

The Mystery of the Omer

Counting *Revealed!*

The lessons taught by the "Counting of the Omer" have been glossed over by the end-time Churches of God. No wonder they possess no spiritual POWER at all! What is the secret way to spiritual power revealed in the counting of the Omer? How can you grow stronger spiritually, so that you will NEVER be deceived?

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"You shall then COUNT seven complete weeks after the day following the Passover holiday when you brought the Omer as a wave offering" (Lev.23:15).

"Sefirat Ha'Omer" -- counting the Omer -- refers to the forty-nine days from the second day of the Passover festival, and recounts the journey of the Israelites from Egypt, through the desert wastes, to the revelation of God at Mount Sinai, when the Commandments of God were set forth from heaven, and God made a Covenant with His people Israel, and "married" His bride.

This step-by-step journey through the wilderness was a time of trial and testing. God revealed to His people the Sabbath day (Exo.16), and satisfied their hunger with manna from heaven. When they complained of thirst, He caused water to spring forth. When the Amalekites attacked, He intervened for them and helped them fight off the vicious hordes (known as the Hyksos in Egyptian history).

Each day the Israelites are commanded to count the Omer, as they experienced their journey from captivity (Egypt) to freedom (Sinai). This daily count is associated with the experience of a toddler (the newly born Israelites, as it were) exploring and gaining understanding of his life's new environment (the wilderness) and the protective nature of his parent (God) who nurtures him, and provides structures and rules to safeguard him from evil.

This journey through the wilderness is a TYPE of the Christian life of overcoming -- from baptism and leaving sin behind (Egypt), marching and struggling through the spiritual wilderness (this evil world, and our human nature), until we reach the Kingdom of God -- Mount Zion.

Jewish psychologist Joel Ziff, in *Mirrors in Time: A Psycho-Spiritual Journey through the Jewish Year*, writes:

"The initial joy of liberation is fragile and impermanent, like the infatuation that marks the beginning of a romantic relationship. An infatuation become strained as differences and conflicts emerge. Pleasure that is complete and trustworthy comes only after a working

through of those differences. . . ." (p.90-91).

Joel Ziff continues:

"This theme is also reflected in the other archetypal symbols associated with this time of year: the fetus must emerge through the constriction of the birth canal, the seed is covered by the dirt and the shell must rot before it can sprout, and the metal is melted in the fire of the furnace before it can be purified.

"Liberation [spiritual growth in Christ] for each of us is a complex, lengthy process. We might initially feel exhilarated, as our ancestors did when they left Egypt; however, at this stage, life can be an emotional roller coaster. The liberation is not complete. New challenges and new difficulties are encountered. We must work through these problems. We need to identify and change old habits of coping that no longer serve us before we can stabilize ourselves in the new environment. *This is a painful process.* We are forced to give up what seems to be our very Essence [our human nature, and old habits]. Only later do we discover that we have surrendered the outer shell" (*ibid.*, p.91).

As we go through our Christian lives, we meet obstacles, encounter problems, face trials and difficulties. All these are reflected in the "counting of the Omer," a task which identifies with our progress in "overcoming" our sins, faults, and human nature, from the moment of conversion and baptism, until that final time when we are changed into spirit beings, the sons of the Father, and inherit the promises of the New Covenant, at the coming of the Messiah!

We encounter problems we need to "work through." We come upon "old habits" which must be rooted out and changed. We find out that life has its ups and downs, like a roller coaster. As we fight and struggle against our human nature, and the downward pulls of the flesh, we find it is a "painful process." Nevertheless, we endure to the end, we keep on keeping on, till that final day when victory shall be ours, and our triumph shall be complete -- when the "Omer" of our life's experiences has been "fully counted" and we reach that final day of "Pentecost," at the end of a "jubilee" period of overcoming -- the day when Revelation is complete, and the Plan of God is finished, and there is "time no more" -- and the Messiah appears from heaven to inaugurate the Messianic Age, taking us to Himself as His spiritual Bride (Rev.19:7).

Among the Jewish people, today, the standard formula for "counting the Omer" goes like this: For example, on the eighth day, the people would pray to God and say, "Today is the eighth day of the Omer, making one week and one day of the Omer." Or, "Today is the twenty-fifth day of the Omer, that is, making three weeks and four days of the Omer." In my own counting of the Omer, I add the following: "This means, there are forty-two more days till Shavuot (Pentecost)," or "There are twenty five more days till Shavuot" -- showing me, and reminding myself, how many days are left to count, till Pentecost, and the countdown ends! Thus we think back both where we have come from, and how much is left till we reach our destination! This gives us a sense of stability, and being, a sense of solidarity, knowing where we are -- where we fit, as it were -- in God's plan, as He is dealing with us.

It is a remarkable fact that there are "seven weeks" that we count the Omer. The word for "weeks" is *shavua* (see Deut.16:9). But in Leviticus 23:15, God inspired Moses to use the word for "sabbaths" which is *shabbatot*. Why the change -- the difference in wording? Evidently, God intends us to LEARN a LESSON from this! The word *shabbat* in Hebrew literally means

"a cessation from labor," "a rest." It is also the name for the seventh day of the week, and the name of each of the annual holy days -- all of which are "days of REST," and therefore qualify as *shabbatot*. But as we are to "count the Omer," then, seven times we come to a *shabbat*, that is, a "cessation from labor," meaning we have FULFILLED THAT "WEEK" of counting -- that week of "overcoming."

Why "seven" such periods in the Omer count-down (or, count-up)? What does the number "seven" refer to in this relationship? "Seven," of course, is the number of COMPLETION, of PERFECTION! It is God's number -- the number of complete perfection and fulfillment. How do these "seven" then, relate to the process of "counting the Omer"? We count each week, and then the number of days, remember. This is significant! Joel Ziff, in *Mirrors in Time*, points out that there is tremendous meaning behind this observance. He declares:

"According to Shneur Zalman [early 19th-century rabbi and leader of Chabad hasidism], each day of the barley offering has a *unique spiritual quality paralleling the learning* of the Israelites day-by-day on their journey from Egypt to Mount Sinai. Although God's Essence is unified, one can differentiate various types of SPIRITUAL ENERGY, each with unique and separate qualities. In the kabbalistic system, God's Presence is experienced through archetypal energies known as the *Sefirot*. There are ten *Sefirot*: Wisdom (*Chochma*), Understanding (*Binah*), Knowledge (*Da'at*), Loving-kindness (*Chesed*), Containing Strength (*Gevurah*), Mercifulness/Beauty (*Tiferet*), Power/Victory (*Netzach*), Presence/Glory (*Hod*), Energy/Foundation (*Yesod*), and Manifestation/Kingdom (*Malchut*). . . The first three *Sefirot* cannot be experienced" (p.94).

The last seven of these *Sefirot*, or Aspects of God's Presence, or God's Essence -- that is, the Seven aspects of God's Holy Spirit, are action-oriented manifestations of the Divine Nature of God. We will discuss these later. The first three, however, are internal aspects of the Divine Nature -- qualities God has and we ought to seek, with all our being -- that is, "Wisdom," "Understanding," and "Knowledge."

Notice how Solomon put this vital key in the book of Proverbs. He wrote, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of *knowledge*; but fools despise wisdom and instruction" (Prov.1:7). He added, "Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding . . . Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God. For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding" (Prov.2:3-6).

Again, Solomon exhorted us, "Get wisdom, get understanding: forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth. Forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee: love her, and she shall keep thee. *Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting, get understanding*" (Prov.4:5-7).

Knowledge represents the acquisition of factual data, amassing facts and statistics and making observations. Understanding builds upon knowledge, for it is the grasping of the facts, the essential understanding of the data and its meaning and relevance, awareness of the interrelationships between the data, or the bits of knowledge, seeing how they all fit together in the BIG PICTURE. But wisdom is the crown of all three of these attributes: Wisdom is the process and ability of taking this knowledge and understanding, and PUTTING IT TO USE -- the practical *application* of knowledge and understanding -- putting it to WORK in our lives!

With these three attributes as a basis, therefore, we now examine the *SEVEN SEFIROT* of God -- also called in Scripture "those seven: they are the eyes of the LORD, which run to and fro through the whole earth" (Zech.4:10). These are the attributes of the Messiah -- the Lamb of God. We read in the book of Revelation: "And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having SEVEN HORNS [complete power and authority] and SEVEN EYES, *which are the SEVEN SPIRITS OF GOD* sent forth into all the earth" (Rev.4:6). These seven "spirits" can refer to seven mighty angels, under the authority of the Lamb of God, who serve Him throughout the earth. These could also be the same as the "seven angels" responsible for the seven churches of God (the seven branches of His true Church). As we read: "The seven stars are the ANGELS of the seven churches" (Rev.1:20).

However, since the "seven eyes" are the "seven Spirits" of God, this phrase can also be a reference to SEVEN (COMPLETE) FACETS of the *Holy Spirit* -- that is, *SEVEN ATTRIBUTES OF DIVINE SPIRITUAL CHARACTER* -- the character of God Himself. These attributes identify Him as God; they identify His Holy Spirit. These "seven" or complete aspects of God, facets of His character, are like the seven facets of an incredible spiritual Diamond, shining, sparkling, dazzling in beauty. They comprise the totality of God's Character -- the very character we as His children are to be STRIVING to develop, and inculcate, into our very beings!

The SEVEN SEFIROT of God

Joel Ziff writes in his book *Mirrors in Time*:

"Shneur Zalman connects the barley offering to the *Sefirot* by referring to Ezekiel's vision, which is included in the reading from the Prophets on Shavuot. In this vision, the prophet experiences God's Presence with the appearance of a human figure riding on a chariot. On the sides of the chariot are four faces: a lion, an ox, an eagle, and a human

Since barley is the grain eaten traditionally by animals, the offering symbolizes nourishment of the 'animals' of the chariot, the 'animal soul' that is the material part of the self. Each of the figures symbolize one of the *Sefirot*. The face of the lion symbolizes *Chesed*; the face of the ox represents *Gevurah*; the eagle symbolizes *Tiferet*.

"During the forty-nine days of counting, we focus *each week* on one of the seven lower *Sefirot*. Each day, we focus on a particular aspect of that *Sefira*. Each of the seven *Sefirot* incorporates within itself an aspect of all the others. We can therefore meditate on the quality of *Chesed* in *Chesed*, *Tiferet* in *Chesed*, and so forth. . . .

"In the same way as a child comes to understand the abstract concept of number only through repeated counting of actual objects, we make sense of the abstract, archetypal spiritual energies in terms of our daily experience. Theoretical concepts can be understood only when they are grounded in real life. Step-by-step, we build understanding. *Spirit that is, by definition, incomprehensible and infinite becomes understandable by clarifying the various different parts. Each day, by counting, we consider ONE QUALITY OF SPIRIT, separating and differentiating into comprehensible pieces. Each day, we focus on a different ASPECT OF GOD'S ESSENCE and clarify how to make a personal connection to that quality*" (p.95).

You should carefully study and re-read the previous paragraphs. They contain a mountain of vital information on how we, as human beings, can develop step-by-step the very qualities of the Spirit Essence of Almighty GOD!

Each day, as we count the Omer, we should strive to integrate and internalize the qualities of God Himself in our own nature and character. In this way we become more and more like our Father and Jesus Christ in character. We become more and more "partakers of the divine nature" (II Pet.1:4). The apostle Paul wrote, "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be FORMED in you" (Gal.4:19). Paul also writes, "That ye put off concerning the former conduct the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be RENEWED in the *SPIRIT of your MIND*; and that ye put on the NEW MAN, which *after God [in God's likeness of character] is created in righteousness and true holiness*" (Eph.4:22-24).

This is a process which takes time. It requires change, suffering, pain, and endurance. It is not easy, like falling off a log into a stream. It requires strenuous, rugged effort -- like climbing a mountain, hiking up steep switch-backs, to the crest of a rugged peak. It requires sheer exertion and constant expenditure of energy to make forward progress.

Joel Ziff writes of this experience of change and growth to true maturity, in comparison with the Israelites' journey through the wilderness. He asserts:

"The Israelites did not go directly from Egypt to the revelation of God's Presence on Mount Sinai. They journey for forty-nine days. They wonder how they will sustain themselves. They need to understand and make sense of the new realities of life in different circumstances. They require time to interact with the world to achieve this understanding.

"The process of cognitive development occurs not only in childhood. As we struggle with new situations, we recapitulate the developmental process. Encountering a changed environment, we find ourselves disoriented and confused, lost in the desert. We do not know how to nourish ourselves. We do not quite know where we are going or how to get there. We may long to return to our old environment, to a world that is familiar. We find mentors and guides for ourselves. We learn through a process of TRIAL AND ERROR, STEP-BY-STEP. In time, we may experience moments of revelation, intuitive leaps in which our goals and methods for achieving those goals become clear" (p.98).

This process of spiritual growth and development is not one of steady regular progress, like a car operating under "cruise control." Not at all. It is more like a jerky, stop-and-go, rough ride, with fits and starts, progress for a while, then a rough patch is hit, or a wash-out on the road, and a "detour" must be navigated past the obstacle. Nevertheless, we continue onward, in faith, believing God's promises and His Word. Says Joel Ziff:

"The breath of life that emerges from the mouth of God differentiates into the various spiritual energies, the *Sefirot* that are associated with the seven weeks of counting. Breath cannot be seen or heard; however, differentiated into vowels, it can be perceived. God's Essence is beyond our perception, but the spiritual energies can be manifest and revealed. In the same way, we begin to differentiate the confusing, chaotic world around us into separate categories and objects" (p.99).

Differentiating the Spirit of God

There is much wisdom in the words we have read, and not a little understanding. Nevertheless, to really grasp the essential *Sefirot* (Aspects) of the Spirit of God, I have found it most helpful to allow the Word of God to delineate and differentiate these qualities for us. The seven (or nine) aspects of the Spirit of God are referred to as the "FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT," in the words of the apostle Paul. What are these qualities or characteristics?

Paul wrote to the brethren in Galatia, these plain and instructive words:

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections [or, "passions," marginal reading] and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also WALK in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another" (Galatians 5:22-26).

There are actually *nine* fruits of the Spirit listed here. But if we combine gentleness and meekness, which go together, and faith and self-control (temperance), then we have *seven* combinations of Divine Attributes -- the *Seven Sefirot* (Manifestations) of God!

Applying the Principles to Our Lives

Now let us apply these lessons to our own lives, in striving to build the character of God by working on building into our character the very attributes ("fruits") of God's Holy Spirit! This is something we can DO -- and FOCUS upon! It will not happen "automatically." You cannot set your life on "AUTO-PILOT" and expect to arrive at your spiritual destination. It behooves us to take control of our lives, and the throttle, and fly as if we were at any moment going to be ambushed by agents of Satan the devil. We must avoid storms as best we can, avoid the lightning, tornadoes which may come up in our flight path, avoid anti-aircraft fire, and enemy rockets, missiles, and aircraft. Coasting on "auto-pilot" would be a sure-fire short-cut to disaster and a crash-landing.

Joel Ziff writes again about the Passover to Shavuot, Counting-the-Omer principle:

"The days from Pesach to Shavuot, Sefirat Ha'Omer, serve as a bridge from the experience of redemption to the experience of revelation. We are pulled from slavery by miracles, by powers outside of ourselves. Changes in our lives -- both positive and negative -- pull us out of our habits, out of our constrictions. It may be a change in work life, relationships, health, a new stage in the life cycle. Then we begin to make sense, to try to understand what this means and how to deal with it."

We may face changes in our church relationships, as well. For many, perhaps their old church affiliation which they had much confidence in, began to erode, and change, and to embrace teachings and doctrines contrary to Scripture. These changes can become very upsetting, and detrimental -- depressing and discouraging. Some become angry, and throw the "book" away, and vow never to have anything to do with "religion" ever again! Others gravitate to this group or that one, depending on where they feel most "comfortable." Many slip back into

a state of somnolent lethargy and spiritual ennui -- boredom and listlessness. The "desert, wilderness wandering" experience for such people becomes lethal. They get off track, lose sight of the goal, and plunge over a cliff or become separated from those who are continuing on toward their destination across the desert!

What happens to such people? For many, maybe they never learned to "count the Omer." Therefore, they became "easy pickings" for Satan and his flock of vultures and scavengers, waiting with eyes peeled to prey on the members of the flock that stray into danger, and wander off, who become disoriented and confused. If they had learned the TRUTH about "overcoming," and mastering the flesh, and developing the attributes of God -- the lesson taught by "counting the Omer" -- then they might have avoided the dangers, the pitfalls, and desert illusions and perils.

How, then, can we truly develop our spiritual senses and the seven facets of God's perfect, righteous, character? Joel Ziff goes on to explain:

"During the days of counting, we use the archetypal images of the *Sefirot* as guides. Our job is *Tikkun* -- repair -- of the attributes. One of the qualities of an archetype is that it is ambiguous, can be defined in many different ways. Through *meditation, contemplation, and analysis*, we clarify the ways in which we might interpret each of the *Sefirot* negatively in ways which are not helpful and positively in ways that help us with our struggles.

"Each week is devoted to one of the seven *Sefirot*. For example, during the first week, the *Sefira* of *Chesed* [*loving-kindness*] is the focus. One might meditate on a variety of topics: What are my experiences of unconditional love? What are my definitions and beliefs about love? How have my life experiences affected my understanding and beliefs? What can I learn from the experiences of others about love? . . .

"Not only does each week have a unique focus; each day within the week also has a particular significance. Each of the *Sefirot* contain aspects of the others. For example, the first week is associated with the *Sefira* of *Chesed*. The days of the week are linked to the various *Sefirot* subsumed in *Chesed*: *Chesed* in *Chesed*, *Gevurah* in *Chesed*, *Tiferet* in *Chesed*, *Netzach* in *Chesed*, *Hod* in *Chesed*, *Yesod* in *Chesed*, and *Malchut* in *Chesed*" (p.103-104).

In the next section of this article, I am combining the Seven *Sefirot* of God, from the Old Testament studies of the kabbalists, with the New Testament revealed qualities of the Spirit of God. Notice how they work together in a spiritually synergistically powerful manner.

The Seven Sefirot and Fruits of the Spirit

Chesed -- loving-kindness. This is also known as *Ahavah* (love). This quality is associated with Abraham, the father of the faithful, who loved God so much he was willing to sacrifice Isaac, his true son, if God so required it. Abraham was also noted for his hospitality. This quality refers to unconditional acceptance and love of others -- out-going concern and care.

Love is also the first of the fruits of God's Holy Spirit! Love is the bedrock of the Law of God -- the first great commandment is to love God, and the second is to love our neighbor. "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not

grievous" (I John 5:3). "Love works no ill to his neighbor: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom.13:10).

Gevurah -- Strength. This quality is also known as *Yirah* -- awe or fear. This quality is connected with Isaac. It refers to strength that comes from containment, the power to contain and hold the energy of love. It is the power of inhibition, the power of discrimination and judgment that allows one to make wise, right choices. Isaac's name means "laughter."

Joy is the second fruit of the Spirit of God -- unbounded laughter and happiness. God's Word says, "The joy of the LORD is your *strength*" (Neh.8:10). Thus true joy is a source of strength -- *gevurah*. "Rejoice in the Lord always," Paul wrote; "and again I say, Rejoice. Let your moderation be known to all men" (Phil.4:4-5).

Tiferet -- Beauty. This quality is also known as *Rachamim* -- mercifulness. "It is also a symbol of PEACE because it represents the perfect BALANCING of the left and right sides, integrating love and containment . . . *Tiferet* is associated with Jacob" (Ziff, p.105).

Peace is the third attribute of God's Spirit! Jesus Christ said, "In me ye shall have peace" (John 16:33). "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not at the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27). Christ is not an "Indian-giver." That is, He doesn't give, and then take away again. Paul also wrote: "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil.4:7). Jacob was a man of peace. He was noted as a peace-maker. Peace involves and includes the quality of "mercifulness," and it is "beautiful" in God's sight.

Netzach -- Victory, Triumph. This begins the second triad (or division of three qualities) of the *Sefirot*. This quality is associated with Moses, who triumphantly led Israel out of Egypt "with a high hand." This quality translates *chesed*, *gevurah*, and *tefirat* into bold action and accomplishment with power, energy, planning, and activity.

Gentleness and *meekness* are two of the fruits of the Spirit of God which seem to fit together. These also are defining characteristics of Moses. Why did Moses achieve such *netzach* -- such victory and success? Because he was a man God could use and work with, a man to whom "success" would not "go to his head" and cause him to swell up like a puffed balloon. We read of Moses: "Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth" (Num.12:3). And David writes of the quality of gentleness, speaking of God Himself, "Thy gentleness hath made me great" (Psalm 18:35). He wrote, "It is God that girdeth me with strength, and maketh my way perfect" (Psa.18:32).

The apostle James tells us: "But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality [favoritism], and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace" (James 3:17-18).

Hod -- Glory. This is the quality that lights up a person's face, the inner strength that causes the face to "GLOW" with confidence, peacefulness, serenity, dignity, honor, and majesty.

It is associated with Aaron, the brother of Moses. Aaron was noted as a "peace" maker, and a man of honor. He was also noted for "unity." Sometimes he went too far in seeking to be a "peace-maker," as when he molded the golden calf for the rebellious Israelites. He sought to preserve the people in unity, so he fell into a spiritual trap. Nevertheless, he was a noteworthy man of God, and a man of wisdom and inner strength. God's word says of such a man, "Who is as the wise man? and who knoweth the interpretation of a thing? a man's wisdom maketh *his face to shine*, and the *BOLDNESS [strength] of his face shall be changed*" (Eccl.8:1). God also says, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in UNITY! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments" (Psa.133:1-2).

Goodness is the sixth fruit of the Spirit of God. This also was a strong quality in Aaron, and a quality we must strive to inculcate into our innermost character. David writes, "Good and upright is the LORD: therefore will he teach sinners in the way" (Psa.25:8). Jesus Christ declared, "A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things" (Matt.12:35). Paul wrote, "For we are his workmanship, *created unto GOOD WORKS*, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph.3:10). The apostle Peter adds, "For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: Let him eschew evil, and DO GOOD; let him seek peace, and ensue it. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil" (I Pet.3:10-12).

Yesod -- Foundation. This quality is the integration of both *netzach* and *hod*, and is the balance between power and presence. Joseph, the son of Jacob, became the prime minister of Egypt, and virtual ruler of the world, after suffering slavery as a teenager, and imprisonment for a crime he never committed. Yet after these harrowing trials he rose by God's miraculous deliverance to an exalted governmental position. He is the embodiment and epitome of this characteristic. Joseph by his suffering and continual growth and strength through contact with God, and His Spirit, became the foundation of the world, delivering the whole earth from the ravages of the most terrible famine mankind had seen up to that time. His wisdom and planning and spiritual strength provided a way to save his own family, and millions of others.

Longsuffering is the fourth fruit of the Spirit of God. Certainly, this characteristic was well-illustrated in the life of Joseph. Despite his trials and tests, tribulations and suffering, Joseph remained faithful to God and worshipped Him through it all. His long-suffering and patience and endurance in well-doing finally led to his exaltation to high office where he could serve in a much greater capacity. The apostle Paul wrote: "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For *ye have need of PATIENCE*, that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry" (Heb.10:35-37). James added, "My brethren, count it all *joy* when ye fall into divers temptations [trials, sufferings]; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh *patience*. But let *patience* have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing" (James 1:2-4).

Connected with this trait is the quality of "self control" -- self mastery -- which is also one of the fruits of God's Holy Spirit. Self-control and long-suffering go together like grits and

eggs. They are two aspects of the same quality -- *endurance* -- and constitute a "foundation" for true achievement!

Malchut -- Kingdom. This quality represents manifestation, the translation of energy into action and activity -- and means literally "KINGDOM." *Malchut* is associated with the *Shekinah* -- the "Presence" -- of God. King David is connected to this *Sefira* as he is the one whom God used to bring the Kingdom of God to fruition and accomplishment *as a type*, in his day. He was himself a *type* of the Messianic King, Yeshua -- and the promised Messiah was to be born of his descendants, of his royal lineage.

Faith is the remaining fruit of God's Spirit, as explained in Galatians 5:22-23. David was a man of faith -- and faithfulness. He learned to control himself, his emotions and desires, and to trust God and depend on Him, rather than do the "expedient" thing, and take action himself to bring about the Kingdom of God. He waited patiently, until God's anointed king, Saul, was killed in battle. David would not attack or slay Saul himself, but rather allowed him to live on several occasions when he could have killed him. But David was loyal to the office of the king; and he would not take matters into his own hands, but trusted God and waited for Him to act. And his faith was rewarded greatly!

Faith is a key characteristic of the character of God -- the *Sefirot* energy of the Spirit of the Most High. How important is faith in our lives? Paul wrote, "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Heb.11:6). Paul also wrote, "Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul" (Heb.10:38-39). The apostle Peter wrote, "Who are kept by the power of God *through faith unto salvation* ready to be revealed in *the last time [our day TODAY!]*: Wherein ye *greatly rejoice*, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations [trials]: That the *trial of your faith*, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love: in whom, though now ye see him not, yet *believing*, ye rejoice with *joy unspeakable and full of glory*: Receiving the *end [purpose, goal] of your faith*, even the salvation of your souls" (I Pet.1:5-9).

These powerful Seven *Sefirot* of God -- these SEVEN manifestations of the Holy Spirit -- are mighty vehicles to spiritual growth and becoming Godlike. If we will meditate on these attributes of God, and ponder them, and reflect upon them, and study them in the Scriptures, and spend time thinking about them, and considering HOW we might express them more fully and completely in our own daily lives -- these divine spiritual energies will provide us a powerful tool to use to become the true SONS OF GOD in actual spiritual image and character likeness.

7 X 7 -- The 49 Steps to Salvation

The "counting of the Omer" from Pesach (Passover) to Shavuot (Pentecost) is a process -- a daily task -- that reflects like a mirror our spiritual lives. If we are not counting the Omer as

God tells us to do, it is reflective of the fact that we are not overcoming sin and temptations and distractions in our lives. If we fail to count one day, but repent, and begin counting from that time, then God forgives us, and we go onward and forward. But it is better if we are faithful from beginning to end.

The Omer count is a reflection of our spirituality. Are we developing the attributes of God and His Spirit in our lives? Are we growing daily, constantly, in love -- joy -- peace -- longsuffering (patience) -- gentleness -- goodness -- faith -- meekness -- moderation (self control)?

Each day of the forty-nine day Omer count is like a building block to salvation. It is a tool to develop and grow in spiritual maturity, so that we are ready when Christ comes, so that we will be a pure and perfect "Bride" for the KING of the Universe!

Think about such a high calling! Are you faithfully "counting the Omer"?

Even more, the Omer count is a pattern -- a template -- to TEACH us what we should be doing *EVERY DAY OF OUR LIVES -- "COUNTING THE OMER" AND DEVELOPING THE TRAITS OF GOD'S HOLY SPIRIT IN OUR LIVES -- EVERY DAY -- DAY-BY-DAY -- TILL THE MESSIAH, JESUS CHRIST, RETURNS FOR HIS BRIDE!*

Each and every day should be an "Omer count" day in our journey to spiritual perfection. Each day we should "number the days," and "count the days," as we journey onward and upward to that thrilling time when Jesus Christ will come again, bringing the Kingdom of God with Him!

The "Omer count" then is a physical "type" or typology of a spiritual reality -- the Christian life process. It represents the spiritual journey -- the Odyssey -- of our lives, as we go through the wilderness, overcome obstacles, and root out the negative attributes of the flesh, and develop and strengthen the positive manifestations of God's Spirit in our lives. We are on a great spiritual Quest. Each day counts. Each week is significant. Every month is a palpable unit of time which ought to be devoted to overcoming, growing, and strengthening the Spirit of God within us. Every year brings us that much closer to MESSIAH!

Are you busy "counting the Omer" in your own life -- till Christ returns?