

## COUNTING THE OMER AND OVERCOMING SIN

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Our Father in heaven stir our hearts and minds with your sincerity and truth in putting out and keeping out the leaven of sin that so easily besets us as we examine ourselves during these days of Unleavened Bread and zealously root out the pride (leavening) and arrogance in our lives. Help us to be humble, meek and gentle as Christ was for us and intercedes for us today at the right hand of God's throne in heaven. Thank you for your mercy and love in helping us to progress and overcome our human frailties and emotions in dealing with the problems of body, mind and spirit. We pray that you will intervene and guide, guard, direct and protect each one of your children in these perilous days.

Give us your words – what we need to say and when we ought to say them along with the wisdom to know when to speak and when not to speak. Solomon taught that there is a season and a time to every purpose under the heaven; a time to keep silence and a time to speak; a time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace. We are to hate evil. We are to love the good. We pray that you will help us drink in deeply the lessons of the days of unleavened bread and give us a special awareness with profound depth of understanding of each thing that we need to do to develop and grow into the holy righteous character of God. We commit ourselves into your hands, praising and thanking you for your holy Sabbaths and your miraculous works in the name of Yeshua — Jesus Christ. Amen.

The beauty of spring is showing forth in the Omak Valley with color and new life for which we are blessed. The fruit trees are full of early emerging blossoms – cherry, plum, and apricot – with the promise of a fruitful harvest. However, the temperature dropped down toward 32 degrees last night. A good fruit crop could easily be lost if a late frost occurs and those blossoms drop. The water supply and weather is always of concern in food production, so we pray for favorable temperature and rain in due season.

Because of our nation turning its back on God and rejecting his law our blessings are being increasingly withdrawn and punishment for our sins is increasing. God takes up and also takes down and he has given a cruel administrator charge over our nation. In my opinion the lawless one has arrived who is after the working of Satan who is consolidating his reign and bringing together the purpose he intends to achieve. Changes of destruction, we have never dreamed are taking place in America with greater government dependency, increased taxation, and redistribution of wealth to those who do not work while the few that do work are footing the cost, illegal immigrants receiving citizenship benefits without proper preparation and continuing national indebtedness in the trillions without a boundary.

In **Matthew 24:1-51**; **Mark 13:1-37**; and **Luke 21:5-36** Christ tells his disciples of the future end of the age, the Great Tribulation and the coming of the Son of Man getting closer by the year. He told them to watch! “Take heed that no man deceive you.” The total eclipse of the moon

on this Passover was an awesome thing to see. The blood red moon tetrad occurring on the holy days of Passover and Tabernacles 2014 and a successive repeat of the same to take place in 2015 are signs in the heavens we are told to look for, but the world says these are meaningless. Astronomers and scientist who have bought into the theory of evolution which rejects the existence of a divine Creator and ruler of the universe who has made all living things, do not understand God's Word, purpose or plan. **Romans 1:18-28**--They are willingly ignorant and suppress the truth so people will not understand. When they knew God they did not take warning nor were they thankful, but professed themselves to be wise and changed the glory of God into manmade corruptible images. Since they did not like to retain God in their knowledge and changed the truth of God into a lie, God gave them over to a reprobate mind filled with all unrighteousness.

God wants us to be a functioning member of the body of Christ, a building block in the spiritual temple of God. That means that we have to be properly sized and shaped to fit perfectly together as one—spiritually speaking—be made righteous. **Romans 12:1**—Paul said that we are the body of Christ. **2 Corinthians 6:16**—“You are the temple of the living God; as God has said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”

**Ephesians 4:12-16**—“<sup>2</sup> for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, <sup>13</sup> till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; <sup>14</sup> that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, <sup>15</sup> but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—<sup>16</sup> from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.” **Ephesians 4:19-22**—“Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, <sup>20</sup> having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief *cornerstone*, <sup>21</sup> in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, <sup>22</sup> in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.”

This does not mean that we just meet together for services and act friendly. To be perfectly fitted together, is like a well-oiled engine/machine so that when the ignition switch is turned on the motor purrs in harmony and functions smoothly together. God's people are to be helping and looking out for one another, because we are all members of the body of Christ. We all need to learn patience, gentleness and goodness. Writing to the church, Paul says in **Ephesians 2:4-10** — “God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, <sup>5</sup> even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), <sup>6</sup> and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup> that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. <sup>8</sup> For by grace you have been saved (under the blood of Christ with his Spirit living in you) through faith (Christ paid for our sins), and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, <sup>9</sup> **not of works, lest anyone should boast.** <sup>10</sup> **We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”**

This gift of faith is not of our own human belief but God-given. The faith of God will save us, because God is able. We are to do that which is encouraging. God determined he would call you before the foundation of the world—determined how he would train and prepare you beforehand and what you would do to be a functioning part of his church body—the reality of being part of the body of Christ in these last days. Remember that you were “without Christ, once aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.”<sup>13</sup> But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.” God called us out of bondage (sin and oppression) and to make us free in the love of Christ.

**Ephesians 2:14-18**—Christ “<sup>is</sup> **our peace** (*unity*), who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation,<sup>15</sup> having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace,<sup>16</sup> and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.<sup>17</sup> And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near.<sup>18</sup> For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.” We are to be united together in oneness of Spirit through Christ. If we fail to accomplish that we will not be in God’s kingdom. God will not accept anyone in his kingdom that will not be ruled over by Him and take their appropriate place and position in the body of Christ which means a smooth fitting and functioning part of the body.

Now you must realize that the body all works together. Does your right hand slap you in the nose or bloody your lip? Does your physical body work against itself? NO! Not if it is healthy, or unless you are mentally unbalanced. As each of us is part of the body of Christ, we need to show *chesed*—loving-kindness toward each part of the body. It is not right to inflict pain on another part of the body. When the enmity, pain and oppression we have experienced from others in our life background is not confronted, then it will spill out on others because we have not consciously changed the deep, unkind and hurtful pattern to which we were subjected. The root is still present.

Adult children of abusive alcoholic parents tend to become abusive alcoholic parents themselves. Forming healthy and lasting relationships are difficult because of the heavy emotional damage in the formative years of childhood. These things are real. We need to understand that we all have backgrounds that we have to pluck out and come out of this rotten evil world. We all dwelt in the cesspool of sin once upon a time, before being lifted out of that mire and stench and washed off briskly with God’s pressured fire-hose to get rid of the dirt and corruption. Then we have to be brought out of the watery grave of baptism into the newness of life and newness of spirit and loving each part of the body with a godly love fervently.

How often do we kid ourselves and coast along wherever the current takes us? We have to be like the salmon that must fight to make it up-stream to successfully fulfill our destiny by going against human nature which we have to conquer. **2 Corinthians 10:4-5**—“For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds,<sup>5</sup> casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, **bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,**<sup>6</sup> and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.” It is not easy. It takes constant daily work.

We count the Omer by means of *sefirat ha'omer* (the counting of the *Omer*) every night for forty-nine days, beginning with the second night of Pesach (Passover) – the sixteenth of Nisan – until the evening before Pentecost (*Shavuot* the 50<sup>th</sup> day). That is seven days times seven weeks which is 49 days (7x7). Most people do not really begin to understand the counting of the Omer.

**Leviticus 23:1**—And the Lord (YHVH) spoke to Moses saying, Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘The **feasts of the LORD**, which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, **these are my feasts.**’ This is the word of God. These feasts belong to the Lord and are his gift to us. This is not the word of Moses. Moses was the transcriber. God is the one who commanded it. If we celebrate the feasts of God, then we are walking with God. If we do not celebrate his feasts, then we are not walking with God.” These are the feasts of the LORD, holy convocations which you shall proclaim at their appointed times.” <sup>3</sup>“Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, a holy convocation. You shall do no work on it; it is the Sabbath of the LORD in all your dwellings.

<sup>5</sup>“On the fourteenth day of the first month at twilight is the LORD’s Passover. <sup>6</sup> And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the LORD; seven days you must eat unleavened bread. <sup>7</sup> On the first day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall do no customary work on it. The seventh day shall be a holy convocation; you shall do no customary work on it.” **Leviticus 23:10-11, 15** — “Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘When you come into the land which I give to you, and reap its harvest, then you shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest. <sup>11</sup> He shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted on your behalf; **on the day after the Sabbath** the priest shall wave it.’ This is the day after the first day of Unleavened Bread—Nisan 16.

Verse 15 is the crucial key here. You shall count for yourselves from the day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering: seven Sabbaths shall be completed. Counting is done for your spiritual edification, growth and development. **Leviticus 25:8**—“You shall **count** seven weeks **for yourself**; begin to count the seven weeks from the time you begin to put the sickle to the grain.” **Deuteronomy 16:9**—“You shall **count** seven weeks **for yourself**; begin to count the seven weeks from the time you begin to put the sickle to the grain.” The Passover is an annual Sabbath and the next day the wave sheaf offering was brought forth in ancient Israel. On that same day we began day 1 counting to Pentecost. On Pentecost a new offering is to be made to the Lord.

We are to begin the Omer count on the 16<sup>th</sup> of Nisan, the second day of Unleavened Bread. That was Wednesday. It has been four days counting today since the 16<sup>th</sup>, so today is Day 4 counting forward to Pentecost. We are counting each day of 7 days of 7 weeks (7x7= 49) to arrive at Pentecost (Shavuot), day 50 which pictures the coming of Christ and the harvesting of the first fruits—the great spiritual spring harvest of those belonging to Christ.

*The Feast of Weeks Reviewed.* Deuteronomy is the fifth book of the Bible, the fifth book of Moses and the final book of Moses. **Deuteronomy 16:8**—“Six days shall you shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there shall be a sacred assembly to the LORD your God. You shall do no work on it. <sup>9</sup>“You shall count seven weeks for yourself; begin to count the seven weeks from the time you begin to put the sickle to the grain. <sup>10</sup> Then you shall keep the

Feast of Weeks (50<sup>th</sup> day-Pentecost) to the LORD your God with the tribute of a freewill offering from your hand, which you shall give as the LORD your God blesses you.” *This relates directly to the counting of the seven weeks and Shavuot/Pentecost, not seven Sabbaths.* <sup>11</sup> “You shall rejoice before the LORD your God, you and your son and your daughter, your male servant and your female servant, the Levite who is within your gates, the stranger and the fatherless and the widow who are among you, at the place where the LORD your God chooses to make His name abide. <sup>12</sup> And you shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt, and you shall be careful to observe these statutes.” The scriptures have the key to eternal life.

The Omer count is not mentioned *per se* in the New Testament of the Bible that I know, but it is mentioned in another sense because the whole New Testament is about it when you understand that it is about the first fruits of the grain that was harvested in the physical harvest. But that is a type of the spiritual harvest of God. As Christians we are God’s spiritual harvest.

**Romans 8:21**—“because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. <sup>22</sup> For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. <sup>23</sup> Not only that, but we also **who have the firstfruits of the Spirit**, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.” “We” means those who have the spirit of God who are converted, baptized, and have received the Holy Spirit. “For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? <sup>25</sup> But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.” We count the Omer with perseverance! We are waiting for the final harvest of the first fruits which is pictured by the Day of Pentecost/*Shavuot*. Now we are persevering toward the day of Pentecost which pictures the Day of the Lord and the second coming of Messiah.

<sup>26</sup> “Likewise, the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. <sup>27</sup> Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.”

**James 1:1-4**—“James (the brother of Christ), a bond servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad (throughout the earth): Greetings. <sup>2</sup> My brethren, **count it all joy when you fall into various trials,** <sup>3</sup> **knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.** <sup>4</sup> But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. <sup>5</sup> If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. <sup>6</sup> But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. <sup>7</sup> Let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; <sup>8</sup> he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.”

We have to have our faith tested. Often these trials and tests seem to dominate and predominate and come right before the feast days of the spring and fall festivals. Three weeks before the feast of Unleavened Bread, Cappy and I had a little trial. As I was driving down a side street in Omak in our 1992 Buick LeSabre, we felt a sudden jolt. A large truck had suddenly pulled out from the curb right into the rear passenger side of our car door! No one was hurt, but the entire door will

have to be replaced. The fault was the young truck driver's who failed to look before pulling out from the curb, but I was the one who had to really persevere and follow up to get action from his insurance company. The insurance company adjuster came to our house yesterday, inspected the door, wrote up his report and wrote out a check to pay for all the damages before leaving. The age of the car affects the value of what an insurance company is willing to pay for repairs. Even though the Buick is old, its appearance and condition still looks very good and we are very pleased with its quality and receiving a fair settlement for the needed repair.

Some years ago while I was fishing, a friend stopped came by to talk and had his three children with him. When one of them saw me battling with a "big one" on the line, he got so excited that he waded out in the river and grabbed the fishing line to *help me*. Well, the fish popped off and swam free. The lesson is that sometimes people think that they are going to do a good helpful thing and just make a mess of things by getting in the middle of what is not their concern. This is a minor example, but these things to me are like a classroom situation. We all have to go through these things in learning to get along with one another. We all have to learn to stifle our emotions and not just react to situations, but realize that God is in charge of us all. We do not need to be worried about the past—our own background or how we were brought up—but are to put our faith in God and move forward. God love us, and commands us to love one another. We are not to berate and condemn one another. The command is to love one another. Love is an outgoing, caring spirit, not a feisty club-beating of someone over the head in vindictive anger.

Sometimes we bring things on ourselves and have caused the result to ourselves. Acting with despicable, shocking, and saddening behavior occurs because we did not act with love and maturity that was very offensive to another person. Eventually, by the fruits of our mouth and our actions, it proves to God whether we are wheat or tares—whether we belong to him or do not belong to him. What kind of Christian are we? A true Christian has love and devotion for God and others. Very plainly, Christ said to his disciples in **John 15:1-7**—"I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. <sup>2</sup> Every branch in me that does not bear fruit He takes away and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. <sup>3</sup> You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. <sup>4</sup> Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. <sup>5</sup> I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without me you can do nothing. <sup>6</sup> If anyone does not abide in me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. <sup>7</sup> If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. <sup>8</sup> By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be my disciples."

God disciplines and prunes us so we can bear more fruit. Pruning takes knowledge, wisdom and understanding. Our gardener prunes our fruit trees and berry vines each spring. So that they will bear good fruit pruning is done on apple, pear, plum, peach and nectarine trees for two reasons: to establish the basic structure, and to ensure good access to sun light channels throughout the tree. In favorable conditions fruit trees set more fruit than is ideal, so the excess fruit must be thinned to improve fruit size and quality. Thinning is the most important step to get the best fruit from these trees if you want large, beautiful succulent fruit.

**John 15:3-5**—“You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. <sup>4</sup> Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. <sup>5</sup> I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for **without me you can do nothing.**” Without Christ’s Spirit helping in us we can do nothing. We can make a mess of things if we depend on ourselves. <sup>6</sup> “If anyone does not abide in me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.” After our trees are pruned, we gather all the pruned branches from our 2 ½ acres and put them in a big pile called a *burn pile* and burn it up. This is what God says he will do those branches that are cut off. We do not want to be cut off from God, but want to allow God to prune us and shape our character the way he wants it shaped so that we love one another and all abide in the vine. It is not profitable for us to be fighting and squabbling among ourselves, or criticizing and judging one another. **Matthew 7: 1**—“Judge not, that you be not judged: for with what judgment you judge, you shall be judged; and with what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again. Why do you look at the speck in your brother’s eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me remove the speck from your own eye, when all the time there is a plank in our own eye? You hypocrite, first remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.’”

**John 15:7-9**—“**If you abide in me, and my words abide in you,** you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. <sup>8</sup> By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be my disciples.” We each need to work on our own self. **2 Corinthians 13:5**—“Examine yourselves *as to* whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified (reprobate).” This is what we have to do with the Omer count—examine ourselves during this season of the year and get rid of the impurities— wrong feelings and emotions—branches that need to be pruned out. Above all, remember **Matthew 12:34-37**—“Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.” Be in control of your mouth. “For by your words you shall be justified, and by your words you shall be condemned.”

**John 15:7** is very simple, “If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.” Christ is not saying that you can just ask for whatever your heart desires and he will give it to you. It does not say that. It says IF YOU ABIDE IN ME, AND MY WORDS ABIDE in YOU (that your thought, action and deeds are within his Torah/commandments, will and purpose) THEN you can ask what you want. Why is that? It is because you will know what he wants and you will want what he wants. You will be asking for something positive that will accomplish God’s will and work to save his people. Even asking God to punish the wicked and remove them so they won’t be just a temptation and snare is positive.

**John 15:11**—“These things I have spoken to you, that my **joy may remain in you,** and that your joy may be full.” Joy is radiant intense happiness or pleasure that lights up the face and eyes. A person with joy is going to laugh and smile and see the positive side of life. Laughter can lighten up the atmosphere, bring a group of people together, keep relationships strong, and make a challenging day so much easier to face. Developing the ability to laugh at yourself and learn to see the amusing and humorous side of life allows you to step back and change perspective; to see

more sides of the situation and resources, so your trouble doesn't seem as large—look at all sides of the situation, not just one way. **Proverbs 17:22**—“A merry heart does good, like medicine. But a broken spirit dries the bones (saps a person's strength).” People who are glum, always frowning and unsmiling have a problem. It takes a lot more muscles to frown than it does to smile. According to Paul in **Galatians 5:22-23** —“the **fruit of the Spirit** is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.” **Isaiah 42:3-4**—“A bruised reed he will not break, and smoking flax he will not quench; he will bring forth justice for truth. He will not fail nor be discouraged, till he has established justice in the earth.” This is the way God is, he binds up the wound.

God is consistent. **Malachi 3:6**— “I do not change”. **James 1:17-18**—“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning. Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures.” **Revelation 14:1-5**—“I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His Father's name written on their foreheads.” This signifies that these 144,000 belong to God and are his possessions—a vessel unto the Lord with his Holy Spirit abiding in them. That is what we are, a vessel of the Lord. “They sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth. These were redeemed from among men, being first-fruits to God and to the Lamb. <sup>5</sup> And in their mouth was **found no deceit, for they are without fault before the throne of God.**” Redeemed means converted with the Spirit of God and redeemed by the blood of Christ.

Not defiled by *women* is speaking of false churches of the world, especially the one spoken of in **Revelation 17**—Babylon the Great the mother of harlots and prostitutes of the earth. The Roman Catholic Church and all her daughter churches that came out of her defile people. The 144,000 are spiritual virgins. They follow the Lamb (Christ) wherever he goes, they go and do whatever he says and does. These were redeemed from among men being first-fruits to God and the Lamb. Are we without fault before the throne of God? We need to be, in order to stand before God faultless without blemish. **Ephesians 5:1 -7**—“Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. <sup>2</sup> And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma. <sup>3</sup> But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; <sup>4</sup> neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. “

<sup>5</sup>“For this you know that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. <sup>6</sup> Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. <sup>7</sup> Therefore, do not be partakers with them. <sup>8</sup> For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light <sup>9</sup> (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), <sup>10</sup> finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. <sup>11</sup> And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. <sup>14</sup> Therefore He says: ‘Awake, you who sleep, Arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light.’ <sup>15</sup> See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, <sup>16</sup> redeeming the time, because the days are evil. <sup>17</sup> Therefore, do not be unwise, but



understand what the will of the Lord is. <sup>1</sup>And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, <sup>19</sup> speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, <sup>20</sup> giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>21</sup> submitting to one another in the fear of God.”

It is the Lord’s will that we humble ourselves and don’t lash out in anger without self control at one another—or rebuke people inappropriately, publically which creates division and a rupture (break) in the body of Christ. We must be gentle, tolerant and patient with one another.

In college many years ago, I gave a speech in a Spokesmen’s Club about relationships. I had a raw egg in my hand which I squeezed and under the pressure its shell and content broke and fell into the dish beneath my hand. It was clear to the audience that there was no way to put that egg back together again. It illustrated well the nursery rhyme about Humpty-Dumpty. “Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall, Humpty Dumpty had a great fall; all the king’s horses and all the king’s men couldn’t put Humpty together again.” Humpty was an egg that fell off the wall and spattered all over the place when it hit the pavement. This is the way human relationships can wind up if we are not careful and watch our mouth. The tongue is the most unruly member of the body and from it originates great sin.

**Ephesians 5:15-27**—“See than that you walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise. Be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the savior of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be subject to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, <sup>27</sup> that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.”

We are the virgin bride of Christ who is now cleansing and sanctifying us by the waters of the washing of his word and his Spirit. Why is he doing this? He is doing this so that he might present us to himself before the Father as a glorious bride holy and set apart without spot or blemish or fault of any kind—sanctified. **James 3:1-5**—“My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment. <sup>2</sup> For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body. <sup>3</sup> Indeed, we put bits in horses’ mouths that they may obey us, and we turn their whole body. <sup>4</sup> Look also at ships: although they are so large and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desires. <sup>5</sup> Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles! <sup>6</sup> And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell (Ghena fire that is). <sup>7</sup> For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind. <sup>8</sup> But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. <sup>9</sup> With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God. <sup>10</sup> Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing.

My brethren, these **things ought not to be so.** <sup>11</sup> Does a spring send forth fresh water and bitter from the same opening? <sup>12</sup> Can a fig tree, my brethren, bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Thus no spring yields both salt water and fresh.”

We can do irreparable damage to people by the wrong use of the tongue. **James 3:13-18**—<sup>3</sup> “Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct (self control) that his works are done in the **meekness of wisdom.** <sup>14</sup> But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking (self-promotion) in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. <sup>15</sup> This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, and demonic. <sup>16</sup> For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there. <sup>17</sup> But the **wisdom** that is **from above** is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. Now the **fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.**” Meekness of wisdom is not shouting angrily “I’ve had enough” and rebuking and berating someone in public when it is not even your business. Discuss matters of disagreement or correction in a calm atmosphere and in private if it is your job. **Matthew 5:9**—“Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. <sup>6</sup> Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled. <sup>7</sup> Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. <sup>8</sup> Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. <sup>9</sup> Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.”

**Psalms 119:165**—“Great peace, have those who love your law, and nothing causes them to stumble.” Literally they have no stumbling blocks. If someone makes a mistake, says something a little out of turn or uncalled for, does that give us the right to stumble—to rebuke them angrily and shout at them? Let’s read it from the reverse side. Great peace have those who love your law. If we love God’s law unequivocally we are going to have wonderful magnified peace and be peace makers. As such nothing will upset and offend us. We will have the meekness of wisdom and not throw oil on a fire!

Oil has a calming effect on wave action as it spreads over the surface of the sea. Very small quantities of oil can cover a surprisingly large area as it spreads into a layer just a few molecules in thickness. The surface tension of the oil layer has an effect similar to that of a thin skin and is highly effective at calming “troubled water”. Thus came the saying “pour oil on troubled water” meaning an attempt to calm a problematic situation. “Troubled” meant agitated and disturbed either of mind or in reference to physical elements like water or sky. We calm the raging waters of our heart by the oil of God’s Holy Spirit.

During this time of the Omer count up to Pentecost the next 50 days, beginning on April 16/Nisan 16, we count both the week and the day (number the weeks and the days 7days x 7 weeks) — called *Siferat ha Omer*: “Blessed are you O Lord our God, king of the universe who has separated us by your commandments, and commanded us concerning counting of the Omer.” Then we say the number of the day and the week that it is. *Example*: Today is the fourth day (endurance) of the first week which is *Chesed*-loving kindness. *Note*: The Omer Count was mailed with your previous Bible study summary. The Daily Omer Meditation can also be downloaded from our website that will give you the way to count the Omer so you can benefit personally. It will make a difference in your life and your heart. May God bless you if you do. Amen.