

## **YESHUA IN THE MONTH OF AVIV (PESACH - MATZAH - BIKKURIM)**

On the evening of 21<sup>st</sup> March 2015, we once again observed the sliver of the new moon, which confirmed Rosh Hodesh had arrived. The sighting was coupled with confirmation from Isra'el that the wild barley has reached the Aviv stage. Together these two signs mark the beginning of yet another Scriptural year. Rosh Hodesh Aviv begins the countdown to Pesach (Passover), which is always observed after sundown on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of Aviv in accordance with the Mitzvot (commands) in Sh'mot (Exodus) 12:42 where it says:- *“This was a night when YHVH kept vigil to bring them out of the land of Egypt, and this same night continues to be a night when YHVH keeps vigil for all the people of Isra'el through all their generations.”* Observance of Pesach is the first of the three Moedim (appointed times of YHVH) that are observed during the month of Aviv. The second Moed – Matzah, is a seven day festival, which also begins on the evening 14<sup>th</sup> and concluding at sundown of the 21<sup>st</sup> day. The third moed is Bikkurim, which means Firstfruits as indicated in Vayikra (Leviticus) 23:10 – *“Tell the people of Isra'el, ‘After you enter the land I am giving you and harvest its ripe crops, you are to bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the cohen.”* This third moed is observed on the 18<sup>th</sup> day of Aviv. More information on the significance of these three Moedim, has been included in the introductory notes of our Talmidei Yeshua New Zealand - Scriptural Calendar. The calendar is a working resource for all who wish observe the seven Moedim of YHVH in accordance with Vayikra Chapter 23; and is now available by emailing us at:-

[administrator@messianic.org.nz](mailto:administrator@messianic.org.nz)

### **Yeshua In The Three Spring Moedim**

The prophetic messages in both the Tanakh (OT) and the B'rit Hadashah (NT) inform us that the death, resurrection and ascension of Yeshua all took place during the month of Aviv and through application of Scriptural Chronology, we can deduce that these events occurred in Aviv 30 C.E. However, through the centuries between that eventful year and today, much controversy has developed over the actual timing of these very important milestones of history. The controversy is mainly due to the fact that the Church intuitions of Christendom seldom recognise that through his death, resurrection and ascension, Yeshua collectively fulfilled all three spring Moedim - Pesach, Matzah and Bikkurim as set forth in Vayikra Chapter 23. A clear understanding of the relationship between the three spring Moedim and the death, resurrection and ascension of Yeshua can only be seen when viewed through the Scriptural Calendar, which alone measures the day from sundown to sundown. The Scriptural Calendar stands in contrast with the Gregorian Calendar, used throughout the modern western world, which has its day commencing at mid-night. Hence, the purpose of this Scriptural Narrative is to bring about a deeper understanding of the sequence of events that took place during the month of Aviv in the year 30 C.E., which was a major hinge point in the history of mankind.

### **Winter 29 C.E.**

To more fully understand the background that lead up to the death, resurrection and ascension of Yeshua, we must set aside our modern Gregorian calendar and take a quantum leap back in history. We need to take up the story about three months before the beginning of the Scriptural year 30 C.E. The narrative begins in the 10<sup>th</sup> month of 29 C.E. where we are told by Yochanan (John) 10:22-26; *“Then came Hanukkah in Yerushalayim. It was winter, and Yeshua was walking around inside the*

*Temple area, in Shlomo's Colonnade. So, the Judeans surrounded him and said to him, "How much longer are you going to keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us publicly!" Yeshua answered them, "I have already told you, and you don't trust me. The works I do in my Father's name testify on my behalf, but the reason you don't trust is that you are not included among my sheep."*

*(Unless otherwise stated all Scriptural quotations are from the Complete Jewish Bible 1998 edition as Translated by Dr David Stern).*

Firstly, it is important to understand that the Judeans who surrounded Yeshua were Edomite's who since the time when Herod the Great became king, were the ruling class in Isra'el. They were well aware that they were not native born Yehudi's (Jews) but, were imposters and had no God given right to rule and govern Isra'el. Hence, from the time of Yeshua's birth onwards the Judeans had been waiting for the real "King of the Jews" to make his presence known. However, it took until just a matter of months before his death, before Yeshua revealed his identity. Even then because of their lust for power they collectively rejected Yeshua's claims of Messiahship. As Yeshua himself said, because you are not included among my sheep you will not recognise me for whom I am. They also confused, because they were expecting a military leader to start an insurrection against their Herodian dynasty, and the Roman yoke of that time. They did not expect a miracle worker who gathered around him fishermen, tax collectors and the poor people from the Galil (Galilee).

However, Yeshua calmly reminded them that they are the imposters without knowledge of the prophecies in the Tanakh that spoke about him. Further, they had little or no awareness of the times in which they were living. Their arrogance set them apart from the sheep-like people who were acknowledging that Yeshua really was the Mashiach (Messiah) that all Isra'el has been awaiting. However, the Torah-teachers and the religious leaders of Y'hudah were well aware of what had been foretold in Dani'el 9:26, where it says:- *"Then, after the sixty-two weeks, Mashiach will be cut off and have nothing."* But, even they and his closest followers were unaware of what would transpire around the time of the next Pesach.

It was around that same time in the winter of 29 C.E. that Yeshua's good friend and follower El'azar (Lazarus) died and was placed in a tomb. But, after four days Yeshua raised him from the sleep of death. El'azar appears to have been a prominent member of the Yerushalayim society, because when he died, Miryam his sister was visited by a number of Judeans and as we are told in Yochanan 11:45 - *"many of the Judeans who had come to visit Miryam, and had seen what Yeshua had done, trusted in him."* However, not all came to trust in Yeshua. Instead, as we are told by Yochanan in 11:46-48 *"But some of them went off to the P'rushim and told them what he had done. So the head cohanim and the P'rushim called a meeting of the Sanhedrin and said, "What are we going to do? — for this man is performing many miracles. If we let him keep going on this way, everyone will trust in him, and the Romans will come and destroy both the Temple and the nation."*

Hence, the Judeans lobbied the P'rushim (Pharisees) who were members of the Sanhedrin to instigate a plot to kill him. Yochanan reveals their plot in verses 49-52 where he says:- *"... one of them, Kayafa (Caiaphas), who was cohen gadol that year, said to them, "You people don't know anything! You don't see that it's better for you if one man dies on behalf of the people, so that the*

*whole nation won't be destroyed." Now he didn't speak this way on his own initiative; rather, since he was cohen gadol that year, he was prophesying that Yeshua was about to die on behalf of the nation, and not for the nation alone, but so that he might gather into one the scattered children of God."*

Kayafa the cohen gadol (high priest) was one who had been appointed to the role not in accordance with Torah, but as a Roman appointee. The Judeans through their Roman appointments, had a controlling voice in the Sanhedrin and hence the governance of Isra'el at the time. However, as Yochanan says the hand of YHVH was upon Kayafa. His prophesy about the future of Yeshua was part of the Sovereign Plan of God. Even though the Sanhedrin thought Kayafa was making the ruling by his own initiative.

Against that backdrop of unrest among the Judeans, Yeshua withdrew from Yerushalayim, because his time had not yet come. As verses 53-54 tell us he and his followers withdrew and wintered over away from the direct influence of the Judeans, as it says:- *"From that day on, they made plans to have him put to death. Therefore Yeshua no longer walked around openly among the Judeans but went away from there into the region near the desert, to a town called Efrayim, and stayed there with his talmidim."*

The location of Efrayim is today unknown. Many have suggested it could be any one of a number towns west of the Yarden (Jordan) river. But, it clear from other passages that Yochanan the Immerser (John The Baptist) resided east of the river. Anyhow, Yeshua spent the rest of the winter months in Efrayim. That is until we take up the narrative again this time in Luke 18:31-34, where we see Yeshua preparing to return to Yerushalayim – *"Taking the Twelve, Yeshua said to them, "We are now going up to Yerushalayim, where everything written through the prophets about the Son of Man will come true. For he will be handed over to the Goyim and be ridiculed, insulted and spat upon. Then, after they have beaten him, they will kill him. But on the third day he will rise." However, they understood none of this; its meaning had been hidden from them, and they had no idea what he was talking about."*

This is also confirmed in Mark 10:32-34 where we see the confusion that had settled upon his twelve talmidim, as we are told:- *"They were on the road going up to Yerushalayim. Yeshua was walking ahead of them, and they were amazed — and those following were afraid. So again taking the Twelve along with him, he began telling them what was about to happen to him." "We are now going up to Yerushalayim, where the Son of Man will be handed over to the head cohanim and the Torah-teachers. They will sentence him to death and turn him over to the Goyim, who will jeer at him, spit on him, beat him and kill him; but after three days, he will rise."*

Luke 19:1 then tells of the demands placed upon Yeshua as they passed through Yericho (Jericho) on their way up to Yerushalayim. In the midst of their confusion two of the talmidim asked to be seated either side of Yeshua in his glory. But, as Mark 10:35-40 shows, they had no awareness of what lay ahead:- *"Ya'akov (James) and Yochanan, the sons of Zavdai, came up to him and said, "Rabbi, we would like you to do us a favour." He said to them, "What do you want me to do for you?" They replied, "When you are in your glory, let us sit with you, one on your right and the other on your left." But Yeshua answered, "You don't know what you're asking! Can you drink the cup that I am drinking? or be immersed with the immersion that I must undergo?" They said to him, "We can." Yeshua replied, "The cup that I am drinking, you will drink; and the immersion I*

*am being immersed with, you will undergo. But to sit on my right and on my left is not mine to give. Rather, it is for those for whom it has been prepared.”*

It is clear from these words that like most of the crowd that was following him, these two talmidim were also expecting him to stand up against the might of Rome and to deliver Isra’el from the yoke of oppression.

### **Six Days Before Pesach**

They finally arrived on the Mount of Olives six days before Pesach as we are told by Yochanan in 12:1, Yeshua (and probably also the Twelve) spending the night in Beit-Aniyah (Bethany) at the home of El’azar, whom Yeshua had some months earlier raised from the dead. The narrative continues in verses 2-11:- *“.. they gave a dinner there in his honour. Marta served the meal, and El’azar was among those at the table with him. Miryam took a whole pint of pure oil of spikenard, which is very expensive, poured it on Yeshua’s feet and wiped his feet with her hair, so that the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. But one of the talmidim, Y’hudah from K’riot, the one who was about to betray him, said, “This perfume is worth a year’s wages! Why wasn’t it sold and the money given to the poor?” Now he said this not out of concern for the poor, but because he was a thief — he was in charge of the common purse and used to steal from it. Yeshua said, “Leave her alone! She kept this for the day of my burial. You always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me.” A large crowd of Judeans learned that he was there; and they came not only because of Yeshua, but also so that they could see El’azar, whom he had raised from the dead. The head cohanim then decided to do away with El’azar too, since it was because of him that large numbers of the Judeans were leaving their leaders and putting their trust in Yeshua.”*

Establishing the date on which Yeshua arrive at Beit-Aniyah is very important, as it sets the dates on which all subsequent events occur. Yochanan says in 12:1 that it was six days before Pesach. Therefore, as Pesach is always celebrated on the night of the 14<sup>th</sup> (that is after sundown, which in Scripture is the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> day) the day Yeshua arrived at Beit-Aniyah would have been the 9<sup>th</sup> of Aviv.

Having established the date as the 9<sup>th</sup> of Aviv we also need to establish the day of the week. Nothing is said as to which day was the 9<sup>th</sup> in the year 30 C.E. However, Scripture does give us a clue through the three Synoptic Gospel accounts as follow:-

Firstly, in Mattityahu (Matthew) 28:1 – *“After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. (NIV)*

Secondly, in Mark 16:2 - *“Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb and they asked each other, “Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?” (NIV)*

Thirdly, in Yochanan 20:1 - *“Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Miryam from Magdala went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb.” (CJB)*

In all three references the women visited the tomb early on the first day of the week or in Gregorian language, Sunday morning. The women going to the tomb on the Sunday morning is a hinge point

that enables us to track back and establish that Yeshua arrived in Beit-Aniyah on the sixth day of the week – Friday.

### **Shabbat Hagadol**

Yochanan continues in 12:12-19 *“The next day, the large crowd that had come for the festival heard that Yeshua was on his way into Yerushalayim. They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting, **“Deliver us!”**”<sup>[1]</sup> **“Blessed is he who comes in the name of YHVH,**<sup>[2]</sup> the King of Isra’el!”* After finding a donkey colt, Yeshua mounted it, just as the Tanakh says — **“Daughter of Tziyon, don’t be afraid! Look! your King is coming, sitting on a donkey’s colt.”**<sup>[3]</sup> His talmidim did not understand this at first; but after Yeshua had been glorified, then they remembered that the Tanakh said this about him, and that they had done this for him. The group that had been with him when he called El’azar out of the tomb and raised him from the dead had been telling about it. It was because of this too that the crowd came out to meet him — they had heard that he had performed this miracle. The P’rushim said to each other, *“Look, you’re getting nowhere! Why, the whole world has gone after him!”*

The day that triumphant entry into Yerushalayim took place was the 10<sup>th</sup> day of Aviv. It was also Shabbat. Hence, the day that has become known in Rabbinical Judaism as “Shabbat Hagadol”, is also an important day for those who are talmidim of Yeshua. There are a number of reasons why this particular Shabbat is so named, but the most common one in the Rabbinical community is in reference to the power YHVH exercised over the Egyptian gods at the time of the exodus.

The Midrash Rabbah states: *“When they (the Jewish people) set aside their paschal lamb on that Shabbat, the first-born gentiles gathered near the Israelites and asked them why they were doing this. The following was their response: “This is a Pesach offering to God who will kill the firstborn Egyptians.” They (the firstborn) went to their fathers and to Pharaoh to request that they grant permission to set the Jewish people free – but they refused. The first-born then waged a war against them and many of them (the Egyptians) were killed. This is the meaning of the verse (Psalms 136:10): “Who struck Egypt through its first born; for His kindness is eternal”.*

However, as Talmidei Yeshua (disciples of Yeshua) we have a greater reason to acknowledge that day as something special. It was the day when Yeshua fulfilled the prophecies regarding his entry into the city. Yochanan in his references above records how Yeshua riding on a donkey from the Mount of Olives down the Kidron Valley and up through the Golden (East) Gate into the city, fulfilled the prophecies in both Psalms and Zechariah. That triumphant entry is doubly important to talmidim of Yeshua, because it was also the day the lambs for the Pesach sacrifice were lead through the Sheep (North) Gate into the city. The significance of the parallel between Yeshua and the sheep, is that both were examined daily until the 14<sup>th</sup> when the Pascal lamb was to be slaughtered at the time of the afternoon sacrifices.

### **Four Days To Pesach**

The four day examination was in keeping with the words of Sh’mot (Exodus) 12:3-8 as it says, *“Speak to all the assembly of Isra’el and say, ‘On the tenth day of this month, each man is to take a lamb or kid for his family, one per household. ‘You are to keep it until the fourteenth day of the*

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1 Psalm 118:25

2 Psalm 118:26

3 Zechariah 9:9

*month, and then the entire assembly of the community of Isra'el will slaughter it at dusk. They are to take some of the blood and smear it on the two sides and top of the door-frame at the entrance of the house in which they eat it. That night, they are to eat the meat, roasted in the fire; they are to eat it with matzah and maror."*

During the four days, like the lambs that were being made ready for Pesach, so also was Yeshua to be scrutinized by the leaders of Y'hudah, but unknown to them their challenges were to proving his suitability to be the sacrificial lamb of God. As Yochanan says in 12:27-30 *"Now I am in turmoil. What can I say — 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it was for this very reason that I have come to this hour. I will say this: 'Father, glorify your name!'"* At this a bat-kol came out of heaven, *"I have glorified it before, and I will glorify it again!"* The crowd standing there and hearing it said that it had thundered; others said, *"An angel spoke to him."* Yeshua answered, *"This bat-kol did not come for my sake but for yours."*

Yeshua in return also challenged the leaders of the people, by entering the Temple grounds and drove out the merchants doing business there. As we are told in Mattityahu 21:12b-13 *"He upset the desks of the money-changers and knocked over the benches of those who were selling pigeons. He said to them, 'It has been written, 'My house will be called a house of prayer.'<sup>[4]</sup> But you are making it into a den of robbers!"<sup>[5]</sup>*

During those four days between his entry into the city on a donkey and the night of his last meal, Yeshua responded to many challenges in a manner that fulfilled the prophets messages of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Amos and others. He proved beyond all doubt that he was both the Son of God and the promised Messiah. This gave the Tz'dukim (Sadducees) and the P'rushim (Pharisees) the very reason they needed to have him arrested and tried on a charge of blasphemy. Hence, his arrest, trial and execution fulfilled the first of the spring Moedim - Pesach. He became the Pesach Lamb.

Mattityahu in 21:17 tells us that at the end of that first eventful day, Yeshua left the city and spent the night at Beit-Aniyah. The suggestion is that he lodged with El'azar, Martha and Miryam on all three nights between Shabbat Hagadol and his last meal with his Talmidim.

Bright and early the next morning (Sunday) Yeshua returned to the Temple for yet more scrutiny and challenges from the leaders of Y'hudah. Mattityahu again takes up the story in 21:23-27 where he says:- *"He went into the Temple area; and as he was teaching, the head cohanim and the elders of the people approached him and demanded, 'What s'mikhah [ordination] do you have that authorizes you to do these things? And who gave you this s'mikhah?'"* Yeshua answered, *"I too will ask you a question. If you answer it, then I will tell you by what s'mikhah I do these things. The immersion of Yochanan — where did it come from? From Heaven or from a human source?"* They discussed it among themselves: *"If we say, 'From Heaven,' he will say, 'Then why didn't you believe him?'"* But if we say, *"From a human source,"* we are afraid of the people, for they all regard Yochanan as a prophet." So they answered Yeshua, *"We don't know."* And he replied, *"Then I won't tell you by what s'mikhah I do these things."*

He continued his response by giving them two further parables, which confounded their arguments against him even more. Finally, in verses 42-46 he silenced their challenges by saying:- *"Haven't*

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4 Isaiah 56:7

5 Jeremiah 7:11

you ever read in the Tanakh, ***‘The very rock which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone! This has come from YHVH, and in our eyes it is amazing’***?<sup>[6]</sup> Therefore, I tell you that the Kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to the kind of people that will produce its fruit!”<sup>[7]</sup> As the head kohanim and the P’rushim listened to his stories, they saw that he was speaking about them. But when they set about to arrest him, they were afraid of the crowds; because the crowds considered him a prophet.

In response to their words, Yochanan says 12:42-43 *“Many of the leaders did trust in him; but because of the P’rushim they did not say so openly, out of fear of being banned from the synagogue; for they loved praise from other people more than praise from God.”*

### **Destruction of Yerushalayim Foretold**

After three tiring days of questions and answers, he once again addressed the crowds as recorded in Mattityahu in Chapter 23. This was immediately before departing from the Temple to prepare himself for what lay ahead. In 23:2-3 he gave a warning to the ordinary people:- *“The Torah-teachers and the P’rushim,” he said, “sit in the seat of Moshe. So whatever they tell you, take care to do it. But don’t do what they do, because they talk but don’t act!”* Then starting in verse 13 Yeshua speaks out seven woes against the Torah-teachers and the P’rushim, culminating by calling them snakes and sons of snakes. He concludes the chapter in verses 37-38 by saying:- *“Yerushalayim! Yerushalayim! You kill the prophets! You stone those who are sent to you! How often I wanted to gather your children, just as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, but you refused! Look! God is abandoning your house to you, leaving it desolate.”*<sup>[8]</sup>

With those words he withdrew to the Mount of Olives, where his talmidim asked him when the Temple would be destroyed and what sign they should look for that would herald the end of this age. Then Mattityahu devotes the entire next chapter (24) to Yeshua’s response to those two questions. *(That chapter will be discussed in more detail in a separate Scriptural Narrative)*

Then on the 13<sup>th</sup> day of Aviv (Tuesday), the talmidim while still failing to understand the significance of what is about to take place, partook in the preparations for the festival of Matzah. They also asked Yeshua where he wanted them to prepare for them all to observe their Seder on the evening of the 14<sup>th</sup> Aviv. Luke provides a well-rounded version of Yeshua’s response in 22:7-13 where he says:- *“Then came the day of matzah, on which the Passover lamb had to be killed. Yeshua sent Kefa and Yochanan, instructing them, “Go and prepare our Seder, so we can eat.” They asked him, “Where do you want us to prepare it?” He told them, “As you’re going into the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him into the house he enters, and say to its owner, ‘The Rabbi says to you, “Where is the guest room, where I am to eat the Pesach meal with my talmidim?’ He will show you a large room upstairs already furnished; make the preparations there.” They went and found things just as Yeshua had told them they would be, and they prepared for the Seder.*

On the 13<sup>th</sup> day of Aviv, it was and still is customary for the woman of the home to do a total “spring clean” so that all traces of leaven are removed from the house by sundown on the 13<sup>th</sup> of Aviv. Rabbinical law, which is centred on many practices carried out in the time of Yeshua,

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6 Psalm 118:22-23

7 Some manuscripts include verse 44: Whoever falls on this stone will be broken in pieces; but if it falls on him and he will be crushed to powder!”

8 Jeremiah 22:5

requires that all leaven be removed on the night preceding the 14<sup>th</sup> of Nisan (Aviv). The custom is that the father of the house after dark on the night of the 13<sup>th</sup> goes throughout the house with a candle and a spoon, searching for any remaining leaven. Then no later than noon of the 14<sup>th</sup> he burns all remaining crumbs found. Thus the house is considered ready for Pesach, which would be eaten that night, after sundown. This practice was also undertaken in 30 C.E. in accordance with the requirements set forth in D'varim (Deuteronomy) 16:4a – *“No leaven is to be seen with you anywhere in your territory for seven days.”*

However, as we well know that year Yeshua himself become the Pesach lamb, so it was not possible for him to eat Pesach at the normal time. Therefore, what Luke wrote in 22:7-13 applied to the previous night. That is the evening beginning at sundown on the 13<sup>th</sup> (Tuesday).

So, Luke continues in 22:14-16 saying:- *“When the time came, Yeshua and the emissaries reclined at the table and he said to them, “I have really wanted so much to celebrate this Seder with you before I die! For I tell you, it is certain that I will not celebrate it again until it is given its full meaning in the Kingdom of God.”*

### **Pesach Seder Or Not?**

There are a number of important matters we need to consider in relation to the accounts from Luke and the other Gospels as they relate to Yeshua's Last Meal with the twelve. Could his Seder have been something other than a Pesach Seder? We need to consider the facts! Firstly, use of the word Seder immediately suggests a direct connection with Pesach, because the word “Seder” generally means – *a ceremonial dinner that commemorates the Exodus from Egypt and includes the reading of the Haggadah and the eating of symbolic foods*. Further, it has been suggested that this word did not come into existence until well into the 2<sup>nd</sup> century and possibly later. So, what would he have said. Perhaps – *“I have really wanted so much to celebrate this meal with you before I die!*

Other matters that need to be considered in connection with the last meal Yeshua eat with the Twelve Talmidim include:-

1. It took place on the evening beginning the 14<sup>th</sup> day of Aviv, not on the traditional night at the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> which is the anniversary of the day Isra'el fled from Egypt. Yeshua celebrated one night earlier than normal.
2. Yeshua knew that he was about to fulfil the role of the sacrificial Pesach Lamb, so would he have eaten lamb on the night before his own sacrificial death? None of the Gospels give any suggestion that he did eat any lamb.
3. Luke records Yeshua as saying in verses 22:15-16 – *“I have really wanted so much to celebrate this Seder with you before I die! “For I tell you, it is certain that I will not celebrate it again until it is given its full meaning in the Kingdom of God.”*

The words imply Yeshua was referring to the celebration of his Seder, as being the event that would be given full meaning in the Kingdom of God. So what will it celebrate?

- a) His own sacrificial death?
- b) The traditional the Pesach remembering Isra'el's departure from Egypt?
- c) Or would it be the working out of the New Covenant that he was about to ratify?

The third option appears to be the only one that really fits with other references Yeshua made about the Kingdom of Heaven, when he spoke in parables. Therefore, all things considered it appears that his last meal with the talmidim was something other than a traditional Pesach Seder?

David Stern in his Jewish New Testament Commentary offers an alternative answer as proposed by Joseph Shulam – Leader of Roeh Israel, Messianic Jewish Congregation in Jerusalem, who has suggested the following:-

*The Last Supper is considered by most scholars to have been a Passover meal or Seder. However, Joseph Shulam has suggested that it may not have been the Seder but a se'udat-mitzvah, a celebratory banquet.*

*Here is the background for his argument. When a rabbi and his students finished studying a tractate of the Talmud, they celebrated with a se'udat-mitzvah or 'banquet of completion,' i.e. graduation. Shulam reasons, that since Yeshua knew he was going to die, he may have regarded it as appropriate to complete his disciples' earthly "course of study" with a banquet. This solution would also resolve the perceived conflict between Yochanan [John] and the Synoptic Gospels over the timing of the Last Supper. (p. 77, Jewish New Testament Commentary)*

Does this sound like a valid explanation for the purpose and timing of Yeshua's last meal? Is there any other material that might corroborate this line of reasoning? The answer is yes!

In March 2010 The Vine Of David Team – FFOZ published an article entitled “Leftovers and the last Supper” which quotes an article about a leading Talmudic Rabbi who considered it a great honour to eat only the crumbs left behind after a graduation banquet had taken place. The Talmudic reference starts with a verse directly from Torah about a similar type of meal in the wilderness, eaten by Yitro, Moshe, Aharon and the leaders of Isra'el. The words of Sh'mot 18:12 tell us – “*Yitro Moshe's father-in-law brought a burnt offering and sacrifices to God, and Aharon came with all the leaders of Isra'el to share the meal before God with Moshe's father-in-law.*”

Reflecting on this verse, the Talmud says – “*Eating a meal with tzaddikim (righteous individuals) was considered as if one had eaten in the presence of God himself. The Talmud further tells us that Rabbi Jonathan [a 2nd century Mishanic Sage] would make a practice to enter the synagogue in the morning after a seudat - mitzvah ("festive meal") had been held and consume the crumbs that were left by those who had celebrated this holy meal. He would say, "Let my lot be with him who eats here in the evenings." Like the Torah command to leave the corners of one's field un-gleaned for the poor. Therefore the concept began to develop early on, that leftovers from a festival meal became a blessing and that eating the food of the righteous connects an individual to them.*

Based on the fact that Yeshua eat his last evening meal (Seder) with his chosen talmidim on the night before Pesach, suggests that it may very well have been a *se'udat-mitzvah* or graduation banquet, hosted by Yeshua on behalf of his faithful talmidim, who had been living with and learning from him since their calling. His death was to become part of the graduation process and the time to move on to the next phase of the Sovereign Plan of God. Namely their receiving of the Ruach HaKodesh, so that they could spread the word about Yeshua far and wide.

## Why The Washing Of Feet?

Returning to the narrative from the Gospel of Yochanan we find another unique activity that Yeshua embarked upon during that last meal with his talmidim. As Yochanan says in 13:3-5; *“Yeshua was aware that the Father had put everything in his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God. So he rose from the table, removed his outer garments and wrapped a towel around his waist. Then he poured some water into a basin and began to wash the feet of the talmidim and wipe them off with the towel wrapped around him.”*

This ritual is only referred to once in Yochanan and does not feature in the other three gospels, but it is of profound significance, as the words of Yeshua reveal, when he was confronted by Kefa's refusal to have his feet washed:- *“No!” said Kefa, “You will never wash my feet!” Yeshua answered him, “If I don't wash you, you have no share with me.”* There is profound depth in those words of Yeshua – *“If I don't wash you, you have no share with me.”*

In saying those words Yeshua was fulfilling the words YHVH gave to Moshe in connection with Aharon and his sons. In Sh'mot 30:19-21. *“Aharon and his sons will wash their hands and feet there when they enter the tent of meeting - they are to wash with water, so that they won't die. Also when they approach the altar to minister by burning an offering for YHVH, they are to wash their hands and feet, so that they won't die. This is to be a perpetual law for them through all their generations.”*

As Aharon and his two remaining sons were ministering to YHVH on behalf of all Isra'el, they had to be ritually clean before serving at the altar. In the same manner, all who are called by YHVH to walk with Yeshua, are in preparation to serve before YHVH as cohanim along with Yeshua during his 1000 year reign. So, if the called out ones are not washed with water before serving, then they remain ritually unclean before YHVH. It must be constantly remembered that the promise held out to all who are called by Yeshua, is that they are to be made immortal at the return of Yeshua. Having been made immortal means the chosen will not die, just as the promise was made to Aharon.

The washing of the feet of the talmidim also was a true act of bonding. The Master became a servant, so that he could cement the relationship between himself and his talmidim. Yeshua concluded his discourse by placing the same requirement upon his talmidim as he stated in Yochanan 13:12-17:- *“Do you understand what I have done to you? You call me ‘Rabbi’ and ‘Master, and you are right, because I am. Now if I, the Master and Rabbi, have washed your feet, you also should wash each other's feet. For I have set you an example, so that you may do as I have done to you. Yes, indeed! I tell you, a slave is not greater than his master, nor is an emissary greater than the one who sent him. If you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.”*

## The New Covenant

After their meal in accordance with time honoured Hebraic tradition, Yeshua took the remaining wine in his cup along with a piece of Matzah and pronounced the b'rakhah over both the elements, as we read in Luke 22:17-20:- *“Then, taking a cup of wine, he made the b'rakhah and said, “Take this and share it among yourselves. For I tell you that from now on, I will not drink the ‘fruit of the vine’ until the Kingdom of God comes.” Also, taking a piece of matzah, he made the b'rakhah, broke it, gave it to them and said, “This is my body, which is being given for you; do this in memory of me.” He did the same with the cup after the meal, saying, “This cup is the New Covenant, ratified by my blood, which is being poured out for you.”*

His actions at that last meal were a direct fulfilment of the words spoken by Yirmeyahu (Jeremiah) the prophet in 31:30-36, where Yirmeyahu speaks of the “New Covenant saying:- *“Here, the days are coming,” says YHVH, “when I will make a new covenant with the house of Isra’el and with the house of Y’udah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their fathers on the day I took them by their hand and brought them out of the land of Egypt; because they, for their part, violated my covenant, even though I, for my part, was a husband to them,” says YHVH. “For this is the covenant I will make with the house of Isra’el after those days,” says YHVH: “I will put my Torah within them and write it on their hearts; I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will any of them teach his fellow community member or his brother, ‘Know YHVH’; for all will know me, from the least of them to the greatest; because I will forgive their wickedness’s and remember their sins no more.”*

What Yeshua did that night by ratifying the ‘New Covenant’ paved the way for Isra’el to be brought to its fullness following his return. *(The significance of the New Covenant will also be discussed in a separate Scriptural Narrative)*

Along with the drinking of the wine of New Covenant, Yeshua also broke a piece of Matzah and gave it to the talmidim as a symbol of his own body. Through this symbol he completely aligned himself with the type of grain offered in the Temple sacrifices. At no stage were any sacrifices offered with leavened flour, regardless what type of offering was made. Vayikra 2:4 & 10 say clearly:- *“When you bring a grain offering which has been baked in the oven, it is to consist of either unleavened cakes made of fine flour mixed with olive oil or matzah spread with olive oil.” “No grain offering that you bring to YHVH is to be made with leaven, because you are **not** to cause any leaven or honey to go up in smoke as an offering made by fire to YHVH.”*

All meat offerings that were made to go up in smoke to YHVH were accompanied by a grain offering. Hence, Yeshua by offering his own blood and his body was replacing the Pesach lamb the unleavened grain offering. By ratifying the New Covenant, with these two elements (wine and matzah) he was bringing the sacrificial system to an end. However, it took a further forty years before the old sacrificial system was finally removed with the destruction of the Temple.

Having considered all these facts, it certainly looks highly unlikely that the last meal Yeshua eat with his talmidim was a Pesach Seder. Instead it is much more likely to have been a *se’udat-mitzvah*, a celebratory banquet, coupled with the sealing of the New Covenant.

We know that Yeshua celebrated his last meal on the night of 14<sup>th</sup> of Aviv, having sat down to eat sometime after sundown. The meal appears to have lasted until mid-evening. As we are told by Mattityahu 26:30-35 *“After singing the Hallel [Psalms 113-118], they went out to the Mount of Olives. Yeshua then said to them, “Tonight you will all lose faith in me, as the Tanakh says, ‘**I will strike the shepherd dead, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.**’<sup>[9]</sup> But after I have been raised, I will go ahead of you into the Galil.” “I will never lose faith in you,” Kefa answered, “even if everyone else does.” Yeshua said to him, “Yes! I tell you that tonight before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times!” “Even if I must die with you,” Kefa replied, “I will never disown you!” And all the talmidim said the same thing.*

## The Spring Moedim

It was around mid-night that Yeshua was arrested and taken by the Temple guard firstly to the Cohen Gadol – Kayafa, then toward dawn he was taken before the Roman Governor – Pilate. Yeshua was tried, executed and laid in the tomb, all before sundown on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of Aviv. So, we can see that from the start of his last meal until he was laid in the tomb, was just one 24 hour day. This is an important concept in understanding the sequence of events that took place in connection with Yeshua in the month of Aviv 30 C.E. Particularly because the timing of death, resurrection and ascension all accurately matched the timing of the three spring Moedim (appointed times of YHVH) as spoken about in Vayikra (Leviticus) Chapter 23. They were a fulfilment of the all three Moedim.

## The Sign of Yonah

In the early stage his ministry while he was teaching on the shores of Lake Kinneret (Sea of Galilee) he was questioned by some of the Torah-teachers wanting a sign to confirm that he was the Mashiach they were awaiting as foretold by the Torah and the Prophets. On this matter Mattityahu 12:38-41 says:- *“At this some of the Torah-teachers said, “Rabbi, we want to see a miraculous sign from you.” He replied, “A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a sign? No! None will be given to it but the sign of the prophet Yonah. For just as Yonah (Jonah) was **three days and three nights in the belly of the sea-monster,**<sup>[10]</sup> so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the depths of the earth. The people of Ninveh will stand up at the Judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they turned from their sins to God when Yonah preached, but what is here now is greater than Yonah.*

Why is this sign so important? It is important because it determines how long Yeshua remained in the tomb, after his death. Rabbinical Judaism is silent about these matters because they still hold to the belief that Yeshua was not the promised Messiah. Therefore, for them there has been no fulfilment of the Sign of Yonah. By contrast the Church institutions of Christendom all hold fast to the belief that Yeshua whom they call Jesus Christ, died on Friday and was resurrected on Sunday morning at or just before dawn.

In spite of these two entrenched positions, Yeshua himself said *‘so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the depths of the earth.* Against his statement there can be no valid argument.

## Recap of Events

It is necessary at this point to bring together all the events that took place in the month of Aviv in that eventful year of 30 C.E., The best way to express the sequence of events is in a table format. Remembering that all events must be measured against the Scriptural Calendar rather the Roman Calendar of that time. It must also be remembered that in Scripture the day begins at sundown approx. 6:00pm rather 12:00pm mid-night according to the Roman (Western) worldview. In making sense of the days of the week on which each event occurred it is however, necessary to use our common titles of each of the day even though in Isra’el in 30 C.E., the days of the week were considered by numbers only – e.g. 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup> day etc. Further, in laying the Scriptural Calendar over the Gregorian Calendar the beginning of each month falls on different days and even different weeks, because the Scriptural Calendar is lunar based, while the Gregorian Calendar is solar based, with the latter laid out as a balanced division of months between the vernal equinoxes. By contrast the lunar calendar, is dictated by the sighting of the first sliver of the new moon, which can vary

between 29-30 day cycles and seldom coincides with the solar cycle. Hence, in understanding the events relating to Yeshua in the month of Aviv 30 C.E. it is necessary to set aside completely the Gregorian Calendar.

**Table 1 – Events leading up to the placement of Yeshua in the tomb**

Rosh Hodesh Aviv	1 <sup>st</sup> Thurs	Beginning of the month of Aviv, Yeshua and his followers on the road to Yerushalayim in preparation for Pesach
Beit Aniyah	9 <sup>th</sup> Fri	Banquet held in Yeshua's honour at the house of El'azar
Shabbat Hagadol	10 <sup>th</sup> Shabbat	Yeshua rode into Yerushalayim on a donkey, also the time when the Pesach lambs were being taken in to be examined.
Time of examination	Saturday to Tuesday	10 <sup>th</sup> to 13 <sup>th</sup> Aviv the time of examination of the Pesach lambs, also the time when Yeshua was challenged by the Torah-teachers and leaders of the Yerushalayim community.
Yeshua's Last Meal	14 <sup>th</sup> Wed	After sundown until about mid-evening, then time in Gat-Sh'manim (Gethsemane) praying before his arrest.
Arrest, trial and death	14 <sup>th</sup> Wed	Arrested around mid-night, questioned by Kayafa then sentenced by Pilate, nailed to the stake and died at 3:00pm
The festival of Matzah	15 <sup>th</sup> Thurs	The first day of the seven day festival of Matzah began at sundown on the Wednesday evening.

**Table 2 – Yeshua fulfils the Sign of Yonah (Mattityahu 12:38-41)**

Sign of Yonah	14 <sup>th</sup> to the 17 <sup>th</sup>	Three days and three nights Yeshua lay in the tomb
	1 <sup>st</sup> night (15 <sup>th</sup> )	6:00pm Wednesday to 6:00am Thursday
	1 <sup>st</sup> day (15 <sup>th</sup> )	6:00am Thursday to 6:00pm Thursday
	2 <sup>nd</sup> night (16 <sup>th</sup> )	6:00pm Thursday to 6:00am Friday
	2 <sup>nd</sup> day (16 <sup>th</sup> )	6:00am Friday to 6:00pm Friday
	3 <sup>rd</sup> night (17 <sup>th</sup> )	6:00pm Friday to 6:00am Saturday
	3 <sup>rd</sup> day (17 <sup>th</sup> )	6:00am on Shabbat until sometime before 6:00pm
<b>Resurrection</b>	3 <sup>rd</sup> day (17 <sup>th</sup> )	<b>Before sundown on Shabbat Yeshua rose from the tomb</b>

**Table 3 – Yeshua fulfils Bikkurim (Vayikra 23:9-11)**

Encounter at the tomb	18 <sup>th</sup>	Approx. 6:00am Sunday, women go to the tomb with spices
Miryam & Yeshua	18 <sup>th</sup>	Miryam touches Yeshua, he rebuffs her contact at that time
Bikkurim (Omer begins)	18 <sup>th</sup>	Yeshua ascended to his Father, as a Firstfruits offering
Amma'us Encounter	18 <sup>th</sup>	Late afternoon he met two followers in the road to Amma'us
Appears in the Upper Room	19 <sup>th</sup>	6:00pm Sunday evening talmidim in the locked Upper Room
Seventh day of Matzah	21 <sup>st</sup>	Holy convocation 6:00pm Tuesday to 6:00pm Wednesday

### **The Twelve Missing Hours**

The commonly accepted understanding among Christians is that Jesus Christ died on Good Friday afternoon and rose from the tomb at or about dawn on Sunday. As Table 2 shows Yeshua rose before 6:00pm on the Shabbat. So, where did he go in the twelve hour period between his resurrection and dawn of Sunday morning? The Gospels give no suggestion about his movements during that twelve hour period. One possible explanation is because at the time of writing the Gospels the oral account of events in Aviv 30 C.E. were still not fully understood by the Twelve Emissaries (Apostles) or maybe it was not intended to be recorded as part of the Gospels. Whatever the reason, those twelve hours were not wasted as we find the clue as to what Yeshua did in 1 Kefa (Peter) 3:18-22, where he says of Yeshua:- *“For the Messiah himself died for sins, once and for*

*all, a righteous person on behalf of unrighteous people, so that he might bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh but brought to life by the Spirit; and in this form he went and made a proclamation to the imprisoned spirits, to those who were disobedient long ago, in the days of Noah, when God waited patiently during the building of the ark, in which a few people — to be specific, eight — were delivered by means of water. This also prefigures what delivers us now, the water of immersion, which is not the removal of dirt from the body, but one's pledge to keep a good conscience toward God, through the resurrection of Yeshua the Messiah. He has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities and powers subject to him."*

Kefa again speaks about the imprisoned spirits in 2 Kefa 2:4 where he says:- *"God did not spare the angels who sinned; on the contrary, he put them in gloomy dungeons lower than Sh'ol to be held for judgment. This is further reinforced by Y'hudah (Jude) in his letter, where he says in verse 6:- "The angels that did not keep within their original authority, but abandoned their proper sphere, he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for the Judgment of the Great Day."*

It is clear from these verses that having been given all authority both in heaven and on earth, as Mattityahu 28:18 states:- *"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me."* Yeshua, following his own release from the grip of death, descended into the deep and gloomy dungeon that is lower than Sh'ol (the common grave of mankind) and spoke to those imprisoned spirits. He informed them that they were being held over for judgment at the end of this age. Thus he was actively engaged during the twelve hours, between his resurrection and his encounter with Miryam. *(Imprisoned Spirits and Yeshua's Authority will be discussed in a separate Scriptural Narrative)*

### **Sealing Of The Tomb**

Mattityahu says in 27:62-66 –*"Next day, after the preparation, the head cohanim and the P'rushim went together to Pilate and said, "Sir, we remember that that deceiver said while he was still alive, 'After three days I will be raised.' Therefore, order that the grave be made secure till the third day; otherwise the talmidim may come, steal him away and say to the people, 'He was raised from the dead'; and the last deception will be worse than the first." Pilate said to them, "You may have your guard. Go and make the grave as secure as you know how." So they went and made the grave secure by sealing the stone and putting the guard on watch.*

The day after the preparation referred to in verse 62 was the Holy Convocation, to be held on the 1<sup>st</sup> of the seven days of the festival of Matzah. A Holy Convocation in Torah is equal in status to that of the weekly Shabbat. It was and still is considered to be a day of rest from ordinary work and a day for assembly for the whole community of Isra'el. Such was the fear among the P'rushim including the head cohen, about the potential for Yeshua's body to be stolen, that they violated their observance of the 1<sup>st</sup> day of Matzah by going to speak with Pilate the Roman Governor, a Gentile with whom they were forbidden to associate, particularly on high Holy days.

### **The Empty Tomb**

The next event recorded in the four Gospels is the encounter between Yeshua and the women who went to the tomb on Sunday morning (that is 1<sup>st</sup> day of the week or the morning after the weekly Shabbat). Mattityahu takes up the story in 28:1-7 where it is recorded:- *"After Shabbat, as the next day was dawning, Miryam of Magdala and the other Miryam went to see the grave. Suddenly there was a violent earthquake, for an angel of YHVH came down from heaven, rolled away the stone and*

*sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were as white as snow. The guards were so terrified at him that they trembled and became like dead men. But the angel said to the women, “Don’t be afraid. I know you are looking for Yeshua, who was executed on the stake. He is not here, because he has been raised — just as he said! Come and look at the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell the talmidim, ‘He has been raised from the dead, and now he is going to the Galil ahead of you. You will see him there.’ Now I have told you.”*

As Table 2 shows Yeshua rose twelve hours earlier at the end of Shabbat, while the women were still resting. The sequence of events is further confirmed by Luke in 23:54 to 24:3, where he says:-  
*“It was Preparation Day, and a Shabbat was about to begin. The women who had come with Yeshua from the Galil followed; they saw the tomb and how his body was placed in it. Then they went back home to prepare spices and ointments. On Shabbat the women rested, in obedience to the commandment; but the next day, while it was still very early, they took the spices they had prepared, went to the tomb, and found the stone rolled away from the tomb! On entering, they discovered that the body of the Lord Yeshua was gone!*

We see from Luke that the women knew where Yeshua had been laid, so on Preparation Day, that is the Friday (Yeshua’s 2<sup>nd</sup> day in the tomb) was the time when they bought and prepared spices and ointments ready to embalm Yeshua’s body. However, they had to rest until the weekly Shabbat had passed. If we reflect back to Yeshua raising El’azar from death, he waited four days. That was because it was an accepted fact that a body that has not been embalmed begins to decompose on the fourth day. So, the women were ready to bathe Yeshua’s body in sweet smelling spices and ointments early on the morning of the fourth day. But, they were too late, he was already alive again.

Yochanan takes up the story yet again in 20:3-13 by giving details of what transpired when the women found the tomb empty. *“Then Kefa and the other talmid started for the tomb. They both ran, but the other talmid outran Kefa and reached the tomb first. Stooping down, he saw the linen burial-sheets lying there but did not go in. Then, following him, Shim’on Kefa arrived, entered the tomb and saw the burial-sheets lying there, also the cloth that had been around his head, lying not with the sheets but in a separate place and still folded up. Then the other talmid, who had arrived at the tomb first, also went in; he saw, and he trusted. (They had not yet come to understand that the Tanakh teaches that the Messiah has to rise from the dead.) So the talmidim returned home, but Miryam stood outside crying. As she cried, she bent down, peered into the tomb, and saw two angels in white sitting where the body of Yeshua had been, one at the head and one at the feet. “Why are you crying?” they asked her. “They took my Lord,” she said to them, “and I don’t know where they have put him.”*

### **Encounter At The Tomb**

Yochanan continues his narrative by drawing attention to the importance of the encounter between Miryam and Yeshua, when he says:- *“As she said this, she turned around and saw Yeshua standing there, but she didn’t know it was he. Yeshua said to her, “Lady, why are you crying? Whom are you looking for?” Thinking he was the gardener, she said to him, “Sir, if you’re the one who carried him away, just tell me where you put him; and I’ll go and get him myself.” Yeshua said to her, “Miryam!” Turning, she cried out to him in Hebrew, “Rabbani!” (that is, “Teacher!”) “Stop holding onto me,” Yeshua said to her, “because I haven’t yet gone back to the Father. But go to my brothers, and tell them that I am going back to my Father and your Father, to my God and your*

*God.” Miryam of Magdala went to the talmidim with the news that she had seen the Lord and that he had told her this.”*

*“Stop holding onto me,” Yeshua said to her, “because I haven’t yet gone back to the Father.”* These words of Yeshua confirm that on that special Sunday, the 18<sup>th</sup> day of Aviv, he fulfilled the third Moedim – Bikkurim. When he encountered Miryam he was still preparing to ascend into the presence of his Father El Shaddai (God Almighty), in the same way the Cohen Hagadol had to present himself with unleavened barley grain before YHVH each Bikkurim. In the same manner Yeshua presented himself before his Father in Heaven as an offering of Firstfruits from the dead. By offering himself in that way, he paved the way for all descendants of Adam to be resurrected either to life or judgment, following his return.

*(The significance of Bikkurim will be discussed in more detail in a separate Scriptural Narrative)*

### **Road To Amma’us And The Upper Room**

Yeshua appeared to two of his followers on the road to Amma’us as recorded in Luke 24:13-32. The encounter took place in the latter part of the same Sunday afternoon. But, the significant feature of this encounter was that neither follower new it was Yeshua. As they walked together they told him all that had happened in Yerushalayim over the previous week, as if he were a stranger from another country. In response Yeshua told them all that they had seen had been foretold in Torah and the Prophets about how the Messiah must die. However, they still did not recognise him. It was not until they stopped and eat together that Luke says in verse 30-32:- *“As he was reclining with them at the table, he took the matzah, made the b’rakhah, broke it and handed it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. But he became invisible to them. They said to each other, “Didn’t our hearts burn inside us as he spoke to us on the road, opening up the Tanakh to us?”*

What happened when he handed them the Matzah, that made them realise it was the Master? Was it that they saw the nail holes in his hands? Luke does not say. But, Luke continues the narrative with the two returning to Yerushalayim, in 24:33-53 by saying:- *“They got up at once, returned to Yerushalayim and found the Eleven gathered together with their friends, saying, “It’s true! The Lord has risen! Shim’on saw him!” Then the two told what had happened on the road and how he had become known to them in the breaking of the matzah. They were still talking about it when — there he was, standing among them. Startled and terrified, they thought they were seeing a ghost. But he said to them, “Why are you so upset? Why are these doubts welling up inside you? Look at my hands and my feet — it is I, myself! Touch me and see — a ghost doesn’t have flesh and bones, as you can see I do.” As he said this, he showed them his hands and feet. While they were still unable to believe it for joy and stood there dumbfounded, he said to them, “Have you something here to eat?” They gave him a piece of broiled fish, which he took and ate in their presence.*

The encounter in the Upper Room took place on that same Sunday evening, at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> day. The talmidim and other followers had locked themselves away fearing that the Judeans would come after them, to arrest and execute them just as they had Yeshua. They still did not fully comprehend the gravity of all that had happened during the previous four days, nor did they fully grasp the reasons why everything had happened the way it had.

The significant difference between that evening encounter and the one with Miryam in that same morning was that when Miryam reached out to embrace him, he said in Yochanan 20:17a – “*Stop holding onto me,*” *Yeshua said to her, “because I haven’t yet gone back to the Father.”*

Now here in their midst in the Upper Room, in Luke 24:39 he says the opposite – “*Look at my hands and my feet — it is I, myself! Touch me and see — a ghost doesn’t have flesh and bones, as you can see I do.*”

What was different was that between the two encounters, Yeshua had ascended to heaven and presented himself bodily as the Firstfruits from the dead, as Sha’ul (Paul) says in 1 Corinthians 15:20 - “*But the fact is that the Messiah has been raised from the dead, the **firstfruits** of those who have died.* Yeshua had truly fulfilled the third moed – Bikkurim, a fact that he himself confirmed in Luke 24:44-48 where we are told:- “*Yeshua said to them, “This is what I meant when I was still with you and told you that everything written about me in the Torah of Moshe, the Prophets and the Psalms had to be fulfilled.” Then he opened their minds, so that they could understand the Tanakh, telling them, “Here is what it says: the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day; and in his name repentance leading to forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed to people from all nations, starting with Yerushalayim. You are witnesses of these things.*

### **The Count Of The Omer Begins**

Having revealed himself to all present in the Upper Room he also ate with them and spoke of all that had happened during the past week and how the events had fulfilled the Torah and the Prophets. It was later that night he once again lead them out to the Mount of Olives, just as he had done the previous Tuesday evening following their last meal together. Only this time instead of being arrested, he withdrew into heaven, just as Luke says in 24:49-53 – “*Now I am sending forth upon you what my Father promised, so stay here in the city until you have been equipped with power from above.*” *He led them out toward Beit-Aniyah; then, raising his hands, he said a b’rakhah over them; and as he was blessing them, he withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven. They bowed in worship to him, then returned to Yerushalayim, overflowing with joy. And they spent all their time in the Temple courts, praising God.*

This all took place on the 18<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> day of Aviv and in accordance with Vayikra 23:15-16 where we are told:- “*From the day after the day of rest — that is, from the day you bring the sheaf for waving — you are to count seven full weeks, until the day after the seventh week; you are to count fifty days; and then you are to present a new grain offering to YHVH.*

Therefore, from the 18<sup>th</sup> of Aviv the count of fifty days begins, which brings us to Shavuot (Pentecost) the time when as Vayikra 23:16 says you are to present a new grain offering to YHVH. That command brings us to the end of the month of Aviv in the year 30 C.E. It also concludes the narrative given in the four Gospels and shows that all the events that took place during that month, when seen through the Scriptural Calendar, prove beyond all reasonable doubt that the firstly Yeshua is the Messiah as he claimed to be and secondly that he fulfilled all three spring Moedim of YHVH as foretold through both the Torah and the Prophets.

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March 2015