

DAY FOUR

“THE LORD AND HIS CREATED WONDERS”

PSALM 119:25-32

This morning while considering the Counting of the Omer, I was once again prompted to imagine the priests of Israel on the Temple Mount lifting up the *minchah* (מִנְחָה), or grain offering, before the Lord (cf. Leviticus 2:1-3).¹

For whatever reasons, picturing this process in my mind has allowed me to Count the Omer with joy and anticipation. But before commenting on today’s verses and some other thoughts, let me first direct your attention to read them:

PSALM 67:1-7

For the choir director; with stringed instruments. A Psalm. A Song. God be gracious to us and bless us, *and* cause His face to shine upon us—Selah. That Your way may be known on the earth, Your salvation among all nations. Let the peoples praise You, O God; let all the peoples praise You. Let the nations be glad and sing for joy; for You will judge the peoples with uprightness and guide the nations on the earth. Selah. Let the peoples praise You, O God; let all the peoples praise You. The earth has yielded its produce; God, our God, blesses us. God blesses us, that all the ends of the earth may fear Him.

PSALM 119:25-32

My soul cleaves to the dust; revive me according to Your word. I have told of my ways, and You have answered me; teach me Your statutes. Make me understand the way of Your precepts, so I will meditate on Your wonders. My soul weeps because of grief; strengthen me according to Your word. Remove the false way from me, and graciously grant me Your law. I have chosen the faithful way; I have placed Your ordinances *before me*. I cling to Your testimonies; O LORD, do not put me to shame! I shall run the way of Your commandments, for You will enlarge my heart.

¹ “Now when anyone presents a grain offering as an offering to the LORD, his offering shall be of fine flour, and he shall pour oil on it and put frankincense on it. He shall then bring it to Aaron's sons the priests; and shall take from it his handful of its fine flour and of its oil with all of its frankincense. And the priest shall offer *it* up in smoke *as* its memorial portion on the altar, an offering by fire of a soothing aroma to the LORD. The remainder of the grain offering belongs to Aaron and his sons: a thing most holy, of the offerings to the LORD by fire” (Leviticus 2:1-3).

COUNTING THE OMER

Perhaps one of the most incredible things, about following the commandments of the Lord, is the blessing we each personally receive as a result of our obedience. Just taking the time to meditate upon the above verses and to Count the Omer has already, in these short four days, allowed me to learn so much more about my Creator and His love for me!

I can remember, in years past, when I followed a discipline to read through the Book of Proverbs each month, with one proverb corresponding to each day of the month. I can also recall following a Bible study that was designed to have a person read through the complete Bible in a year. In recalling each of these, and other similar programs that have been developed over the years by godly people, to encourage a consistent daily study of God's Word—I **now am reminded of just how beneficial those tasks were to nurturing my soul.** You may have gone through a similar regimen.

But now that I am following the command of the Lord to Count the Omer, the personal revelation that I believe He is giving me is beyond my greatest expectation! For the first time in my life, I am focusing on the daily offering, and being prompted by this discipline, I am discovering more about my relationship with my Heavenly Father and Creator. It has been easy to already conclude that He loves me so much that He simply wants me to know Him better, so that our intimate fellowship can flourish. Just this thought *alone* should inspire you to obedience to His ways!

Years ago, when I first studied and learned about the evening and morning oblation, I was taught that in Ancient Israel, the priests would typically recite a Psalm of David. This would affirm how the Earth and its fullness were the Lord's:

“A Psalm of David. **The earth is the LORD's, and all it contains, the world, and those who dwell in it.** For He has founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers. Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD? And who may stand in His holy place? **He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul to falsehood and has not sworn deceitfully.** He shall receive a blessing from the LORD and righteousness from the God of his salvation. This is the generation of those who seek Him, who seek Your face—even Jacob. Selah. Lift up your heads, O gates, and be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in! Who is the King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O gates, and lift *them* up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in! Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, He is the King of glory. Selah” (Psalm 24:1-10).

As I looked again today at these words, I was reminded of the sovereignty of our Creator and His dominion over Creation. He has provided greatly for us, with much provision and many joys to be taken advantage of, while we live on this Earth! I was also humbled by the reality of who can actually come into God's presence on His hill, or meet Him at the altar on the Temple Mount. Only those with clean hands and pure hearts, and who reject the ways of falsehood, are actually allowed to participate in the offering of sacrifices (Psalm 24:4). We surely need to make sure we are spiritually cleaned from sin, if we want Him to reveal more of who He is to us.

Is there anything that significant about the measurement of the *omer* (עֹמֶר)? It can seem somewhat stale in one's study of the Torah to simply find out that an *omer* is the equivalent of around 2.3 quarts or 2.2 liters. In the wilderness trek of Ancient Israel, we actually see that the people were to gather up an *omer* of manna each day for their daily sustenance:

“This is what the LORD has commanded, ‘Gather of it [manna] every man as much as he should eat; **you shall take an omer apiece** according to the number of persons each of you has in his tent” (Exodus 16:16).

For the Ancient Israelites, an *omer* was to be considered their “daily bread” (cf. Matthew 6:11; Luke 11:3). When the Lord supplied them with manna in the wilderness journey for forty years, it was to be something that was to teach them not only faith, but complete trust and reliance upon Him. The following thoughts offered by the *ArtScroll Chumash* on this are a bit illuminating:

“Moses instructed the people that every day’s portion was to be the same for everyone, an *omer*, a standard measure of the time, which is the volume of 43.2 average-sized eggs. The Torah implies that everyone was expected to eat the same amount... This, too, was part of the eternal lesson of faith, for otherwise it would be implausible that men, women, and children of all sizes and ages should eat the same quota of food every day. That lesson would be reinforced by the fact that manna could not be put away for another day; when individuals attempted to do so, it became spoiled overnight.”²

The Lord God was the Provider of Israel’s daily bread in the wilderness—and *He is also the Provider for our needs today*. He not only provides us with meat, vegetables, fruits, and many other nourishing and delectable things for people to eat and drink, but He has also created a world and a universe for us to truly marvel at! Looking at a specific verse from our selection today (Psalm 119:25-32), we can be reminded of just how important it is to reflect and meditate upon the Holy Scriptures. This one verse really seemed to ignite my spirit in my reflections this morning:

“Make me understand the way of Your precepts, so I will meditate on Your wonders”³ (Psalm 119:27).

As I considered the way of God’s precepts, and began to meditate on His wonders, the term rendered as “wonders,” the verb *pala* (פָּלַא),⁴ grabbed my attention. When Counting the Omer and recognizing the offerings that were made in the ancient Tabernacle and Temple, it is most appropriate to consider how our Creator provides daily bread and food through the many species of grains and other edible plants. In His creative genius, He is not only responsible for the variety of plants, but also for their increase and growth. Even something as seemingly simple as a sheaf of barley or grain of wheat, is an incredibly complex aspect our world that He has formed and given humans for their daily sustenance.

Upon further consideration of the term *pala*, I noted that it was used in yesterday’s meditation (Psalm 119:17-24). It is used in conjunction to the wonderful things the Lord teaches us from His Instruction:

“Open my eyes, that I may behold wonderful [*pala*] things from Your law”⁵ (Psalm 119:18).

As I pondered some of the “wonderful things” God presents us with from the Torah, and the remainder of the Holy Scriptures—the fact that He has been opening my eyes to the blessings associated with following the Torah instruction to Count the Omer began to excite me. For the first time in my life, I have been actually taking the time to follow a

² Nosson Scherman, ed., et. al., *The ArtScroll Chumash, Stone Edition*, 5th ed. (Brooklyn: Mesorah Publications, 2000), 387.

³ Heb. *v'asiychah b'nif'lotekyha* (וְאִשִּׁיחַהּ בְּנִפְלוֹתֶיךָ).

⁴ A Nifal (simple action, passive voice) verb meaning, “be surpassing, extraordinary” (*BDB*, 810).

⁵ Heb. *nifla'ot m'toratekha* (נִפְלוֹת מִתּוֹרַתְךָ); “the wonders of Your teaching” (*NJPS*).

COUNTING THE OMER

Torah command that for years has been overlooked. And now, in His rewarding way, He has allowed me to praise Him for not only His sustenance, but for the opportunity to spend some time reflecting on some of His wonders.

Perhaps for a few of you, focusing some attention on thinking about grain or oil or even animals, and how they played unique roles in the Levitical service of the Torah, does not excite you that much as it does me. Yet I am sure that there are wondrous aspects of God's Creation here on Planet Earth, or in the greater universe, that do excite you. When you think about something majestic such as Niagara Falls or the Grand Canyon, or something truly inspiring like a distant nebula or quasar—do you not just stand in awe of the One who made them?

Keep in mind that only by focusing some of our attention on God's Creation, and expelling great praise and thanksgiving to Him for the life He has given us—can we ever hope to understand the wonders, joys, and experiences of the world to come! Creationist Hugh Ross gives us the following observations to consider:

“Today, with a human population topping six billion, Earth still offers plentiful supplies. In fact, the universe and Earth seem lavishly over-endowed for humanity's survival. There is enough here for people to enjoy a magnificent environment, eat delightful food, spend quality time with others, access technology, and experience pleasure of all kinds—spiritual, intellectual, emotional, and physical. We easily could get by with less.....

“The first creation is ‘very good’ (Gen. 1:31). It's the best possible realm to encourage as many people as possible to choose something far better: an eternal relationship with the Source of all goodness. This creation also equips and trains individuals to receive the roles, rewards, pleasures, and relational fulfillments of the new creation. It's the best possible place to bring about, part of that preparation, a rapid conquest of anything less than perfect goodness, and that of course includes evil.”⁶

When we simply acknowledge our dependence upon the Eternal Creator for provision, the fact that we are taking the time to recognize His presence in our lives gives Him great pleasure. I truly believe He desires to give us more and more knowledge and understanding about His ways and what He has made for us to enjoy. This is what Moses tells the Israelites as he comes to the end of his life:

“The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law” (Deuteronomy 29:29).

How many “hidden things” (HCSB) might He reveal to those of us who are faithful to obey Him and seek His will for our lives? During the next forty-five days, will He reveal more about who He is and His wondrous ways? *What distinct lessons might you learn, as your relationship with our Heavenly Father is enhanced?* To just consider this possibility should be reason enough for us to continue to Count the Omer, as we approach the Feast of Weeks. For the Earth and its fullness are His (Psalm 24:1), and perhaps **He truly does have more wonders to share!**

⁶ Hugh Ross, *Why the Universe Is the Way It Is* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2008), pp 149, 185.