

Count to Pentecost I

Hebrew/Greek Word Study of Sabbath, Week, Weeks

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Before we get into counting, Bill Dankenbring says this:

When it says that, ‘...on the morrow after the Sabbath shall the priest wave it’ (Lev. 23:11), it is obvious that that means the day after the first Holy Day, because of the context.

Leviticus 23:11 (KJV): “And he shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted for you: **on the morrow after the Sabbath** the priest shall wave it.”

- Which day is the most obvious—if you use that kind of reasoning—that it’s referring to? *The seventh day!*
- Why? *It was mentioned last!*

It is not obvious at all that it refers to the first day. It’s not obvious to me.

You have a little sleight of hand, because you stop here and you go to the New Testament, John 19, and what does it say about the day of the preparation of the Passover that the Jews had and they didn’t want the bodies on the cross because the next day was the High Day, a High Sabbath. The Greek is ‘megale sabbato,’ which means *a great day*. Then Dankenbring says:

See, that proves that that is the Sabbath and that’s the one that this is referring to, because in John 19, that’s what it says.

Oh! *new truth!* He hasn’t proved a thing. There is no inherent proof in it to come to that conclusion. If you study God’s Word enough and think with God’s Word, then what you’re going to do is be able to have a firm foundation and basis on which to make a conclusion. Then what happens is, Dankenbring goes to a lexicon and says that:

The word ‘shabbat,’ which is right here in Lev. 23:11, which means *Sabbath*, can also mean *week*.

However, the word ‘shabbat’ has *never* been translated *week*. The word *week* in Deut. 16, is ‘shbouth,’ which is everywhere translated *week*.

So, you have a problem. Technically you could say that you could call the Sabbath *week*, but here it is ‘Shabbat’ and that’s the same word that is used in

Leviticus 23:3: “Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day *is* the Sabbath of rest...to the LORD in all your dwellings.”

1. Dankenbring’s reasoning to say that it is obvious that the Sabbath, ‘shabbat’, refers

to the first Holy Day in the context of Lev. 23, does not say the first Holy Day is a ‘shabbat.’

It says Leviticus 23:7: “...a **Holy convocation**. You shall not *do any servile work therein*,” because he could do whatever work that’s necessary for the Feast, no problem.

2. On the ‘shabbat,’ the Sabbath, it says, “...You shall not do any work...” (v 3).

It talks about waving the sheaf, and so forth, v 15: “And **you shall count to you beginning with the next day after the Sabbath**, beginning with the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven Sabbaths shall be complete. Even unto the day after the seventh Sabbath you shall number fifty days. And you shall offer a new grain offering to the LORD” (vs 15-16). The word, ‘to count from,’ comes from the Hebrew: ‘m-mchrth’ meaning *beginning with*.

I know exactly how we can prove this with your job. If you have the reasoning that it is *exclusive* counting, you go in to your boss and he gives you the check. You look at it and you say, ‘I’m only paid for 32 hours but I worked 40.’ He says, ‘Well, no. You worked *from* Monday to Friday. We don’t count Monday, because it’s *from*.’ Even in English, *from* is *inclusive* when you are talking of time. You worked *from* Monday to Friday, which means that you worked Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday: five days. It’s the same way here. When you count ‘from the morrow **after** the Sabbath,’ it doesn’t say the first Holy Day. It does say Sabbath.

There is nothing inherent in what is said here that in any way means the first Holy Day. If there’s anything inherent here, that you want to draw a conclusion that it would mean one of the Holy Days, it could only mean the last Holy Day, not the first one. The reason is that if you look at the context here, and you say:

- there is the first Holy Day (v 7)
- there is the 7th day, a Holy convocation (v 8)
- if you say that the Sabbath (v 11) has got to logically, because of the context, flow from the 1st Holy Day

That logic is not correct, because the Sabbath here, if that is the case, would have to logically refer to the seventh day, not the first day. In other words, in the context here, if you read it along, it says: ‘the first Holy Day is a Holy convocation’

and ‘the seventh day is a Holy convocation.’ Now, we talk about the Wave Sheaf Offering and in your mind you don’t know which day this is referring to, because it says:

Verse 11: “...On the next day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it.” Someone comes along and says, ‘Aha! It is obvious from that context that, that means, not the regular Sabbath during the Days of Unleavened Bread, not the seventh day of Unleavened Bread, but it’s got to logically mean, the first day of Unleavened Bread because of the context.’

That’s what William Dankenbring says. Maybe you missed his logic there. His logic has a slip in it, and the slip is this: The first day (v 7) is followed by the seventh day (v 8), which is followed by v 11. So, there is no logical connection back to the first day. The logical connection in the context would be to the seventh day *if* this were the Sabbath, as referring to a Holy Day. He says that it logically refers back to the first day.

Even though some people don’t like all these technicalities and we’re recycling a lot of different things that have been recycled long ago, that we need to get into these technicalities and we need to understand them, especially when it says, ‘beware of false prophets.’ Which ones do we have to beware of? *We’re not going to be deceived by:*

- Lord Maitreya
- the pope
- the chief rabbi
- the Catholic priest
- the Protestants

Who would more likely deceive us than anybody else? ***Someone who has been in the Church of God for a long time!*** That would be the most dangerous.

Nowhere has ‘shabbat’ been translated in the *King James* as *week*. When you go to Deut. 16 it has a little problem with Pentecost, too. Do you know what the little problem with Pentecost is in Deut. 16? It’s not where you begin to count from the time you put the sickle to the corn, that’s not the problem. There are two distinct things here that have to be adjusted by Lev. 23:

1. there is no beginning day and there is no ending day definitively stated
2. it does not tell you 50 days

That means in Deut. 16, though it’s informative, though it does say seven weeks, you cannot establish doctrine on this, because it is not definitive.

Deuteronomy 16:9: “You shall count seven weeks to yourselves. Begin to count the seven weeks from the time you *first* began to *put* the sickle to the grain.” It doesn’t tell us which day. In Lev. 23 (*KJV*)

it says, ‘...On the morrow after the Sabbath...’ Now you’ve got a definitive place to start once you understand what that Sabbath is.

Verse 10: “And you shall keep the Feast of Weeks to the LORD your God according to the sufficiency of a freewill offering from your hand, which you shall give according as the LORD your God has blessed you.” It doesn’t tell you the exact day to begin and it doesn’t tell you the exact day to end the Feast of Weeks. You shall keep the Feast of Weeks. It says, ‘seven weeks.’

Even in the Hebrew Interlinear it is translated, and also in the Hebrew, you’re kind of stuck with ‘week,’ because it means a *full week*. That is understood in relationship to a month.

- What is a full month? *Thirty days!*
- What is a deficient month? *Twenty-nine days!*

So when it says a complete week, which it does here in the Hebrew, it doesn’t mean that you start in the middle of one week and you come to the middle of another week. Though it is seven days that seven is not a week, because a week runs from one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, a complete week from day one to day seven. It doesn’t mean that you start on day three in one week and you end up on day two for your seven days in the next week. These are deficient or incomplete weeks.

If you ask someone to work for you for the week of the 17th—which this month is on Sunday—you would know that that’s a complete week. If you said, ‘I want you to work for me from the 20th to the 27th you would have to say, ‘That’s part of one week and part of another week and I can’t do the full week. I can do a full week, but I can’t do two parts of a week.’ Even on today’s calendar that would be the case.

So, when it says here, ‘on the Sabbath,’ and it is ‘shabbat,’ it does mean *the weekly Sabbath*. Just from the context, there is no other thing you can conclude from it, because it’s not clear whether it’s the first Holy Day—by the way, it does not call it a Sabbath in the context—and it’s not clear that it’s the seventh Holy Day, and it’s also not called a Sabbath in the context. The Sabbath—‘shabbat’—has got to be the weekly Sabbath as it falls during this time.

Leviticus 23:15: “And **you shall count** to you beginning with the next day **after** the Sabbath, beginning with the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering; **seven Sabbaths shall be complete.**” Now, you could make that *weeks*, but if you do it is a complete week, which means that **you do have to start on the day after the Sabbath** if you

translate that *weeks*. You can't have a deficient week.

Verse 16: "Even unto the day after the seventh Sabbath... ['shabbat'] ...you shall number fifty days..." If it were fixed during the day like the 6th of Sivan, as it is today with the Jews, how would God express it? *He would say the 6th of Sivan, because you would have the exact day!* It would never change and there would be no need to count. Why would you count the weeks?

Then, Bill Dankenbring uses the analogy that 'it's just like people counting down to Christmas today'—of all analogies to use! The true logic is that if you're going to denounce a pagan day and try and get away from it, why use the analogy of people counting down to Christmas if that's a pagan day? It becomes really terrible.

What I have done since Bill Dankenbring said that in the *Septuagint* it says 'the first day.' There are also some people who say that the first day in the *Septuagint* means, 'beginning with the first day of the week.' So, I've read it and that's a possibility.

from the *Septuagint*:

Leviticus 23:8: "...The seventh shall be a Holy convocation, you shall do no servile work.' And the Lord spoke to Moses saying, 'Speak to the children of Israel and say to them, "When you enter into the land which I give you and reap the harvest thereof, you shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest and he shall lift up the sheaf before the Lord to be accepted for you on the morrow after the first day the priest shall lift it up'" (vs 8-11).

Sorry, but that is not in the Hebrew, but it is in the *Septuagint*.

Now, you see why it's important to know a little bit about the background of the *Septuagint*, because you can say, 'Was that added in at a later time?' *It's possible that it was!* You can't say it was and you can't say it wasn't, but it's possible that it could have been, especially when you understand that the Jews also had a temple in Egypt, in Elephantine. Guess what? *They worshipped all the sun gods!* They had all the pagan things, but they kept the Feast of Unleavened Bread and they kept the Passover, but they calculated time from sunrise to sunrise. So, you have part of this influence in here. It does say 'the first day,' but sorry, that is not in the Hebrew.

Verse 12: "And you shall offer on the day which you bring the sheaf, a lamb without blemish of the first year for a whole burnt

offering to the Lord and it's meal offering, two-tenths meal...You shall not eat bread or new parched corn this day until you offer the sacrifice to the Lord...perpetual statute...And you shall number to yourselves from the day after the Sabbath... (vs 12-15)

In this case it didn't say 'first day.' This leads me to believe that—it's telling me internal evidence—that maybe it was tampered with up there in v 11 and left alone down here in v 15.

...from the day in which you shall offer the sheaf of the heave offering, **seven full weeks**" (v 15).

Full weeks! What does this tell me? *This tells me that someone put in 'first day' in there sometime at a later date!* I cannot be guaranteed that that *Septuagint* is correct.

Another thing, when you look into the Greek, the word is, 'ton sabbaton,' which is an interesting thing.

(go to the next track)

Let's go to the New Testament and see where the phrase, 'ton sabbaton' is used. You won't find it in your Bible so I'll have to tell you about it. You will find it in the English, but you won't find the Greek that I'm going to tell you about.

I want to emphasize the thing where it says, and it's translated *complete weeks*. You have *from the Sabbath*, then you have *complete weeks* and you count 50 days. Even from the *Septuagint*, if you bypass that one little phrase which says, 'the first day'—which does not agree with the rest of the context—you can't have a complete week if the first day happens to fall on Tuesday, like it did this year. The first Holy Day was on a Tuesday, so the day after the first Holy Day would be a Wednesday and you can't have a complete week. There are some inconsistencies even in the *Septuagint*. The reason I'm covering that is so that if someone comes to you and says, 'Oh, look! Read this. This makes sense.' Then you will know what it's talking about before you even get into it.

The Greek 'ton sabbaton' is an unusual translation of a plural, *the Sabbaths*. It literally means *the Sabbaths*—plural.

Luke 4:16: "And He [Jesus] came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and according to His custom, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath Day..."

Here's where knowing the Greek helps you a little bit. A literal translation of this, which you can see in a Greek Interlinear, means: '...and on the day of the Sabbaths...' From that, many conclude that it

was Pentecost. If you are to count seven full Sabbaths, then you have ‘the day of the Sabbaths.’ It’s interesting the way it is. Let’s clarify:

- ‘ton sabbaton’ means **Sabbaths**
- ‘to sabbato’ means **the Sabbath**
- ‘sabbatou’ means, **a Sabbath**
- ‘mias sabbatin’ **on one of the Sabbaths**

It’s a plural on *the Sabbaths*, but a little different, not a specific Sabbath. Where this is ‘on the day of ton sabbaton,’ could be literally translated, *on the day of the Sabbaths*, referring to after having counted seven Sabbaths—‘ton sabbaton.’

When we come to Acts 13, this is on one of their trips; they come through Paphos, Perga, and Pamphylia and John went back to Jerusalem.

Acts 13:14: “Now, after passing through from Perga, they came to Antioch of Pisidia; and they went into the synagogue on the Sabbath Day...” That can mean, ‘...on the day of the Sabbaths,’ being Pentecost, He was there, because the ordinary Sabbath is ‘to sabbato,’ *the Sabbath*. ‘mias sabbatin,’ *on one of the Sabbaths*, Jesus entered into the synagogue and healed. They didn’t say a specific Sabbath.

So, when this says, ‘...hemera ton sabbaton,’ which is exactly what you’re reading there, it can be literally translated, *and on the day of the Sabbaths* or *the day of the weeks*. The sum of the conclusion is that if you didn’t understand the Greek, you could easily be confused. You can only come to one conclusion with it in the plural. There is only one exception of that, which I’ll point out to you a little later in the book of Acts.

You can probably find in commentaries that they would say that this had to be Pentecost. Why would they come to that conclusion? ‘The day of the Sabbaths’ has got to be something different than ‘to sabbato, back there where it say that He has to be such and such a place and Pentecost is the Greek ‘pentekonta,’ which literally means *the fiftieth*.

Now that you’ve labored through that and maybe get just a little understanding of it, now we’ll be able to progress. Obviously, it something that you can’t necessarily go ahead and maybe completely understand the first time thorough. What I’m trying to do is to help you enough so you can see that there is a difference in the expression. Generally speaking, when there’s a difference in the expression, it does mean something different.

In other words, if you’re going to follow consistently through on the Greek, ‘ton sabbaton’ means plural, *Sabbaths*. It means more than one, or if it were ‘to sabbatou’ or if it were *of the Sabbath*, it would be ‘to sabbato.’ It would be a little different.

How could translators easily gloss over something like that? *I would say it is because that was not necessarily an important part of the doctrine for them!* Even the translators are coming from a doctrinal position. For example: Where they translated ‘grace,’ they were very good in translating it because that was their doctrinal position. You have to understand that, too. In other words, all I’m saying in this, is that this gives us very clear indication that there’s more to it than meets the eye. What is it that there’s more to it that doesn’t ‘meet the eye,’ just in the *King James*? I’ll try and point out some things as we go along to help along those lines.

The *New American Standard Version*, which reads in Leviticus 23:9: “Then the Lord spoke to Moses saying, ‘Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, “When you enter the land which I’m going to give you and reap its harvest, then you shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest and he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord for you to be accepted on the day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it. And on the day when you shall wave the sheaf, you shall offer a male lamb one year old without defect...””(vs 9-12).

Verse 15 (NASV): “You shall also count for yourselves from the day after the Sabbath from the day when you brought in the sheaf of the wave offering, there shall be seven complete Sabbaths.” That’s a good way of doing it—seven—which shows that ‘shabbat,’ the Hebrew for Sabbath, has not been translated *weeks*, in any case here.

Verse 16: (NASV): “...And you shall count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath, then you shall bring a new grain offering.” Now you see where you can easily get the term in the Greek, ‘ton sabbaton.’ That’s why when I read in the *Septuagint*, ‘ton sabbaton’ it rang some bells. Let me show you why.

I would like to say I would be happy to announce that I would be glad to say that I have an ironclad case for ‘ton sabbaton.’ *I don’t!* I have nearly an ironclad case. There’s only one exception to it.

Matthew 28:1: “Now, late on the Sabbath, as **the first day of the weeks** was drawing near...”—‘sabbaton.’ That doesn’t prove anything of itself, but it’s the *first of the week*.

When we come to Mark 16 we find something that is also interesting. That could be literally translated ‘*and on the first of the weeks*’ (Matt. 28:1). What is interesting in Mark is that it says:

Mark 16:1: “Now, when **the Sabbath** had passed...” The Greek here, is ‘to sabbato,’ a singular

word, not ‘ton sabbaton,’ a plural word. Then when we come to the next place, it says:

Verse 2: (KJV): “And very early on the first *day* of the weeks...”—*or* ‘on the first of the Sabbaths.’ Still, that is not really conclusive, but isn’t it interesting on which day that names it? We obviously know if we understand chronology in the Bible.

Luke 23:54: “Now, it was *a* preparation day, and **a Sabbath** was coming on”—singular Sabbath.

Verse 56: “And they returned *to the city*, and prepared spices and ointments, and *then* rested on **the Sabbath** according to the commandment”—singular Sabbath.

Luke 24:1: “Now, on the first *day* of the **weeks**...”—‘ton sabbaton’—which would be the very first day of the seven weeks, a literal translation.

In the situation with Matthew, Mark and Luke—‘on the first of the weeks.’ It’s interesting that right there in Luke 24, you have the differentiation between a single ‘to sabbatou’ and ‘to sabbatou’ and the difference between ‘ton sabbaton’—the long ‘o.’ You could say, ‘the first day of the weeks.’ That helps us understand and count the Sabbaths, or count the weeks. That does establish it on *the first of the week*, but why is it in the plural?

Does that mean that it is the first day of those weeks that we are to count to Pentecost? It’s possible, but you cannot dogmatically say so. The reason that you can’t dogmatically say so, is because I’ll show you the only place in the New Testament where ‘ton sabbaton’ does not referred to that exact same day, right after the Sabbath. It refers to a time after **a** Sabbath, which was *during the counting*, but it was after the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

If there were not that one place in Acts 20, then you could say dogmatically that this means that, but you can’t say dogmatically that it means that you’re counting beginning the first day of counting the weeks or the Sabbaths to Pentecost. There’s an indication that it is, just in the way the word is used. That’s all you can conclude from that.

That day we are talking about was in fact *the first day of the weeks*, not **the day of the weeks**, which is different, but *the first day of the weeks*. You do have an indication, yes. You do have that, but since there is an exception to that, you can’t say it absolutely dogmatically has to be, but you can’t cast it aside and say that it does not mean that.

I’m of the firm conviction that Greek becomes difficult to people who don’t know Greek, when someone’s trying to explain it and they make it

difficult. I find that if you can point out some things, you don’t have to be an expert in it, but at least you can see the difference. You can understand that there’s a difference. I see nothing wrong in trying to help a congregation understand it. Some people say, ‘you’re lay members; you’ve to be a scholar to understand.’ You don’t have to be a scholar to at least have a little understanding on it. I think it’s important to share that with the brethren rather than to say that this is what the Greek is. How do you know that’s what the Greek is?

John 20:1: “Now, on the first *day* of **the weeks**...”—*day* is not there. It’s understood. If it did have the word *day*—‘hemera’—then you would have something to say, and we can sink our teeth into this. It does mean ‘*the first day of the weeks*,’ but it doesn’t say it that way. You can go back and in John again, it shows the singular Sabbath (John 19).

Verse 19: “Afterwards, as evening was drawing near **that day**... [‘hemera ekeine’ meaning *on that day*] ...the first *day* of the weeks...”

It does give an indication that if you are **counting toward Pentecost**, that that would be ‘*the first day of the weeks*,’ when the Wave Sheaf Offering was waved.

All Scripture from *The Holy Bible In Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* (except where noted)

Scriptural References:

- 1) Leviticus 23:11, 3, 7, 3 15-16, 11
- 2) Deuteronomy 16:9-10
- 3) Leviticus 23:15-16, 8-15
- 4) Luke 4:16
- 5) Acts 13:14
- 6) Leviticus 23:9-12, 15-16
- 7) Matthew 28:1
- 8) Mark 16:1-2
- 9) Luke 23:54, 56
- 10) Luke 24:1
- 11) John 20:1, 19

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- John 19
- Acts 20

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