

DANIEL BERNHARDT



BEGINNING
OF THE BIBLICAL
YEAR



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D A N I E L B E R N H A R D T



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Introduction

Have you ever wondered if the Bible refers to or presents some kind of calendar? What cycle governed the religious activities of God's people? How were the units of time determined and measured? The Scripture makes reference to months, days and years among others. When does the year begin according to the Word of God? Does it begin according to our calendar? What determines its beginning and end?

Exodus 12:¹ And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, ²**This month *shall be* unto you the beginning of months: it *shall be* the first month of the year to you.**

Just before the exodus from Egypt, God pointed out to them that the month in which they were leaving was the beginning of months, and explained that it was the first of the months of the year. On the 14th day, between the two evenings, they would slaughter the lamb and in the evening they would eat of the lamb¹. They were to eat it in haste, with their loins girded and their shoes on their feet², and on that very day, the 15th³ day of the first month, God would bring them out of the land of Egypt⁴. The people of Israel would from then on keep this day as a memorial of the deliverance of God. Naturally, the question arises, and what is that first month?

Exodus 13:³ Then Moses said to the people, "**Commemorate this day, the day you came out of Egypt**, out of the land of slavery, because the Lord brought you out of it with a mighty hand. Eat

¹ Exodus 12:6-8

² Exodus 12:11

³ We need to keep in mind that the day begins at sunset (Genesis 1:3-5, 8, 13), and the lamb was to be slain on the 14th between the two evenings, and in the evening, that is on the following day, the 15th, they would leave Egypt.

⁴ Exodus 12:14, 16-17

nothing containing yeast. ⁴ **Today, in the month of Aviv, you are leaving.** NIV

The first month is called **of Aviv**⁵ (or Abib). In Hebrew, the word Abib is preceded by a definite article, “*ha*”, indicating specifically that it is the month **of the**⁶ Abib. It is the month in which Abib is or there is Abib.

Exodus 34:¹⁸The feast of unleavened bread shalt thou keep. Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, as I commanded thee, **in the time of the month Abib: for in the month Abib thou camest out from Egypt.**

The people of Israel went out in the month of Abib, on the fifteenth day of the first month of the year.

Deuteronomy 16:¹ Observe the month of Abib, and keep the passover unto the LORD thy God: **for in the month of Abib the LORD thy God brought thee forth out of Egypt by night.**

God brought His people out in the month of Abib when it was evening, that is, when the sun had not yet risen.

Abib

We wonder then, apart from being the first month of the year, what month specifically is the month of Abib? What does Abib mean? How does the Scriptures use and explain this word? Strong's dictionary defines it as follows:

⁵ <http://lexiconcordance.com/hebrew/9005.html>

⁶ Exodus 23:15

24. אָבִיב **'âbiyb**, *aw-beeb'*; from an unused root (mean. to *be tender*); *green*, i.e. a young *ear* of grain; hence the name of the month *Abib* or *Nisan*:—*Abib*, ear, green ears of corn.

The name of the month, *Abib*, comes from a root meaning tender, and *Abib* means green, referring to a young ear of grain.

Exodus 9:³¹ And **the flax and the barley was smitten: for the barley was in the ear**, and the flax *was* bolled. ³² But the wheat and the rye were not smitten: for they *were* not grown up.

In verse 31, speaking of the barley, the word *Abib* has been translated as "in the ear". We then see that this word denotes the state in which the barley grain is, that is when the plant has already formed an ear with the grain of barley. This verse also determines the sequence in the ripening and harvesting of the grains.

2 Samuel 21:⁹ ... they were put to death during **the first days of the harvest, just as the barley harvest was beginning**. NIV

The work of grain harvesting begins with the barley harvest. This is the first grain to be harvested. **The word *Abib* in the Scriptures, apart from indicating the month, is always in reference to barley, it is not**

Harvest sequence



Barley
1



Flax
2



Wheat
3



Rye
4

used for any other cereal. For flax another term is used, translated "bolled" (budding, in bloom), to emphasize the stage of its maturity. Once

the barley harvest has begun, then the flax harvest begins, and later the wheat and rye ripen and are harvested. This is the order in which the grains ripen and are harvested. We partially see this in the story of Ruth.

Ruth 2:²³ So she kept fast by the maidens of Boaz **to glean unto the end of barley harvest and of wheat harvest**; and dwelt with her mother in law.

This sequence in the harvest of the grains has a direct relevance in the celebration of the feasts. In the calendar established by God to meet with His people, the first feast is the Passover⁷, to be celebrated on the 14th day of the first month, Abib, to remember the protection by the blood of the Lamb from the destroyer⁸. This holy convocation is between two evenings, that is after noon as the sun descends over towards the horizon. From the 15th of Abib in the afternoon (i.e. from sunset at the end of the 14th), until the 21st of the same month, the feast of unleavened bread is celebrated⁹.

Leviticus 23: ¹⁰ Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then **ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest: ¹¹ 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. ... ¹⁴ And ye shall eat neither bread, nor parched corn, nor green ears, until the selfsame day** that ye have brought an offering unto your God: *it shall be* a statute for ever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.

During the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the day after the Sabbath, the sheaf of the first fruits of the harvest was waved¹⁰.

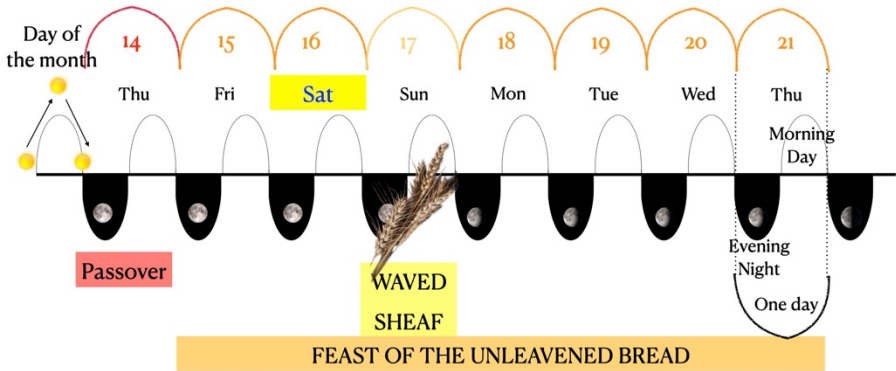
⁷ Leviticus 23:4-5

⁸ Exodus 12:23

⁹ Exodus 12:14-19; Leviticus 23:6-8

¹⁰ The days of the week varies from year to year, depending on the beginning of the month. This weekly sequence is for illustrative purposes only.

Month of Abib, the first month of the year



The waved sheaf, of what grain was it? What were the first-fruits of the beginning of the harvest? As we have seen¹¹, barley is the first grain to be harvested. Thus, it was barley that was waved before the Lord. This indicates that the fields had to be ready for harvest at the time this feast was kept, because if they were not ripe, the offering of the first-fruits could not be offered. If there was no ripe barley grain, there was no feast, and consequently no month of Abib or month of barley in the ear. Thus we see that the beginning of the year was directly linked to the feasts and these with the state of the barley grain. Neither the people of Israel would eat bread, nor roasted grain, nor fresh ear until the day in which the wave sheaf was offered. That is to say, the harvest, beginning with the first grain that ripened, the barley, could not be consumed until the day in which the first-fruits were offered in the wave sheaf. How was it to be offered? In what state did the grain have to be?

Leviticus 2:¹⁴ And if thou offer a meat offering of thy firstfruits unto the LORD, thou shalt offer for the meat offering of thy

¹¹ 2 Samuel 21:9

firstfruits **green ears of corn dried by the fire, even corn beaten out of full ears.**

In the first-fruits offering, which includes the sheaf, the grain's degree of maturity is detailed. The word translated as green ears is the word Abib in Hebrew. In this offering of the first-fruits, the barley had to be in green or fresh ears. The grain had to be able to be roasted and eaten, indicating a degree of maturity, not complete but initial.

Joshua 5:¹⁰ And the children of Israel encamped in Gilgal, **and kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the month at even** in the plains of Jericho. ¹¹ And **they did eat of the old corn of the land on the morrow after the passover, unleavened cakes, and parched corn in the selfsame day.** ¹² And the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the old corn of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year.

Abib then is a green barley grain that can be shattered in a hail plague¹², but at the same time by the third week of the month of Abib be a grain hard enough to be grounded, crumbled and made into flour and cook cakes with it, thus being fully ripe. In this way, the Abib status of the barley was evaluated without bias.

Exodus 34:²² And thou shalt observe **the feast of weeks, of the firstfruits of wheat harvest**, and the feast of ingathering at the year's end.

In the next feast presented to us, the feast of Weeks, the first-fruits of the wheat harvest were offered to the Lord. The feast is called the feast of Weeks because seven completed Sabbaths had to be counted in order to celebrate it.

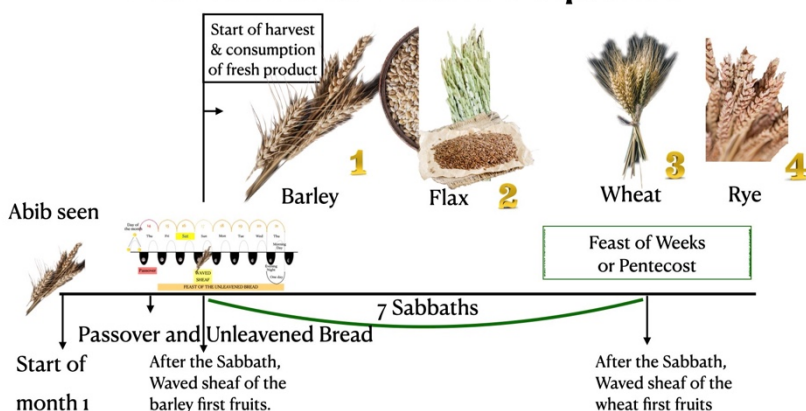
Leviticus 23:¹⁵ And **ye shall count** unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; **seven sabbaths shall be complete:** ¹⁶ **Even unto**

¹² Exodus 9:31

the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the LORD.¹⁷ Ye shall bring out of your habitations two wave loaves of two tenth deals: they shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven; *they are* the firstfruits unto the LORD.

Fifty days, or seven completed Sabbaths, after the Sabbath day¹³ that fell during the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the new grain of wheat was offered before the Lord. Bread and wheat flour were also offered as part of the first-fruits.

Harvest and Feasts Sequence



Deuteronomy 16:⁹ Seven weeks shalt thou number unto thee: **begin to number the seven weeks from *such time as thou beginnest to put the sickle to the corn.***¹⁰ And thou shalt keep the feast of weeks unto the LORD thy God with a tribute of a freewill offering of thine hand, which thou shalt give *unto the LORD thy God*, according as the LORD thy God hath blessed thee:

¹³ See Appendix C: The Count of the Omer for more detailed information.

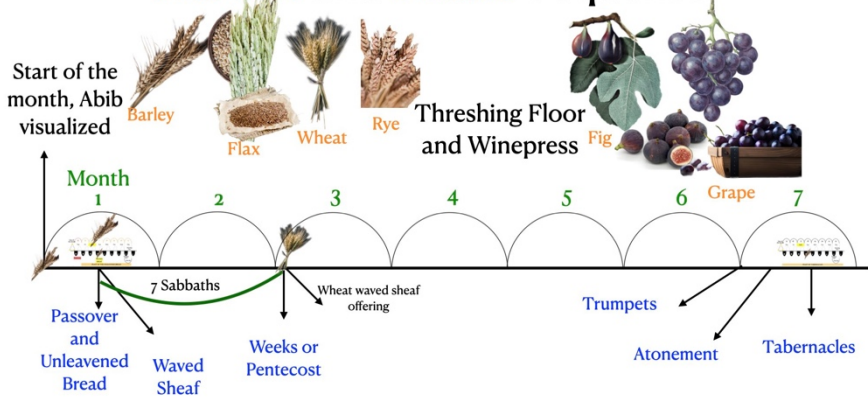
... ¹³Thou shalt observe the feast of tabernacles seven days, **after that thou hast gathered in thy corn and thy wine:**

When considering this verse in reference to the feast of Weeks, we notice that only after the offering of the first-fruits of barley was offered, did they begin to put the sickle into the harvest. That is to say, **before the wave sheaf offering in the first month, the harvest did not begin and the fresh grain was not consumed.** There were no harvesting or reaping tasks before the sheaf offering. It is in this context that the feast of Tabernacles is introduced, which occurs after the threshing floor and the winepress.

Exodus 23:¹⁴Three times thou shalt keep a feast unto me in the year. ¹⁵Thou shalt keep the feast of unleavened bread: (thou shalt eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded thee, **in the time appointed of the month Abib;** for in it thou camest out from Egypt: and none shall appear before me empty:) ¹⁶And **the feast of harvest, the firstfruits of thy labours,** which thou hast sown in the field: **and the feast of ingathering, which is in the end of the year, when thou hast gathered in thy labours out of the field.** ¹⁷Three times in the year all thy males shall appear before the Lord GOD.

These are the three great yearly celebrations in which every man and his family were to present themselves before the Lord. At the feast of Unleavened Bread, the first-fruits of barley were offered. At the feast of Harvest, or of Weeks, or Pentecost, the first-fruits of wheat were offered. In this feast, the gleaning of the first fruits of their labors was celebrated. Then, the feast of Ingathering at the end of the year, which is the feast of Tabernacles, was celebrated once the fruits of the labors of the field had been harvested, that is, once the process of harvesting grains and fruits was finished.

Harvest and Feasts Sequence



Thus, we see that these three annual gatherings are events that are determined by the harvest of agricultural work: grains (the threshing floor) and fruits, including of the vine (the winepress). Their celebration depended on the beginning of the year based on Abib. The barley had to be ready in order to present the wave sheaf. To celebrate Pentecost, the count of the seven Sabbaths could only be started once the barley first-fruits were offered in the wave sheaf. It was impossible to celebrate the feast of Weeks, and also that of the wave sheaf, without the presence of the grain in a state of Abib. Thus, we see that the first month of the year is called Abib because it is the month in which the grain of barley is in the ear. It is the month in which the barley grain is in a state of early maturity described as green ears and its grain is in a condition to be roasted, or ripe enough to be grounded and made into flour. And it is this that triggers the cycle of gatherings or feasts of the Lord, which are celebrated in their respective months. Without Abib, there are no feasts. Abib, apart from being the name of the first month, always appears in relation to

barley, there is no other connection in the Bible¹⁴. There is no reference of Abib with the season of spring as we know it.

Month

But we keep asking ourselves, when does the year begin? The first month of the year is called Abib because it declares the state of the barley. The barley has to be in the Abib state for the month to be called that way, that is, if there is no Abib, the year does not begin because the month cannot be called Abib.

Exodus 12:¹ And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, ²**This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you.**

Just before they left Egypt, God specifically indicates that month as being the first month of the year.

Numbers 9:¹ And the LORD spake unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, **in the first month** of the second year after they were come out of the land of Egypt, saying, ²**Let the children of Israel also keep the passover at his appointed season.** ³**In the fourteenth day of this month**, at even, ye shall keep it in his appointed season: according to all the rites of it, and according to all the ceremonies thereof, shall ye keep it.

The same thing happened at the beginning of the second year of their pilgrimage, God Himself told them of the beginning of the year. This would only be natural if we consider that they were wandering in the wilderness, where there was no barley growing. Once they enter in the land that God would give them, how would they know? We notice

¹⁴ Exodus 9:31; 13:4; 23:15; 34:18; Leviticus 2:14; Deuteronomy 16:1

that in Exodus 12:2, when Moses is told “this month”, he is specifically told that it is the beginning of the months. This means that “this month” is the beginning or start of each month, because of the meaning of the word *month*. What does month mean? How is the month determined? In this regard, the Strong's dictionary defines it as follows:

2320. חֹדֶשׁ **chôdesh**, *kho'-desh*; from 2318; the *new moon*; by impl. a *month*:—*month* (-ly), *new moon*.

We see that the word translated as “month” is moon, that is, the months are counted or calculated by the phases of the moon. The dictionary is also specific in mentioning the new moon. The implication that it is the new moon arises from the root of this word, which in the Strong's dictionary is #2318:

2318. חָדַשׁ **châdash**, *khaw-dash'*; a prim. root; to *be new*; caus. to *rebuild*:—renew, repair.

And we ask ourselves, when is the new moon? We see that the root meaning of the word month, or moon, is to be new and to rebuild, the latter in the sense of to renew, repair, restore. This, plus the evidence presented below, determines that it is the first visible ray of light from the moon. Then, the month begins when after its invisible dark phase the first visible ray of light is seen. It is impossible for it to be renewed if there is nothing new, and what is new is that on that day the moon is visible. The moon is new when it is first seen. As long as it does not appear, it is not renewed, it does not appear "new". Moses is told "this moon". How could it be pointed out when there is no moon? The verses¹⁵ where the root of the word moon is used

¹⁵ For instance: Psalms 51:¹⁰Create in me a clean heart, O God; And **renew** a right spirit within me.

Psalms 104:³⁰ Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created: And thou **renewest** the face of the earth.

Lamentations 5:²¹ Turn thou us unto thee, O LORD, and we shall be turned; **Renew** our days as of old.

imply that it is the beginning of a process. In that sense, the invisible dark phase of the moon is the end of a process, not the beginning. Added to this is the difficulty that it is common for there to be two consecutive days of the invisible dark phase of the moon, leaving it uncertain which of them would be the one marked for the beginning of the month¹⁶. The Gesenius dictionary¹⁷ defines the root word of the word moon as follows (Strong #2318).

שׁוּׁרָ in Kal not used, *to be new*, Aram. --- id. Arab. --- to be new, recent; IV, to produce something new; but Conj. III, IV, also *to polish* a sword. Perhaps the original idea is **to shine**, *to glitter*; comp. --- to be *pure*, holy.

The notion of a polished sword, and perhaps in that sense with the idea of shining or glittering given its new condition, is found in the translation of the following text:

2 Samuel 21:¹⁶ And Ishbi-benob, which *was* of the sons of the giant, the weight of whose spear *weighed* three hundred *shekels* of brass in weight, he being girded with a **new sword**, thought to have slain David.

The word translated as "new sword" is Strong's dictionary word #2319:

2319. שׁוּׁרָ **châdâsh**, *khaw-dawsh*´; from 2318; *new*:—fresh, new thing.

¹⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dark_moon

¹⁷ *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament, including the Biblical Chaldee*; from the Latin of William Gesenius, by Edward Robinson, Eighteenth Edition, 1865, página 297 y 298.

<https://archive.org/details/hebrewenglishlex00geserich/page/296/mode/2up>

This word also has as its root in the same word that the word translated as month or moon has. In that sense, it is not difficult to imagine the connection between a new or glittering sword and the new moon.



But, apart from the linguistic side of the words, we find the following verse:

Deuteronomy 16:¹ **Observe the month of Abib**, and keep the passover unto the LORD thy God: for in the month of Abib the LORD thy God brought thee forth out of Egypt by night.

The word “observe”¹⁸ in Hebrew, besides the meaning of “to behold or look narrowly”, can be translated as to guard or keep. But we notice that the instruction is to look for the moon of Abib. Then, in regards to the following verse:

Exodus 12:² **This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you.**

We see that God specifically tells them that this moon that was visible to them was the beginning of the months, that is, when the month started. "This month," or literally translated "This new moon", is not a moon that cannot be seen, but it is that first visible ray of the new moon. Thus, the visible new moon is what determines the beginning of the month. In that sense, God in Deuteronomy 16:1 calls them to observe, to look at the new moon of Abib, at the new moon where the barley is found in the ear, because it is in that month that God

¹⁸ Strong #8104. שָׁמַר *shâmar*, *shaw-mar'*; a prim. root; prop. to *hedge* about (as with thorns), i.e. *guard*; gen. to *protect*, *attend to*, etc.:—beware, be circumspect, take heed (to self), keep (-er, self), mark, look narrowly, observe, preserve, regard, reserve, save (self), sure, (that lay) wait (for), watch (-man).

delivered them from Egypt. Thus, the Passover will be celebrated at the observable new moon of the month of the ear of barley, or Abib.

The new moon is visible every 29 or 30 days, and two lunar months in a row add up to 59 days. We know that in general there were twelve months in a year:

1 Kings 4:⁷ And Solomon had **twelve officers** over all Israel, which provided victuals for the king and his household: **each man his month in a year** made provision.

However, the count of a year gives us 354 days ($59 \times (12\%2)$). We now know that it takes 365.25625 days for the sun to set over exactly at the same point, any point, on the horizon when coming from the same direction. However, the biblical invitation is not to observe the sun, but the moon and Abib. At the end of the 12th month, and there being no Abib on the new moon, the beginning of the year is postponed by one month. In this way, the mismatch in the calendar is automatically corrected with 13-month years. This occurs approximately every two or three years $((365.25625 - 354)/(59/2))$. In this way, the calendar works perpetually.

Year

Since we are considering when the year begins, the first use of this word in Scripture cannot be left without consideration.

Genesis 1:¹⁴ And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and **years**:


This is how Strong's dictionary defines the word:

8141. שָׁנָה **shâneh** (in plur. only), *shaw-neh'*; or (fem.)

נָפַךְ **shânâh**, *shaw-naw'*; from 8138; a *year* (as a *revolution* of time):—+ whole age, × long, + old, year (× -ly).


The origin of this word is telling. It is composed of three letters:

פּ Shin:




“The Ancient picture for this letter is , a picture of the two front teeth. This letter has the meanings of teeth, sharp and press (from the function of the teeth when chewing). It also has the meaning of two, again, both or second from the two teeth.”

¹⁹

נ Nun:

“The ancient pictograph  is a picture of a seed sprout representing the idea of continuing to a new generation. This pictograph has the meanings of continue, perpetuation, offspring or heir.”²⁰

ה Hey:

“The original pictograph for this letter is  or , a man standing with his arms raised out. The Modern Hebrew and original name for this letter is “hey”. The Hebrew word “hey” means “behold”, as when looking at a great sight. This word can also mean “breath” or “sigh” as one does when looking at a great sight. The meaning of the letter  is behold, look, breath, sigh

¹⁹ *The Ancient Hebrew Lexicon of the Bible*, Jeff A. Benner, Virtualbookworm.com Publishing Inc., 2005, page 31.

<https://archive.org/details/TheAncientHebrewLexiconOfTheBible/page/n29/mod e/2up>

²⁰ *Ibid.*, page 28.

and reveal or revelation from the idea of revealing a great sight by pointing it out.”²¹

The pictographic meaning of the letters that compose the word year give the idea of a man who tastes with his teeth a seed, and waving his arms announces, makes known the continuation to a new generation, to a new period of time.



But returning to the verse in Genesis 1, let us read it again:

Genesis 1:¹⁴ And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven **to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years:**

God set up luminaries in the firmament of the heaven with five very specific purposes:

- a. Divide the day from the night,
- b. be for signs,
- c. for seasons,
- d. for days,
- e. and years.

Let us consider each one of them in detail.

How do the lights in the firmament of the heaven separate or divide day from night? Let us first note the meaning and use of the word day in this context.

²¹ Ibid., page 23.

Genesis 1:⁵ And **God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.**

Since the lights were to separate the day from the night, evidently the word day here refers to the part of the day when there is light. Right there in the context it is explained:

Genesis 1:¹⁶ And God made two great lights; **the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night:** *he made* the stars also.

The sun was set to rule the day, and its disappearance from the sky brings darkness, the ruling of the moon and marks the separation of day from night.

How are the lights in the firmament of the heaven for days? Having seen its application to the first meaning of day, the luminous part, in this instance it refers to the second definition of day, to the time called in the Scriptures as "evening and morning" or night and day. It is key to be able to determine when the cycle of one day ends, i.e. evening and morning or night and day, and when the other begins. In this regard, the Genesis 1 account always places the sequence as being evening and morning. And speaking of the evening, this is how the following verse defines it:

Leviticus 22:⁶ The soul which hath touched any such shall be unclean until **even**, and shall not eat of the holy things, unless he wash his flesh with water. ⁷ And **when the sun is down, he shall be clean**, and shall afterward eat of the holy things; because it *is* his food.

The word "even" here in the original Hebrew is the same word that is translated as "evening" in Genesis 1:5, and is defined as when the sun is down. We find the same testimony in the New Testament:

Matthew 8:¹⁶ **When the even was come**, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with *his* word, and healed all that were sick:

Luke 4:⁴⁰ **Now when the sun was setting**, all they that had any sick with divers diseases brought them unto him; and he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them.

Here, the period stated as “even” begins with the setting of the sun. We see further confirmation in the following verse:

John 20:¹ **The first *day* of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark**, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre.

The first day of the week had already begun without the sun having risen. It was evening, and already the first day of the week or Sunday.

Genesis 1:⁵ And **God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.**

So what does a 24-hour day consist of? In the evening or even and the morning. In darkness or night and light or day. It is defined that this period begins with darkness or night, that is, at sunset. And it also becomes the culmination of the previous day. This is how the sun is “for days”, being the light that in its setting determines the end of one day and the beginning of the other. We note that it is only one light that is sufficient to determine the day.

How are the lights of the firmament of the heaven for signs? Evidently these are signs in heaven²².

Luke 21:¹¹ And great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and **great signs shall**

²² Jeremiah 10:2

there be from heaven. ... ²⁵ And there shall be **signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars**; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring;

Speaking of the destruction of Jerusalem and the second coming of Christ, Jesus says that they will be preceded by signs in the sun, the moon and the stars. And what will these signs be?

Matthew 24:²⁹ Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall **the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven**, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:

Joel 2:¹⁰ The earth shall quake before them; The heavens shall tremble: **The sun and the moon shall be dark, And the stars shall withdraw their shining**:

Revelation 6: ¹² And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and **the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood**; ¹³ **And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth**, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.

The signs in the lights consist specifically in that the sun will be darkened, the moon will not give its brightness or become like blood, and the stars will withdraw their brightness or fall from the sky onto the earth. Thus the lights are for signs of heaven.

How are the lights of the firmament of the heaven for seasons? Strong's dictionary defines the word "seasons" as follows:

4150. מועד **môw'êd**, *mo-ade'*; or

מועד **mô'êd** *mo-ade'*; or (fem.)

מועד **môw'âdâh** (2 Chron. 8:13), *mo-aw-daw'*; from 3259; prop. an *appointment*, i.e. a fixed *time* or season; spec. a *festival*; conventionally a *year*; by implication, an *assembly* (as convened

for a definite purpose); technically the *congregation*; by extension, the *place of meeting*; also a *signal* (as appointed beforehand):—appointed (sign, time), (place of, solemn) assembly, congregation, (set, solemn) feast, (appointed, due) season, solemn (-ity), synagogue, (set) time (appointed).

In our usual use of the word season in English, we usually think of the four seasons of the year: summer, winter, spring and autumn.

Genesis 8:²² While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and **summer and winter**, and day and night shall not cease.

The Scriptures instead present two seasons: winter and summer. These are the time of cold and heat, the time of sowing and harvest.

Psalms 74:¹⁷ Thou hast set all the borders of the earth: **Thou hast made summer and winter.**

Proverbs 6:⁸ [the ant] **Provideth her meat in the summer, And gathereth her food in the harvest.**

Proverbs 10:⁵ He that gathereth in summer *is* a wise son: *But* he that sleepeth in harvest *is* a son that causeth shame.

We see that God created summer and winter, and the ant works in the summer, which is the time of harvest. Not only the ant, but the man who is not a fool works in the summer as well, which is the time of harvest.

Jeremiah 8:²⁰ **The harvest is past, the summer is ended,** and we are not saved.

The end of the harvest marks the end of summer and the beginning of winter.

Jeremiah 36:²² Now the king sat **in the winterhouse in the ninth month:** and *there was a fire* on the hearth burning before him.

In the seventh month, at the Feast of Tabernacles, the end of the whole harvest was celebrated. And we see in this verse, the king, being the ninth month, is in the winter house. It was cold enough for the king to have a brazier burning before him. Summer, on the other hand, is soon after the fig tree and the trees have begun to bud or shoot forth:

Luke 21:²⁹ And he spake to them a parable; Behold the fig tree, and all the trees; ³⁰ When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand.

Thus, in Scriptures we read of winter and summer, of sowing and of harvesting. In that sense, the season is a time appointed for a certain activity or event. On the part of man, season is about sowing and reaping activities. And these, in turn, are caused by the length of the day and the influence of the moon.

Zechariah 14:⁸ And it shall be in that day, *That* living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; Half of them toward the former sea, And half of them toward the hinder sea: In summer and in winter shall it be.

And after the millennium, there will also be two clearly determined seasons: summer and winter.

In relation to rain, we find in the Scriptures two great rains, the early rain, preparing the soil to receive the seed, and the latter rain, which ripens the grain.

Song of Songs 2:¹¹ For, **lo, the winter is past, The rain is over *and gone***; ¹² The flowers appear on the earth; The time of the singing *of birds* is come, And the voice of the turtle is heard in our land; ¹³ The fig tree putteth forth her green figs, And the vines *with* the tender grape give a *good* smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.

The rainy season is associated with winter, after winter, the rains have passed. That is to say, the rains are prior to the beginning of the harvesting period.

Proverbs 26:¹ As snow in summer, and as rain in harvest, So honour is not seemly for a fool.

Neither rain nor snow is convenient in summer, and so we see that it was not usual to have rain at harvest time or summer.

1 Samuel 12:¹⁵ But if ye will not obey the voice of the LORD, but rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then shall the hand of the LORD be against you, as *it was* against your fathers. ¹⁶ Now therefore stand and see this great thing, which the LORD will do before your eyes. ¹⁷ ***Is it not wheat harvest to day? I will call unto the LORD, and he shall send thunder and rain;*** that ye may perceive and see that your wickedness *is* great, which ye have done in the sight of the LORD, in asking you a king. ¹⁸ So Samuel called unto the LORD; and the LORD sent thunder and rain that day: and all the people greatly feared the LORD and Samuel.

As we see in this story, thunder and rain were not common on harvest days.

However, as far as the seasons are concerned, we do not find in the use of the word "moed" any connotation with the seasons of the year in the most common sense of its use in English. That is, the word "moed" is not used to indicate the passage from one season to another at the equinoxes or solstices. It is not linked to the concept of spring or autumn as being separate from summer or winter. However, another meaning of the word "season" is that of a specific time or event or period²³. And we ask ourselves, how is the word "moed" used in the Bible? What meaning does its use carry?

²³ <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/season>

In Genesis 1:14 this word in Hebrew is found in the plural, *moedim*, as its translation "seasons" denotes. The word has four well-specified uses in Scripture. First, as a specific time. Here are some examples:

Genesis 21:² For Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the **set time** of which God had spoken to him.

Here the word is translated as "set time," indicating the specific moment of time when God had promised Sarah that she would have a son.

Exodus 9:⁵ And the LORD appointed a **set time**, saying, To morrow the LORD shall do this thing in the land.

In this other verse, reference is also made to a "set time", established by the word of God and its effective fulfillment on the following day. The second use that this word has in Scripture is with the meaning of meeting or gathering in relation to a place or time. We see this in the following verse:

Exodus 27:²¹ In the tabernacle of the **congregation** without the veil, which *is* before the testimony, Aaron and his sons shall order it from evening to morning before the LORD: *it shall be* a statute for ever unto their generations on the behalf of the children of Israel.

Here the word is translated as "congregation", and it specifies the function of the place it references. Thirdly, this word is used in reference to a specific time, which may be a holiday or month.

Exodus 34:¹⁸ The feast of unleavened bread shalt thou keep. Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, as I commanded thee, in the **time** of the month Abib: for in the month Abib thou camest out from Egypt.

In this case the word has been translated as “time”, and refers specifically to the period of time of the feast of Unleavened Bread. We see the same in other feasts, like Passover, when it’s translated as “appointed season”:

Numbers 9:² Let the children of Israel also keep the passover at his **appointed season**.

And in fourth and last, this word means feasts, in reference both to the Sabbath as a day of rest and to the other 7 feasts.

Leviticus 23:² Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, *Concerning* the **feasts** of the LORD, which ye shall proclaim *to be* holy convocations, *even* these *are* my feasts. ... ⁴ These *are* the **feasts** of the LORD, *even* holy convocations, which ye shall proclaim in their **seasons**.

Although “moedim” has been translated as feasts, it can also perfectly be translated as meetings, gatherings, assembly, etc., which are to be at their specific times or seasons, using again the same word but with the other meaning.

Considering then all the variations of the meaning of “moedim”, it is noteworthy that the translation of this word in Genesis 1:14 as seasons does not refer to spring or autumn, as we by default tend to think. Neither does it refer to the sun, nor to summer or winter. The Scriptures never use this term with these meanings, but rather denoting times, specific and appointed times, meetings, gatherings, feasts, etc. This being so, how is it that the lights of the firmament of the heaven are for appointed times, meetings, gatherings and congregations? As we had seen, the month begins with the first visible new moon, being a day of holy convocation²⁴.

Psalms 104:¹⁹ He appointed the moon for seasons: ...

²⁴ Isaiah 1:13; Numbers 10:1, 10; 28:11-15; 2 Kings 4:23; Hosea 2:11; Ezra 3:4-5

Since the new moon is mostly observable just before sunset or immediately after, at that time it is when the month begins, at the time of its observation. And the first day of the month begins at sunset, in this way establishing the days of the month. Thus, we see that while for the determination of the Sabbath, only the sun is used in seven-day sequences²⁵, the sun and moon are for the purpose of setting the other times of gathering: feasts and holy convocations as detailed in the Scriptures.

How are the lights in the firmament of the heaven for years? The beginning of the days are determined by the setting of the sun, and the months by the observation of the new moon. However, the first month, and therefore the year, is determined by the appearance of Abib. On the day of the new moon, if the barley was in the ear and the grain in a condition to be roasted and/or milled, it was the month of the ear, the month of Abib, the first month of the year. If there is no Abib, the month is not called Abib. The month bears the name and bears witness that there is Abib, and the pictographic origin of the word year testifies to this.

Deuteronomy 33:¹³ And of Joseph he said, Blessed of the LORD *be* his land, For the precious things of heaven, for the dew, And for the deep that coucheth beneath, ¹⁴ And **for the precious fruits brought forth by the sun, And for the precious things put forth by the moon,**

The agricultural production of the earth, including barley, are fruits of the sun and the things put forth by the moon. This is also how the sun is to determine the beginning of the year. Thus the major and minor lights are to determine the year.

²⁵ We mention only two main reasons for determining consecutive seven-day cycles. For the first one, see Appendix C. For the second one, Exodus 16: 4-5, 19, 22-26.

Equinox

Having considered all this, the question naturally arises: what about the equinox? Doesn't the equinox play a role in determining when the year begins? We need first to define the term equinox:

“1: either of the two points on the celestial sphere where the celestial equator intersects the ecliptic.

2: either of the two times each year (as about March 21 and September 23) when the sun crosses the equator and day and night are everywhere on earth of approximately equal length.”²⁶

The word “tekufah” in modern Hebrew is used in reference to the equinox and solstice²⁷, and it is a word that we also find in the Scriptures. This is the meaning according to the Strong's dictionary:

8622. תְּקוּפָה **t^eqûwphâh**, *tek-oo-faw'*; or

תְּקָפָה **t^eqûphâh**, *tek-oo-faw'*; from 5362; a *revolution*, i.e. (of the sun) *course*, (of time) *lapse*:—circuit, come about, end.

We see that the meaning is revolution, in the sense of a circuit or turn, course (speaking of the sun) and lapse of time.

1 Samuel 1:²⁰ Wherefore it came to pass, when **the time was come** about after Hannah had conceived, that she bare a son, and called his name Samuel, *saying*, Because I have asked him of the LORD.

In this verse, tekufah has been translated as "the time was come". The revolution or cycle was completed by giving birth to a son. The conception is the beginning of the period and birth is at the due course of time or when it was time to pass. Thus, we see that there is a cycle or span of approximately nine months, from conception to

²⁶ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/equinox>

²⁷ <https://jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/14292-tekufah>

giving birth. The next verse shows us another use of this word, translated as "at the end":

2 Chronicles 24:²³ And it came to pass **at the end** of the year, *that* the host of Syria came up against him: and they came to Judah and Jerusalem, and destroyed all the princes of the people from among the people, and sent all the spoil of them unto the king of Damascus.

After a revolution of time, a turn or at the completion of a one-year cycle, we are told that the Syrian army went against Joash. We find references related to war activity and its cycle in the following verses:

1 Kings 20:²⁶ And it came to pass **at the return of the year**, that Ben-hadad numbered the Syrians, and went up to Aphek, to fight against Israel.

2 Samuel 11:¹ And it came to pass, **after the year was expired, at the time when kings go forth to battle**, that David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they destroyed the children of Ammon, and besieged Rabbah. But David tarried still at Jerusalem.

There is a specific time in which kings go out to make war, and it is after the lapse of a year. This is, according to the Hebrew definition of the word, the revolution, the lapse of time, and is marked at its beginning by the time of war. In this case, the revolution or the cycle of time is 12 months or one year approximately.

The word equinox, as we use it according to its English definition, is directly connected to the sun. In specific reference to the sun, we find the following verse:

Psalms 19:⁴ Their line is gone out through all the earth, And their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun, ⁵ Which *is* as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, *And* rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race. ⁶ His going

forth *is* from the end of the heaven, And his **circuit** unto the ends of it: And there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.

In this verse the word “tekufah” has been translated as "circuit", describing the course of the sun, comparing it to a husband who leaves his chamber, and travels the path in haste, from one end of heaven to the ends of it.

Psalms 104:¹⁹ He appointed the moon for seasons: **The sun knoweth his going down.** ²⁰ **Thou makest darkness, and it is night:** Wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep *forth*. ²¹ The young lions roar after their prey, And seek their meat from God. ²² The sun ariseth, they gather themselves together, And lay them down in their dens. ²³ Man goeth forth unto his work And to his labour until the evening.

The end of heaven when it comes to the sun is when the sun has gone down over the horizon, when it is dark or night.

Psalms 50:¹ The mighty God, *even* the LORD, hath spoken, and called the earth **From the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof.**

Psalms 113:³ From the rising of the sun **unto the going down** of the same The LORD's name *is* to be praised.

The circuit of the sun is from one end of heaven, its rising, to the other end of heaven, which is its setting, that is, when and where it sets. And the “tekufah” is the circuit, course, or path of the sun in the heaven, referring to the sunrise-sunset revolution. If we were to look for a time reference, it is the circuit in the heavens during the day, which has different durations according to the time of the year assuming a fixed position on the surface of the earth. In other words, “tekufah” refers to a time span of approximately 8 to 16 hours.

Agricultural-Civil Year

There is one more reference in the Scriptures where the word “tekufah” is used.

Exodus 34:¹⁸The feast of unleavened bread shalt thou keep. Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, as I commanded thee, in the time of the month Abib: for in the month Abib thou camest out from Egypt. ... ²² And thou shalt observe the feast of weeks, of the firstfruits of wheat harvest, and the feast of ingathering at the year's **end**. ²³ Thrice in the year shall all your men children appear before the Lord GOD, the God of Israel.

In this case, the word has been translated as "at the ... end". Some versions translate it as "at the close"²⁸ and others as "at the turn" or "at the turning"²⁹ or "at the revolution".³⁰

Exodus 23:¹⁴Three times thou shalt keep a feast unto me in the year. ¹⁵Thou shalt keep the feast of unleavened bread: (thou shalt eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded thee, in the time appointed of the month **Abib**; for in it thou camest out from Egypt: and none shall appear before me empty;) ¹⁶And the feast of harvest, the firstfruits of thy labours, which thou hast sown in the field: and **the feast of ingathering, which is in the end of the year**, when thou hast gathered in thy labours out of the field. ¹⁷Three times in the year all thy males shall appear before the Lord GOD.

In this verse, "in the end" is the translation of another Hebrew word that has nothing to do with the word “tekufah”. There are three feasts or times in which every man and his family³¹ shall appear before the Lord.

²⁸ NABRE

²⁹ CJB, DARBY, HCSB, ISV, LSB, LEB, MSG, NASB, NIV, OJB ..., etc.

³⁰ YLT

³¹ Deuteronomy 12:7

2 Chronicles 8:¹³ Even after a certain rate every day, offering according to the commandment of Moses, on the sabbaths, and on the new moons, and on the solemn feasts, **three times in the year, even in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles.**

The first one is at the feast of Unleavened Bread. Secondly, the feast of Harvest or Weeks, where the harvesting of barley and flax, the first fruits of agricultural work, was largely completed and the harvesting of wheat was ready to begin.

Deuteronomy 16:¹³ Thou shalt observe **the feast of tabernacles** seven days, after that thou hast gathered in **thy corn and thy wine:** ... ¹⁵ Seven days shalt thou keep a solemn feast unto the LORD thy God in the place which the LORD shall choose: because the LORD thy God shall bless thee in all thine increase, and in all the works of thine hands, therefore thou shalt surely rejoice. ¹⁶ Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the LORD thy God in the place which he shall choose; **in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles:** and they shall not appear before the LORD empty:

And the third and last feast is Tabernacles, or the feast of the Ingathering at the end or “tekufah” of the year in the seventh month. Thus we see that the end or “tekufah” of the year was when the fruits of the labors in the field had been gathered in, at the end of all harvest, including all grains and the fruits of the wine. This is when the revolution or the cycle of time or the "tekufah" has been completed or finished. In this regard, we read:

Leviticus 25:¹ And the LORD spake unto Moses in mount Sinai, saying, ² Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the land which I give you, then shall the land keep a sabbath unto the LORD. ³ Six years thou shalt sow thy field, and six years thou shalt prune thy vineyard, and gather in the fruit thereof; ⁴ But **in the seventh year shall be a sabbath of rest**

unto the land, a sabbath for the LORD: thou shalt neither sow thy field, nor prune thy vineyard. ⁵That which groweth of its own accord of thy harvest thou shalt not reap, neither gather the grapes of thy vine undressed: *for it is a year of rest unto the land.* ... ⁸And thou shalt **number seven sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years; and the space of the seven sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years.** ⁹Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubile to sound **on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land.**

On the day of atonement, the tenth day of the seventh month, the trumpet was blown and a year of rest was announced from that day. We then see that for six years the people of Israel were to sow the land and reap its fruits. But in the seventh year, which began from the feast of atonement, the land was to have rest for one year, it was not to be sown or pruned. That is, the agricultural year began with sowing and pruning after the day of atonement. There is a year that ends with the harvest, at the end of the agricultural cycle.

Deuteronomy 15:¹ **At the end of every seven years thou shalt make a release.** ²And this *is* the manner of the release: Every creditor that lendeth *ought* unto his neighbour shall release *it*; he shall not exact *it* of his neighbour, or of his brother; because it is called the LORD's release. ... ¹²And if thy brother, an Hebrew man, or an Hebrew woman, be sold unto thee, and serve thee six years; **then in the seventh year thou shalt let him go free** from thee.

Additionally, in this seventh year debts were forgiven and slaves were released. This year was the Lord's year of remission. The question might arise: how did the year begin during the seventh year and during the years of jubilee, when there was no sowing and reaping?

Leviticus 25:⁴ But in the seventh year shall be a sabbath of rest unto the land, a sabbath for the LORD: thou shalt neither sow thy

field, nor prune thy vineyard. ⁵That **which groweth of its own accord** of thy harvest thou shalt not reap, neither gather the grapes of thy vine undressed: *for* it is **a year of rest unto the land.** ⁶And **the sabbath of the land shall be meat** for you; for thee, and for thy servant, and for thy maid, and for thy hired servant, and for thy stranger that sojourneth with thee, ⁸And thou shalt **number seven sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years; and the space of the seven sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years.** ⁹Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubile to sound on **the tenth day of the seventh month, in the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land.** ¹⁰And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout *all* the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubile unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family. ¹¹A jubile shall that fiftieth year be unto you: ye shall not sow, neither reap **that which groweth of itself in it,** nor gather *the grapes* in it of thy vine undressed. ¹²For it *is* the jubile; it shall be holy unto you: **ye shall eat the increase thereof out of the field.**

Although there would be no sowing or harvesting, there would be enough food for everyone. Whatever grows of its own accord or of itself would be of measure for the beginning of the year. In harvesting, it is only natural that grain would fall to the ground, especially when using manual methods. Additionally, barley is a cereal that grows wild in the land of Israel, so the land would yield enough barley not only for all to consume but to also determine the beginning of the year.

Thus, we see that another year is established in the biblical agricultural calendar that establishes this agricultural-civil practice. In fact, some Bible versions translated Exodus 34:22 “at the year’s

tekufah” as “at the turn of the agricultural year”³². It is to this turn or end of the year that the fourth instance of the word "tekufah" refers to. The beginning of this revolution or cycle is at the beginning of the cycle of sowing and pruning which is after the feast of Atonement. Given the preparation and pilgrimage to Jerusalem to attend the feast of Tabernacles, to all purposes it is after this last feast that practically this cycle begins. And its completion is on the Day of Atonement.

Thus we have seen the four instances in which the word "tekufah" is used. And we ask ourselves: do we find the concept of the equinox as being the day of the year on which day and night are of the same length? Do we find in the Scriptures the concept that the new year begins with the equinox or after it? Nowhere in the Scriptures have we been able to find this concept. "Tekufah" in a first instance is used to describe the time span from conception to birth, approximately 9 months. In a second instance, it refers to the cycle of time measuring when nations go out to war, which is approximately 12 months, a year, since they always went out at around the same time. In a third instance it is the course or path that the sun makes in the sky from its rising to its setting, in this case a cycle of between 8 and 16 hours approximately and depending on the location on earth. And in a last and fourth instance it refers to the annual cycle that began with agricultural work and ended with the Day of Atonement. Thus we see that the word "tekufah" in the Bible has no relation with the current meaning of equinox, nor is it used for the determination of the beginning of the biblical year that determines the time of religious events³³.

³² CSB, HCSB.

³³ This is not something that should surprise us, since the meaning of words can change with the passing of time. In Isaiah 54:12 the word carbuncles is composed

Deuteronomy 16:¹ **Keep** the month of the new fruit, {Heb, if Abib} ... JUB

God's invitation is not only to observe, to look at the moon when Abib of barley is found, but also to keep it. This keeping is to treasure, to keep in our hearts this moment that marks, with the exception of the seventh day Sabbath, the beginning of the year and the dates of congregation or meetings with God.

Jerusalem

There are verses in the Scriptures that never cease to amaze us with their statements:

1 Corinthians 5:⁶ Your glorying *is* not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? ⁷ Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. **For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:** ⁸ **Therefore let us keep the feast,** not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened *bread* of sincerity and truth.

The word of the Lord here points out to us that because³⁴ Christ is our Passover, which has already been sacrificed, we should keep the feast. Recognizing that Christ is our Passover, the fulfillment of the type announced by the Passover celebration, the shadow being reached and fulfilled by the reality of Christ's sacrifice, should lead us

of two words, one of which is eqdah, which in modern Hebrew means pistol. But that does not make us believe that there were pistols in Isaiah's days.

³⁴ 5620. ὥστε **hōstē**, *hoce'-teh*; from 5613 and 5037; *so too*, i.e. *thus therefore* (in various relations of *consecution*, as follow):—(insomuch) as, so that (then), (insomuch) that, therefore, to, wherefore.

to keep the feast. What feast are we talking about here? At a first glance, the feast of Unleavened Bread, but a more careful and extensive study of the Scriptures will show that they are the 8 feasts of Leviticus 23³⁵. Having then these times of gathering or congregation being clearly detailed: what about the place in which these gatherings are to take place? Is this a call to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, given the following verse?

Deuteronomy 16:¹⁵ Seven days shalt thou keep a solemn feast unto the LORD thy God **in the place which the LORD shall choose**: because the LORD thy God shall bless thee in all thine increase, and in all the works of thine hands, therefore thou shalt surely rejoice.

Jesus Himself was confronted with this question in His day, to which He responded:

John 4:²⁰ Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. ²¹ Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, **the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.** ²² Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. ²³ But the hour cometh, and now is, when **the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth**: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. ²⁴ God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth.

The woman at the well, seeking to escape from the revelation of her disorderly life, poses to Jesus a problem that was evidently a matter of intense dispute in her day: where to worship God? Jesus tells her plainly, recognizing that salvation comes from the Jews, that in those same days of Jesus and now, true worshipers will worship the Father

³⁵ See "What about the feasts?" <https://maranathamedia.com/book/view/what-about-the-feasts-third-edition-2016>

in spirit and in truth. God seeks worshipers from the heart who worship him according to truth and He accepts their worship regardless of where they worship³⁶. How does Jesus' assertion that God is Spirit answers the woman's question? There is no place where the Spirit of God cannot reach the one who worships³⁷ God, and to receive the blessing of God's presence there is no need to approach any particular mountain in that and this present historical time³⁸. Christ Himself promised:

Matthew 18:²⁰ For **where** two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

Matthew 28:²⁰ ... lo, **I am with you always**, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen.

Jesus Christ promises His followers that He will be there where two or three are gathered in His name, every day, until the end of the world. Being Christ present, it becomes worship of the Father in spirit and in truth. But, of course, we must first open the door to Christ³⁹. And it is precisely at these times of congregation that the promise of an additional blessing of Christ's presence⁴⁰ is given to us. But, recognizing this, how is the beginning of the year determined for these times of encounter? Evidently, the Bible directs our eyes to the barley, but is it the barley of each locality? Is it for each place to determine its own date of gathering? If it were so, we would find that the dates would be reversed relative to the opposite hemisphere. Or

³⁶ Malachi 1:5, 11

³⁷ Psalms 139:7

³⁸ When "five are fallen, and one is, *and* the other is not yet come", Revelation 17:10

³⁹ Revelation 3:20

⁴⁰ See "Christ, the Sabbath and the Heights of the 1888 Message", "Sabbath Fountain" y "Living Bread from Heaven".

<https://maranathamedia.com/book/view/christ-the-sabbath-and-the-heights-of-the-1888-message>

<https://maranathamedia.com/book/view/sabbath-fountain>

<https://maranathamedia.com/book/view/living-bread-from-heaven>

is there a central location to be looked at that will ensure unanimity of blessing globally?

Leviticus 23:¹⁰ Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, **When ye be come into the land which I give unto you**, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest: ¹¹ 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. ... ¹⁴ And ye shall eat neither bread, nor parched corn, nor green ears, until the selfsame day that ye have brought an offering unto your God: **it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.**

No matter where we dwell, it is always the same principle. It will always be, by perpetual statute, of the harvest from the land which the Lord gave to Israel and where Israel entered. It does not say of the harvest where you dwell, but of the harvest of the land into which Israel entered. In that sense, the place of the dwelling is independent of the place of the barley harvest, no matter where you live, it will always be in relation to the harvest of the land that the Lord gave to the people of Israel coming out of Egypt.

Deuteronomy 16:¹ **Observe the month of Abib**, and keep the passover unto the LORD thy God: for in the month of Abib the LORD thy God brought thee forth out of Egypt by night. ² **Thou shalt therefore sacrifice the passover** unto the LORD thy God, of the flock and the herd, **in the place which the LORD shall choose to place his name there.**

The moon that is observed and kept is that of Abib, in the place where the Passover was to be sacrificed to the Lord.

Hebrews 13:¹² Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. ¹³ Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his

reproach. ¹⁴ For **here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.**

Christ, our Passover, was already sacrificed for us, and He suffered for us without the gate. Where Christ suffered and was sacrificed is where Abib, the beginning of the months of the year, is determined.

Some might ask, what if we do not know the state of the barley, what if we lose contact with the result of the state of the grain in the land of Israel? These are in any case hypothetical questions that do not address our current reality. If we want, today we can know⁴¹. But regardless of this, we cannot forget that when Israel was coming out of Egypt, God Himself told to the people through Moses which moon marked the beginning of the month⁴². God thus made known the beginning of the first and second year, before the catastrophic refusal to enter the Promised Land. In the same way, God will work with His people when they leave Babylon to be taken to the Promised Land.

Deuteronomy 11:¹⁰ For the land, whither thou goest in to possess it, *is* not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst *it* with thy foot, as a garden of herbs: ¹¹ But the land, whither ye go to possess it, *is* a land of hills and valleys, *and* drinketh water of the rain of heaven: ¹² **A land which the LORD thy God careth for: the eyes of the LORD thy God *are* always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year.**

God's eyes are upon the land into which Israel entered after their departure from Egypt, and specifically in relation to the beginning of the year and the end of the year. We can trust that God takes care of His calendar and His times revealed to man. So that we can be sure

⁴¹ For instance: <https://www.renewedmoon.com>

⁴² Exodus 12:2; Numbers 9:1-3

that we will receive the rain, the blessing of His presence in a greater measure, the early and the latter in its due season.

The people of Israel in their pilgrimage to the Promised Land, kept only the feast of Unleavened Bread the first two years, then there is silence in the Scriptures, and at the gates of possessing the land, they kept it again:

Joshua 5:¹⁰ And the children of Israel encamped in Gilgal, **and kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the month at even in the plains of Jericho.** ¹¹ **And they did eat of the old corn of the land on the morrow after the passover, unleavened cakes, and parched corn in the selfsame day.** ¹² And the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the old corn of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year.

It was kept as soon as they crossed the Jordan, in the plains of Jericho, and only later it was indicated to them that they were to do so in Jerusalem. In the same way with spiritual Israel from spiritual Babylon on their pilgrimage to the Promised Land. For this reason, Paul urges us to celebrate the feast of Unleavened Bread, receiving the Spirit of Christ, that is, in sincerity and truth. For only if we receive the living bread that comes down from heaven, only if we eat His flesh and drink His blood, that is, receive His word and Spirit⁴³, will we be able to worship God in spirit and truth.

Isaiah 66:²³ And it shall come to pass, *that* from one new moon to another, And from one sabbath to another, Shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the LORD.

Isaiah 33:¹⁷ Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty: They shall behold the land that is very far off. ... ²⁰ **Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities:** Thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet

⁴³ John 6:48-53, 63

habitation, A tabernacle *that* shall not be taken down; Not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, Neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken. ²¹ But there the glorious LORD *will be* unto us A place of broad rivers *and* streams; Wherein shall go no galley with oars, Neither shall gallant ship pass thereby.

New Jerusalem, the city that descends from heaven after the millennium, rests on the Mount of Olives⁴⁴, and there, where Christ gave His life, the people of God for eternity will gather to worship God and the Lamb, in the city of their feasts or “moed”.

Zechariah 14:¹⁶ And it shall come to pass, *that* every one that is left of all the nations Which came against Jerusalem Shall even go up from year to year To worship the King, the LORD of hosts, And to keep the feast of tabernacles.

Thus, the pilgrimage of the people of Israel of old to the city of Jerusalem, the place where the Passover was sacrificed, becomes a shadow or figure of the solemn times of gathering and worship that the people of God will for eternity enjoy.

The Divine Pattern

This relationship between the experience of ancient and spiritual Israel, where the invisible is manifested and made known by the visible, is framed within what we know as the Divine Pattern, the relationship between the Father and the Son.

1 Corinthians 8:⁶ But to us *there is but* one God, the Father, **of whom** *are* all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, **by whom** *are* all things, and we by him.

⁴⁴ Zechariah 14:3-4

The Father is the great source, the One from whom all things proceed, and we see that the Son is the means or channel by which all things are, consist⁴⁵ and are sustained or upheld⁴⁶.

Matthew 11:²⁷ All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and **he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.**

It is the Son of God who glorifies⁴⁷, manifests, makes known⁴⁸ the Father, because no one knows the Father as the Son knows Him, and this depth of knowledge is reciprocal. Who can say that he knows the Father as the Father knows him? No man can see the Father, yet it is by beholding and by knowing Christ that we know God⁴⁹. Additionally:

John 14:⁶ Jesus saith unto him, **I am the way**, the truth, and the life: **no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.**

Jesus is the way, the only means to reach the Father. In this manner, the channel becomes a means to reach, to understand, to know, to appreciate the source. And a relationship similar to that between the Father and Christ can be seen in the way the year is determined. For one might ask: instead of the fruit producing the summer, is it not the summer that produces the fruit?

Deuteronomy 16:¹ **Observe** the month of Abib, and keep the passover unto the LORD thy God: for in the month of Abib the LORD thy God brought thee forth out of Egypt by night.

Deuteronomy 33:¹³ And of Joseph he said, Blessed of the LORD *be* his land, For the precious things of heaven, for the dew, And for

⁴⁵ Colossians 1:17

⁴⁶ Hebrews 1:3

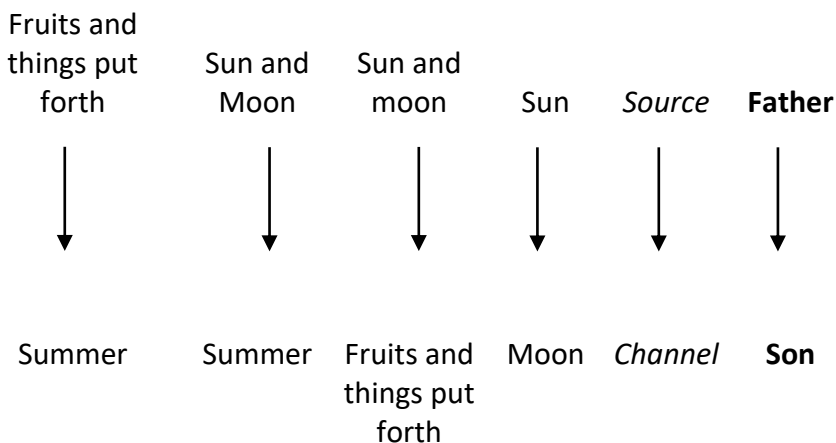
⁴⁷ John 17:4

⁴⁸ John 1:18

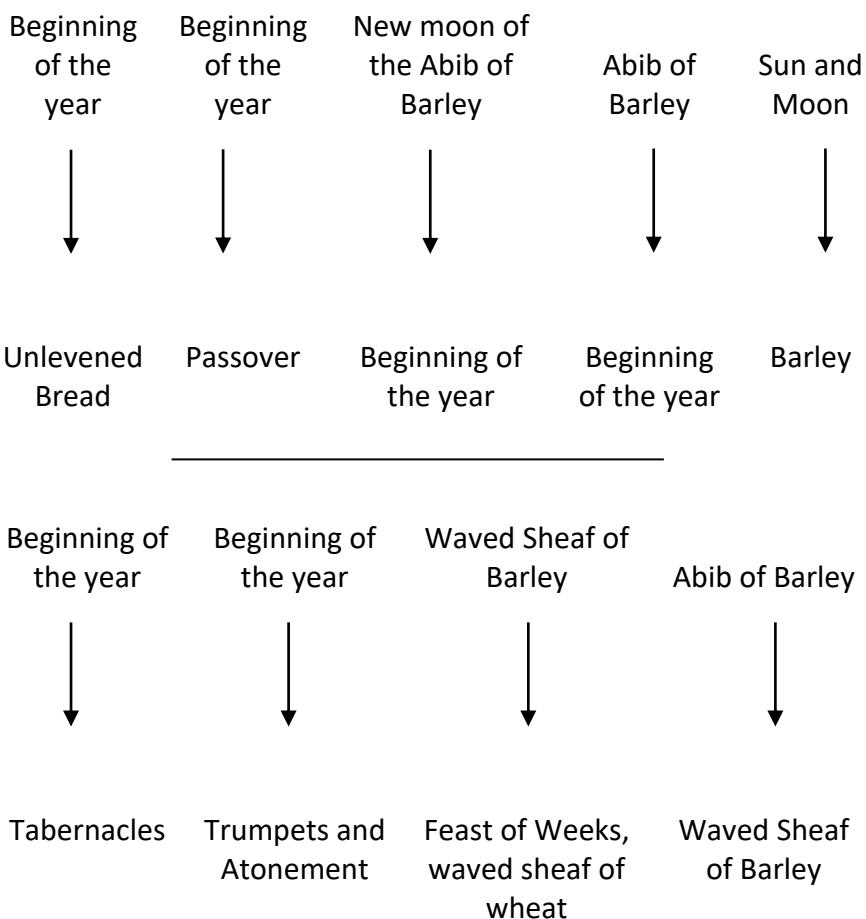
⁴⁹ 2 Corinthians 4:6

the deep that coucheth beneath, ¹⁴ **And for the precious fruits brought forth by the sun, And for the precious things put forth by the moon,**

It is the influence of the sun and moon that produces the fruit and the things put forth. Not the summer itself. Thus, the relationship between each element is clearly delineated, reading from right to left:

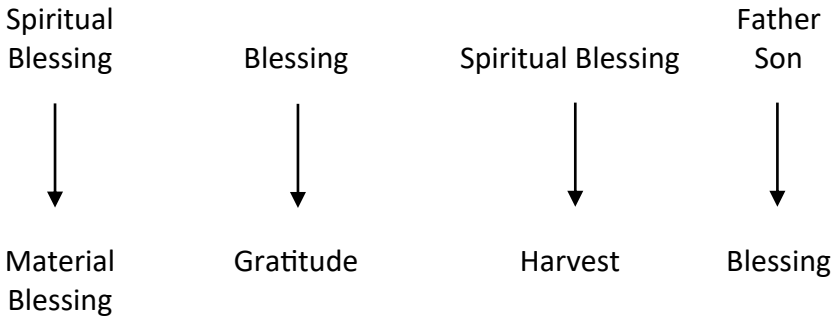


The invitation we find in the Scriptures is to keep, to observe the moon of Abib, or the moon of the ear of barley. Barley is the beginning of the harvest, it is a fruit of the sun, a thing put forth by the moon. We are not called upon to look to the sun to determine the year. The light of the moon, on the other hand, has its origin in the sun. Just as to know the Father, invisible, we must look to the Son, likewise, in order to know the beginning of the year, we must look to the manifestation, that which makes it known, that which reveals its influence. We should observe the new moon and the fruit of the sun, which is the Abib of the barley. And the relationship that all these elements have with each other and with the feasts can be framed in a source-channel relationship.



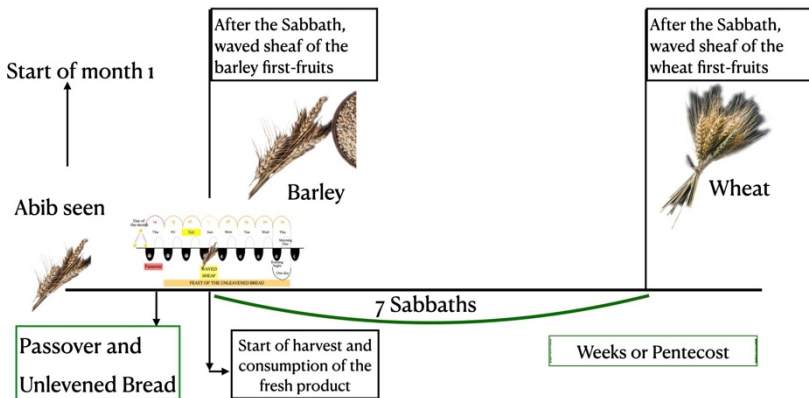
But having seen this source-channel relationship in this topic, we see another one. The cycle of festivals and religious events are connected with the fruits of the earth, and the specific intention of these gatherings is that the people should recognize the blessings of God in the works of their hands, in their agricultural labours, in the food that God graciously provided. This blessing of God, invisible to the unbelieving eye, has its direct manifestation in the harvest. And the recognition of the material blessings would lead them to become

aware of the past and present spiritual blessings that they were receiving at that very time. Recognizing the material blessings would lead them to recognize and receive the spiritual blessings.



Another instance where we see the divine source-channel pattern is in that the feasts are centered on agricultural activity and specifically on the harvest of the fruits of the earth. In the first fruits offering presented before the Lord we find spiritual lessons.

First-fruits



In the first month, after the weekly Sabbath within the feast of Unleavened Bread, the first-fruits of the first grain, barley, were offered before the Lord. Then, after seven Sabbaths were completed, the wave sheaf of the wheat's first-fruits was offered. Thus, we clearly notice two groups. First, the first-fruits of the barley were offered to the Lord, and then the whole barley crop was reaped, and secondly, the first-fruits of the wheat were also offered to the Lord, and then the whole wheat crop was reaped. This is an illustration of the work of salvation.

1 Corinthians 15:²⁰ But now is Christ risen from the dead, *and become the firstfruits of them that slept.* ... ²³ But every man in his own order: **Christ the firstfruits**; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.

Christ is the first-fruits of those who have slept. And together with Christ, others were raised as first-fruits of those who are asleep.

Matthew 27:⁵¹ And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; ⁵² And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, ⁵³ And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.

These, Christ in His ascension, took with Him:

Ephesians 4:⁸ Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.

Having Christ ascended, taking captive with Him those who had been captives of death, He sent the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, the universal early rain. Christ and these first-fruits represent the barley, the first fruits of the great spiritual harvest. And there is another great harvest at the end of the history of this world, at the coming of the Son of Man.

Revelation 14:¹⁴ And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud *one* sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. ¹⁵ And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. ¹⁶ And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.

Regarding the end time first-fruits, we read:

Revelation 14:¹ And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him **an hundred forty and four thousand**, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. ² And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: ... ⁴ These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. **These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.** ⁵ And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.

The first-fruits or 144,000 are represented by the wheat first-fruits. They are the first fruits from among the living, unto God and to the Lamb. And these first-fruits, from spiritual Israel⁵⁰, are only the beginning of a harvest that will be a great multitude from every nation, tribe, people and tongue, who will have come out of the great tribulation and will be able to stand in the day of the wrath of the Lamb. However, in the Scriptures we are presented that the agricultural work did not end with the wheat harvest, but ended with the grape harvest.

⁵⁰ Revelation 7:4-8; Romans 9:6-8; John 8:33-44; Galatians 3:27-29

Joel 3:¹³ Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: Come, get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow; For their wickedness *is* great. ¹⁴ Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: For the day of the LORD *is* near in the valley of decision.

The grape harvest is a symbol of the judgment that falls on the wicked.

Revelation 14:¹⁷ And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. ¹⁸ And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. ¹⁹ And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast *it* into the great winepress of the wrath of God. ²⁰ And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand *and* six hundred furlongs.

Thus, the feasts and their celebration, the calendar, the fruits of the earth and the first-fruits illustrate the work of salvation.

And finally, we note that in determining the beginning of the year there is an element of uncertainty. It is not possible to know with certainty when the year will begin. Regarding Christ's ministry, there was also uncertainty or ignorance regarding His resurrection, even though He had clearly told them three days and three nights, and also His presentation as the first fruits. There are years in which it will be more obvious when the year will begin, but there are others in which it will not. Thus there is uncertainty as to the beginning of the dates of the feasts. This is an illustration of what Christ taught us:

Matthew 24:³⁶ But of that day and hour knoweth no *man*, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.

Appendix A: Temporal sequence of the plagues in Egypt

At the beginning of the word study on Abib, we quoted the following verse:

Exodus 9:²⁹ And Moses said unto him, As soon as I am gone out of the city, I will spread abroad my hands unto the LORD; *and* the thunder shall cease, neither shall there be any more hail; that thou mayest know how that the earth *is* the LORD'S. ... ³¹ And **the flax and the barley was smitten: for the barley was in the ear, and the flax was bolled.** ³² **But the wheat and the rie were not smitten: for they were not grown up.**

We sometimes think that the plagues in Egypt occurred over a long period of time. In line with that, we tend to think that the time between the seventh plague, when the ear of barley was smitten, and the tenth plague, the death of the firstborn, was months. However, let us carefully consider the sequence and timing of these plagues.

We read that by the time of the seventh plague, the barley was in the Abib state. Then came the plagues of locusts, of darkness and the death of the firstborn. The latter occurred on the 15th day of the month Abib⁵¹, the day they departed from Egypt. It was on the 14th that they sacrificed the Passover lamb, painted the lintel to be protected from the destroyer⁵², and ate the lamb. And it is in the plague of darkness that Pharaoh instructs Moses to be careful not to see his face, for he would die⁵³. Moses for his part vows to never see him again. However, it is Moses who announces the plague of the

⁵¹ Exodus 11:4-5

⁵² Exodus 12:23

⁵³ Exodus 10:28-29

death of the firstborn⁵⁴, and withdraws in anger from Pharaoh's presence, because the hardness of Pharaoh's heart was leading to such terrible consequences for Egypt. This establishes the sequence as one plague occurring immediately after the other, and Moses announcing the plague of death of the firstborn in his encounter with Pharaoh ending the thick darkness that lasted for three days⁵⁵. Summarizing then, the plague of darkness began at the beginning of the 11th day of the



Ninth plague



Tenth plague

the 11th day of the month of Abib and ended at the end of the 13th, and it is at the beginning of the 14th that Pharaoh invites Israel to leave Egypt, to which Moses asks for the cattle to leave as well, in order to offer sacrifices and offerings. Pharaoh refuses, to which Moses announces the death of the firstborn at the following midnight. Pharaoh warns Moses to do not see his face anymore, and Moses withdraws in anger. We remember that on the 10th⁵⁶ the Passover lamb was chosen and separated, being the day prior to the plague of darkness. Thus, appointing the lamb to be sacrificed is immediately followed by the plague of darkness.

The sequence between the seventh plague of hail and the eighth plague of locusts is also immediate. Moses announces in the morning the plague of hail, coming the following day at the same time it was announced to Pharaoh⁵⁷. This hail was so heavy that there

⁵⁴ Exodus 11:4-8

⁵⁵ Exodus 10:22-24

⁵⁶ Exodus 12:3

⁵⁷ Exodus 9:18-19

had never been such before, to the point that God advises Pharaoh to protect animals and people.



Seventh plague

Psalms 78:⁴⁷ He destroyed their vines with hail, And their sycomore trees with frost. ⁴⁸ He gave up their cattle also to the hail, And their flocks to hot thunderbolts. ⁴⁹ He cast upon them the fierceness of his anger, Wrath, and indignation, and trouble, By sending evil angels *among them*. ⁵⁰ He made a way to his anger; He spared not their soul from death, But gave their life over to the pestilence;

God destroyed their vineyards, flocks and cattle with hail and lightning. How did this happen? By giving them up. Their lives were in God's hand, but who demanded them?⁵⁸ Who required and demanded their lives?⁵⁹ To whom did He deliver them up? God delivered them to an army of destroying evil angels. God releases,

leaves or looses the winds that hovered over the land of Egypt, who brought that destruction. It was such that



Eighth plague

it destroyed all the grass of the field and broke all the trees of the land⁶⁰. However, the wheat and rye were not destroyed⁶¹. The storm ceased only after Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron, and Moses, having left

Pharaoh's presence, prayed to God for the storm to cease. Seeing that the storm had ceased, Pharaoh hardened his heart⁶². Then God again sends Moses to Pharaoh to announce the plague of locusts starting the day after the announcement. This plague would eat that

⁵⁸ Zechariah 3:1; Revelation 12:10

⁵⁹ Job 1:9-12; 2:3-6

⁶⁰ Exodus 9:25

⁶¹ Exodus 9:32

⁶² Exodus 9:33-35

which escaped the plague of hail⁶³. Being the barley Abib, it tells us that it was immediately after the hail, since what had been destroyed had not even greened up yet, but the locusts would eat what the hail had left⁶⁴. That same day of the announcement, comes an east wind that lasts all day and night, and when the morning of the following day came, it brought the locust. The plague was of such magnitude that it darkened the land, and Pharaoh hastens to call for Moses and Aaron to take away the plague, and there comes a west wind that casts the locusts into the Red Sea. But still Pharaoh did not let the children of Israel go, thus introducing the plague of darkness.

We then see that the plagues of hail and locusts come immediately within 24 hours of being announced, and cease with Moses intercession. Given the increasing destructive impact of the plagues, it is only natural to think that they occurred more and more quickly and in a faster and shorter rhythm, as travail upon a woman with child⁶⁵. And having set times⁶⁶ for each one of them, it leads us to believe that they occurred in a very short period of time. In this temporal sequence we see that the plague of the hail and the locust must not have taken long, and that most likely fell in the first 9 days of the month of Abib or just before the beginning of the month of Abib, since the verse tells us that at the time of the seventh plague (hail) the barley was already Abib.

⁶³ Exodus 10:4-5

⁶⁴ Exodus 10:12, 15

⁶⁵ Isaiah 11:11; 13:8; 1 Thessalonians 5:3

⁶⁶ Exodus 9:5

Appendix B: Historical record of the search for Abib

Some might ask, is there any historical record of looking for the Abib to start the year? The answer is yes, as well as other methods for determining the year. Here are some quotes that show this, with the footnotes within the text itself in smaller print:

1. What is remarkable about this quote, despite the fact that it begins the year on the first two days of the seventh month, or Rosh Hashanah, is that it establishes the principle that those who lived in exile should wait for confirmation from messengers coming from Palestine.

“The Israelites living in exile were dependent for their information concerning the date of the New Year entirely upon the messengers sent out by the high court in Palestine, which in turn fixed the date upon the testimony of witnesses who would announce when the new moon appeared (as explained in Tract Rosh Hashana). Thus the exiled people did not know whether the 30th or 31st day from the first day of p. 86 Elul would be proclaimed the first day of Tishri (the New Year), and both were kept holy in consequence. For this reason the Mishna cites the ordinances referring to such as apprehend that the New Year will last two days.”⁶⁷

2. What is remarkable about this quote is that it mentions the reason why the first month is called Nisan, and that they establish Exodus

⁶⁷ *The Babylonian Talmud*, translated by Michael Rodkinson, Chapter Three, Regulations concerning wherewith and where an Erub may be made. ... Footnote 85:1

<https://archive.org/details/babylonian-talmud/page/n729/mode/2up?view=theater>

12:2 and Deuteronomy 16:1 as the verses to use in determining the beginning of the year. From these verses they understand that the grain should be observed in order to know when it is ripening, giving this the beginning of the year.

“The rabbis taught: The first of Nissan is the new year for (arranging the) months, for (appointing) leap years, for giving the half shekels, and, some say, also for the rental of houses. Whence do we know (that it is the new year) for months? From the passage [Ex. xii. 2] where it is written: ‘This month shall be unto you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you.’ It is also written [Deut. xvi. 1]: ‘Observe the month of Abib’ (early stage of ripening). In which month is grain in the early stage of ripening? I can say only Nissan, and the Law calls it the first. Could I not say Adar (when the grain begins to shoot up)? Nay, for the grain must be ripening during the major portion of the month (and in Adar it is not). Is it then written that the grain must be ripening the major portion of the month? Therefore, says Rabhina, the sages do not find (the rule of calling Nissan the first month) in the Pentateuch, but in the Book of Esther, where it is clearly stated [Esther, iii. 7], ‘In the first month, that is, the month Nissan.’”⁶⁸

3. What is interesting about this quote is that it quotes from Rabbi Simeon ben Gamliel, who was a contemporary of Jesus⁶⁹. He is quoted from a letter he sent informing the exiled communities that they were adding a month, thus postponing the beginning of the year. Among the reasons given was that the grain had not yet ripened. Barley is identified as the grain of which the waved sheaf

⁶⁸ *The Babylonian Talmud*, translated by Michael Rodkinson, Chapter One, The ordinances of the New Years of the Jewish Calendar –the messengers that were sent out from Jerusalem ...

⁶⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Simeon_ben_Gamliel

was made, and of which they had to wait until it was ripe. We can also see the teachings of the commentators to the letter of Simeon ben Gamliel, when another solar calendar based on the equinox and the solstices had already been established, thus teaching traditions of men as commandments of God, teachings regarding the beginning of the year that have no record in the Scriptures.

“Our Rabbis taught: The year may not be intercalated on the ground that the kids or the lambs or the doves are too young. But we consider each of these circumstances as an auxiliary reason for intercalation. How so? — R. Jannai [gave the following example of the law in operation], quoting from R. Simeon b. Gamaliel's [letter to the Communities]: 'We beg to inform you that the doves are still tender and the lambs still young, and the grain has not yet ripened. I have considered the matter and thought it advisable to add thirty days to the year.'”

An objection was raised: How long a period was intercalated in the year? Thirty days. R. Simeon b. Gamaliel said: A month? — R. Papa Said: [The matter is left to the judgment of the intercalary court:] if they wish, they may add a month; or if they wish thirty days.

Come now and see the difference between the proud leaders of former days and their modest successors of later times. For it has been taught: It once happened that Rabban Gamaliel was sitting on a step on the Temple-hill and the well known Scribe Johanan was standing before him while three cut sheets were lying before him. 'Take one sheet', he said, 'and write an epistle to our brethren in Upper Galilee and to those in Lower Galilee, saying: 'May your peace be great! We beg to inform you that the time of 'removal' has arrived for setting aside [the tithe] from the olive heaps.' Take another sheet, and write to our brethren of the South, 'May your peace be great! We beg to inform you that the time of 'removal' has arrived for setting aside the tithe from the corn sheaves.' And take the third and write to our brethren the

Exiles in Babylon and to those in Media, and to all the other exiled [sons] of Israel, saying: 'May your peace be great for ever! We beg to inform you that the doves are still tender and the lambs still too young and that the crops are not yet ripe. It seems advisable to me and to my colleagues to add thirty days to this year.' [Yet] it is possible [that the modesty shown by Rabban Gamaliel in this case belongs to the period] after he had been deposed [from the office of Nasi].

Our Rabbis taught: A year may be intercalated on three grounds: on account of the premature state of the corn-crops; (This species must be ripe in the month of Nisan which is known in the Bible as the Abib (Ex. XIII, 44) the month of ears (of corn), in reference to the ripeness of the corn in that month) or that of the fruit-trees;⁸ or on account of the lateness of the Tekufah (Lit. 'cycle', 'season'. The Jewish Calendar, while being lunar, takes cognisance of the solar system to which it is adjusted at the end of every cycle of nineteen years. For ritual purposes the four Tekufoth seasons, are calculated according to the solar system, each being equal to one fourth of 365 days, viz. 91 days, 71/2 hours. Tekufah of Nisan (Vernal equinox) begins March 21; Tekufah of Tammuz (Summer Solstice), June 21; Tekufah of Tishri (Autumnal equinox), September 23; Tekufah of Tebeth (Winter Solstice), December 22. Should the Tekufah of Tammuz extend till after the Succoth Festival, or the Tekufah of Tebeth till the sixteenth of Nisan, the year would be intercalated, so that the festivals might fall in their due seasons, viz., Passover in Spring, Succoth in Autumn.) Any two of these reasons can justify intercalation, but not one alone. All, however, are glad when the state of the spring-crop is one of them (Because if the corn-crop is already ripe and the intercalation prompted by other reasons, the prohibition of new produce till after the Omer Offering (v. p. 50, n. 4) according to Lev. XXIII, 14, would be unduly prolonged for another month.). Rabban Simeon b. Gamaliel says: On account of [the lateness of] the Tekufah. The Schoolmen inquired: Did he mean to say that 'on account of the [lateness of the] Tekufah' [being one of the two reasons], they rejoiced,¹¹ or that the lateness of

the Tekufah alone was adequate reason for intercalating the year? — The question remains undecided.

Our Rabbis taught: [The grain and fruit of the following] three regions [are taken as the standard] for deciding upon the declaration of a leap-year: Judea, Trans-Jordania, and Galilee. The requirements of two of these regions might determine the intercalation, but not those of a single one. All, however, were glad when one of the two was Judea, because the barley for the Omer (A measure of barley (1/10th of an ephah) taken from tender ears, was brought on the 16th day of Nisan to the Temple as a heave-offering. v. Lev. XXIII, 10-11.) was obtained [by preference] in Judea (For two reasons, firstly, because the grain taken for the Omer offering had to be tender, and this could only be so if it was cut from a field in the proximity of Jerusalem, for if it were brought from a far-off distance, the stalks would become hardened in transit, by the wind. Secondly, according to the Talmudic rule, that one must not forego the occasion of performing a commandment (cf. Yoma 33a), the ripe corn in the vicinity of Jerusalem offered the earliest opportunity of fulfilling the precept (v. Men. 64b). If the grain in Judea, however, gave no cause for intercalation, it would be overripe at the time of the Omer, and so unfit for the purpose.).⁷⁰

⁷⁰ Babylonian Talmud: Folio 11a y 11b.

Appendix C: The Count of the Omer

One might ask, could it be possible that the feast day of weeks, when the first fruits of wheat were offered, falls on a Sabbath? If this were to be the case, then the first fruits of barley were offered on a Sabbath as well. This question is considered since "from the morrow after the Sabbath" may also refer to the morning part of the Sabbath day, although that usage of "morrow" is the least usual in Scripture, there being already another unrelated word used for that time of day⁷¹. Consider again the following verse:

Leviticus 23:¹⁵ And ye shall count unto you **from the morrow after the sabbath**, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; **seven sabbaths shall be complete**: ¹⁶ Even unto **the morrow after the seventh sabbath** shall ye number **fifty days**; and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the LORD.

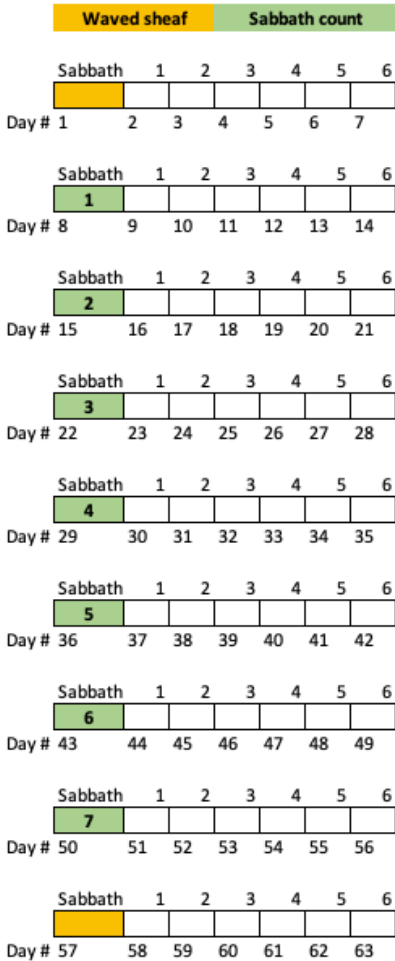
Sabbath in these verses is a reference to the seventh day of the week, as we will later on establish. From the "morrow after the Sabbath" when the wave sheaf of barley is offered, seven Sabbaths must be complete. The word translated as complete, is the following in Hebrew:

8549. תָּמִיִּם **tâmîym**, *taw-meem'*; from 8552; *entire* (lit.), fig. or mor.); also (as noun) *integrity, truth*:—without blemish, complete, full, perfect, sincerely (-ity), sound, without spot, undefiled, upright (-ly), whole.

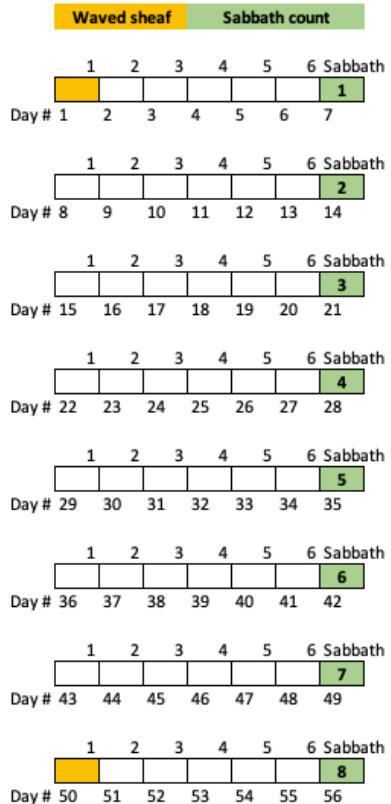
Apart from its meaning of moral integrity or without blemish, in all its other uses it always refers to the whole, the entirety, the totality or completeness of what is being referred⁷². So we see that from the day on which the wave sheaf offering was offered, seven complete

⁷¹ 1242. בֹּקֶר **bôqer**, *bo'-ker*; from 1289; prop. *dawn* (as the *break* of day); gen. *morning*:—(+) day, early, morning, morrow.

⁷² Leviticus 3:9; 25:30; Joshua 10:13; Psalms 119:80; Proverbs 1:12; Ezekiel 15:5.



full Sabbaths must be counted. In other words, a partial Sabbath cannot be counted. The Sabbath must have been whole, complete, finished, from evening to morning or from night to day. Considering that the Omer was offered at the time of the morning sacrifice, that is, between 8am and 9am, in case it was offered on a Sabbath, the first complete Sabbath would only occur seven days later. The count would



thus no longer be fifty days, as the verse indicates, but 57 days. And if the count is made from the same Sabbath of the waved sheaf, which implies setting aside the concept of seven **complete** Sabbaths, it would end up being 43 days instead of 50. Thus, regardless of how the counting is done, it never reaches 50 days.

But, if the counting begins the day after the Sabbath, as the preponderant use of the translation of that word suggests, then **both the concept of seven complete, whole, entire Sabbaths** between the wave-sheaf offering of barley and the wave-sheaf offering of wheat, **as well as the concept of 50 days** between the Sabbath preceding the wave-sheaf offering of barley and the wave-sheaf offering of wheat, would remain intact.

Additionally, let us consider the death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ. Christ is the first-fruits of those who have slept⁷³. Thus, Christ lived in His experience what the Jewish ritual typified, specifically as it is related to the first-fruits. The ritual foreshadowed the following:

Leviticus 23:⁹ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, ¹⁰ Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest: ¹¹ 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.

The term "before the Lord" implies before the presence or face of the Lord. For Jesus, this meant that He would stand before the presence of His Father as a wave offering of the first-fruits of barley, symbolic of the saved who slept, on the following day after the Sabbath within the feast of Unleavened Bread. We find evidence of the fulfillment in the verses detailing the events surrounding the resurrection of Jesus. Mary Magdalene went first to the tomb, on the first day of the week, while it was still dark. Seeing the stone removed from the tomb, she runs to the disciples to tell them that the body of the Lord had been taken away. Peter and John run to see if this was so, and find the

⁷³ 1 Corinthians 15:20

tomb open and the linen cloth neatly folded. John, who narrates in the third person, believed, not yet understanding the Scriptures, and they both return to their own home⁷⁴. Mary Magdalene, who had returned with them to the tomb from behind, stays there:

John 20:¹¹ But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, *and looked* into the sepulchre, ¹² And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. ¹³ And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. ¹⁴ And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. ¹⁵ Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. ¹⁶ Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master. ¹⁷ **Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father:** but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and *to* my God, and your God. ¹⁸ Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and *that* he had spoken these things unto her.

What did we notice, early in the morning of the first day of the week? That Jesus Christ had not yet ascended to His Father. For that reason, Jesus Christ tells Mary Magdalene, "touch me not". Literally, Jesus was asking her not only to do not touch Him, but to do not stop Him⁷⁵. Jesus, before receiving recognition of His followers, would present Himself to His Father and be accepted as the first-fruits of those who

⁷⁴ John 20:1-10

⁷⁵ 680. ἅπτομαι **haptōmai**, *hap'-tom-ahēe*; reflex. of 681; prop. to *attach* oneself to, i.e. to *touch* (in many implied relations):—touch.

slept. After this happened on the first day of the week, Christ returns to the disciples, and can say the following:

John 20:²⁴ But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵ The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, **Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.** ²⁶ And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: *then* came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace *be* unto you. ²⁷ Then saith he to Thomas, **Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side:** and be not faithless, but believing. ²⁸ And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. ²⁹ Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed *are* they that have not seen, and *yet* have believed.

Jesus Christ invites Thomas to touch Him, something that Mary was previously prevented from doing. After meeting with Mary Magdalene and before meeting with Thomas, Jesus Christ ascended to the Father and was presented as the first-fruit before the Lord. Since Mary Magdalene met Jesus Christ early on the first day of the week, then it seals the understanding that the wave sheaf offering was the day after the Sabbath.

The starting point of the count is the following, in reference to the feast of the wave sheaf of barley during the feast of Unleavened Bread:

Leviticus 23:¹¹ 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.

The sheaf is waved the day after the “Sabbath.” This word in the original Hebrew language is the following:

7676. שַׁבָּת **shabbâth**, *shab-bawth*’; intens. from 7673; *intermission*, i.e. (spec.) the *Sabbath*:—(+ every) sabbath.

Then, “Sabbath” is referring the seventh day of the week. We know that it refers to that day, because that same word is used in the same context for the Sabbath on the seventh day of the week.

Leviticus 23:³ Six days shall work be done: but **the seventh day is the sabbath of rest**, an holy convocation; ye shall do no work *therein*: it is the **sabbath** of the LORD in all your dwellings.

Contrary to tradition, the first and seventh day of Unleavened Bread are not called Sabbaths, but days of holy convocation.

Leviticus 23:⁷ In the first day ye shall have an holy **convocation**: ye shall do no servile work therein. ⁸ But ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD seven days: in the seventh day is an holy **convocation**: ye shall do no servile work *therein*.

“Convocation” is the translation of the following Hebrew word:

4744. מִקְרָא **miqrâ**’, *mik-raw*’; from 7121; something *called out*, i.e. a public *meeting* (the act, the persons, or the place); also a *rehearsal*:—assembly, calling, convocation, reading.

The word used for these days is not Sabbath, but *miqra*, which means a call to a meeting, convocation, reading, assembly, etc. The only day that can properly be called Sabbath in the week of Unleavened Bread is the seventh day of the week. It is true that there is a holiday called Sabbath that is not the seventh day of the week, but is found in the feast of Trumpets and Atonement⁷⁶ in the seventh month. Since Trumpets is the 1st day and Atonement is the 10th day of the seventh

⁷⁶ Leviticus 23:24, 32; 16:31

lunar month of the year, at least always one would fall on any day of the week.

Now, returning to the count of the waved sheaf of wheat, it was also waved the day after the Sabbath, that is, always a Sunday. In keeping the feast of Weeks, we read:

Leviticus 23:¹⁵ And ye shall count unto you **from the morrow after the sabbath**, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete:

The starting point for the count is the day on which the wave sheaf of barley was offered, which was the day following the Sabbath, referring to the seventh day of the week. To reach the day of Weeks or Pentecost, you must count seven complete Sabbaths, and the day after the seventh Sabbath there will be 50 days. This makes it evident and seals the interpretation that the referenced Sabbath can only refer to the seventh day of the week. Because there are seven cycles of seven days. Because there are seven Sabbaths. Because the beginning of the count and the end of the count is framed within these Sabbaths. Someone could persist in going against a testimony as clear as that which the Scripture gives, and affirm that the counting is not done from the day after the Sabbath, but from the *miqra*, that is, counting from the second day of the feast of Unleavened Bread, and consistency requires that seven *miqras* must be counted, and then we will see how difficult it is to determine the date for the feast of Weeks while reaching the required 50 days. Additionally, we highlight the fact that the Sabbath of the seventh day of the week in Lev. 23:3 is also called a *miqra*. This does not mean that the *miqra* days are Sabbaths, but that the Sabbath is a *miqra* day, that is, a day of convocation.

Appendix D: Modern times search of the Abib

Note that in this record, Abib was always a whole month later than what the Jews celebrated. The discrepancy with today might be explained by the remarkable colder times at that time due to what is called the Little Ice Age⁷⁷.

“This table is founded on the Rabinnical calculation which makes the first day of Nisan commence with the new moon, *nearest* the day on which the sun enters Aries (or at the vernal equinox.) It ought, however, to be observed, that the Caraites maintain that the Rabbins have changed the calendar, so that to present the first fruits of the barley harvest on the 16th of Nisan, as the law directs, would be impossible, if the time is reckoned according to the Rabinnical calculation, since barley is not in the ear, at Jerusalem, until a month later. The accounts of many travellers confirm the position of the Caraites. Mr. E. S. Colman, a converted Jew, who has been employed as a missionary to the Jews in Palestine, in an article published in the American Biblical Repository, for April, 1840, makes the following remarks on this subject: The season for the feast of unleavened bread is thus defined in Exodus 13:4. ‘This day come ye out, in the month Abib.’ Also Exodus 23:15, ‘Thou shalt keep the feast of unleavened bread in the time appointed of the month Abib’—Lemoed chodesh hââbib, literally, ‘at the season of the month of green corn,’ as is evident from the parallel word in Exodus 9:31, ‘and the flax and the barley was smitten, for the barley was (‘Abib’) in the ear.’ But at present, the Jews in the Holy land have not the least regard to this season appointed and identified by Jehovah, but follow the rules prescribed in the oral law, viz. by adding a month to every second or third year, and thus making the lunar year correspond with the solar. And when the fifteenth day of Nisan, according to this computation, arrives, they begin to celebrate the above-mentioned feast, although

⁷⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Little_Ice_Age

the *chedesh haabib* may have passed, or not yet come. In general, the proper season after they have celebrated it, is a whole month, which is just reversing the command in the law.—Nothing like ears of green corn have I seen around Jerusalem at the celebration of this festival. The Caraites observe it later than the Rabbinical, for they are guided by *Abib*, and they charge the latter with eating unleavened bread during that feast. I think, myself, that the charge is well founded. If this feast of unleavened bread is not celebrated in its season, every successive festival is dislocated from its appropriate period, since the month *Abib* is laid down in the law of God as the epoch from which every other is to follow. In an ‘Economical Calendar’ of Palestine, which has been prepared with the greatest care, is the following remark under the month commencing with the new moon of *April*. ‘Wheat, zea or spelt and *barley*, ripen.’ On the whole, it is probable that the Jewish year, in the time of the Old Testament writers, commenced with the new moon of *April*, instead of that of *March*. ...

The Jewish Rabbins say, that *March* and *Sept*, instead of *April* and *October*, were the initial months of these two years. That they were so at a late period is admitted, but the change was probably owing to the example of the Romans, who began their year with the month of *March*. The Jews being pleased with their example in this respect, or overruled by their authority, adopted the same practice. That this is the most probable statement, is evident also from the fact, that the position of the Rabbins is opposed not only by *Josephus*, but by the usage of the Syriac and Arabic languages; from the fact also, that the prescribed observances of the three great festival days will not agree with the months of *March* and *September*, as has been shown by *Michaelis*: see *Commentat. de Mensibus Hebraorum in Soc. Reg. Goett.* 1763—1768, p 10. et. seq. ...

It will be seen, therefore, if the Caraites are correct, (and the Mosaic law settles the question that the Passover cannot be observed till the barley harvest is ripe,) that an astronomical calculation of the

day of the week on which the first full moon after the vernal equinox in A. D. 33, would fall, cannot prove the day of the week on which the true Passover would be observed that year, and consequently cannot prove the year of the crucifixion. We said it could not prove the day of the week on which the true Passover would be observed: if the first full moon after the vernal equinox in 33, came on Friday, the next full moon would be 29 1-2 days later. But as the Jews reckoned from the first appearance of the moon. Which is seen sometimes 29 and sometimes not till 30 after the appearance of the previous moon, we should have no means of knowing whether the 14th day from its appearance would be on Saturday, 29 days from the 14th of the previous moon, or on Sunday, 30 days from the same period. If, therefore, the Caraites are correct, while the calculations of Ferguson as to the day of the week on which would fall the first full moon after the vernal equinox, are perfectly correct, they give us no certain clue to the day of the week on which the true Passover came, and consequently cannot determine the year of the crucifixion.

Again, even if the Rabinical Jews were correct, with regard to the *moon* in which the Passover should be kept, and we could ascertain to a certainty, the *day* on which the *astronomical full moon* would fall, yet that might be *one day* earlier or one day later than the 14th from the day of its appearance. The changing of the moon early or late in the day, would make one day's difference in the time of its appearance; and therefore the astronomical full of the moon would not, within one day, determine the Jewish 14th of the moon." {HST December 5, 1843, p. 134.15}

Appendix E: Contemporary search of the Abib

The following table is the results of search conducted by Nehemiah Gordon.

Year	Latest search aviv not found	Earliest search aviv found	New moon post aviv
2000	Mar-12	Apr-04	Apr-07
2001	Mar-02	Mar-11	Mar-27
2002*		Mar-14	Mar-16
2003	Mar-04	Mar-30	Apr-04
2004	Mar-08	Mar-22	Mar-23
2005*		Mar-08	Mar-12
2006	Feb-28	Mar-28	Mar-31
2007*		Mar-18	Mar-21
2008	Mar-06	Mar-23	Apr-08
2009*		Mar-26	Mar-28
2010*		Mar-12	Mar-18
2011	Mar-22	Mar-30	Apr-05
2012*		Mar-22	Mar-24
2013*		Mar-11	Mar-14
2014	Mar-02	Mar-25	Apr-01
2015	Feb-27	Mar-15	Mar-22
2016	Mar-10	Mar-27	Apr-10
* Not available. Abib always found on first search.			

The summary is as follows:

Event	Minimum	Median	Maximum
Latest search aviv not found	February 27 (in 2015)	Mar-05	March 22 (in 2011)
Earliest search aviv found	March 8 (in 2005)	Mar-22	April 4 (in 2000)
New moon post-aviv	March 12 (in 2005)	Mar-27	April 10 (in 2016)

Have you ever wondered if the Bible refers to or presents some kind of calendar? What cycle governed the religious activities of God's people? How were the units of time determined and measured? The Scripture makes reference to months, days and years among others. When does the year begin according to the Word of God? Does it begin according to our calendar? What determines its beginning and end? What does the Biblical evidence tell us?

BEGINNING OF THE BIBLICAL YEAR

