceful rest is the seventh thousand-year time period of man's tenure on this earth, which corresponds to the seventh day of the week—the Sabbath. It will be a Sabbath on this earth for 1000 years. The Days of Unleavened Bread picture this, for the first day is a Sabbath representing the first Sabbath when YHVH rested after creating a perfect, paradisiacal and sin-free world. The last day or seventh day of the Unleavened Bread festival is also a Sabbath, which corresponds prophetically to the Messianic Age—when a sin-free (leaven-free) paradise on the earth will have been restored.

On an individual level, when one makes the exodus from one's spiritual Egypt at the time of one's conversion or salvation one enters into the spiritual "rest" of Yeshua (Heb. 4:1-11). One takes on the yoke of Yeshua, which is light and easy (Matt. 11:28-30), and experiences the "joy of YHVH" (Neh. 8:10; John 16:24; Rom. 5:11) and the peace or shalom of YHVH that surpasses all understanding (Phil. 4:7). This corresponds to the first day or Sabbath of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Then come five days of walking through the wilderness of life eating the bread of affliction (Deut. 16:3). Despite our salvation from Egypt and the receipt of joy and peace each must struggle to enter the ultimate peace/shalom or rest of the Promised Land (the last or seventh day of the Feast

of Unleavened Bread which is a Sabbath). Paul talks about working out one's own salvation (Phil. 2:12) and the struggles to defeat the carnal man (Rom. 7), to walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit and to enter into the Spirit of life in Yeshua Messiah (Rom. 8:1-2). Yeshua talked about the persecution and tribulation that Believers would have to endure to enter the ultimate rest of his kingdom (Matt. 5:10-12). Paul said that all who live godly will suffer persecution (2 Tim. 3:12), and that the metal of our lives must be tested and purified by the fire of trial (1 Cor. 3:12-13). James says that we are to count it all joy when we are tried or proven (Jas. 1:12). Will the fires of persecution separate us from the love of Yeshua, Paul asks the Romans (Rom. 8:35)? Will we forget our first love as the Ephesians did (Rev. 2:4) and lose faith and long for the delicacies of Egypt as the Israelites did falling into doubt and unbelief and perishing in the wilderness (Heb. 3:8-19)? Or will we persevere and overcome the world as the Author and Finisher of our faith, Yeshua, did (John 16:33) to enter into the Promised Land, bring down the walls of Jericho, and to possess rewards of the Kingdom of Elohim (Matt. 5:10, 12; 1 John 5:4; Rev. 2:7, 17; 3:5, 12, 21; 21:7)? We are to resist sin (leavening) in our lives even to the point of paying the ultimate price, if necessary, as did Yeshua (Heb. 12:1-4) as well as many of the prophets (Heb. 11).

This is the walk of the wilderness, but we press on in faith for the hope that is set before us (Heb. 6:18), the hope of eternal rest in the Promised Land of the Kingdom of Elohim. This is what the last Sabbath or seventh day of the Days of Unleavened Bread represents. Seven is the number of perfection or completion. For six days we work—work out our salvation (Phil. 2:12). Yes, we are saved at the time of our conversion and have passed from death and condemnation to everlasting life (John 5:24), but salvation and sanctification (being set-apart from the world, flesh and the devil for service to YHVH) are also a lifelong process which will culminate in the transforming of our mortal bodies into glorious and spiritual bodies at the resurrection. At this point in time we will have arrived at the completion or perfection of our hope the number seven epitomizes in Scripture.

Eating unleavened bread is a memorial, remembrance or reminder (Exod. 13:6-9) of our coming out of our spiritual Egypt, for the Israelites left Egypt early in the morning as they were making their morning bread and because they left in haste the bread was not able to rise (Exod. 12:34). Therefore, they were forced, by circumstances, to leave their leavening or sin behind in Egypt, so to speak. Believers are commanded to eat unleavened bread to remind us that we have left our old sinful ways behind us in Egypt as we press onward to the Promised Land or Eternal Kingdom of YHVH Elohim.

A Sequence of Events Pointing to a Wednesday Crucifixion and An End of the 14th Pesach

Let's look at John 12:1 and see a sequence of events unfolding here:

- ☞ Yeshua came to Bethany six days before Passover (verse 1).
- ☞ Then they had a formal dinner, which probably was the Erev Shabbat (Evening of the Sabbath) meal (v. 2) on Friday night. So Yeshua came to Bethany on Friday, which was six days before Passover (or the ninth of Abiv).
- ☞ That evening at Erev Shabbat was the beginning of the tenth day of Abiv, or five days (Friday late afternoon/evening to Wednesday late afternoon evening) before the Passover. It was here that Mary anointed Yeshua with the spikenard (verse. 3). This is the fulfillment of the Passover lamb being separated that occurred, according to Torah, on the tenth of Abiv. From Friday Erev Shabbat forward five days takes you to the end of the day on Wednesday the fifteenth of Abiv which corresponds to when he was crucified and then laid in the grave before the setting of the sun. The disciples worked quickly to entomb him before the High Sabbath or first day of Unleavened Bread that would be starting at sundown on the fifteenth of Abiv.

AN OUTLINE OF SUBJECTS RELATING TO THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD, WAVING OF THE FIRSTFRUITS AND THE RESURRECTION OF YESHUA

Meaning of the Word *Matzoh*

- ☞ In the Tanakh (OT) the word for *unleavened bread* in Hebrew is *matzoh*/מַצֹּה (*mem-tzaddik-hey*) (Strong's H4682) meaning *without leaven*.

- ☞ In the Apostolic Writings the word for *unleavened bread* in Greek is *azumos* (*Strong's* G106) and means *without leaven*.
- ☞ In the Tanakh (OT) there are two words for *leaven*:
 - *chametz*/חָמֵץ, a noun (*Strong's* H2557) meaning *leaven, that which is leavened*; from the root H2556 *chametz*/חָמַץ (verb) meaning *to be sour, to leaven*. According to TWOT the root word/verb designates the action and result of yeast which ferments or sours bread dough. This idea of becoming sour is extended to a person's negative attitude. For example, in Psalms 73:21 *chametz* is translated as *cruel* [and in Psa. 73:21 as *grieved*]. The Torah strongly commands that anyone eating *chametz* during Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread will be "cut off" from Israel (Exod. 12:19-20). Exodus 12:39 notes that Passover bread was not leavened because the Hebrews went out quickly from Egypt and thus had no time for the dough to rise. Thus it had the symbolic value of teaching Israel that having been redeemed from Egypt they should leave their old life [and sinful, "sour" carnal nature] quickly and set out toward the promised land by faith. Leavened bread was also prohibited in connection with the offering of sacrifices involving blood (Exod. 23:18; 34:25). Neither it nor honey could be burned with the meal (Lev. 2:11) and it could not be baked with the fire offering (Lev. 6:15). But leavened bread could be eaten with the thank offering (Lev. 7:13) and with the first fruits offering on Shavuot/Pentecost. In later Jewish thought leavened bread became a symbol of corruption and impurity, as also in Yeshua's teachings (Matt. 16:2; Mark 8:15) and in one remark by Paul (1 Cor. 5:8) (Vol. 1, page 289).
 - *se'or*/שֵׂאֵרָה (*sin-aleph-resh*) (*Strong's* H7603) meaning *leaven*. This is the generic term for leavening or leavened bread and is found five times in Scripture (Exod. 12:15, 19; 13:7; Lev. 2:11; Deut. 16:4). In the first four references *se'or* is used in parallel construction with *chametz*. In all but Lev. 2:11 it is used in reference to the Feast of Unleavened Bread while in the former *se'or* is used in reference to the meal offering.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread Is One of Three Aliyah/Pilgrimage Festivals

Three times each year the Israelites would go up to the place where YHVH had placed his name to keep the feasts of Passover/Unleavened Bread, Pentecost and Tabernacles.

The First Born Were to Be Redeemed During the Feast of Unleavened Bread

See Exodus 34:18-20.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread Commemorates Israel's Exodus From Egypt/Prophetic Implications

Exodus 13:6-9 shows us that the Feast of Unleavened Bread is a sign and memorial to the Israelites, for on the first High Sabbath of the Feast of Unleavened Bread the Israelites left Egypt by YHVH's strong hand. What then does day seven, which is another High Sabbath, of the Feast of Unleavened Bread signify? If the first day is a memorial looking back to the momentous event when the Israelites victoriously fled the bondage and slavery of Egypt, could day seven represent when the same victorious Israelites would enter the Promised Land after defeating those who would prevent them from doing so? In Joshua 5:10, at the threshold to the Promised Land, the Israelites kept Passover after which they marched around Jericho for seven days. On the final day the walls of Jericho collapsed. It is possible that they marched during the seven days of Unleavened Bread and the final day of the feast is when Jericho was destroyed? If this is the case, does this prophetically picture when YHVH's people on the verge of inheriting the Millennial kingdom will see the collapse of Babylon the Great, the one enemy of Israel and obstacle from its possessing its spiritual/Millennial domain and inheritance?

References to the Feast of Unleavened Bread In the Apostolic Scriptures

- ☞ See Matthew 26:17; Mark 14:12; Luke 22:1; and Acts 12:3; 20:6.
- ☞ In 1 Corinthians 5:8 Paul urges Believers to keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

A Righteous Remnant "Woman" In the End Times Will Be Keeping the Feast Days

Revelation 12:1 describes a woman (Body of Believers) who is standing on the moon (-based calendar). Verse 17 says the woman's remnant keeps the Torah-law of YHVH and has the faith/testimony of Messiah Yeshua (see also

14:12 and 22:14). This is a last-days view of a Torah-observant, feast day keeping and Gospel-oriented (remnant) Body of Believers.

The Resurrection of Yeshua Occurred During the Feast of Unleavened Bread and Relates to First Fruits

- ☞ Yeshua is the firstborn over all creation and the firstborn from the dead (Col. 1:15, 18).
- ☞ Messiah was prophesied to be the first to rise from the dead (Acts. 26:23).
- ☞ In 1 Corinthians 15:20-23 we see that Messiah has risen and become the first fruits of them that are dead.
- ☞ He's the firstborn among many brethren (Rom. 8:29).
- ☞ He's the first begotten/born into the world (Heb. 1:6). Yeshua was the first of Elohim's spiritual creation as well as the firstborn (first fruits) of the physical creation at his resurrection.

The Wave Sheaf Offering Occurred At the Time of the Feast of Unleavened Bread:

In Leviticus 23:9-14 we read,

9 And YHVH spake unto Moses, saying,

10 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:

11 And he shall wave the sheaf before YHVH, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it.

12 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 YHVH.

13 And the meat offering thereof shall be two tenth deals of fine flour mingled with oil, an offering made by fire unto YHVH for a sweet savour: and the drink offering thereof shall be of wine, the fourth part of an hin.

14 And ye shall eat neither bread, nor roasted kernels, nor plump green kernels, until the selfsame day that ye have brought an offering unto your Elohim: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.

Josephus (*Antiquities, Book 3, Chap. 10, para. 5*) states that the barley harvest, both public and private could not commence in Israel until the completing of the Wave Sheaf Offering ceremony. This confirms the position of the modern Karaite Jews who search for ripening barley (*abiv*) not only in Jerusalem, but also throughout the land of Israel. Since Jerusalem is approximately 2500 feet above sea level, the barley in the valleys would become ripe much earlier than in Jerusalem. So were one to wait for the barley in Jerusalem to become ripe before being permitted to harvest barley in the valleys, it would seem that the lower-elevation barley would be rotting in the fields before it could be harvested.

To be accepted as the Wave Sheaf Offering the barley had to be found in the land of Israel proper—not outside of the land. The *Mishna*, the second-century book which records Jewish oral tradition allegedly descending directly from the time of Moses states in *Menachoth* 7.1, “Every offering, whether of the congregation or of an individual (public or private), may come from ‘outside the land, be of new product (of the year) or old product, except the *omer* (the wave-sheaf at Passover) and the two loaves (at Pentecost), which may only be brought from new product (that current year), and from that (which grows) within ‘the land’” (*Sketches of Jewish Social Life*, by Alfred Edersheim, p. 17).

Some Hebrew Words and Their Definitions

- ☞ The Hebrew word for *sheaf* is *omer* (*Strong's* H6016).
- ☞ The Hebrew word for *firstfruits* is either *reysbiyth* (*Strong's* H7725) or *bikkurim* (*Strong's* H10061, from *bakkar* meaning *to break the matrix [of the womb], firstling*).

- ☞ *Sefirat HaOmer* means *the counting of the omer*.
- ☞ *Yom Hanafat HaOmer* means *the Day of the Omer Waving*.

Yeshua, the Untouchable One

After his resurrection, Yeshua could not be touched by humans and be ritually defiled until after his ascension (John 20:17) after which he allowed them to touch him (verses. 19, 26, 27). As the Wave Sheaf offering was offered up to the Father by the High Priest on the “morrow after the Sabbath [i.e. the first day of the week],” so Yeshua resurrected and ascended to his Father in heaven on the first day where he was accepted by his Father as the perfect sin sacrifice and first fruits offering.

Regarding Yeshua’s actual resurrection, Scripture does not say *when* he resurrected, only that the tomb was found empty on the first day. We know that he went into the grave between the evenings after his death. We know that the Wave Sheaf was waved on the first day. To fulfill the biblical types, it seems that Yeshua most likely resurrected very early on the evening (or at the beginning) of the first day, just after the Sabbath—exactly three days and three nights after being placed in the grave. (For further discussion on this subject, see my teaching article entitled, *The Resurrection of Yeshua from a Hebrew Roots Perspective*, available at <http://www.hoshanarabbah.org/pdfs/firstfruits.pdf>.)

Feast of First Fruits Versus Wave Sheaf Day (Which Occurred During the Feast of Unleavened Bread)

(For a full discussion of this vital subject, please see my teaching article entitled, *The Resurrection of Yeshua from a Hebrew Roots Perspective*.)

There is no literal “Feast of Firstfruits” mentioned in the Scriptures as some teach. The closest similar term found in Scripture is a reference to Shavuot/Pentecost, which occurs after the Feast of Unleavened Bread and fifty days after the waving of the newly harvested sheaf of barley by the Priest.

Scripture reveals that Shavuot/the Feast of Pentecost has several names:

- ☞ *Feast of Weeks* (Lev. 23:15-17; Deut. 16:10,16)
- ☞ *Feast of Harvest* of the Firstfruits (Exod. 23:16)
- ☞ *The Feast of Weeks of the firstfruits of the wheat harvest* (Exod. 34:22)
- ☞ *Pentecost* (Acts 2:1)

The Wave Sheaf offering (which some erroneously refer to as the “Feast of Firstfruits”) was the ceremony when the Priest offered up or waved before Elohim the newly harvested first fruit sheaf of barley. This ritual occurred on the day after the Sabbath that falls during the Feast of Unleavened Bread and is not to be confused with the Feast of the Harvest of the Firstfruits (Exod. 23:16), which is another name for the Feast of Pentecost/Shavuot.

The Wave Sheaf offering was a forerunner of the Feast of the Harvest of the Firstfruits or Feast of Weeks, which came 50 days later. These two days are linked by the counting of the *omer* (*Strong’s* H6016 meaning *sheaf*, which is a *dry measure of about one-half gallon*; from H6014 *amar* meaning *to bind sheaves, to gather*). “Wave Sheaf Day” when the *omer* of barely was waved and accepted by Elohim represents Yeshua’s ascension to heaven after his resurrection and his being accepted of the Father. It is linked to a 50-day (jubilee, setting the captives free from the slavery of sin and death) counting of the *omer* terminating in the Feast of the Harvest of Firstfruits or Pentecost when the salvation of human beings (the greater wheat harvest) occurs as the Spirit of Elohim is poured out, which indeed began occurring on the Day of Pentecost as recorded in Acts 2. The Wave Sheaf offered during the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Lev. 23:6-11), prophetically foreshadowed the resurrected Yeshua now serving as our heavenly High Priest (Heb. 4:14). This spiritually paved the way for the Father to call many unto repentance leading to their salvation pictured by the wheat harvest of Pentecost/Shavuot. The Spirit of Elohim could not come until Yeshua departed this earth (John 16:5-14). The Spirit’s coming brought forth the spiritual harvest of souls on Pentecost and afterwards into our time.

The Wave Sheaf offering prophetically foretold 1500 years earlier the exact day when Yeshua, the Messiah, the perfect and sinless Lamb of Elohim, would resurrect and ascend to heaven and be accepted by the Father.

In John 12:23-24 Yeshua predicted his demise and the resulting harvest of souls, “And Yeshua answered them,

saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abides alone: but if it die, it brings forth much fruit.”

The Wave Sheaf Offering Is a Picture of Yeshua:

- ☞ Yeshua was abused, beaten, thrashed and scourged as was the grain.
- ☞ Yeshua suffered fiery trial, culminating in the fiery pain of death; the grain was parched/roasted.
- ☞ Yeshua was tested, purified and perfected by his earthly experience, including the ordeal of crucifixion; the grain was sieved many times until it was pure.
- ☞ See Hebrews 2:18; 5:8-9.

The Resurrection of Messiah Prophesied in the Hebrew Scriptures

- ☞ Psalms 16:10, “For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; **neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.**”
- ☞ Psalms 49:1,5; “**But Elohim will redeem my soul from the power of the grave:** for he shall receive me. Selah.” (This is a generic reference to the resurrection of the righteous. It could be reasoned that if the righteous dead are resurrected how much more so the Messiah?)
- ☞ Read Psalms 22:26ff.
- ☞ Isaiah 26:19, Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead. (This is a generic reference to the resurrection of the righteous. It could be reasoned that if the righteous dead are resurrected how much more so the Messiah?)
- ☞ Isaiah 53:9-10, And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased YHVH to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of YHVH shall prosper in his hand.
- ☞ Isaiah 53:11, “He shall see the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.” The NIV reads: “After the suffering of his soul, he will **see the light of life** and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities.” (A marginal note states the following: “Dead Sea Scrolls [see also Septuagint]; the Masoretic Text does not have *light of life*.)
- ☞ Genesis 3:15 (compare Col. 2:15 and Rev. 1:18), “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall **bruise thy head**, and thou shalt bruise his heel. And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it [by resurrecting from the grave].”
- ☞ Hosea 5:15-6:3, “I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early. Come, and let us return unto YHVH; for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. After two days will he revive us; **in the third day he will raise us up**, and we shall live in his sight. Then shall we know, if we follow on to know YHVH; his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.”

WAVE SHEAF DAY, THE FIRST WEEK OF THE COUNT OF THE OMER AND YESHUA’S ASCENSION

The Scriptures We Will Analyze

- ☞ Matthew 28:1, “In **the end** [Greek: *de*] of **the sabbath** [Greek: *sabbaton*], **as it began to dawn** [Greek: *epiphosko*] toward the first *day* [a supplied word which is not in original Greek] of **the week** [Greek: *sabbaton*], came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.” (KJV)

- ☞ Mark 16:1, “And when **the sabbath** [Greek: *sabbaton*] was past [diaginomai], Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him.” (KJV)
- ☞ Luke 24:1, “Now upon **the first** [Greek: *mia*] *day* [a supplied word which is not in original Greek] of the week [Greek: *sabbaton*], **very early in the morning** [Greek: *orthros*], they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them.” (KJV)
- ☞ Luke 24:1, “Now **one of the week**, while still very early, they came on the tomb ...” (J.P. Green Interlinear)
- ☞ John 20:1, “**The first** [Greek: *mia*] *day* [a supplied word which is not in original Greek] of **the week** [Greek: *sabbaton*] cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre.” (KJV)

The Greek Words Used

- ☞ *De* (Strong’s G1161), a primary article or conjunction. In the KJV it is primarily translated as *but* (1237 times), *and* (934 times) *now* (166 times) and *then* (132 times).
- ☞ *Diaginomai* (Strong’s G1230) means *to be past, continue, to be between, intervene*.
- ☞ *Epiphosko* (Strong’s G2020) meaning *begin to dawn, to grow light*.
- ☞ *Mia* (Strong’s G3391, feminine adjective of G1520 [*protos*]) a cardinal number, means *one* in contrast to *protos* (the ordinal counterpart to *heis/mia*) meaning *first*.
- ☞ *Orthros* (Strong’s G372) meaning *daybreak, dawn*.
- ☞ *Sabbaton* (Strong’s G4521) means *the seventh day of each week which was a sacred festival on which the Israelites were required to abstain from all work, a single Sabbath, Sabbath day, seven days, a week*. In the Apostolic Writings *Sabbaton* occurs 68 times 37 times of which it is translated as *Sabbath day*, 22 times as *Sabbath* and 9 times as *week*. This word is from the Hebrew *shabbaton* (Strong’s G7677), which is from *shabat* (Strong’s G7676).

According to *Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, the Greek word *shabbaton* as used in Matthew 28:1, Mark 16:2, Acts 20:11 and 1 Corinthians 16:2 though translated in the KJV as “the first day of the week” literally and idiomatically means, “one of the sabbaths” signifying “the first day after the sabbath” (p. 810). Some scholars see this as a reference to the beginning count of the Feast of Weeks since in all the above references either that Feast or the Feast of Unleavened Bread is mentioned in the textual context of each passage. *The Interlinear Bible* of J.P. Green translates *sabbaton* in Matthew 28:1, John 20:19, and Acts 20:7 as *sabbaths*, though he translates the same word not as *sabbaths*, but *first of the week* or *of a week* in Mark 16:2 and 1 Corinthians 16:2 respectively. Green translates the phrase containing *sabbaton* in Luke 24:1 as “But on one of the week, while still very early...”

Vincent’s Word Studies In the NT on Acts 20:7 admits that *sabbaton* is plural in the Greek, though he references it as a singular word saying, “The plural used for the singular, in imitation of Hebrew form. The noun *Sabbath* is often used after numerals in the signification of *a week*. See Matt. 28:1; Mark 16:2; John 20:19” (Vol. 1, p. 558).

The Meaning of the Hebrew Word *Shabbat*

The word *Sabbath* is represented by several related Hebrew words. Let’s look at each of these words to see how Scripture uses each one.

- ☞ ***Shabbat*** שבת (Strong’s H7673) is a primitive root word meaning *to repose, rest, desist (from exertion or labor), cease*. It is translated in the KJV by the following words: *cease* (47 times), *rest* (11 times), *away* (3 times), *fail* (2 times), *celebrate* (1 time), *misc.* (7 times).
- ☞ ***Shabbat*** שבת or שבת (Strong’s H7676; from 7673) means *intermission, i.e. (specifically) the Sabbath* and is used in reference to the weekly Sabbath, the Day of Atonement, the sabbatical year, weeks and is translated in the KJV as *Sabbath* (107 times). Examples of its usage:
 - Weekly Sabbath: Exod. 16:25; 20:8, 10; 31:15; Deut. 5:10, 12, 15; Lev. 23:3
 - Day of Atonement: Lev. 16:31; 23:32

- Sabbath (sabbatical) year: Lev. 25:4; 26:34, 43; 2 Ch. 36:21
- Weeks of Sabbaths: Lev. 23:15 (seven Sabbaths or weeks); 25:8
- ☞ **Shabbaton** שַׁבְּתוֹן or שַׁבְּתוֹן (Strong's H7677, from 7676) means *a special holy day* and is used in reference to the weekly Sabbath, Day of Atonement, sabbatical year, Feast of Trumpets and the first and last days of the Feast of Tabernacles and is translated in the KJV as *rest* (8 times), *sabbath* (3 times). Examples of its usage:
 - Weekly Sabbath: Ex. 31:15; 16:23; 35:2; Lev. 23:3;
 - Day of Atonement: Lev. 16:31; 23:32
 - Sabbatical year: Lev. 25:4
 - Feast of Trumpets: Lev. 23:24
 - First day of the Feast of Tabernacles and the Eighth Day (Shemini Atzeret): Lev. 23:34

Shabbat/Shabbaton Versus Shabat

The Greek word *sabbaton*, as noted, is from the Hebrew word *shabbaton* which is from the Hebrew root word *shabbat*. It is interesting to note that both *shabbaton* and *shabbat* are spelled with a double *b*. This is because in the word *shabbat*/שַׁבַּת the Hebrew letter ב/bet (*b*) has a *dagesh*, which is a dot inside of the ב/bet which doubles the *b* giving it a pronounced sound or doubling affect when pronouncing the word. *Strong's Expanded Concordance* notes this in their Greek dictionary when defining the Hebrew origination of the Greek word *sabbaton*. “The doubled *b* has an intensive force, implying a complete cessation or a making to cease, probably the former. The idea is not that of relaxation or refreshment, but cessation from activity. The observation of the seventh day of the week, enjoined upon Israel, was a sign between God and His earthly people, based upon the fact that after the six days of creative operations He rested” (p. 222). The Hebrew word *shabbat*, from which both the Greek word *sabbaton* and the Hebrew word *shabbaton* derive, is contrasted to the Hebrew word *shabat* (Strong's H7673) that, please note, is spelled with only one *b*. Though still spelled with the same Hebrew letters (שַׁבַּת, *shin, bet, tav*), the letter *bet* does not contain a *dagesh* giving the *bet* a doubling sound. Therefore, the word for *shabat* simply means, as we have noted above, *to repose, desist or cease* without specific reference to the actual Sabbath day as compared to the word *Shabbat* (שַׁבְּתַת, doubled *b*).

Conclusions That Can Be Drawn From This Study

What can we conclude from the above facts?

- ☞ The word translated for *first* is the Greek word *mia* which, according to the Greek lexicons, refers to the cardinal number *one* and is not the ordinal number *first*, which is a completely different Greek word.
- ☞ The words *of the* in the phrase *of the Sabbath* seem to be supplied and not in the original Greek. According to the interlinears that this author has checked they are listed where simply the word *sabbaton* is written.
- ☞ Why would the writers of the Gospel accounts of the empty tomb emphasize literally *week one*? Could it be that they are referring to week one of the counting of the omer—the seven weeks between the weekly Sabbath within the seven-day festival of Hag HaMatzot (Feast of Unleavened Bread) and Shavuot (Pentecost, Feast of Weeks)? The Torah specifically speaks of the day after the Sabbath when the High Priest would lift heavenward in a waving motion the freshly cut barley for Elohim to accept (Lev. 23:9-14). This event, which would occur on the first day of the week (Sunday), would also commence the counting of the 49 days (seven weeks) of the omer concluding with the celebration of Shavuot (Pentecost, literally meaning *to count fifty*) on the fiftieth day (Lev. 23:15-16). Interestingly, eminent nineteenth century Christian Bible scholar, E.W. Bullinger in the study notes on John 20:1 in his *Companion Bible* states that the word phrase “first [day] of the week” should not be rendered *week*, as in most standard English Bibles. He goes on to say this phrase is rather a reference to Leviticus 23:15-17 showing that this is the first of the days for reckoning the seven Sabbaths to Pentecost. On this day, therefore, he continues, the Messiah became the first fruits of Elohim's resurrection harvest (1 Cor. 15:23).

- ✎ If our preliminary analysis is correct, it is likely that not only did Yeshua resurrect just after the end of the Sabbath, and barely into the evening portion of the first day, but he ascended to heaven on the first day, as well, when the priests were waving the barely *omer*—on Wave Sheaf or First Fruits Day. Therefore, the Gospel writers were emphasizing a “morrow after the Sabbath” or first day (Lev. 23:15) Wave Sheaf offering, which was a prophetic shadow-picture of Yeshua’s resurrection and ascension to his Father in heaven (John 20:17) to be accepted as the first of the first fruits of those resurrected from the dead (1 Cor. 15:20-23) as well as the commencement of the counting of the seven weeks leading to Shavuot (Pentecost).

