

BEIT TEFILLAH



Omer Count

Why We Count the Omer Like Paul

Why This is Important

How You Count the Omer
Determines When You Celebrate
Shavu'ot/Feast of Weeks, aka
Pentecost

How Would Paul Have Counted the Omer?

⁶ And after Paul knew that some of the people were of the Sadducees and some [were] of the Pharisees, he cried out in the assembly, "Men, my brothers, I am a Pharisee, the son of Pharisees and concerning the hope of the resurrection of the dead, I am being judged."
(Acts 23:6, Magiera Translation of the Peshitta)

How Would Paul Have Counted the Omer?

Premise 1: If Paul was a Pharisee, then he would use the Pharisaic method of counting the days/*omer* to Shavuot.

Premise 2: Paul was a Pharisee.

Conclusion: Paul used the Pharisaic method of counting the days/*omer* to Shavuot.

Following the Logical Argument form Modus Ponens (MP):

If P, then Q.

P.

Therefore, Q.

Outline

- **Background**
- *Mimacharat HaShabbat*
- **Two Vignettes**
- **Joshua 5**
- **Majority View vs Rabbinic View
vs Evidence that Predates
Chanukah**
- **Summary**
- **Conclusions**

Background 1

- **Why do most Messianics count the days to Shavuot like Sadducees instead of like Paul?**
- **Why do Orthodox Jews count like Paul, but most followers of Yeshua do not?**

Background 2

- **Orthodox Jews (and Pharisees like Paul) counted from the day after the annual Sabbath on the first day of Unleavened Bread**
- **Sadducees counted from the Yom Rishon/Sunday in the midst of Unleavened Bread**

Background 3

- **The Essenes/Qumran community used a fixed, solar calendar and also started the count on a Sunday, but on the Sunday after Unleavened Bread was complete (i.e. the 26th day of the month)**

Acknowledgment

- **Insights into *mimacharat hashabbat* in this study were either derived from or inspired by the research of Daniel Gregg in his work, *The Scroll of Biblical Chronology, Vols 1 and 2*, available at torahtimes.org**

mimacharat hashabbat

מִמְּחָרַת הַשַּׁבָּת

Read

Vayyiqra/Leviticus 23: 5 – 17

Devarim/Deuteronomy 16: 9-10

Now, Let's Study

- The Karaite sect of Judaism claims a spiritual heritage from the Sadducees. They make a claim that the Sadducee's method of counting is the only correct way to count, based solely on the Scriptures.

Now, let's study and examine this claim, bearing in mind that "words mean things"

The מ Means Something

מִמַּחֲרַת הַשַּׁבָּת

- *From* in Hebrew is מן, and when prefixed to a word only one letter is used: מ
- It occurs in all three texts:
 - Vayyiqra/Leviticus 23:11, 23:15, & 23:16
- Most translations render the *mem* as "from" in vs. 15, but as "on" in vs. 11, and not at all in vs. 16.
- How does your translation read?

Acknowledgment: Insights into *mimacharat hashabbat* derived from or

The מ Means Something

מִפְּחָרַת הַשָּׁבֹת

- According to the Gesenius Hebrew Lexicon מָחָר is derived from יוֹם אַחֵר
 - “Day After,” “Morrow/Tomorrow” or “Time to Come”
 - **First use of *machar*: Bereshiyt/Genesis 30:33** (in the phrase *b’yom machar*)
 - **How is *machar* used in its first use?**

The מ Means Something

Vayyiqra/Leviticus 23:16A

עַד מִמָּחָרֵת הַשַּׁבָּת הַשְּׁבִיעִת תִּסְפְּרוּ חֲמִשִּׁים יוֹם

- **Literally:** *Until from the morrow of the seventh Sabbath counting a fiftieth day (not count fifty days)*
- What this means: If we we're consistent in understanding מ = "from," when we get to Vayyiqra 23:16 we see "until *from* the morrow of the seventh Sabbath counting a fiftieth day," then the text only indicates that the "fiftieth day" is located somewhere beyond the seventh Sabbath just like like the *seven sabbaths* in vs. 15 are located beyond the Sabbath.

Which Shabbat is “the Shabbat”?

מִפְּחֻרְתַּת הַשַּׁבָּת

- **Is the weekly Sabbath meant, or is it the Festival Sabbath (the first day of Unleavened Bread)?**
- **Two vignettes indicate which is one meant**
 - **Exodus and the Giving of the Torah**
 - **Crucifixion, Waving, Resurrection and the *Ruach HaQodesh***

Does “Shabbat” Only Mean “The 7th Day of the Week”?

Shabbat = 7th Day of the Week is the primary but not the exclusive meaning:

See Vayyiqra/Leviticus 25:8:

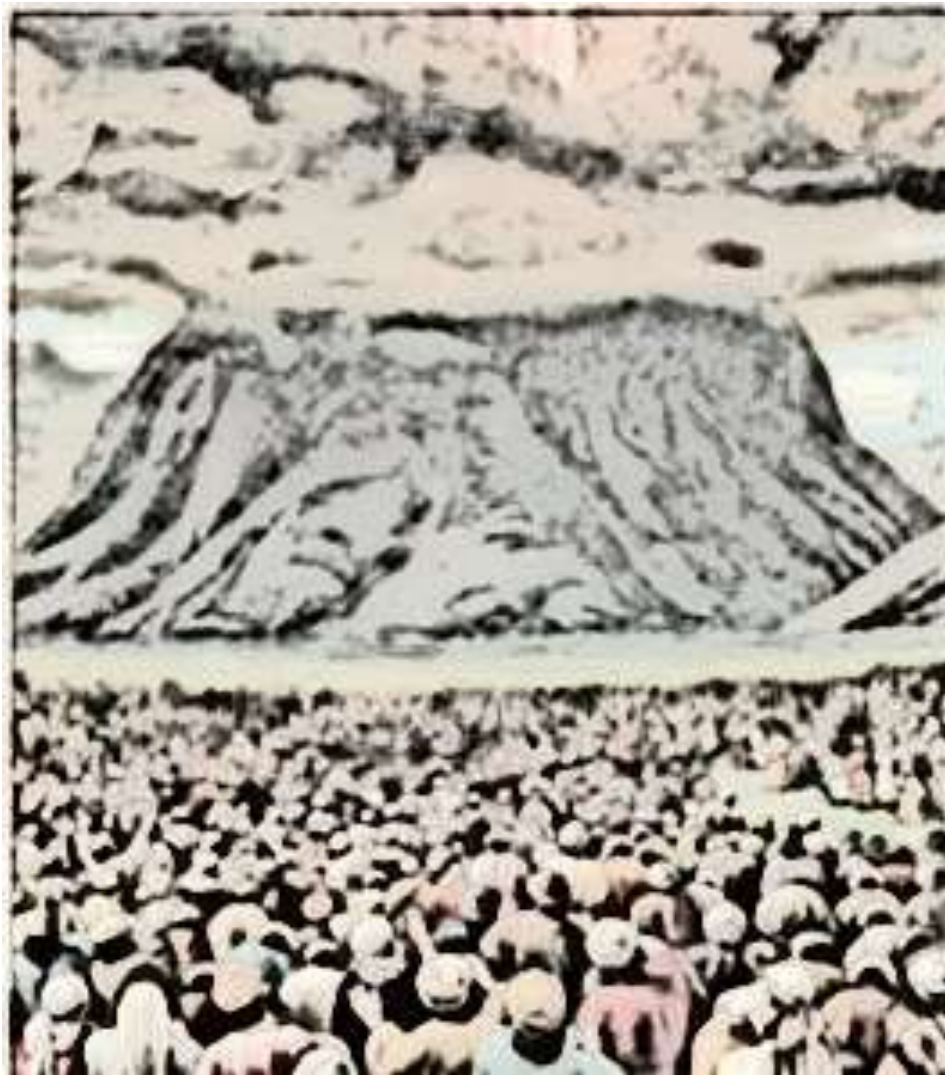
- (NJB) "You will count seven **weeks** of years *sheva shabbatot shanim* (שִׁבְעַ שַׁבְּתוֹת שָׁנִים) -- seven times seven years, that is to say a period of seven weeks of years, forty-nine years.
- Joshua 5:12a: וַיִּשְׁבֹּת הַמָּן מִמָּחָרָת
And the manna **ceased** from the morrow after...

Which Shabbat is “the Shabbat”?

מִפְּחֻרַת הַשַּׁבָּת

- **One scholar’s view/conjecture is that the word “Shabbat” is meant to be in a participle formulation meaning “ceasing” (as in “the Day after ceasing to eat leaven”) but since the Karaites were the ones who “vowel pointed” the Masoretic text, it was pointed as “Shabbat.”**

Vignette 1: Giving of the Torah



Vignette 1: Giving of the Torah

- **To start with, the Karaites would argue that the only feast called a “Sabbath” in Scripture is Yom Kippur. We will address that in Vignette 2**
- **Although the Scriptures do not specifically say this, a very ancient tradition [associates the giving of the Torah with Shavuot](#)**
- **The math from the Passover in Egypt to the Ten Words from Mount Sinai supports this view**

Vignette 1: Giving of the Torah

- **If the giving of the Ten Words was on a Sunday, that means the previous two days were “Friday” and “Sabbath”**
- **Israel is told to wash their garments and prepare themselves for two days and to be ready for the third day (Exodus 19:10-11)**
- **Thus, if the Ten Words were given on a Sunday, then that previous Sabbath.... is a work day**

Vignette 1: Giving of the Torah

- **Does it really make any sense for YHWH to order Israel to work on (desecrate) Sabbath, then tell them:**

Shemot 20: 8 – 11 (HRV) Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it, Set-Apart. 9 Six days shall you labor and do all your work, 10 But the seventh day is a Sabbath unto YHWH your Elohim. In it, you shall not do any manner of work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your manservant, nor your maidservant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger that is within your gates. 11 For in six days, YHWH made heaven and earth; the sea, and all that in them is, and rested on the seventh day. Wherefore YHWH blessed the Sabbath day, and Set-It-Apart.

Vignette 1: Giving of the Torah

- Is “the Seventh Day” a Sunday?

We may be able to determine which day of the week the Ten Words were given by a close look at **Shemot/Exodus 24**:

- After meeting with the Seventy Elders of Israel on the day YHWH spoke from the Mountain, Moshe goes further up the mountain. Then we read:

Shemot/Exodus 24: 16 – 18 (HRV) 16 And the glory of YHWH abode upon mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days: and the seventh day He called unto Moshe, out of the midst of the cloud. **17** And the appearance of the glory of YHWH, was like devouring fire on the top of the mount, in the eyes of the children of Yisra’el. **18** And Moshe entered into the midst of the cloud, and went up into the mount: and Moshe was in the mount forty days and forty nights.

“Torah Day”

“Six Days”

“Seventh Day”

Thus, “Torah Day” =
7th Day = Shabbat

Vignette 1: Giving of the Torah

- **Is “the Seventh Day” a Sunday?**
- **What if “the seventh day” really means “the seventh day”? Thus...if six more days pass, and then the seventh day comes, it is the **Sabbath** day.**
- **If so, this shows us that the day of the feast, after which the six days are counted, was also Shabbat....Thus, from Scripture, the giving of the Ten Words was on Sabbath, not Sunday**

Vignette 1: Giving of the Torah

- **If you believe that Shavuot is the anniversary of the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai**
- **....and you believe that Shavuot is always on a Sunday**
- **.....then do you also believe that YHWH ordered the Children of Israel to work on the Sabbath before Shavuot?**
- **Do you *really* believe **that**???**

Vignette 2: Crucifixion, Waving, Resurrection and the *Ruach HaQodesh*



Vignette 2: Crucifixion, Waving,

Resurrection and the *Ruach HaQodesh*

- **These topics of the execution of Yeshua of Nazareth, the waving of the Omer, the Resurrection and the coming of the Ruach HaQodesh are all interconnected. One person has described it as a “Rubik’s Cube.”**

Vignette 2: Crucifixion, Waving, Resurrection and the *Ruach HaQodesh*

- **The 50 days ending at Shavuot are counted from the waving of the *omer* of Barley**
- **The day the count begins determines when it ends**
- **So, the question is: When was the *omer* of barley waved?**
- **This brings us back to the readings from Vayyiqra 23 and Devarim 16**

Vignette 2: Crucifixion, Waving, Resurrection and the *Ruach HaQodesh*

- **It also brings us back to the Karaite assertion that the first day of Unleavened Bread is never referred to as a Sabbath in the Tanakh**
- **This is accurate, as far as it goes, but it is not the whole truth. The first day of Unleavened Bread is called a **Sabbath** in the Ketuvim Netzarim: (next slide)**

Vignette 2: Crucifixion, Waving, Resurrection and the *Ruach HaQodesh*

- **John 19:31 (NASB)** Then the Jews, because it was the day of preparation, so that the bodies would not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and *that* they might be taken away.
- (See also Mat. 28:1; Mark 16:2; Luke 24:1; John 20:1)
- **Based on this passage below, I don't think the standard Friday evening – Sunday morning chronology is possible:**
- **Matthew 12:40 (NASB)** for just as JONAH WAS THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS IN THE BELLY OF THE SEA MONSTER, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

Vignette 2: Crucifixion, Waving, Resurrection and the *Ruach HaQodesh*

- **The determination of the chronology of the Passover and Crucifixion really are a study on their own.....however, if it is NOT a standard Fri-Sun chronology it means:**
- There are at least two Sabbaths during that week
- The day the *omer* was waved in the Temple was not on a Sunday. Some assume that the Saducees controlled the Temple and thus the calendar. The Jewish historian Josephus refutes this:

History

Josephus writes:

“But on the second day of unleavened bread, which is the sixteenth day of the month, they first partake of the fruits of the earth, for before that day they do not touch them... (*Antiquities of the Jews* 3.250).

Comment: Elsewhere Josephus tells us that the Sadducees, when they were in authority, had to adopt the doctrines of the Pharisees due to the popularity of those views (their own views here being held only by a rich and well off few). (See Josephus, *Antiquities*, Book XVIII, 1:3-4).

History

Josephus and First Fruits

- **What this means is that the 2nd Temple operated on the Pharisaic determination of First Fruits, Aviv/Nisan 16.**
- **At dark after Aviv/Nisan 15 (even if it was now Sabbath), they would reap the *omer* in order for it to be waved at dawn in the Temple, and the grain offering is placed on the altar until the following dawn.**
- **Meaning: At the time of the Second Temple, the 50 day count started on the day the omer of barley was waved: Aviv/Nisan 16**

First Fruits

“Thurs” 14 Aviv	“Fri” 15 Aviv	“Sabbath” 16 Aviv	“Sun” 17 Aviv
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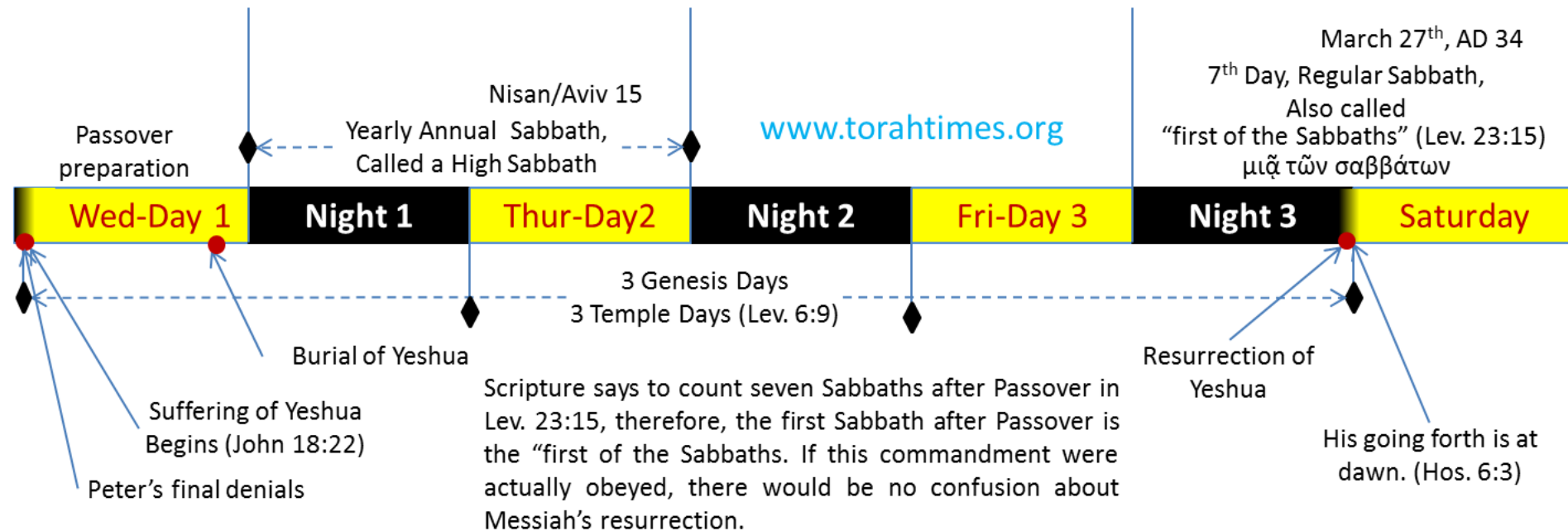
- If the crucifixion was on “Thurs,” the Festival Sabbath is on 15 Aviv and First Fruits *omer* was waved on Sabbath, 16 Aviv at dawn
- If Yeshua arose at *havdallah* at the end of that Sabbath or dawn on 17 Aviv, his resurrection is still associated with First Fruits. It is only in the (untenable, in my view) Fri-Sun chronology that Yeshua arose as the omer was being waved

Another View

The Jewish Messiah, for all Israel:

He wasn't raised on Sunday. The Scripture says "first of the Sabbaths"

(Mt. 28:1; Mk. 16:2; Luke 24:1; John 20:1).



(This view is from of Daniel Gregg, author of *The Scroll of Biblical Chronology* and translator/editor of the *Good News of Messiah*)

The Ruach's Shavuot Seal

Acts 2:1-4 (CJB) 1 The festival of Shavu'ot arrived, and the believers all gathered together in one place. 2 Suddenly there came a sound from the sky like the roar of a violent wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3 Then they saw what looked like tongues of fire, which separated and came to rest on each one of them. 4 They were all filled with the Ruach HaKodesh and began to talk in different languages, as the Spirit enabled them to speak.

Comment: The “converts” or exiles we read about later this chapter would have been associated with the Pharisees. By coming on Shavuot when they were in “the House,” the *Ruach* confirmed their counting method

Which Calendar Would Paul Use?

Acts 20:16 (CJB) For Sha'ul had decided to bypass Ephesus on his voyage, in order to avoid losing time in the province of Asia, because he was hurrying to get to Yerushalayim, if possible in time to celebrate *Shavu'ot*.

1 Corinthians 16:8 (CJB) But I will remain in Ephesus until Shavu'ot,

Question/Comment: Paul described himself as a Pharisee (Acts 23:6).

Joshua 5

Joshua 5

Joshua 5 is often used as proof that the Aviv/Nisan 16 method of counting is incorrect. An examination of this passage will show that it just is not so.

Let's examine:

Joshua 4:19 (NASB) Now the people came up from the Jordan on the tenth of the first month and camped at Gilgal on the eastern edge of Jericho.

Joshua 5

Joshua 5:10-12 (NASB) ¹⁰ While the sons of Israel camped at Gilgal they observed the Passover on the evening of the fourteenth day of the month on the desert plains of Jericho. ¹¹ On the day after the Passover, on that very day, they ate some of the produce of the land, unleavened cakes and parched *grain*. ¹² The manna ceased on the day after they had eaten some of the produce of the land, so that the sons of Israel no longer had manna, but they ate some of the yield of the land of Canaan during that year.

Joshua 5

Thus, some conclude that since Israel celebrated Passover on the 14th and ate the grain of Canaan on the next day, they must have waved the *omer* on the 15th (presumably a Sunday), though the text does not say they did wave the omer of barley at all.

- **This conclusion is disproved by re-reading Exodus 23:16 and Leviticus 23:10.**
- **It is from “**your harvest**” that is waved, not captured grain grown by someone else.**
- **The Talmud (Rosh Hashanah 13a) has a discussion about Joshua 5, and answers the argument by asking if the barley could have grown from nothing to ripeness in just five days (or as above, if the heathen could raise the crop to be harvested by the Israelites and waved) .**

Majority View vs Rabbinic View vs Evidence that Predates Chanukah

The Majority View

The majority of Nazarenes/Messianics follow the logic of the Karaite sect of Judaism on this topic. Karaite Judaism holds that Shavuot (Pentecost) always comes on Yom Rishon/Sunday. Hence, they believe that the original, historical Shavuot, (when God met with the seventy elders of Israel on Mt. Sinai) was on Yom Rishon. The reason is that calculating the correct date of Shavuot depends on counting 50 days which start "in the day after the Sabbath" and they believe this "Sabbath" to be the weekly Sabbath (and that "Sabbath" always means "the seventh day of the week" with the exception of when the Scripture calls Yom Kippur a "Sabbath").

The Rabbinic View

- **The rabbis understand “the sabbath” reference in Vayyiqra 23:11 as the “sabbath” of the first day of Unleavened Bread, i.e. always on Nisan/Aviv 15. Thus the waving of first fruits is always on the next day, Nisan/Aviv 16. The rabbis “solved” the “seven sabbaths” problem by interpreting ‘sabbaths’ as ‘weeks’ in vs. 15 and 16. Some who defend the Karaite interpretation have scolded me, saying: “You shouldn’t always follow the rabbis.”**

The Rabbinic View

- **We agree, of course, that a follower of Yeshua should not always follow the rabbis. Indeed, the rabbis were wrong to interpret “sabbaths” as weeks. However, neither should one always follow the Sadducees or the Karaites.**
- **The traditional Jewish understanding that “sabbath” in the Hebrew text of Vayyiqra 23:11 refers to the first day of Unleavened Bread pre-dates the rabbis, pre-dates the Pharisees, pre-dates the first Chanukah and the entire Maccabean revolt.**

Evidence that Pre-Dates the Chanukah

- **This evidence comes from the Greek Septuagint translation, abbreviated LXX, which stands for the 70 Jewish scholars credited with translation of the LXX from the Hebrew into Greek in Alexandria. The LXX was the very first translation of the Torah into a foreign language that we know circulated in the ‘civilized’ world. The five books of Torah were made about 250 BCE.**

Evidence that Pre-Dates the Chanukah

In *Vayyiqra*/Leviticus 23:11, the LXX reads,

1473	3588	1887	3588	4413	399	1473	3588	
υμῖν	τῇ	ἐπαύριον	τῆς	πρώτης	ανοίσει	αὐτὸ	ὁ	
for you.	On the	next day	of the	first	[³ shall offer	⁴ it	¹ the	
2409		2532	4160		1722	3588	2250	3739

- “τῇ ἐπαύριον τῆς πρώτης” (the tomorrow of the first day). The Hebrew reads, ‘from the tomorrow of the Sabbath’ *mimacharat hashabbat*. So the LXX is translating ‘the Sabbath’ in vs. 11 as “*protos*,” the ‘first day’ (of unleavened bread).
- *Tongue in cheek: I’m waiting for the argument that this proves that Sabbath is now the first day of the week.*

Evidence that Pre-Dates the Chanukah

- In Vayyiqra 23: 15, the LXX translates ‘the morrow of the Sabbath’ to refer to the same day (τῆς ἐπαύριον τῶν σαββάτων). The Hebrew has ‘from the tomorrow of the Sabbath.’ **What this shows is that the LXX translators regarded Vayyiqra 23:11 as referring to the annual Sabbath, and that they also regarded the Greek for ‘the sabbath’ to refer to the same (τῶν σαββάτων). It is clear in the context that ‘the Sabbath’ was interpreted as referring to a singular “annual Sabbath,” the first day of unleavened bread.**

Other Ancient Evidence

- **Besides the LXX, both the Aramaic Targums and 1st century CE historian Josephus (discussed earlier) tell us that ‘the Sabbath’ in Vayyiqra 23:11 was understood to be the first day of unleavened bread.**
- **Elsewhere Josephus tells us that the Sadducees, when they were in authority, had to adopt the doctrines of the Pharisees due to the popularity of those views (their own views here being held only by a rich and well off few). (See Josephus, Antiquities, Book XVIII, 1:3-4).**

Summary

- **1. The Karaites are correct to count seven Sabbaths, and the Rabbis are wrong to ignore them.**
- **2. The historical understanding of this verse dating from before the time of the Maccabees begins the count on the day after 15th of Aviv/Nisan.**
- **3. The Ruach HaQodesh validated what became known as the Pharisaic counting method in Acts 2:4.**
- **4. The Rabbis are wrong to change "sabbaths" in vs. 15 to "weeks" or the same change in vs. 16, but...**
- **5. The Rabbis are right to reckon the count to Shavuot from the 16th of Aviv/Nisan**

Conclusions

- **From historical writings, then, we see that in the 2nd Temple period, the Temple operated using the counting method of the Pharisees (counting the ‘omer from Nisan/Aviv 16).**
- **When the Ruach came in Acts 2 on Shavuot, the “converts” or exiles in Jerusalem on Shavout would have been associated with the Pharisees.**

Conclusions

- **By the Ruach coming on Shavuot when the talmidim and converts were in the House (i.e. the Temple), I conclude that the Ruach confirmed the counting method then in use. Remembering that Paul identified himself as a Pharisee, he would have used that counting method when he says that he is trying to get back to Jerusalem in time for Shavuot (Acts 20:16).**

Summary and Conclusions

What We Talked About

- **Background**
- *Mimacharat HaShabbat*
- **Two Vignettes**
- **Joshua 5**
- **Majority View vs Rabbinic View vs Evidence that Predates Chanukah**

Summary

- The literal interpretation, including all the *mems*, supports the Pharisee's method of counting
- The followers of Yeshua called the first day of Unleavened Bread a high (or great) Sabbath
- Paul's method of counting has Scriptural support

Conclusion: When is Shavuot (1)?

- There is strong evidence that the Ten Words were given on Sabbath
- No matter how good an argument that the Karaites, Boethusians, Sadducees and modern Messianics might make, YHWH seems to have validated the Pharisaic method by sending the *Ruach HaQodesh* on the believers, the Netzarim, in Acts 2 on Shavuot according to their counting method
- Thus, I conclude from Scripture that Nazarene Shavuot = counting from Aviv/Nisan 16

Conclusion: When is Shavuot (2)?

- In the 2nd Temple period, the *omer* count was always conducted in the morning
- Thus, for 2020, if we start with Passover corresponding to either the Hillel II “fixed calendar” or the New Moon sighting from Israel, and use the historical counting method at the time of Acts 2, Day 1 of the *omer* count is on the morning of **4/10/2020**. The 50th day of the count will be reached on the morning of **5/29/2020**.
- The 50th day is Shavuot, the Feast of Weeks

Questions/Comments