

A New Look at God's Sacred Year

When Does the Biblical YEAR Begin?

How can we determine the beginning of a year, according to the Biblical reckoning? Can the year begin PRIOR to the spring equinox? Must it begin AFTER the spring equinox? Should we just go according to the Jewish "fixed" calendar, created in 357-58 A.D., by rabbi Hillel II? What about the "barley" crop? Why is the first month of the Jewish calendar called "Abib"? How can we KNOW for certain WHEN God's Holy Days occur? Here is the plain TRUTH!

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There are many things we must consider when looking at the calendar of God. Many people today throw up their hands, and exclaim, "It's too complicated!" Others say, "I'll just let my minister or church handle it," and they simply decide to follow men or a particular church which may have no knowledge or expertise in this matter whatsoever!

What should we do? Shouldn't we study this subject, and look into the Word of God, and quit taking everything for granted, or assuming this or that person or church is "right," without any evidence or proof?

The Month "Abib"

God says in His Word, "This month shall mark for you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year for you" (Exo.12:1). In that first month Israel was commanded to take a lamb, on the tenth day, and sacrifice it on the 14th day, as the "Passover lamb" (verses 2-6).

In Deuteronomy, God adds, "*Observe the month of ABIB by keeping the Passover to the LORD your God, for in the month of ABIB the LORD your God brought you out of Egypt by night*" (Deut.16:1).

The month of Abib occurred in the spring. It was the first month of the religious/festival calendar. But how was its precise beginning or first day determined?

The key is found in the name of the month itself. The term “Abib” in Hebrew, is from an unused root meaning “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” (Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance, #24). The Gesenius Hebrew-English Lexicon defines the term, “an ear of corn, a green ear.”

This term is found first in the Bible in Exodus 9:31, “the barley was in the ear.” Therefore the month of *abib* is defined by its very name as the month of the first “green ears” or newly developed grain. The grain crop in Israel and the Middle East at the spring of the year is the BARLEY CROP, as seen in Exodus 9:31.

Therefore, the first month of the year must conform to the greening, ripening of the heads of BARLEY in the fields in Israel and around Jerusalem!

The Barley Harvest – a Key to Understanding

The barley begins entering the “abib” stage every year around late February to early March. The spring equinox varies from March 20-21, each year. The first month of a new year is determined also by the first seen faint crescent of the new moon.

Therefore, the first month of the new year is usually that month whose new moon occurs nearest the spring equinox, when the barley has reached the “abib” stage of ripening!

This means that to determine each new year, it is necessary for God’s people in Israel – primarily the Jews – to go out in the fields and check on the ripening barley, to see if it has reached the “abib” stage of development.

Every year, the Karaites, led by Nehemiah Gordon, do this very thing, and have expeditions into the environs of Jerusalem, the Negev, and surrounding areas in Israel, to check on the status of the barley, to determine the beginning month of each new year.

Sounds rather simple, isn’t it? Not necessarily. Let’s examine this calendar issue more closely.

The First Ripe Barley

Alfred Edersheim in *The Temple: Its Ministry and Services*, observes: “As the year of the Hebrews was *lunar*, not solar, it consisted of only 354 days 8 hours 48 minutes 38 seconds. This, distributed among twelve months, would in the course of years have completely disordered the months, so that the first month, or *Nisan* (corresponding to the end of March or the beginning of April), *in the middle of which the FIRST RIPE BARLEY was to be presented to the Lord*, might have fallen in the middle of winter. Accordingly, the Sanhedrin appointed a committee of three, of which the chief of the Sanhedrin was always president, and which, if not unanimous, might be increased to

seven, when a majority of voices might suffice, to determine which year was to be made a leap year by the insertion of a thirteenth month” (page 155).

In *The Essence of the Holy Days*,” by Avraham Yaakov Finkel, we read, “However, the Torah requires that Passover be observed in *the month of ‘standing grain,’* namely, the spring.” He quotes Deuteronomy 16:1, “Safeguard the month of standing grain [Abib] so that you will be able to keep the Passover to God, since it was in the *month of standing grain* that God your Lord brought you out of Egypt at night” (page 141).

So when should the year begin? So far, we see it must be determined by the ripening of the barley, and it must be in spring, near the spring equinox. But can it begin PRIOR to the equinox? Or does it have to begin AFTER the equinox, as some say.

The truth is, as the Scriptures show, the determining factor is the RIPENING BARLY CROP! The reason why this is true is found in the book of Leviticus, discussing the Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread, which occur from Abib or Nisan 15-21.

The Wave Sheaf Offering

We read that during the Feast of Unleavened Bread, Israel was commanded to “bring the sheaf of the first fruits of your harvest to the priest. He shall raise the sheaf before the LORD, that you may find acceptance; on the day after the Sabbath [first high holy day, as the Septuagint shows, the Passover Sabbath] the priest shall raise it” (Lev.23:10-11).

This was the day of the wave sheaf offering! It occurred the day after Passover – that is, on Nisan 16. (The Passover seder was eaten at the beginning of Nisan 15, after the sun had set on Nisan 14 when the Passover lambs were slaughtered between the hours of 3:00 pm and 5:00 pm, according to the first century Jewish historian Josephus.)

Notice! The barley crop had to have “first fruits” ready for the wave sheaf offering *by the time of Passover, which occurred at the middle of the month of Abib!* This required that the barley crop had to be in a ripening stage by the beginning of the month and the end of the previous month! If the barley was beginning to ripen in the fields by the last few days of Adar, the previous month, then the next month would be declared as the month of “ABIB” – the month of “standing grain” or “ripening ears.”

Since the state of the barley is the final determining factor in all of this, in order to produce the “wave sheaf offering” in time for Passover from the “first-fruits” of the barley crop, then the new year *could begin in some years PRIOR to the spring equinox itself – although PASSOVER itself had to occur in the spring, and therefore AFTER the spring equinox!*

How simple!

“First-Fruits” come FIRST!

If the barley was becoming ripe at the end of Adar, but some people decided to postpone the onset of Abib because of their theory that the new month could not begin until AFTER the spring equinox, that would mean, in their calendar, that in some years where they inserted an Adar II (leap month), the Passover feast would not fall until LONG AFTER THE “FIRST-FRUITS” OF THE BARLEY CROP had matured and ripened in the fields! Yet God specifically commanded: *“You shall eat NO BREAD OR PARCHED GRAIN OR FRESH EARS UNTIL THAT VERY DAY, UNTIL YOU HAVE BROUGHT THE OFFERING OF YOUR GOD: it is a statute FOREVER throughout your generations in all your settlements”* (Lev.23:14).

If the month of Abib is postponed a whole month, when the abib barley has begun to ripen, that means that by the time Passover occurs, the harvest would be about HALF OVER! The people would be prohibited from eating ANY of the GRAIN for a WHOLE MONTH!

And it would certainly be *long past* the time of “FIRST-fruits”!

Sighting the Barley

In an email sent out to interested people around the world, Nehemia Gordon (website www.karaite-korner.org) sent out the following announcement:

“On March 11, 2005 Aviv barley was found in multiple locations in the Jordan valley including Naomi Junction and Fatzael Junction. The Aviv barley in the Alon and Ein Mabua regions were re-examined for the benefit of new Aviv searchers who had not been present on the previous occasion. One large field below the entrance of the town of Alon which had previously contained patches of Aviv barley had advanced to a uniform state of Aviv. On the March 11 Aviv Search the following people participated: Nehemia Gordon, Ruthanne Koch, Devorah Gordon, Melekh Ben Ya'aqov, Rivkah Michaeli, Glen Cain, Karl Bloodworth, Ferenc Illesy, Uri Marcus, Avi Marcus, Terry Fehr, Shlomoh Gaber, and Yosi Gaber. Aviv barley was not found in the northern Negev on March 10.”

-- Nehemia Gordon
Jerusalem, Israel

Thus, according to the Bible, and the testimony of the Scriptures, and authoritative witnesses, the new year this year began March 11, at sunset, and “New Year’s Day” was March 11-12, from sunset to sunset! Happy new year!

A Deeper Look at God’s Calendar

In grasping these fundamental truths, it is useful to read the works of those knowledgeable in the Jewish calendar, including Jewish rabbis. One such author is Rabbi Nathan Bushwick.

In *Understanding the Jewish Calendar*, Rabbi Nathan Bushwick wrote,

“In the time of the Sanhedrin there were no published calendars as there are today. The Sanhedrin declared the beginning of each month when the moon was actually sighted” (page 51).

Bushwick continues,

“The Sanhedrin used a similar method to determine whether the year should be a regular year or leap year. You will recall that the reason for making a leap year is to make sure that Pesach falls in the spring. Each year, in the month of Adar, they would determine how much longer the winter would last. Their determination was based on *weather and AGRICULTURAL conditions, and upon calculations of the date of the spring equinox. IF THEY CAME TO THE CONCLUSION that the NEXT MONTH would be SPRING ALREADY, they would declare it a REGULAR YEAR* and the next month would be Nisan. If, however, they decided that it would not be spring for another month, they would declare the next month Adar Sheni [*Adar Second, or Adar II*] and it would be a leap year” (*ibid.*).

Bushwick states further,

“It was impossible to know in advance whether a particular year would be a regular year or a leap year or whether a particular month would have twenty-nine or thirty days, since the final decision of both of these things *was made by the Sanhedrin year by year and month by month.* The length of the month was never determined until the thirtieth day actually arrived and the length of the year was generally not determined until the month of Adar. So you can see it was impossible to ever publish a calendar” (p.52).

In Biblical times, sighting of the new moon, and the sighting of the barley in the abib stage of growth, were vital – crucial – to the determination of the NEW YEAR!

Arthur Spier, in *The Comprehensive Hebrew Calendar*, also addresses the calendar in the times of the Second Temple. He also shows that regarding the beginnings of new years in ancient times, a number of factors were considered. He states:

“A special committee of the Sanhedrin, with its president as chairman, had the mandate to regulate and balance the solar with the lunar years. This so-called Calendar Council (*Sod Haibbur*) calculated the beginnings of the seasons (*Tekufoth*) on the basis of astronomical figures handed down as a tradition of old. Whenever, after two or three years, the annual excess of 11 days had accumulated to approximately 30 days, a thirteenth month Adar II was inserted before Nisan in order to assure that Nisan and Passover would occur in Spring and not retrogress toward winter.”

Notice! When the days had accumulated to about 30 days, then an “extra month,” or “leap month,” was declared by the Sanhedrin. This was to keep the festivals from retrogressing toward the winter and coming earlier and earlier every year, so that Passover would always be observed *in the proper season – springtime!*

Spier continues, giving other reasons why a 13th month, Adar II, would be added in a given year, by the Sanhedrin:

“However, the astronomical observation was not the only basis for intercalation of a thirteenth month. *The delay of the actual arrival of spring was another decisive factor.* The Talmudic sources report that the Council intercalated a year when the **BARLEY IN THE FIELDS HAD NOT YET RIPENED**, when the fruit of the trees had not grown properly, when the winter rains had not stopped, when the roads for Passover pilgrims had not dried up, and when the young pigeons had not become fledged. The council on intercalation considered the astronomical facts together with the religious requirements of Passover and the natural conditions of the country” (p.1-2).

The Spring Equinox

Some claim that the Hebrew calendar cannot begin a new year before the spring equinox. Is this true? If that were true, as we have seen, it would play havoc with the “first-fruits” of the “wave-sheaf offering,” and the harvesting of much of the barley crop, which would have to be delayed UNTIL the wave-sheaf offering was waved before the LORD, on the 16th day of Abib!

Can the Hebrew calendar begin the new year in the spring BEFORE the spring equinox? Yes, it most certainly can!

In *The Comprehensive Hebrew Calendar*, written by Arthur Spier, a highly respected rabbi and academician, we find many times when the Hebrew year in the spring begins PRIOR to the spring equinox. Remember, the equinox varies from year to year as being March 20-21. Yet the Hebrew month of Nisan or Abib, in the Hebrew calendar, used by Jews all over the world, began *before* the spring equinox in the following years:

<i>Year</i>	<i>First Day</i>	<i>Roman Day</i>
1975	Nisan 1	March 13
1980	Nisan 1	March 18
1983	Nisan 1	March 15
1988	Nisan 1	March 19
1991	Nisan 1	March 16
1994	Nisan 1	March 13
1999	Nisan 1	March 18
2002	Nisan 1	March 14
2005	Nisan 1	March 12*

Notice the asterisk on the final year shown, 2005. In this case, we show the final year according to the “Observed Hebrew Calendar”! Observation of the ripening fields of barley is done each year by the Karaite Jews in Jerusalem. On March 8 and 11, 2005, they explored the regions around Jerusalem, Israel, and found many spots of ripening barley. Therefore, the NEW YEAR this year actually began on March 12 (or the previous evening at sunset, when the New Moon was sighted in Israel)!

As you study the dates shown above, you can see that the Jews themselves begin the new year in some years BEFORE THE SPRING EQUINOX! It should be obvious, then, that the new year can begin before or after the spring equinox, *as long as the Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread do not begin before the equinox! They must occur IN THE SPRING, “at the appointed times,” and “in their seasons.”* God plainly said, “These are the feasts of the LORD, even holy convocations, which ye shall proclaim IN THEIR SEASONS” (Leviticus 23:4).

It is the Passover itself which must occur in the spring of the year – not the first day of Nisan! That is God’s plain order and directive.

Tekufot (“Seasons”)

The term *tekufot* comes from the word *tekufah*, literally, “circuit,” related to the word meaning “to go round.” The *tekufah* of the month of Nisan refers to the spring equinox.

One of the chief concerns of the present Jewish calendar, introduced by Hillel II in 358 A.D., was to set the present fixed order of the Jewish leap years, when a thirteenth month was intercalated into the year, seven leap years in each nineteen-year calendar cycle. Says the *Encyclopedia Judaica*, this was done “to achieve the main *raison d’être* of intercalation – to prevent the lunar Nisan 16 from occurring before the day of the *tekufah* of Nisan” (“Calendar,” vol.5, page 50). In other words, the main purpose was to PREVENT PASSOVER from occurring BEFORE the spring equinox!

Passover was commanded to be observed “in its season,” which means in the spring – and since the spring equinox is the first day of spring, Passover cannot occur before this date! However, this did not mean the month of Nisan *itself* could not begin before the spring equinox! The key is in the Scriptures themselves. God declared to Moses and Israel: “These are the *feasts* of the LORD . . . which ye shall proclaim *in their seasons*” (Lev.23:4).

Thus the Biblical requirement is NOT that Nisan cannot begin before the spring equinox, but that the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread – the HOLY DAYS and FESTIVAL of Nisan – may not begin before the spring equinox!

Those who claim that Nisan cannot begin before the spring equinox don’t have a “leg” to stand on! They are claiming as a fact something that has never been

demonstrated to be true. They are inventing out of thin air a calendar rule which the Bible does not teach, anywhere, and the Jews themselves do not teach or accept!

Let's not be led astray by erroneous opinions of false teachers and opinionated men who set themselves up as some kind of authority or calendar "teacher"! Indeed, God warns us to beware of men who "despise government [or, "dominion"]. Presumptuous are they, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities" (II Peter 2:10). Peter says of them, they "speak evil of the things that they understand not" (verse 12). He even calls them "wells without water" (verse 17).

We read in the *Encyclopedia Judaica*, an authoritative source, in its article on the month of Nisan, "The zodiacal sign of this month is *Aries*. . . . In the 20th century Nisan, in its earliest occurrence, extends from March 13 to April 11, and in its latest from April 11 to May 10" ("Nisan," vol.12, page 1177). (This year it was actually March 12!)

Clearly, this shows that the month of Nisan can begin a whole week or more before the spring equinox, which is March 20-21!

Equinoxes

What about the fall holy days? – isn't the Feast of Tabernacles supposed to occur in the Fall to keep it in the right season? Some have said that the Feast of Tabernacles should always be in the Fall. So, they ask, if the spring Holy Days are early, wouldn't this make the Fall Festivals early? The answer is a simple, "No."

Keep in mind that the Passover *never* occurs before the spring equinox! Therefore, the Fall Festivals would not occur before the fall equinox.

Cecilia Payne-Gaposchkin in *Introduction to Astronomy*, points out, "The feasts of the Jewish and Christian years were fixed by the moon; the Passover was set by the date of the full moon in the month of which the *fourteenth day (from new moon) fell on or after the vernal equinox*" (page 45).

Says the *World Book Encyclopedia*, "The equinoxes occur on March 20 or 21 and on September 22 or 23" ("Equinox," vol.6, p.267-268). This is the day when the sun is directly above the earth's equator, making days and nights of nearly equal length everywhere on the earth.

The time interval from the spring equinox to the fall equinox is longer than that between fall and spring, because the earth's orbit is elliptical, and the earth moves more slowly when it is farther from the sun, as during the summer months, and moves fastest when nearer the sun (it moves fastest during January).

With the Jewish fixed calendar, there are 178 days from Nisan 1 to Tishri 1, the seventh month. From the first day of Passover (Nisan 15) to the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles (Tishri 15), there are 178 days. Between Nisan 1 and Tishri 15, the first day

of the Feast, are 192 days. From March 20 to September 21 (equinox to equinox) there are 185 days.

This means that the Feast of Tabernacles can begin at the Fall equinox, or thereafter. But it does not occur *before* the equinox.

In the chart below we show the years where the Jewish calendar has had an early Nisan (one beginning before the spring equinox), with the dates for Nisan 1 and Tishri 15, from 1975 to 2002. Notice:

<i>Year</i>	<i>New Year/Nisan 1</i>	<i>Tabernacles/Tishri 15</i>
1975	March 13	September 20
1980	March 18	September 25
1983	March 15	September 22
1988	March 19	September 26
1991	March 16	September 23
1994	March 13	September 20
1999	March 18	September 25
2002	March 14	September 21
2005	March 12*	September 20*

The last date shown is according to the New Moon/Abib Barley sighting for the year 2005, since the barley for the spring Passover wave sheaf offering was declared to be in the “abib” (ripening) stage by the Karaite Jews in Jerusalem, Israel.

Thus we see that even when the calendar year begins at the new moon prior to the spring equinox, this does not push the Feast of Tabernacles before the fall equinox. In the time frame from 1975 to 2005, the earliest the Feast of Tabernacles ever occurred was on the autumnal equinox, September 20. It did so three times.

“Year’s End”

We read in Exodus 23:16 the expression, “and the feast of ingathering, which is in the *end* of the year” (Strong’s #3318, *yatsa*, a primitive root, “to go out”). The “feast of ingathering” is another name for the Feast of harvest or “Tabernacles.” It occurs in Israel at the end of the harvest season, when the year “goes out” or ends, and the winter begins. In ancient Israel, although there was spring, summer, fall, and winter, there were essentially two seasons – winter (with the fall) and summer (with the spring) – both divided by the two equinoxes.

In Exodus 34:22, we read of “the feast of ingathering at the year’s end” (Hebrew, “revolution of the year”). This is a different word. It is Strong’s #8622, *tequphah*, “a *revolution*, i.e. of the sun, *course – circuit, come about, end.*”

The Feasts of God were to be proclaimed “in their seasons” (Lev.23:4). The word for “seasons” in Hebrew is *moad*, or *moadim*, Strong’s #4150, meaning “an appointment, i.e. a fixed time or season; specifically a festival; conventionally, a year.” The Feasts should be kept “in their appointed times” – that is, on the correct dates, in the proper time of year. The Feast of Tabernacles is at the “end” of the year (*atsa*), meaning close to the fall equinox which begins the winter season.

God set the sun and moon in the heavens to determine the *moadim* or “seasons,” or “appointed times.” In Genesis 1:14 we read, “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 (*moadim*), and for days, and years.”

I see no conflict whatsoever between the beginning of Nisan 1 before the spring equinox and these calendar rules we find in the Scriptures. This year the Feast of Tabernacles will begin on September 20, the day of the fall equinox.

How Did the Apostles Know?

Some have wondered how the apostles knew when the barley was ripe in time to know when Passover should be observed. This is really not so difficult to answer. Of course, most of the apostles were around Jerusalem or nearby regions (Peter, James, John, etc.). Paul was the primary itinerant apostle, traveling westward through Europe. The Jews had communities in all these areas. They had signaling methods to notify outlying regions throughout Asia, Babylonia, etc., when a New Moon was observed in Jerusalem. So they knew the beginning of months at the time the new moons were sighted. (Signal fires were lit at night, and relays passed the message on. Later, a type of “pony express” was used when Samaritans tried to create confusion by lighting false signal fires).

The ripening barley had to be observed PRIOR to the month to be declared “Nisan” or “Abib.” It had to be seen in Adar, the twelfth month. That leaves about three weeks for people to be notified about the Passover. However, because of the degree of uncertainty as to when a particular Festival was to be observed, the Jews made it a rule to observe *two days* for each holy day in outlying areas, away from Judea, except for the Day of Atonement, which occurred on the 10th day of Tishri. Fasting for two days straight was not considered necessary, as this could cause hardship. Observing the festivals for two days in outlying areas was done as a precaution so that if there was a lack in communication, somehow, the correct day would still be observed.

Unjustified Criticism

Since the announcement of the new year’s beginning, there have been vicious attacks on the Karaites by certain ones who have their own agenda, apparently. They may themselves be deceived, or misled, but they are certainly misleading others – a very serious matter in God’s sight!

A number of people seem to be very upset this year because the Karaites DID find lots of barley around the Jerusalem area.

Nehemia Gordon, a leader among the Karaites, who observe the new moons each month, is a person who has obtained much experience in studying and observing the ripening barley harvests in Israel. His track record goes back about ten years. He is a sincere and faithful man who deserves much credit and respect. He has received a lot of “flack,” recently – but NOT FROM JEWS, mind you – they appreciate his efforts, although they don’t recognize his authority since they are waiting till their own rabbis (or new Sanhedrin) decide to go back to the observed calendar instead of Hillel II’s fixed calendar.

Most of the unjustified criticism he has received has come from various “Messianic” self-styled “rabbis,” or so-called “Christians,” who have a mind (and opinion) of their own. And they have their own “agenda.” Jesus Christ, the Messiah, warned us about those who lead others astray, including some “Christian” and “Messianic” groups, who proclaim their own ideas and false explanations. “Prove all things,” Paul warns us (I Thess.5:21). “Believe not every spirit,” John declared (I John 3:1).

Nehemia Gordon wrote about this disconcerting problem, saying:

“Our recent Aviv Report seems to have angered many people who follow the Rabbanite calendar or the Equinox Calendar. Karaites have nothing against those that follow other calendar systems. We believe that the Tanach commands us to follow the biblical Aviv-New Moon calendar and share this information with those who ask to receive it. What other non-Karaite groups do is really none of our business. But rather than agree to disagree on the calendar issue, a small number of Messianics and Christians have been disseminating vicious lies about the Karaites. One of these lies is that Karaite Jews had a questionable role in the holocaust. This is an old accusation which has no basis in fact or reality. I think it is significant that rather than try and prove their position from Scripture, these people are putting forth smokescreen arguments of this sort. I wrote a study some time ago on the supposed role of Karaites in the Holocaust which I am now making generally available at:<http://www.karaite-korner.org/holocaust.htm>

“In this context I have to say how surprised and impressed I am at the reaction of Rabbanites to our Aviv Report. These reactions range from apathy to ‘Yes, if there was a Sanhedrin we would do as you do.’ But I have not detected any hostility from Rabbanites on this issue. The reason is that the Rabbanites do not disagree with us on the question of Aviv, only on the question of who has the authority to examine and consider the Aviv. On this issue Karaites and Rabbanites agree to disagree. Maybe those Messianics and Christians who are making personal and communal attacks on Karaites can learn a lesson of decency from the Rabbanites.”

A Deplorable Condition

This year, the vast majority of God’s people have missed the “boat.” They have followed the “fixed” Jewish calendar and therefore inserted a thirteenth month when they should not have done so, thereby postponing the month of Nisan by 30 days, long after the ripening of the standing grain of barley! Thus they are beginning the month of “Abib” *thirty days AFTER the “abib”!* *This places their festival observances one whole month late for the whole year!* They are therefore *out of sync* with the barley harvest and *their festivals and months are a whole month LATER than the Biblically mandated beginning of the year, determined by the agricultural factor of the barley being “abib” a month before they start their month of “Abib” or Nisan!!*

How sad! How grievous! How must God in Heaven yearn for His people to repent of their stubbornness and iniquity and folly (I Sam.15:23), and get back to the true TORAH (Deut.4:1-2), and the faith ONCE delivered to the saints! (Jude 3-4).

Could this sort of thing be why God attests to Israel, in the prophecy of Isaiah, “Ah, sinful nation, people laden with iniquity, offspring who do evil, children who do corruptly, who have forsaken the LORD, who have despised the Holy One of Israel, who are utterly estranged!”

“Why do you seek further beatings? Why do you continue to rebel? The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint” (Isaiah 1:4-5).

God continues, “New moon and Sabbath and calling of convocation – I cannot endure solemn assemblies with iniquity. *YOUR new moons and YOUR appointed festivals MY SOUL HATES; they have become a BURDEN to me, I am weary of bearing them*” (Isaiah 1:13-14).

God thunders, “Come now, let us argue it out, says the LORD: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be like snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool. If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land; *but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be DEVoured by the sword;* for the mouth of the LORD has spoken” (Isaiah 1:18-20, NRSV).

Jeremiah the prophet laments, “The LORD hath caused the solemn feasts and Sabbaths to be *forgotten in Zion*, and hath despised in the indignation of His anger the king and the priests” (Lamentations 2:6, KJV).

Because of transgression, God declares, “I will put an end to all her mirth, her festivals, her new moons, her Sabbaths, and all her appointed festivals. . . I will punish her for the festival days of the Baals, when she offered incense to them . . . and went after her lovers, and forgot me, says the LORD” (Hosea 2:11-13, NRSV).

God is not “happy” with the ignorance of His people. He is not pleased with their cavalier transgression of His Law – His Torah – which is the true “way of life”!

A Final Warning

Nor is the true Almighty God happy with His church in these last days! He reproves them for their sad spiritual condition, *blindness, nakedness*, and spiritual poverty and ignorance! Yeshua, the Messiah, declares, to the END-time church called “Laodicea” – the very word means “the people decide,” or “decided for the people” – in a blistering rebuke, “I know your [record of] works and what you are doing; you are *neither cold nor hot*. Would that you were cold or hot! So, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will *spew you out of My mouth!* For you say, I am rich; I have prospered and grown wealthy, and I am in need of nothing; and you do not realize and understand that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, naked.”

Does this not describe very accurately MANY – even the vast majority – of God’s people, today? Sad, but very, very true. The Messiah goes on:

“Therefore I counsel you to purchase from Me gold refined and tested by fire, that you may be [truly] wealthy, and white clothes to clothe you and to keep the shame of your nudity from being seen, and salve to put on your eyes, that you may see. Those whom I [dearly and tenderly] love, I tell their faults and convict and convince and reprove and chasten [I discipline and instruct them]. *So be enthusiastic and in earnest and burning with ZEAL and repent* [changing your mind and attitude].”

Yes, the time has come to REPENT – and CHANGE!

“Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears and listens to and heeds My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he [will eat] with Me. He who overcomes (is victorious), I will grant him to sit beside Me on My throne, as I Myself overcame (was victorious), and sat down beside My Father on His throne. He who is able to hear, let him listen to and heed what the [Holy] Spirit says to the assemblies (churches)” (Rev.3:15-22, Amplified Parallel Bible).

“He that has an ear.” “He who is able to hear.”

Are you listening? Will you “heed”? It’s all up to you. You must decide. May God give you courage, strength, and faith and trust in Him and His Word, so that you won’t be led into error and plunge down the wrong road, and ignore the witness of the truth, and go far, far astray! Far too many are lettings others do their thinking for them. They are trusting mere men – with the jewels of salvation!

What about you, personally? Will you take the challenge? Will you make the effort to study and “prove” the truth?

Really now – you know it truly *IS* up to *you!* May God grant you wisdom and understanding, so you can obey Him with a whole heart in truth!

Abib Barley Found!



This year Nehemia Gordon and his abib search team in Israel on March 8 found Aviv stage barley in a new area, near the spring of Ein Mabua, 9 miles east of Jerusalem. Vast quantities of lush healthy Aviv were found, as shown in the picture above. Therefore, the New Moon of March 11 began the New Year and the first day of “Abib” or “Nisan,” the first month of the year, was from sunset March 11 till sunset March 12.



Shown above is a sample of the ripening ears of abib barley, as was found near the spring of Ein Mabua. For more pictures and information, contact www.karaite-korner.org, in Israel. Clearly, the abundant discovery of barley in the abib stage of growth shows that Passover in 2005 was correctly observed on March 25, not one month later, as the vast majority of people, including the Jews, observed it.

