

# IS BARLEY USED TO DETERMINE THE FIRST MONTH? “Calendar Part II”

A Message given on Sabbath  
by Elder Mike Abbaduska

Sections [96-103] Barley and the Wave Sheaf Taken from Herb Solinsky’s “*Treatise on the Biblical Calendar*”, second edition, completed on April 3, 2009. This is a free download, [biblical-calendar.org/tbc2.pdf](http://biblical-calendar.org/tbc2.pdf) by Herb Solinsky. We acknowledge his research of thirty years.

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# IS BARLEY USED TO DETERMINE THE FIRST MONTH?

“Calendar Part II”  
Elder Mike Abbaduska

(A Sabbath Message at the Assembly...DVD)

Intro: Lev 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 first fruits of your harvest unto the priest:”

1. Some Elders teach that the harvest can not start till the wave sheaf is taken. Is this true?
2. Does the scripture teach or say that we must wave the sheaf before the harvest?
3. Can the harvest begin anytime...yes.
4. Some Assemblies say that the barley will be lost if it is not harvested early with the new moon before the equinox, change of the year? Is this true?
5. Is the barley condition an indicator of which moon to use, either before the equinox or after? No.

There is much confusion and poor understanding about the wave sheaf and how it is used in the keeping of Yahweh's torah Holy Days. This Sabbath message is presented as part two of a study to educate the body on the finding of Abib 1 and observing the proper days set in the scripture.

Every covenant believer should understand the biblical calendar and be able to state the scriptural rationale for selecting the proper new moon. Part one of this study proved that Israel, took the new moon after the equinox of March 20-23 to start the calendar until the illegal priesthods of the Pharisees changed this process to the moon closest to the equinox even if it is before. This study clarifies the issues concerning the barley and the wave sheaf. Basically we will find that the wave sheaf will always be available when a moon is used on or after the equinox. The wave sheaf will not be lost, and the harvest can begin anytime. In other words, with the correct moon on or after the equinox, Yahweh promises all the scriptures will be kept properly concerning the barley in all aspects of waving and harvest. We will look at the scriptures and historical evidence, or Torah-keeping, in use of the barley. Do not trust anyone. Study to show yourself approved unto Yahweh. After this study, a believer should be able to tell if his assembly is keeping the right biblical calendar days.

We will study Herb Solinsky's research paper, "Treatise on the Biblical Calendar", as a primary tool to evaluate the scriptures and assembly tradition among the Yahweh groups. Keep in mind again, Solinsky's paper is deep, objective research for truth. It is not a man's doctrine or tradition. The bibliography is the source of references that prove the conclusions and outcomes of the paper.

#### [96] Meaning of *aviv* from the *Mishnah*

The word *aviv* appears in the *Mishnah* (c. 200) in Kil'ayim 7 where translations give its meaning as "ears" or "green ears", although the context and commentary provide more understanding. The context involves a growing cereal plant in the ground where it should not be growing because its growth is a violation of Deut 22:9, which prohibits growing multiple crops together.

The passage bearing the word *aviv* along with comments appears on page 117 of BT-KI. The passage is: "R. Akiba said: If it [a growing cereal plant] has produced [only] blades, he must turn the soil; if it has reached the stage of green ears [= *aviv*], he must beat them out; if it has grown into corn, it must be burnt." Footnote 6 concerns "turn the soil", where it states, "So as to ensure that they do not grow again." Footnote 7 concerns "the stage of green ears", where it states, "I. e., before it has reached a third of its normal full growth." Footnote 8 concerns "grown into corn", where it states, "And make no use of either grain or stalk ...".

From this we see that the Rabbinic interpretation of *aviv* from c. 200 when the *Mishnah* was published is the first third of the ear development. This corresponds to the milky phase. On page 44 of H. L. Ginsberg 1982, where he translated Ex. 13:4, he translated *aviv* as “milky grain”. From the previous extensive discussion of Ex. 9:31-32, it has been concluded that *aviv* encompasses multiple stages of the development of barley including some or all of the dough phase, and therefore Ginsberg's viewpoint that *aviv* means “milky grain” contradicts the Tanak as does the position from the *Mishnah*.

[97] Ambiguity of Identifying the  
Month of *aviv* from the word *aviv*

Ex. 9:31-32 has shown that the meaning of *aviv* encompasses several stages of the development of ears of barley. In Israel the beginning of the barley harvest for each area spans a seven-week period. This is clear evidence that the word used for the first month, *aviv*, does not in itself define only one month for the whole of Israel. From the earliest stage of ears of barley in one part of Israel until the barley harvest is completed in Israel spans a time of four, or even five, months.

Because Lev. 2:14 uses *aviv* for any grains and any firstfruits of grains regardless of the stage of growth, the presence of *aviv* in the expression *chodesh ha aviv* is too general and hence not sufficiently specific to be able to determine when this month occurs from its description alone, if one entertains the hypothesis of totally avoiding the vernal equinox. If one wishes to propose that “month of *aviv*” is intended to mean “month of first *aviv*” (which the Tanak does not say) and desire

to apply this description in Israel to determine the first month, then this would frequently cause the first month to begin in February. In any event, the goal in this treatise is to base proposed practice for the biblical calendar on evidence from the Tanak. When a great deal of individual subjectivity in definition enters the scene, the result is irresolvable controversy.

Arbitrary definitions that have no basis in the Tanak must be rejected.

### [98] Josh 5:10-12 and the Date of the Wave Sheaf Offering

In the KJV, the Hebrew word translated “old corn” in Josh. 5:11, 12 is *avur*, Strong's number 5669. While it is an easy matter to check that all modern scholarly lexicons since the time of Gesenius (early nineteenth century) translate this word as “produce” rather than “old corn”, one should understand the reasons, further details, and the implications. It is true that the Hebrew dictionary at the back of Strong's concordance states that this word means “old corn”, but this dictionary was primarily made by volunteer students who were not scholars, and this should not be classified as a scholarly lexicon. Page 128 of Ellenbogen points out that the translation “old corn” was an interpretive explanation by the Jewish sage David Kimchi (1160 - 1235), and his influence (by later reputation) among the Jewish scholars responsible for the Hebrew portion of the King James Version led to its adoption of “old corn”. Ellenbogen writes that the Akkadian word *eburu* means produce and harvest (from its ancient contexts that have survived the ravages of time).

Often there is little distinction between the Semitic consonants “*b*” and “*v*”, and only the deletion of one dot changes the Hebrew letter bet (“*b*”) into vet (“*v*”), so that the Akkadian *eburu* is essentially *evuru* which is almost the Hebrew *avur* (“old corn” in the KJV). Ellenbogen also mentions similar words in Aramaic and Syriac with this meaning. This word is discussed on pages 39-40, 65-66 of Cohen 1978 where further references are given for the Semitic background of this word. Page 65 states, “Note finally that *avur* seems to be attested now on an ostrakon from Arad with the meaning ‘harvest-produce.’”

Near the end of Josh 5:12 the Hebrew word *tvuah* (Strong's number 8393) is translated “yield” which the Israelites ate later that year which would then have become stored grain. The word *tvuah* refers to food in storage in Lev. 25:22; II Chr. 32:28, although in other contexts its age is not relevant to its use, so that the meaning of *tvuah* includes both fresh produce and stored produce. Nevertheless, the contrast of *tvuah* with *avur* in the same context would further indicate that *avur* means fresh produce rather than old grain. A large quantity of old grain would more likely have been stored within the protected walls of Jericho rather than in the smaller less protected area of Gilgal (Josh 5:10), so the context further supports the view that *avur* means fresh produce rather than old grain. This is indirect contextual supporting evidence that *avur* means fresh produce.

According to Lev. 23:14 Israel was forbidden to eat of the new crop until the day of the wave sheaf offering. Num. 31:25-27; Deut. 20:14; Josh. 22:8 shows that the spoil of the enemy in

the land promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob was to become theirs even though they did not plant it. Hence the new produce was theirs. Thus the wave sheaf offering must have been performed by the date of Josh. 5:11 in order for the Israelites to have been permitted to eat that produce. Josh. 5:11 states “on the morrow of the Passover”, and this phrase in the Hebrew also occurs in Num. 33:3 where it is stated to be the 15th day of the first month. Thus Josh. 5:11 was the 15th day of the first month, and the wave sheaf offering must have been offered on (or before) that date. But it couldn't have occurred before the 15th day because Lev. 23:5 mentions the Passover on the 14th day before discussing the days of unleavened bread and the wave sheaf offering. Thus the wave sheaf offering occurred on the 15th day that year, which, according to Lev. 23:6 and Num. 28:17 was the first day of unleavened bread. Since the wave sheaf offering is mentioned after the seven days of unleavened bread, the “morrow of the Sabbath” in Lev. 23:15 must always be one of the seven days of unleavened bread.

In summary, the rejection of the translation “old grain” for *avur* in Josh. 5:11, 12 comes from (1) the evidence of a very similar word in Akkadian, Aramaic, and Syriac, which are Semitic languages; (2) the fact that the meaning of “old grain” is not known prior to Kimchi about 1200 CE; and (3) the indirect implications of the context. Modern scholarly lexicons base their conclusion primarily on (1).

Other aspects relating to the proper count:



(1) The day of the wave sheaf offering is mentioned in Lev. 23:15-16, which literally states, “And you shall count for yourself on the morrow of the Sabbath from [the] day you brought the sheaf of waving [to the priest], seven complete [or perfect] Sabbaths they shall be, until on the morrow of the Sabbath the seventh, you shall count 50 day[s], and you shall present a new offering to YHWH.” Here the Hebrew phrase *mee macharat*, meaning “on the morrow”, occurs twice. This shows the ending of the count to 50 on a Sunday (morrow of the Sabbath) and the starting of the count also on a Sunday.

Thus Josh. 5:11 fell on a Sunday, the first day of unleavened bread.

(2) In Lev. 23:15 where it mentions “seven complete/perfect Sabbaths they shall be”, the word “Sabbaths” does not have to mean “weeks”. The Hebrew word for “complete” also means “perfect” and “unblemished” as an unblemished lamb. Seven is the number of perfection and completeness, so that the Sabbath, being the seventh day, does complete and make perfect that week. “Complete/perfect” refers to the number seven, which defines the Sabbath day number. Thus a complete/perfect Sabbath may be understood as a “completing Sabbath”, i.e., a Sabbath that completes a seven day cycle. If seven continuous days does not end in the Sabbath, those seven days lack the perfection of ending in the seventh day. Thus “seven complete Sabbaths”, means “seven completing Sabbaths”, where a completing Sabbath is understood as a Sabbath that includes the six prior days. While a week is implied, the emphasis is on the fact that the Sabbath makes a completion and perfection in its day number.

(3) Is there a biblical Hebrew expression for a full or complete week that does not involve the word Sabbath which could have been used if the Sabbath was not involved in a special way in the count to Pentecost? There is. The Hebrew phrase for a “full month” (or complete month) is literally translated “a month of days” in Num. 11:20, 21; Deut. 21:13; II Ki. 15:13. Thus, by analogy, a complete week ought to be “a week of days”. Indeed this phrase “week of days” (meaning complete week) does occur in Dan. 10:2 and 10:3, which the NKJV and KJV shows with the words “full” and “whole”. This shows that the usual way to mention a “complete week”, when the Sabbath is not involved, was not used in Lev. 23:15.

(4) There is a count to 50 for the Jubilee year in Lev. 25:8. Where it states “...seven Sabbaths of years...”, there is no reason to understand “Sabbaths” as meaning “weeks”. After counting the first six years, the count for the next year is both Sabbath year number one and year number seven. Repeating this for the next six years to again arrive at year 6, the count for the next year is both Sabbath year number two and accumulative year number 14. Continuing in this way, the count at Sabbath year number three is also accumulative year 21, the count at Sabbath year number four is also accumulative year 28, etc., until the count at Sabbath year number seven is also accumulative year 49. By counting Sabbath years (one through seven), each of which is the culmination of six ordinary prior years, one is indirectly counting 49 years. But the explicit direction from Lev. 25:8 in counting Sabbath years from one to seven is perfectly fine and does not require one to translate the word “Sabbaths” as “weeks”.

(5) Making the analogy of patterning the count to the jubilee year with the count to the Feast of Weeks transfers the first six ordinary years to the first six ordinary days, and then the Sabbath year to the Sabbath day. Just as the jubilee year is the year after the seventh Sabbath year, Pentecost is the day after the seventh Sabbath day. This analogy would be broken if one starts the count to Pentecost on any day other than the first day of the week.

(6) The fact that one name of the feast is “Feast of Weeks” does not need to deny the use of the word “Sabbath” having been used multiple times in the description of the count in Lev. 23:15-16. There is no context that requires the Hebrew word *shabat* in the Tanak to mean “week” or “seven”. There is a different Hebrew word for week and a different Hebrew word for seven. There is no need to confuse the use of these words.

#### [99] Meaning of *omer* for Sheaf and its State of Development

The passage on the wave sheaf offering in Lev. 23:10-16 contains the word sheaf [6016 *omer*] in Lev. 23:10, 11, 12, 15. This Hebrew word occurs in the following ten other places: Ex. 16:16, 18, 22, 32, 33, 36; Deut. 24:19; Ruth 2:7, 15; Job 24:10. From Ex. 16:36 we see that it is a dry measure of volume, but Ruth 2:7, 15 provide an alternate meaning, namely a sheaf of stalks with expected ears of grain. We are faced with the problem of resolving the ambiguity between the two meanings of *omer*.

Before examining the context of Ruth 2:7, 15 in some detail, the method of reasoning to resolve the ambiguity of the meaning of *omer*, in the context of Lev. 23, is now undertaken. While the Levitical priesthood existed and performed their ceremonies every year in Jerusalem until the Temple was destroyed in 70 AD, this ceremony of the wave sheaf offering was witnessed by all people who attended the Festival of Unleavened Bread. This ceremony continued to be performed every year, and with one united priesthood, their practice should not have changed through the centuries. People came to Jerusalem from great distances to be at this festival and thus see this ceremony, including Jews from Alexandria, Egypt, which was only about 200 miles away.

Specialists in the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew text, recognize that its translators had a better command of the Greek language than of the Hebrew, and that the translation was undoubtedly made in Alexandria. Some of the Jews in Alexandria, possibly even some of the translators themselves, could surely explain what happened during the wave sheaf ceremony, so that the Greek translation could be accurate in its description. The Greek language does not have the ambiguity of the Hebrew language for the two meanings of the word *omer*. The Greek text uses one word, *gomer*, for the dry measure of the manna in Ex. 16, and a different word, *dragma*, as the translation for *omer*, in Deut. 24:19; Ruth 2:7, 15, and the wave sheaf offering. This resolves the ambiguity of the meaning of *omer* in the context of Lev. 23. All the uses of *dragma* in the Septuagint are listed on page 348 of Hatch and Redpath. If there existed any historical hint that the nature of the *omer* was a controversial issue at that time, then this would not resolve

the question. But there is no such hint from before the destruction of the Temple, nor does Rabbinic literature hint that there was a debate over this.

Moreover, in Gen. 37:7 where the Hebrew word for sheaves is *aluma*, Strong's number 485, its Greek translation in the Septuagint is also *dragma*. The Septuagint translation by Brenton for Gen. 37:7 is: "I thought ye were binding sheaves [= *dragma*] in the middle of the field, and my sheaf [= *dragma*] stood up and was erected, and your sheaves [= *dragma*] turned round, and did obeisance to my sheaf [= *dragma*]." (Plural forms of *dragma* are used where the translation is plural.) **Thus a bundle of tied stalks is called a sheaf (*omer*).**

Ruth 2:7, "And she said, 'Please let me glean and gather among the sheaves [= *omer*] after the reapers.'" (This has the plural of *omer*.) Gleaning is gathering the grains still having their husks. The reapers swing the sickles that cut the stalks. Ruth 2:15, "And she rose to glean. Then Boaz commanded his young men saying, 'Let her glean even among the sheaves [= *omer*] and do not rebuke her.'" (This has the plural of *omer*.) Ruth 2:17, "So she gleaned in the field until the evening and beat out what she had gleaned, and it was about an ephah of barley." The beating was necessary to separate the husks from the grains.

On page 73 of H. L. Ginsberg 1982, he translates *omer* in Lev 23 as "armful", judging the quantity that might be tied into a bundle.

On page 506 of Danby's translation of the *Mishnah* in Me-nahot 10:4, talking about the wave sheaf ceremony and specifically the grains of barley (after they were separated from the husks), we find, "They put it in a grist-mill and took there from a Tenth [of an Ephah of flour] which was sifted through thirteen sieves." Danby added the explanation in square brackets, "a Tenth [of an Ephah of flour]". Ex. 16:36 states, "Now an *omer* is one-tenth of an ephah." Danby is showing the common Rabbinic understanding that the *Mishnah* accepts the viewpoint that the Hebrew word *omer* means the dry measure quantity instead of the tied bundle of stalks. The *Mishnah* was published c. 200, which is about 130 years after the Temple was destroyed.

This contradicts the understanding given above using the Greek word *dragma* from the Septuagint, which was translated long before the Temple was destroyed. The *Mishnah* has an incorrect interpretation.

The incorrect interpretation of *omer* from the *Mishnah* implies that the barley that was used in the wave sheaf offering was always ripe enough to make flour. Even from the milky stage of development, the ears of barley are quite edible and have value. This was previously discussed when commenting on Luke 6:1. (The use of the word "harvest" twice in Lev 23:10 will be discussed in the next chapter.)

### [100] Wave Sheaf Offering

Previous discussion has established that the day of the wave sheaf offering occurred on the morrow of the Sabbath, so that this morrow was a Sunday, and this Sunday fell within the

seven Days of Unleavened Bread. The *omer* that was offered was a tied bundle of stalks of barley.

The Hebrew word *noof*, Strong's number 5130, has been typically translated “wave” as in wave sheaf offering in Lev. 23:11, 11, 12, but as now seen in pages 461-473 of Milgrom, there is significant evidence to translate it “elevate” instead. However I will wait until I note some further scholarly consensus before I use this meaning.

The wave sheaf offering is mentioned in Lev. 23:10-14; Deut. 16:9-10. Here is a literal translation of Lev. 23:10-14; Deut. 16:9.

Lev. 23:10, “Speak to [the] children of Israel and say to them, ‘When you come into the land which I am going to give to you and reap its harvest, then you shall bring [the] first [= *raysheet*] sheaf [= *omer*] of your harvest to the priest.

Lev. 23:11, “And he shall wave the sheaf before YHWH for your acceptance on the morrow of the Sabbath the priest shall wave it,

Lev. 23:12, “on [the] day that you wave the sheaf you shall offer a year old male lamb without blemish for a burnt offering to YHWH

Lev. 23:13, “and a cereal offering with it, two-tenths [of an ephah] of fine flour mixed with oil, an offering by fire to YHWH, a pleasing odor and its drink offering of a fourth of a hin of wine.

Lev. 23:14, “You shall not eat bread, nor roasted/parched-grain, nor fresh grain until this same day, until you have brought [the] offering of your Almighty. It is a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.”

Deut. 16:9, “Seven weeks you shall count for yourself from [about the time] you begin [to put the] sickle to standing grain, you shall begin to count seven weeks.

As in Lev. 23:10, the phrase “when you come into the land” is often used in the special sense of “from the time that you come into the land onward”, not specifically “when you come into the land for the first time”. This is seen in the following examples: Lev. 14:34; 19:23; 25:2; Nu. 15:2; Deut. 17:14; 26:1.

Lev. 23:10 mentions harvest [7105 *ketseer*] twice. This word occurs on page 894 of BDB where three meanings are derived from the biblical contexts: (1) “process of harvesting”; (2) “what is reaped, harvested, crop”; (3) “time of harvest”. The second meaning is often overlooked. Consider some examples.

In the context of a foreign nation that will come and conquer Israel, Jer. 5:17 reads, “And they shall eat up your harvest [= *ketseer*] and your bread, which your sons and daughters should eat. They shall eat up your flocks and your herds. They shall eat up your vines and your fig trees. They shall destroy your fortified cities, in which you trust, with the sword.” These various foodstuffs have previously been harvested and then stored, though some of it has been eaten since the time of harvest. This verse shows that the invaders shall eat the stored food



at the time of the invasion. Here the stored food, that is, what remains of the crop, is called the harvest.

Another way of describing a foreign invader is in Isa. 17:11, “In that day you will make your plant to grow, and in the morning you will make your seed to flourish. But the harvest [= *ketseer*] will be a heap of ruins in the day of grief and desperate sorrow.” Here the word harvest refers to the crop as it is still growing at the time of the invasion. In this sense the word harvest simply refers to the crop in its current state before the time of typical general reaping.

Joel 1:10, “The field is wasted, the land mourns. For the grain is ruined, the new wine is dried up, the oil fails.”

Joel 1:11, “Be ashamed you farmers, wail you vine dressers, for the wheat and the barley, because the harvest [= *ketseer*] of the field has perished.” Again the word harvest refers to the crop, not the time of normal harvest.”

When considering the phrase “and reap its harvest” near the beginning of Lev. 23:10, keep in mind that the normal time to begin the barley harvest varies according to the location in Israel. This variation stretches over a seven-week period. It is not the moment of general harvest for the majority of Israel. The ceremony described in Lev. 23:10 is based upon reaping a first [= *raysheet*] bundle of stalks of barley, an *omer*. The grains on those stalks may be in any of several stages of development from the edible milky phase to the ripe stage when flour may be ground. All of these stages are useful. Recall Luke 6:1 where grains were picked from the stalks and comfortably eaten raw.

The differences between Lev. 2:14-16 versus Lev. 23:10-14; Deut .16:9-10 are:

(1) Lev. 2:14-16 begins with “if” and it pertains to those who own a grain crop. But the wave sheaf offering is a collective plural obligation of the children of Israel. The wave sheaf offering is from barley because it is the first of the harvest, but no specific kind of grain is indicated in Lev. 2:14-16.

(2) Lev. 2:14-16 mentions *aviv* but Lev. 23:10-14; Deut. 16:9-10 does not. I do not necessarily attach any specific significance to this, but am simply noting differences in wording. Any stage of grain for firstfruits [= *bikurim*] is indicated in Lev. 2:14, and similarly any stage may be used for the wave sheaf offering. As previously discussed, *aviv* does not show any specific stage of grain.

(3) In Deut. 16:9 “standing grain” is translated from the single Hebrew word *kamah*, Strong's number 7054. This word was already discussed in the introductory chapter on *aviv*. The flexibility of this word makes it difficult to draw any conclusions from its use in the immediate summarized context. The key question concerning Deut. 16:9 is whether the specific use of this cut standing grain can be demonstrated from its summarized context, or even from the directly related context of Lev. 23:9-16. The Tanak is silent on this. However, there is nothing explicitly said that prohibits the use of the wave sheaf offering for food after the ceremony is performed. That is under the jurisdiction of the priesthood.

(4) Lev. 2:15-16 tells what is to be done with the preparation

from Lev. 2:14. Most of it is consumed as a firstfruits offering. In contrast to this, Lev. 23:12-13 tells what is to be done with preparations different from the wave sheaf offering! There are no instructions of what is to be done with the wave sheaf offering itself after the ceremony.

(5) Lev. 2:14 mentions firstfruits (= *bikurim*, discussed above) twice, but Lev. 23:10-14 does not have this word, and neither does Deut. 16:9-10! The offering of Lev. 2:14-16 must come after the sheaf of Lev. 23:10 is cut because Lev. 23:10 has the word “first”, and Deut. 16:9 has the word “begin”.

The wave sheaf offering is not called *bikurim* (firstfruits) even though it must come first! The reason for this may well be that *bikurim* for a grain offering has a highly specific method of use stated in Lev. 2:14-16, and the context of Lev. 23:10-14 does not show such a method. In Lev. 23:10 the word *raysheet* is used, and it is hazardous to employ a subjective decision to translate this with the same word “firstfruits”, thereby appearing to equate *bikurim* with *raysheet* in these contexts (although there are distinctions between these words as previously discussed in the chapter on firstfruits.) Both Tanakh-JPS and Tanach-Stone translate *raysheet* as “first” in Lev. 23:10.

(6) Lev. 2:14-16 compared to Lev. 23:10-14; Deut. 16:9-10 have vastly incompatible descriptions in their formulas of procedure, and the Hebrew technical terms that are used to describe them are different, so there is no need to assume that the *bikurim* (firstfruits) offering of Lev. 2:14-16 governs the offering of Lev. 23:10-14.

## [101] How the Wave Sheaf was Obtained

Lev. 23:10 “Speak to [the] children of Israel and say to them, ‘When you come [plural form of the verb come] into the land which I am going to give to you and reap [plural form of the verb reap] its harvest, then you shall bring [plural form of the verb bring] [the] first sheaf of your harvest to the priest.’”

This definitely does not say that the priest goes out to look for the sheaf (the bundle of stalks, *omer*). Instead it says that “you”, the farmers, are to bring it to the priest. The Hebrew verbs for “you come”, “reap”, and “you shall bring” are in the plural form - see AKOT where the grammatical form of every verb is given. This is similar to the English verb “to be”, in which one writes, “I am”, “he is”, and “they are”, so that the form “are” is plural.

It definitely does not say that only one farmer brings the wave sheaf. This is being spoken to all the children of Israel, not merely to those where the barley is furthest in development. The wave sheaf ceremony occurs on the Sunday during the seven Days of Unleavened Bread as previously discussed along with Josh 5:10-12.

Since the wave sheaf ceremony occurs during the Festival of Unleavened Bread, and at this time all the men were required to already be at one central place in Israel keeping this feast (Deut. 16:16), in order for the farmers to bring it the distance from the field where it grew, to the priest at this festival, it must have been cut by the farmer before leaving for the feast. The context definitely does not say that the barley that is brought by

each farmer can only be brought if it has reached some specific stage of growth.

[102] More Comments on the Time of  
Early Ripe Barley in Israel

I have already quoted from the personal experiences of Gustaf Dalman concerning the time of the barley harvest in Palestine. Some other sources are now tapped.

On pages 44-45 of Carpenter (who has translated from the Latin of J. D. Michaelis) we find, "Besides, all who in their travels [in Palestine] mention the time of harvest, tell us that corn [grain or barley] grows ripe, and is mowed, in the months of April and May. Rauwolf says, that the harvest commences in the beginning of April; but he is to be understood according to the old [Julian] calendar, and to say that about the tenth of our [Gregorian] April N.S. [new style] the sickle is first put into the early ripe fields of Palestine."

On pages 362-363 of Thomson we find, "I have visited the pilgrims' bathing-place, the supposed scene of this miracle, early in April, and found barley-harvest about Jericho already ended. I also found the [Jordan] river full to the brim, and saw evidence in abundance that it had overflowed its banks very recently [Josh 3:15]. Barley-harvest in the vale of the Lower Jordan begins about the end of March. This seems early, and in fact it is long before the crops are ready for the sickle on the neighboring mountains, or even around the fountains of the Upper Jordan. But the reason is obvious. The valley at Jericho is

thirteen hundred feet below the level of the sea, is sheltered from cold winds on all sides by mountains of great height, and is open to the warm southern breeze from the basin of the Dead Sea. It has, therefore, the climate of the tropics, though in the latitude of Jerusalem.”

On pages 487-488 of Ideler we find the following (my translation from the German), “According to the writings of journeys, the accounts of which were collected by Michaelis and exhaustively by Buhle, the barley at the border of Jericho, the warmest region of Palestine, generally reaches to maturity in the first days of our April. From this time onward, when the first ears were offered, one is permitted to begin the harvest, and this continues in the suitable parts of the land to the north near Lebanon, until into the last half of May. Hence, here in Palestine the barley begins to ripen about 14 days after the vernal equinox. So we note that the “Ears-Month” would have begun according to Moses’ determination, approximately with this time of the year, if it was to be gauged according to the sun.”

[103] Can the Barley Harvest begin before the  
Wave Sheaf Offering?

Is there evidence that the reaping of the barley harvest could not start until the wave sheaf offering had been made?

To help answer this question, let us review and compare a literal translation of two passages.

Deut. 16:9, “Seven weeks you shall count for yourself from [about the time] you begin [to put the] sickle to standing

grain, you shall begin to count seven weeks.”

Lev. 23:15-16, “And you shall count for yourself on the morrow following the Sabbath, from [the] day you brought the sheaf of waving [to the priest], seven complete/perfect Sabbaths they shall be, until on the morrow following the Sabbath the seventh, you shall count 50 day[s], and you shall present a new offering to YHWH.” Here the Hebrew phrase *me-macharat*, meaning “on the morrow following”, occurs twice.

The following aspects of Deut. 16:9 point out its incompleteness and the omission of details in comparison to Lev. 23:15-16.

(1) It makes no mention of 50 days, or even any specific number of days, but instead simply “seven weeks”, which is only a rough summary of the days of the count.

(2) It makes no mention of the ending day of the count.

(3) It makes no mention of “Sabbath”, thus omitting further detail.

(4) It makes no mention of the phrase “on the morrow following”.

(5) It makes no mention of the sheaf (*omer*).

(6) It does not mention anything about the role of the priest or some ceremony involving the sheaf, and while this is not mentioned in Lev 23:15-16, it is mentioned in Lev 23:10.

(7) It makes no mention of not eating any of the new crop until the day of the wave sheaf offering in contrast to Lev. 23:11, 14. The above comparison shows that Deut. 16:9 is a rough summarized statement without precision. The major omissions are the first two aspects regarding the count.

(8) However, another significant lack is that where there are English words added in square brackets in the above literal translation of Deut. 16:9, if no words are added between “from” and “you”, and if no words are added between “begin” and “sickle”, the thought is not complete. The words that need to be added are open to question, but whatever words are added, they must be in harmony with the thoughts expressed in Lev. 23:10-16. The omissions in Deut. 16:9 make it secondary to Lev. 23:10-16. It is Lev. 23:10-16 that controls the understanding of Deut. 16:9, not vice versa.

The question arises as to what specifically must be added to Deut. 16:9 in order for it to express a coherent unbroken thought that allows Lev. 23:10-16 to control the subject.

Deut. 16:9 forces the translator to add the words “about the time”, because the day that the farmers cut the first sheaf was before they departed for the Festival of Unleavened Bread, not the day they presented it to the priest. Since each individual farmer had his sheaf cut before leaving for the feast, and it took each of them some time to travel, the sheafs were not all cut on the same day. Undoubtedly many priests participated in the wave sheaf ceremony because there were many farmers. Nothing in Scripture requires that the day of cutting the first sheaf



for any specific farmer also be the day that the farmers presented it to the priest.

The only statement that makes a prohibition is Lev. 23:14, “You shall not eat bread, nor roasted/parched-grain, nor fresh-grain until this same day, until you have brought [the] offering of your Almighty.” Hence there is no requirement that the standing grain that the individual farmer wants to harvest (if any) before he leaves for the feast must be left standing. Thus the safety of the crop is not threatened by early ripeness in certain areas before the feast of unleavened bread!

The day to start the counting of seven weeks is not clearly indicated in Deut. 16:9, but only from Lev. 23:15-16 can we know that it was from the day of the wave sheaf offering, not from the day each farmer cut the sheaf in advance of leaving for the feast. Since each farmer had to cut his sheaf in advance of the day of the wave sheaf offering, is there any limitation of how far in advance the farmer may cut the sheaf that he planned to take to the feast for the wave sheaf ceremony? Scripture is silent on this. Once the farmer did cut this particular sheaf first and set it aside for safe keeping to be brought to the feast, is there any Scripture that forbids the farmer from harvesting additional grain before he leaves for the feast?

Since Lev. 23:10 mentions “your harvest” and wild barley neither provides a high yield for the effort nor has desirable qualities for normal use, wild barley would not qualify for “your harvest” unless it was a time of famine.

Only domesticated barley was intended for the wave sheaf

offering. However there is no reason why the word *aviv* cannot include wild barley.

When I spoke with Dr. David Marshall, a barley and wheat geneticist from Texas A & M University in 1992, he told me that when he visited Egypt, the farmers who still used a sickle waited until the barley was at 30 percent water content or less before harvesting. This was about the first time at which flour could be obtained. This was by experience rather than a scientific measurement, but Dr. Marshall knew the water content. They could wait some weeks and let the water content decrease, but they could not let it get near 10 percent because at that point only modern machinery could harvest it without shattering and losing the grain. But winter barley that lies dormant over the winter ripens slowly because the temperature rises slowly. They have some weeks to wait before they will lose it to shattering. A primary difference between wild barley and domesticated barley is that domesticated varieties are bred to enable the grain to stay on the stalk for a much longer time before shattering than wild barley. Wild barley shatters soon after ripening, but not domesticated barley.

### Some Added Conclusions

(1)The literal Hebrew words present in Deut. 16:9-10 does not forbid the Israelite farmer from harvesting his crop before the wave sheaf offering. Once the farmer has cut and put aside the first sheaf, he may reap his crop. He may harvest the crop before leaving for the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Thus the crop is not at risk based upon the day of the wave sheaf offering.

(2) The day of the wave sheaf offering may be thought of as a man having a long leash with a dog at the end. The dog represents the ripening of barley which can wander a little this way or that, but not too far from the day of the wave sheaf offering. Barley in Israel ripens over a seven-week period depending on the location, so that the word *aviv* is not descriptive of only one month. It takes a more precise astronomical method to pin down the month of *aviv* to one month.

(3) Gen. 1:14 ends in the word “years”, so that the lights in the heavens determine years. Moses evidently did not think it was important to describe the astronomical method to define years because the vernal equinox was common knowledge in Egypt where the Israelites had been, being witnessed by the greatest pyramids of Egypt. Heat is the major factor that determines the time of the ripening of winter barley, not light. Lights are mentioned repeatedly in Gen. 1:14-16, never heat.

#### [104] The Meaning of Deut. 16:1

In order to arrive at a proper understanding of a biblical subject or verse it is necessary to first understand the clear Scriptures and then use information from them to eventually understand the unclear ones. Deut. 16:1 is an unclear Scripture for at least the following reasons:

(1) The first Hebrew word in Deut. 16:1 is *shamar*, Strong's number 8104, which has a variety of possible meanings depending on the context. It primarily may mean “to keep [a law]”, “to observe [by sight]”, “to preserve or protect”, “to celebrate [a festival]”, or “to guard [captives]”, and some of

these meanings can overlap or blend. There is debate over the meaning of *shamar* in Deut. 16:1.

(2) Considerable effort has been expended above to show that *aviv* means “ears [of grain]” regardless of the stage of ripeness of the ears. But some references have taken the Talmudic interpretation of *aviv* as “the milky phase of grain” as if this constituted the full scope of its original meaning. Without a thorough study of Ex. 9:31 and the hail plague in Egypt in its agricultural, historical, climatic, and geographical context as well as the use of *aviv* in the Dead Sea Scrolls, one can not appreciate the full scope of the meaning of *aviv*, and this misunderstanding of *aviv* has perhaps been the primary cause of confusion over the meaning of Deut. 16:1.

(3) Deut. 16:1 may be divided into two parts, the first designated 16:1A and the second 16:1B. The Hebrew word *chodesh*, Strong's number 2320, occurs in both parts. This word either means “new moon” or “month” depending on the context. The full Hebrew expression in which *chodesh* occurs here is “*chodesh ha aviv*” which means either “the new moon of *aviv*” or “the month of *aviv*”. This exact Hebrew expression occurs six times in Scripture: Ex. 13:4; 23:15; 34:18A, 18B; Deut. 16:1A,1B. The context of the five places other than Deut. 16:1A show it to mean “month of *aviv*”. Is it plausible to think that in Deut. 16:1A this expression means “new moon of *aviv*” but in the second half of the same verse (and everywhere else), the same expression has a different meaning? Some people think it is plausible, but in my opinion it is quite unlikely for the expression to change its meaning in only the first half of the verse.

(4) Another controversial question about the translation of Deut. 16:1 involves whether the Hebrew word *aviv* should be translated to emphasize its meaning or to indicate the name of the month, and this depends on the original intent of the first part of the verse. If the first part of this verse is intended to describe an activity of visual searching as some teach, then the word *aviv* should most likely be translated to emphasize its meaning. However, in ancient times a name typically did have meaning, so that *aviv* can indicate both a name and meaning. It is a descriptive name because the meaning alone applies to several months.

Now that four points of controversy concerning the translation of Deut. 16:1A have been elucidated, it should be clear to the reader that one should not start the study of how to determine the first month with a forced interpretation of this verse. An edifice should be built on a firm foundation, not one that is conceived in debate. In other words the claim is made by some that this verse should start, “Observe [by sight] the new moon of [in which you find] nearly ripe, green ears ...” Notice that the added expression “in which you find” is not based on any Hebrew words from Deut. 16:1, but is nothing more than a forced wishful interpretation upon the text. This interpretation involves a controversy over the intended meaning of *shamar*, a controversy over the intended meaning of *aviv*, a controversy over the intended meaning of *chodesh*, and a controversy over whether *aviv* should be translated into its meaning or transliterated as the name of a month.

Beyond these four matters of controversy is the issue of adding the expression “in which you find”, so that the belief of

“physically searching for *aviv*” is read into the text, and then this text is used as alleged evidence for this practice to determine the first month.

The clearest way to refute this alleged interpretation of Deut. 16:1a is to recognize that *aviv* means “ears [of grain]” regardless of the stage of ripeness of the ears. One does not go looking for something that has a wide scope of meaning, otherwise one does not know what to look for. Hence adding the expression “in which you find” is a fallacy as an implied translation. Consistency in translating the expression *chodesh ha aviv* within Deut. 16:1 requires that *chodesh* mean “month” here. Deut. 5:12 also starts with the word *shamar* and means, “Keep [the laws of] the Sabbath day to set it apart ...” Similarly Deut. 16:1 means, “Keep [the laws of] the month of *aviv* and perform the Passover ...” The laws of the month of *aviv* include the *aviv* and perform the Passover ...”

The laws of the month of *aviv* include the laws of the Passover.

The presence of the Hebrew word *chodesh* in Deut. 16:1a thwarts the attempt to make it to mean, “Observe [by sight] the nearly ripe, green ears...” because *chodesh* stands as a barrier between “observe” (*shamar*) and “*aviv*”. Besides, *aviv* has a wider range of meaning than this, and the time at which barley comes to maturity ranges over a seven week period throughout Israel. Hence “observing” is not confined to merely one month, as though this meant “Observe [by sight] the month of nearly ripe, green ears ...” When using an accurate translation of *aviv*, the meaning, “Observe [by sight] the month of ears...” still does

not make sense because “ears” span several months from the earliest stage to the last of the harvest.

[105] The First Month During the 40  
Years of Wandering in the Wilderness

Num. 9:1-14 describes the keeping of the Passover in the wilderness during the first year after the Israelites left Egypt. In order to do this during the 40 years in the wilderness they would have to determine when the first month began.

Num. 9:15, “Now on the day that the tabernacle was erected, the cloud covered the tabernacle, the tent of the testimony, and in the evening it was like the appearance of fire over the tabernacle, until morning.

Num. 9:16, “So it was continuously, the cloud would cover it by day, and the appearance of fire by night.

Num. 9:17, “And whenever the cloud was lifted from over the tent, afterward the children of Israel would then set out; and in the place where the cloud settled down, there the children of Israel would camp.

Num. 9:18, “At the command of YHWH the children of Israel would set out, and at the command of YHWH they would camp; as long as the cloud settled over the tabernacle, they remained camped.

Num. 9:19, “Even when the cloud lingered over the tabernacle for many days, the children of Israel would keep YHWH's

charge and not set out.

Num. 9:20, “If sometimes the cloud remained a few days over the tabernacle, according to the command of YHWH they remained camped. Then according to the command of YHWH they set out.

Num. 9:21, “If sometimes the cloud remained from evening until morning, when the cloud was lifted in the morning they would move out; or if it remained in the daytime and at night, whenever the cloud was lifted, they would set out.

Num. 9:22, “Whether it was two days or a month or a year that the cloud lingered over the tabernacle, staying above it, the children of Israel remained camped and did not set out; but when it was lifted, they did set out.”

Num. 9:23, “At the command of YHWH they camped, and at the command of YHWH they set out; they kept YHWH’s charge, according to the command of YHWH through Moses.”

Notice in verse 22 that even if the cloud lingered for a year, they remained camped. Their coming and going was strictly governed by the cloud by day and the fire by night over them during the 40 years. The only exception was when the 12 spies were sent out, which occurred before the announced 40 year punishment of wandering in the wilderness (Num. 14). There is no hint that they violated the rule of remaining with the miraculous cloud and fire by sending search parties into Israel to seek *aviv* to determine the first month during the 40 years.



## [106] Indirect Interpretation of Gen 1:14 and the Jews in Rome

It has been proposed that Gen. 1:14 be interpreted so that the sun indirectly affects the barley which in turn causes the time of the first month. But Gen. 1:14-16 mentions lights of the heavenly bodies, not heat. It is the heat from the sun that causes winter barley to ripen. The angle at which the sun's rays enter the atmosphere causes the heat. This angle is determined by the nearly constant axis on which the earth rotates in comparison to the plane of the earth's orbit around the sun. The trade winds and the rain also affect the temperature which affects the barley, not only the sun with the constant axis of the earth. A prolonged lack of rain also hastens the ripening of barley.

Hence this interpretation of Gen. 1:14 that the light of the sun indirectly determines the first month does not properly consider all the factors and it is very doubtful that Gen. 1:14 was intended to be understood this way. The question is this: What Scripture provides substantive evidence for the interpretation that an examination of barley determines the first month? The relevant parts of the Tanak have been investigated, including Ex. 9:31-32; Lev. 2:14-16; 23:10-16; Deut. 16:1, 9-10 and the phrase *chodesh ha aviv*.

Attempts to consider using barley introduces confusion in, 1) practical definitions regarding the arbitrary botanical investigation of barley, 2) the wild and domesticated varieties of barley, 3) whether artificial irrigation must be excluded, and 4) the places within Israel to look for it. The directness of Gen. 1:14 as a cause and effect verse must be given priority.

Philo of Alexandria attributes the vernal equinox as the cause of the first month. Josephus mentions the sun being in the fixed sign of the zodiac named Aries as a cause, which is astronomical rather than agricultural. Lev. 23:10 states that the Israelites bring the *omer* to the priest, not that any priests go searching for barley. All the reasoning associated with barley as the alleged cause of the time of the first month is imaginative.

In Gen. 1:28 we see the command to “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth”. While filling the earth, one had to have means for knowing when to keep the Days of Unleavened Bread during the first month when far from Jerusalem. Concerning the keeping of Pentecost, in Acts 2:10 we note that festival visitors came from “the districts of Libya around Cyrene, and the sojourning Romans, both Jews and proselytes”. A major Jewish settlement around Cyrene was 800 miles from Jerusalem. Rome was about 1500 miles from Jerusalem. While this relates to Pentecost rather than the Days of Unleavened Bread, going to Jerusalem for a seven day festival would be more desirable than for the one day festival of Pentecost. Even those who could not make the long and expensive journey from Rome would still want to observe the Days of Unleavened Bread locally. In commenting on Acts 2:10, page 63 of Bruce states, “There was a Jewish colony at Rome in the second century B.C., and it was augmented by the Jews who were brought there from Palestine in 62 B.C., to grace Pompey's triumph, and later set free. We have references in Roman inscriptions to at least seven Jewish synagogues in Rome.”

It would have been a significant problem for news about

barley (to signify the first month) to reach Jews about 1500 miles away in Rome, in time for the Days of Unleavened Bread for local observance in Rome. This problem is far worse for a person who wishes to travel from Rome to Jerusalem to keep the feast there after hearing the news about the barley in Rome. While hypothetical high speed runners and fire signals might be employed in getting news to Rome in time, it does not help people who want to travel from Rome to Jerusalem to keep the feast to find out that the month which recently began is the first month. On page 149 of Casson 1974, we read, "To go from Italy to Spain by land would have taken a month, to Alexandria [Egypt] well-nigh two." On page 150 Casson writes, "For travelers heading for the eastern Mediterranean [by ship] from anywhere within the western part of the empire, Rome was, far and away, the best jump-off point." On page 123 of Casson 1994, we read, "Except for emergencies, the ancients limited their sailing to the season when the weather was most dependable, roughly from the beginning of April to October."

The winds over the waters between Rome and Alexandria during this period blow prevailingly from the west. This meant that the voyage from Rome, made with a favorable wind all the way, was quick and easy, taking normally no more than two to three weeks." On page 124 Casson explains that if a person wanted to go from Rome to Palestine, the best choice would be to get on a grain freighter from Rome to Alexandria, and then make the remaining 200 mile journey by land or sea. In summary, if a man left Rome by ship on April 1, which is the earliest time in the year that a ship would leave, he stood a reasonable chance of reaching Jerusalem by May 1. In most years this is too late for Passover. Since a Jew would not want to travel on

the Sabbath, it would take about two months to travel from Rome to Jerusalem by land. In any event, news about barley would not come in time to help the Jew from Rome to know when to leave for Jerusalem.

Only an astronomical method that would allow the Jews in Rome to know the first month for themselves would make sense, and this is in harmony with a direct understanding of Gen. 1:14.

#### [107] History of the Karaites

There are Jews in different parts of the world today that call themselves Karaites. The Karaites in Israel today use barley alone to determine the first month. Since many people receive emails from them, we now devote some space for a brief discussion about their history and the calendar. Page 20 of Ankori states: “Ever since the famous century-old theory of Geiger linked the early Karaites with the internal conflicts of the Second Jewish Commonwealth, scholars did not cease to detect ancient antecedents in Karaite ideology. Geiger and his successors hailed the Karaites as spiritual heirs, nay, actual survivors, of the seemingly extinct Sadducee party. On closer analysis, however, Sadduceism in its classical definition seems to have played in the Middle Ages the role of a haunting historical recollection rather than an actual source of influence, an amorphous symbol of dissent rather than a definitive sectarian identity.”

On page 777 of Gil we find, “The origins of the Karaites and their early development are shrouded in obscurity. The sources which describe these beginnings single out the figure of

‘Anan, who is considered the founder of Karaism.’ On page 778 we read: “As to the Karaite sources themselves, Qirqisani says that ‘Anan lived in the days of the second Abbasid caliph, the founder of Baghdad, Abu Ja’far al-Mansur’ (754-775), which fits what has been said above.”

On page 22 of Schur (1992) we see, “Modern research does not accept the traditional Karaite version, which regards Anan unreservedly as the founder of the Karaite sect. Most scholars stipulate now the existence of two separate groups:

- the Ananites, followers of Anan and sometimes actually members of his family;
- the Karaites, who were the outcome of the coalescence of various sectarian groups.”

On page 211 of Schur (1995) we find, “Now that Anan's real position in Karaite history begins to be better understood, Benjamin Nahawendi looms much larger, as he was the first real leader and unifier of the sects which eventually made up Karaism. He hailed from Nihavend in Persia (in the province of Media), and might have lived (in the first half of the ninth century) in Persia or in Iraq.” Page 213 states: “Nahawendi’s importance is attested to by medieval Arabic accounts, which call the Karaites ‘the followers of Anan and Benjamin’. Saadia Gaon and Judah Halevi regarded Anan and Nahawendi as the two founders of Karaism.”

On page 448 of Ben-Sasson we find, “The diversity between the Karaites themselves resulted from the rationalistic individualism of this trend in the tenth century.” Page 449 states, “According to the Karaites, the individual is duty bound to rely on his own intelligence and to understand the Holy Scriptures independently.”

The Karaite named Levi ben Yefeth wrote a book about 1006-7 in which he mentions three prevalent views of how to determine the first month. This is reported on pages 303-304 of Ankori. The first view he presents is that of the Rabbanites who use the modern calculated Jewish calendar. The next quotation from pages 303-304 has square brackets with words added by Zvi Ankori in the midst of his translation from Levi ben Yefeth, where we read, “The second group consists of people in the Land of Shine'ar [= Babylonia] from among our brethren the Karaites. They follow the [computation of the vernal] equinox alone; yet, they stipulate certain conditions which are different from those stipulated by the Rabbanites. This is why we have listed this group as separated from the Rabbanites .... Now, this second group does not inquire, nor search, for the abib at all; [its members simply] wait and do [the proclamation of Nisan] when the sun reaches the Constellation of the Ram....”

In the Middle Ages the Constellation of the Ram meant the 30 degree segment of the zodiac beginning with the vernal equinox; not what it meant to Pliny the Elder and Josephus, and not the actual star group that formed the constellation. Next, on page 304, Zvi Ankori, continues his translation: “The adherents of the third group [i. e., the Palestinian-oriented Karaites] observe [the New Year] on the strength of abib alone and they do

not investigate [the position of] the sun at all.”

The following paragraph appears on page 326 of Ankori: “Thus, in the case of an unusually early ripening of barley in Palestine, the twelfth month of the Karaite calendar-year, Adar, would yield to Nisan, the first month of a new year. Indeed, an actual occurrence is cited when the Purim Festival, due to fall, as a rule, in the middle of Adar, was shelved altogether to make way for Passover, which falls in the middle of the succeeding month of Nisan.” Footnote 66 places this in the year 1006-1007. In Est 9:19-23 it is clear that the Jews had decided that every year on the 14th and 15th days of the 12th month Adar they would celebrate Purim. Hence they understood that every year had to have at least 12 months, but the Karaites who used barley apparently accepted the viewpoint that some years might only have 11 months based on the state of the barley.

In Poland today (and scattered elsewhere in eastern Europe) there are Karaites that follow the second group above which uses the vernal equinox and not the barley to determine the first month.

In discussing the Karaites, pages 392-393 of Nemoy state, “Some of them begin the ‘(month of the) fresh ears’ (with the appearance) of (any kind of) green herbage, whereas others do not begin it until (fresh) garden-cress is found all over Palestine; others begin it only when (at least) one piece of ground becomes ready for harvest; still others begin it even when only a handful of corn is ready for harvest.” This indicates that Karaites in the Middle Ages who wanted to use vegetation to determine the first month could not agree among themselves on

the method, undoubtedly because the Bible does not provide a botanical description for the month of *aviv*.

### [108] Issues Against the Position that Barley Determines the First Month

(1) Ex. 9:31-32 in its context shows that *aviv* includes a multitude of stages of the growth of the ear of barley. One text in the Dead Sea Scrolls shows it to mean fully ripe ears. With such a variance in the inclusive meaning of *aviv*, how can it be used to determine the first month?

(2) The presence of *aviv* in Israel applies to several months from the meaning of *aviv*, so that its name does not uniquely determine a month.

(3) Since Moses never went into Israel and did not know when barley grew through its various stages there, and since the stages of barley growth in Egypt occur at a different time from the stages of barley growth in Israel, how would he know to think about barley growth in Israel in relation to the first month at the time that Ex. 12:2 was told to him, given that there is no mention of barley or *aviv* in the immediate context of Ex. 12:2?

(4) Although there is evidence that the wave sheaf offering should be performed with domesticated barley rather than wild barley, there is no evidence that the general meaning of *aviv* must be restricted to domesticated barley. The word *aviv* does not occur in contexts of the wave sheaf offering. How does one use the Bible to decide whether to use wild or domesticated



barley in any proposed definition to use *aviv* to define the first month?

(5) If a proposed definition of barley is used to determine the first month, what would prevent a year from having eleven months, and how should this be accepted in light of Est 9:19-23?

(6) Since “month of *aviv*” does not mean “month of first *aviv*” and several months show *aviv*, how does one decide the month of *aviv* from the word *aviv*?

(7) Num. 9, especially verse 22, shows that Israel did not search for *aviv* in Israel to determine the first month during the 40 years of wandering in the wilderness. This is a type of how people all through history from that time onward who wanted to keep the festivals were expected to use a different method from searching for *aviv* to determine the first month, especially in view of Deut. 30:11-14. Similarly, Karaites in Babylonia about 1000 CE used the vernal equinox and ignored the barley; they were too far away from Israel to use barley, and it is not known that they would have used barley if they could have known its status.

(8) In the first century it would have been a significant problem for news about barley just prior to the first month to reach Jews about 1500 miles away in Rome in time for the Days of Unleavened Bread (for local observance in Rome). This problem is far worse for a person who wishes to travel from Rome to Jerusalem to keep the feast there after hearing the news about the barley in Rome. While hypothetical high speed runners and

fire signals might be employed in getting news to Rome in time, this does not help people who want to travel from Rome to Jerusalem to keep the feast after finding out that the month which recently began is the first month. If using barley is the proper method, what advice does one give to the Jew in Rome who wants to go to Jerusalem for Passover?

(9) What Scripture is strong enough to overturn the direct cause and effect statement in Gen. 1:14 that the lights in the heavens are for festivals and years? Neither Lev. 23:10 nor Deut. 16:9 provides a direct statement that the wave sheaf offering determines the first month.

(10) Ezra 6:15 and Neh. 6:15 tie in with Gen. 1:14 to give the biblical and archaeological evidence that together show explicit evidence that Gen. 1:14 involves the vernal equinox so that the first month begins on or after the vernal equinox. The Hebrew word *tkufah* can mean equinox or solstice.

(11) Philo of Alexandria explains Gen. 1:14 and Ex. 12:2 without the use of barley, and with the use of the vernal equinox. He makes a reference to the vernal equinox as used by other nations, which would necessarily be the continuation of the Babylonian calendar, which did not allow the first month to precede the vernal equinox. Josephus also uses an astronomical expression rather than an agriculture to indicate the placement of the first month.

(12) The ripening of winter barely is caused by heat, not light. This heat is a result of the angle of the sun's rays of light to the earth, and the angle originates from the fixed axis of the earth

to the plane of the earth's orbit. Hence the cause of ripening of winter barley is not the light from the sun. Thus the light from the sun is not the indirect cause for the first month. Gen. 1:14 does not mention heat, which is really the primary direct cause for the ripening of barley. Gen. 1:14 does not show any use of barley to determine the first month because it mentions light, not heat.

## CONCLUSIONS: Barley

From II Sam. 21:9; Lev. 23:10-16; Deut. 16:9-10 there is some correlation between the first biblical month and the presence of standing grain of barley in Israel. A detailed study of the Hebrew expressions *chodesh ha aviv* (to designate the first month in Ex. 13:4) and *yerach ha etanim* (to designate the seventh month in I Ki. 8:2) in the Semitic context does *not* show that the presence of the definite article *ha* in the middle to grammatically force the specific meaning of the word *aviv*, or the specific meaning of the word *etanim*, to characterize one and only one month.

Yes, it is true that only one month is determined by these expressions because of the unique month number associated with those words, but not because of the Hebrew grammar associated with *ha* (the).

A detailed study of Lev. 2:14 does not restrict *aviv* to be any particular stage or stages of development of the ear of grain. The purpose of Lev. 2:14-16 is to explain how to offer firstfruits of grain, not to fully define *aviv*.

Based upon historical reports of the time of the earing and reaping of barley in the various parts of Egypt as well as selected information about wheat in Egypt, the hail plague mentioned in Ex. 9:22-34 occurred between January 15 and February 15 (Gregorian dates), which is an earlier time context from Ex. 12:2. Due to the difference in temperature between northern Egypt and southern Egypt, the time of the reaping of barley in Egypt is spread out over a five week period. Evidence from Egyptian agricultural timing, along with a knowledge of the various stages of development of ears of barley and other grains correlated with Ex. 9:31-32 (containing the Hebrew word *aviv*) shows that *aviv* has a wide range of meaning in stages of growth rather than a narrowly defined meaning of one stage. Thus Ex. 9:31-32 and Lev. 2:14 are consistent in the conclusion that *aviv* does not correspond to only one stage of the development of the ear of barley.

Due to the temperature variation in Israel, the barley is reaped there over a seven week period, assuming the same variety of barley is used. A careful study of the Hebrew in Deut. 16:1 does not make it a commandment to go out to look for barley to determine the first month.

A detailed study of the wave sheaf offering from Lev. 23:10-16; Deut. 16:9-10 shows that the barley that is used in the sheaf for the offering does not have to be at any particular stage in the development of its ears. When the existing Hebrew words in Deut. 16:9-10 are examined, it cannot be proved that the Tanak forbids reaping grain before the wave sheaf was offered. On the other hand, Lev. 23:14 does forbid eating of the new grain until the wave sheaf is offered. The word *aviv* simply

means “ears [of grain]” without specifying its development. Attempting to narrowly define the first month called *chodesh ha aviv* through the meaning of *aviv* applied to barley that is growing in Israel, requires unprovable assumptions and contradicts the astronomical context of Gen. 1:14-18 utilizing lights. Gen. 1:14-18 avoids mentioning heat or plants, which would thereby introduce agriculture.

Ps. 133 mentions that the unity of Israelites dwelling together is like oil upon the head of Aaron.

Anointing with oil upon the head bestows authority on the priest (Ex. 28:41; 29:7-9; 30:30; 40:13-15), and the Aaronic priesthood was given the authority to recognize the sighting of the new crescent by their blowing two silver trumpets on the first day of each month (Num. 10:10). They had the authority to teach the law (Lev. 10:8, 11; Mal. 2:7). Thus the Aaronic priesthood was a source of unity within Israel on all new moons and festivals because there was only one high priest and only one hereditary priesthood. There could be no opposing opinions and disunity concerning the day of the new moon because of the authority of the high priest to achieve unity. This priesthood that was used to achieve unity was only given residence within Israel (Num. 35:2-8). II Sam 6:6-7 shows the sudden miraculous death of Uzzah because he took the authority of certain Levites upon himself when he touched the ark. Similarly, only the Aaronic priesthood from the location of Israel has the biblical authority to recognize each new moon. In the absence of the Aaronic priesthood, at least two reliable witnesses from Israel should be used to determine that the new moon has been sighted.

[Editors Notes from study:]

## CONCLUSIONS AND COMMENTS.

1. Israel did not have a wave sheaf in the wilderness to tell them the moon.

2. Israel did not define only one month by the growing or harvesting of barley. The barley growing and harvest lasted for 3-5 months.

3. Abib is a month of earing after the tkufah (March 20-23), the first month of spring. It is not the first month that barley appears or is gathered.

4. The barley can be harvested anytime. It does not have to be waved first. The omer can be waved anytime when the days of Unleavened bread occurs.

5. The wave sheaf or barley condition does not determine the moon to be selected as Abib 1!

6. Because the barley can be harvested anytime, but not eaten till waved, there is no danger (in taking the proper and correct new moon after tkufah) that the harvest will be lost due to age.

7. It is scriptural error to use barley development to choose a moon. This will result in choosing incorrect days.

8. The Pharisees changed the true calendar by using early barley to move up the Holy Days.

# STUDY NOTES

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6. Passover Is Not A Holy Day.
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8. The Calendar Made simple.
9. Is The Equinox Scriptural?
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