

Laying a Foundation

An important part of any investigation is the clarity of words required in order to communicate thoughts and ideas. Therefore, as part of the introduction to our three volumes, it is necessary to do two things. First, we must lay a foundation by providing some preliminary definitions for a few key terms. Second, we need to furnish our reasons for using certain other important names and words that will be utilized throughout our study. To demonstrate, there shall be an explanation for our choice in favor of the name and title “Yahushua the messiah” in place of “Jesus Christ,” as well as our reasons for using the title “Christian” as a cover-all for all of the early assemblies following Yahushua the messiah. An explanation shall also be offered for using the pronunciation “Phasekh” as a transliteration of the Hebrew word פסח (*Ph-s-kh*), commonly translated into English as “Passover.” Other initial terms defined will be *moad*, *khag*, and *sabbathon*. Knowing these definitions shall greatly enhance the reader’s ability to engage in the research.

Yahushua the Messiah

Throughout our text, in place of the form “Jesus Christ,” we will respectfully use “Yahushua the messiah,” a more proper transliteration and translation of his original Hebrew name and title יהושע משיח (Yahushua *meshiakh*). The name יהושע, also written יהושוע (Yahushua),¹ was the same name that was given to the famous Israelite general Yahushua (Joshua) the son of Nun,² and to the high priest Yahushua, the son of Yahuzadak,³ both being scriptural foretypes of the messiah. Our preference comes from the fact that Yahushua better expresses the meaning of the original name. Yahushua means “Yahu saves.”⁴ It does not mean “Yahweh saves,” as so often incorrectly asserted. Yahu is the praenomen of Yahu Yahweh,⁵ the son of father Yahweh.⁶ It was Yahu who became Yahu-shua the messiah, “for he (Yahu) shall save his people from their sins.”⁷

1 SEC, Heb. #3091; CHAL, p. 130.

2 E.g., Josh., 1:1, et al; cf., the Gk. of the LXX and Heb., 4:8, and the Lat. of the Vulg.

3 Hag., 1:1, et al; cf., the LXX, and the Vulg.

4 Yahu + SEC, Heb. #3467. See SNY, chap. ix; ZDMG, 59, pp. 341f, יהו + ישוע. Eusebius, *D.E.*, 4:17:23, for example, defines the Hebrew name יהושע to mean “Ἰαὸς σoterία (*Iao soteria*; Yahu saves).”

5 See above Intro. to Three Vols., pp. 2f, n. 4. Also see TNY.

6 For the large body of evidence proving the existence of two Yahwehs, a father and a son, see TTY. Also see our discussions in App. A–C.

7 Matt., 1:21. All those calling upon the father’s sacred name, Yahweh, shall be saved (Joel, 2:32; cf., Acts, 2:14–21, 4:8–12; also see Ps., 54:1–3, 124:8; Prov., 18:10; Zech., 13:9). Yet one must

The English name “Jesus” is ultimately derived from the Aramaic short form שׁוּעָ (Yeshua), meaning “he saves.”⁸ As Solomon Zeitlin states, “שׁוּעָ is not Hebrew. In Hebrew the name is written יהושע.”⁹ The Aramaic came into the Greek as Ἰησοῦς (Yesus), Ἰησοῦν (Yesun), etc.—suffixes like ς (s) and ν (n) being a common Greek addition to names. The Greek form Ἰησοῦς (Yesus), in turn, came into Latin as *Jesus*,¹⁰ and then into English as Jesus. This shortened Aramaic form שׁוּעָ (Yeshua) was first utilized because of the hesitancy of the Jews to pronounce or use the full name יהוָה (Yahu). This reluctance stemmed from the fact that the name Yahu contained the same first three letters used to form the sacred name יהוה (Yahweh). The mere utterance of the name Yahweh by the common man was prohibited by Jewish religious taboo since the second century B.C.E.¹¹ This taboo eventually spilled over to the name יהוָה (Yahu) and, by the end of the first century C.E., only the bi-literal form יה (Yah) was officially allowed.¹²

The name Jesus, accordingly, was created as a substitute for the more proper form Yahushua.¹³ This point is verified in numerous ways. In the Hebrew text of Haggai and Zechariah, for example, the name of the high priest Yahushua is rendered as יהושע (Yahushua), the son of Yahuzadak,¹⁴ while in the book of Ezra, written in a period when Aramaic was more commonly spoken, this same high priest is called שׁוּעָ (Yeshua), the son of Yuzadak.¹⁵ In the Greek texts of the Septuagint (LXX) and Josephus, meanwhile, when discussing the high priest carrying this name, it was rendered Ἰησοῦς (Yesus), Ἰησοῦν (Yesun), etc.¹⁶ Similar evidence is discovered in the Masoretic Text (MT) of the book of Joshua and in the Targum Jonathan, where the name of Yahushua the son of Nun is found written in Hebrew and Aramaic as יהושע (Yahushua). Yet in the Greek of Acts, 7:45, and Hebrews, 4:8, and in the Septuagint and Josephus, it is rendered Ἰησοῦς (Yesus), Ἰησοῦν (Yesun), etc.¹⁷

Meanwhile, the early fourth century C.E. Christian bishop of Caesarea, Eusebius, notes that Moses gave the name Ἰησοῦν (Yesun) to the man who would follow him in the rulership of the Israelites, i.e., יהושע (Yahushua), the son of Nun.¹⁸ He did so because Yahushua the son of Nun “bore the image of our saviour” and in this way Moses marked him with “the greatest honor” by “περιτέθειται (*peritetheitai*; bestowing

also be cognizant that it is Yahu, the angel who comes in the name of Yahweh, who has died in order to pass on and then receive unto himself the eternal inheritance in order that he might save us by grace. For the angel named Yahweh see App. A and the studies in TTY and TNY. For the issue of grace see below Chap. V.

⁸ SEC, Heb. #3442.

⁹ JQR, 60, p. 194.

¹⁰ HLD, p. 1013.

¹¹ SNY, chap. xii.

¹² Mid. Teh., Pss., 113 and 68; B. Erub., 18b; MNY, p. 51; and TTY. Also see above Intro. to Three Vols., pp. 2f, n. 4.

¹³ DB, p. 307; SEC, Gk. #2424; and see above n. 1.

¹⁴ Hag., 1:1, 12, 14, 2:2; Zech., 3:1-8.

¹⁵ Ezra, 3:2, 8-9, 5:2, etc. Notice as well the alteration of the name יהוזדק (Yahu-zadak) to יוזדק (Yu-zadak).

¹⁶ Jos., *Antiq.*, 11:3:10-11:4:3.

¹⁷ Jos., *Antiq.*, 5:1:12-29.

¹⁸ Cf., Num., 13:16; Deut., 34:9.

upon)”¹⁹ him “the name of our saviour.”²⁰ Irenaeus, likewise, equates Yahushua the son of Nun as a type of the messiah calling him Ἰησοῦν (Yesun).²¹ Therefore, the name Jesus is merely a gloss for the original Hebrew name Yahushua.

The Greek term *χριστός* (*khristos*), English “Christ,” meanwhile, is not a proper name but a title. It is a translation of the Hebrew title מְשִׁיחַ (*meshiakh*)—itself transliterated into Greek as *μεσσίας* (*messias*), *μεσσίαν* (*messian*), etc. and into English as “messiah”—which means “anointed.”²² In the book of John, for instance, we read of the title “*μεσσίαν* (*messian*), which is being interpreted the *χριστός* (*khristos*).”²³ The word “messiah” is used to identify Yahushua (Yahu saves) as the one who has been “anointed” by Yahweh to be our king and high priest.

As a result, the combined form Ἰησοῦς χριστός (Yesus *khristos*; Jesus Christ) is in reality a translation of the Hebrew יְהוֹשֻׁעַ מְשִׁיחַ (Yahushua *meshiakh*). For reasons of insight and accuracy, we shall render this name and title into English as Yahushua the messiah.

The Term Christian

We would next like to explain our use of the title Christian. Those in scholarly circles realize that the term Christian was not originally adhered to by the followers of Yahushua the messiah. More properly, those earliest members of the Assembly, who were largely made up of Jewish converts following Yahushua, should be called Yahwehists, after Yahweh,²⁴ the name of their *eloah* (deity).²⁵ The name Yahwehists is especially appropriate due to the emphasis placed upon the father’s sacred name by Yahushua and his disciples.²⁶ Yet the use of

¹⁹ A form of περιτίθημι (*peritithemi*), “place or put around, put on . . . metaph., bestow, confer upon”; cf. περιτείνω (*periteino*), to “stretch all round or over” (GEL, 1968, p. 1390). Lake, *Euseb.*, i, p. 31, transl. περιτέθειται to mean “surrounds.”

²⁰ Eusebius, *H.E.*, 1:3:1–6. Also see Eusebius, *D.E.*, 4:17; Barnabas, 12:8–10.

²¹ Irenaeus, frag. 19. Also see Tertullian, *Marc.*, 17.

²² SEC, Gk. #3323; GEL, 1968, p. 2007; CHAL, pp. 218f; SEC, Heb. #4898.

²³ John, 1:41, 4:25.

²⁴ For a complete discussion see SNY, chap. xi through app. E; and cf., 2 Chron., 7:14, “my (Yahweh’s) people, upon whom my name is called”; Jer., 14:9, “Yet you, Yahweh, are in the midst of us, and we are called by your name”; Jer., 15:16, “for I am called by your name, Yahweh, *eloahi* of hosts”; Dan., 9:18f, “for your city and your people are called by your name” (cf., Isa., 60:14; Ezek., 48:35; Rev., 3:12). Also see James, 2:7; Acts, 15:14–17; Amos, 9:11f; Rev., 14:1.

²⁵ In our study we shall translate the Greek generic term θεός (*theos*; deity) when used in the New Testament with more appropriate transliterations of the Hebrew generic terms אֱלֹהִים (*eloah*, mighty being), or its plural and collective noun forms אֱלֹהִים (*eloahi*) or אֱלֹהִים (*eloahim*). (A collective noun is a noun that denotes a collection of things regarded as a single unit.) These terms and the title אֱלֹהִים (*el*; mighty one) have been indiscriminately glossed into English by the single word God. Each term actually has its own unique meaning (see SNY, chap. i). For example, *eloah* is singular and *eloahi* is plural.

Nevertheless, when *eloahi* is used in reference to the two Yahwehs, it becomes a collective noun, the two *eloah* being אֶחָד (*akhad*; “united” into one unit) (HEL, p. 10; SEC, Heb. #258, 259), the same word used when a husband and wife are united in a marriage (Gen., 2:24; cf., Eph., 5:31f; 1 Cor., 6:15–17), i.e., “Yahweh *eloahi* is *akhad* (unified)” (Deut., 6:4; Zech., 14:9). As a body of beings ruled by father Yahweh the collective noun *eloahim* is used, i.e., “Yahweh is the *eloahi* of the *eloahim*” (Deut., 10:17). To retain these more precise meanings and to avoid any confusion, we shall continue throughout our study with the proper transliterations. Also see below, Intro. to Part I, p. 30, n. 39; and App. A, p. 385, ns. 2 and 3.

²⁶ For example, Matt., 6:9; John, 5:43, 10:25, 17:5f, 11f, 25f; Eph., 3:14f; Matt., 28:19f; Acts, 4:8–12; Heb., 2:12; Rom., 10:12f (cf., Joel, 2:28–32; Ps., 148:13).

the sacred name by anyone except the high priest and a chosen few was forbidden by Jewish oral law under penalty of death.²⁷ When spoken among the disciples of the messiah, it could only be uttered in private for fear of persecution by the Jewish religious leaders.

Under these circumstances, it is clear that, despite whatever name they may have utilized in private, any public use of the sacred name Yahweh during the earliest years of the Assembly would have been unthinkable. In this sense, the earliest members actually differed from those who later called themselves Christians. Beginning in the early second century C.E., various Christian assemblies adopted the Jewish position on the sacred name, declaring it ineffable.²⁸ Having abandoned the use of the sacred name, these later Christians began to substitute the titles “κύριος (*kurios*; sovereign)” (“*domini* [master]” in Latin; “Lord” in English) and “Christ,” as well as the Greek form of Yahushua, i.e., Ἰησοῦς (*Yesus*), Ἰησοῦν (*Yesun*), etc. (“Jesus” in English), for the sacred name.²⁹

Under prohibition against speaking the sacred name, the Assembly at first publicly referred to the followers of the messiah as Ναζωραίων (*Nazoraion*; Nazoraenes, Nazarenes), “because of the city of Nazareth,” where the messiah had lived.³⁰ This usage was based upon the prophecy that, “he (the messiah) shall be called a Ναζωραῖος (*Nazoraïos*; Nazoraene, Nazarene).”³¹ The apostle Peter (Keph), on the day of Pentecost which followed the death and resurrection of the messiah, pronounced that it was “Yahushua the Nazoraene” whom Yahweh had raised up.³² The apostle Paul was even called a ringleader of “the heresy of the Nazoraenes.”³³

Epiphanius adds that, “for a brief period,” these Nazoraenes were also “called Ἰεσσαῖοι (*Iessaïoi*; Jessaeans) before they were called Christians,” because of “Jesse, I suppose, since David was descended from Jesse, and Mary from David’s line.”³⁴ It is more probable, though, that Epiphanius misunderstood the Jewish term of derision for Christians, for they called יהושהׁ (Yahushua) by the name ישׁוׁ (Yeshu),³⁵ a meaningless word, and the followers

²⁷ SNY, chap. xii.

²⁸ For example, Justin Martyr (c. 160 C.E.) speaks of “ineffable” deity with the “unutterable” name (Justin Mart., *Trypho*, 126, 127, *1 Apol.*, 61, 63, *2 Apol.*, 6, 10, 13). Irenaeus, *Ag. Her.*, 3:5:1, calls Yahweh “the unnameable father,” also see 2:16:2. By the time of Jerome (384 C.E.) the pronunciation of the sacred name יהוה was forgotten by all but a few scholars. When found still written in Hebrew letters in biblical text, it was mistakenly read by laymen to be the Greek name Πιπι (Pi-Pi) (Jerome, *Epist.*, 25). In this same passage, Jerome declares the sacred name Yahweh to be “ineffable.”

²⁹ See for example, Eusebius, *D.E.*, 2:3 §80, 3:7 §136, 4:18 §294c, and in Eusebius, *H.E.*, 1:3:12, where Eusebius refers to the name “Christ” as “his truly reverend and sacred name.” Also see Origen, *Celsus*, 1:6, 25, 67. The NSBD notes that in these early Christian circles “something of the awe attaching to *Yahweh* among the Jews was transferred to the name ‘Christ’ or the compound ‘Jesus Christ,’ which even in the Apostolic Age had come to be regarded as a proper name instead of a definitive expression (Jesus the Christ)” (p. 606). G. H. Parke-Taylor observes, “Christian mysticism has been more concerned with the name of Jesus than with the name YHWH” (YDNB, p. 105).

³⁰ Epiphanius, *Pan.*, 29:6:5.

³¹ Matt., 2:23.

³² Acts, 2:22–24.

³³ Acts, 24:5.

³⁴ Epiphanius, *Pan.*, 29:1:2, 29:4:9, 29:5:4.

³⁵ TDNT, 3, p. 286.

may well for a time have been called "ישׁו" (Yesui), which is spelled and sounds very much like "ישׁ" (Yesse; Jesse) and "ישׁשׁ" (Yessei; Jesseaeans).

Because Nazareth was located in Galilee, and most of the disciples were from that region, the early Assembly members were also identified as Galileans. Peter, for example, was accused by the Jews of being a Galilean because of his form of Aramaic speech and because he was seen with the messiah.³⁶ The messiah was himself described as a Galilean.³⁷ Accordingly, Emperor Julian the Apostate referred to all Christians as "Galileans."³⁸

Most of the members of the early Nazoraenes were Jews who had converted to Christianity. An important faction of these, because of a large Pharisaical element,³⁹ continued to adhere to the customs of the Torah of Moses as well as to their belief in Yahushua as the messiah. Because of their stand on the Torah of Moses, non-Judaeans classed this sect as neither Christian nor Jewish, while the Nazoraenes were claiming to be both.⁴⁰ Since this sect retained the name Nazoraenes, the non-Judaeans in the Assembly sought to separate themselves by another identity. To fill this void they gravitated to the title "Christian," a term first applied to them by unbelievers who were critical of the Assembly.

To demonstrate, the book of Acts informs us that, during the ministry of the apostle Saul (Paul), while many of the disciples of Yahushua were gathered at Antioch, Syria (in 42 C.E.), they "were first called Χριστιανούς (*Khristianous*; Christians)" by the Greek-speaking inhabitants of that city.⁴¹ This term, as already noted, is derived from the Greek word χριστός (*khristos*; English "Christ"), which is a translation of the Hebrew title מָשִׁיחַ (*meshiakh*; English "messiah"), both words meaning "anointed."⁴² In effect, by calling them "Christians," the pagan Syrians were identifying them as the "followers of the messiah."

Eusebius notes that in the time of Emperor Claudius (41–54 C.E.), "the title of Christian had not yet become well-known everywhere."⁴³ The pagan Roman author Tacitus (writing between 115–120 C.E.), meanwhile, informs us that in the days of Nero (54–68 C.E.) the Roman people gave this name to those following the messiah. He writes:

Therefore, to scotch the rumor (that Nero had ordered the fire), Nero substituted as culprits, and punished with the utmost refinements of cruelty, a class of men, loathed for their vices, whom the crowd styled *Christianos*; *Christus*, the founder of the name, had undergone the death penalty in the reign of Tiberius, by sentence of the procurator Pontius Pilatus.⁴⁴

³⁶ Mark, 14:70; Luke, 22:59.

³⁷ Luke, 23:6.

³⁸ See for example, Julian, *Ag. Gal.*, §39A–358E, and *Epist.* 36, §422–424.

³⁹ Cf., Acts, 15:1–6.

⁴⁰ Epiphanius, *Pan.*, 29; John Dam., 29; Jerome, *Lives*, 2, 3, *Epist.*, 20:2.

⁴¹ Acts, 11:26. Also see Irenaeus, *Ag. Her.*, 3:12:14; Epiphanius, *Pan.*, 29:1:3, 29:4:10.

⁴² SEC, Heb. #4899, Gk. #5546–5548; GEL, 1968, p. 2007. Also see above p. 9, and n. 2.

⁴³ Eusebius, *H.E.*, 2:17:1, 4.

⁴⁴ Tacitus, *Ann.*, 15:44. For Nero's part in this story also see Suetonius, *Nero*, 38; Dio, 63:16–18.

According to the Romans, it was the Roman crowd (as had the Syrian population before them), and not the followers of Yahushua, who styled them Christians, naming them after the title of their founder. About this same time, in the days of the Jewish King Agrippa, when Festus became the Roman procurator of Judaea (59 C.E.),⁴⁵ Agrippa charged Paul, in bantering vein, “You persuade me a little to become a Christian.”⁴⁶ A Jewish man named Trypho, in the mid-second century C.E., tells the Roman Christian Justin Martyr, “You have all acquired the name of Christians from him (Yahushua).”⁴⁷

As with many such incidents in history, a title given by outsiders soon came to be adopted by those so labeled. We find, for instance, the title Christian used for the first time by a disciple of the messiah in the first epistle of Peter, when he writes, “Yet if any (suffer) as Christians,⁴⁸ let him not be ashamed.”⁴⁹ By the beginning of the second century C.E. the term was in widespread use by many of the assemblies themselves. The reworked letters of Ignatius (second century C.E.) and the works of Origen (c.225 C.E.) both express the desire to be called a Christian.⁵⁰

We recognize that those more advanced in their studies about the early use of the sacred name might well take issue with using the title Christian for the first few generations of followers, arguing that the term Christian originated among pagans as a term of derision against the early assemblies.⁵¹ One might also argue that the Christian assemblies of a much later date were very dissimilar in doctrine when compared with their earlier counterparts. Nevertheless, this term has been in widespread use as a gloss for all of these groups from very early times. Under its umbrella came the Nazoraenes, Ebionites, and various Christian gnostic assemblies, even though all of these were branded as heretics by Catholic orthodoxy.

What holds all of these groups together under a single, common appellation, and for which we will utilize the single term “Christian” as a cover-all, is their professed belief in the messiah of the New Testament. Therefore, this term should not be considered offensive. It is used throughout our study not to identify those who were correct but to designate anyone part of a general movement built upon Yahushua as the messiah and a belief in the New Testament—from the early Yahwehists to the later Roman Catholics.

⁴⁵ IDB, 1, pp. 604f; NBD, p. 421; cf., HJP, 1, pp. 467f. Also see FSDY, 2, for the evidence that Festus became procurator in the summer of 59 C.E.

⁴⁶ Acts, 26:28.

⁴⁷ Justin Mart., *Trypho*, 64:1. That Trypho was Jewish see Justin Mart., *Trypho*, 1:3.

⁴⁸ Peter did not speak Greek but used Mark as his translator or interpreter (Ariston, quoted by Eusebius, *H.E.*, 3:39:15; Jerome, *Lives*, 1, 8). Therefore, if Peter’s original letter was composed in Aramaic or Hebrew, as often supposed, the Hebrew word would have been מְשִׁיָּחִים (*meshiakhim*), meaning “messiahians” or “followers of the messiah,” much like צַדִּיקִים (*tsadoqim*) means “Saduceans” and נְזִרִים (*natsori*) means “Nazoraenes.”

⁴⁹ 1 Pet., 4:16.

⁵⁰ Ignatius, *Rom.*, 3:2; Origen, *Hom. Luke*, 16.

⁵¹ JTS, (NS) 9, pp. 26–37, where Harold Mattingly equates the first use of the title *Christiani* (Christians) as a way of ridiculing the followers of the messiah as the crowds used the title “*Augustiani*” to ridicule ludicrous bands of opportunists who followed Nero’s chariot, proclaiming themselves the soldiers of his triumph. Workman writes that during this period, “The use of the word ‘Christian’ is itself a sneer” (PIEC, p. 34, n. 1, cf., p. 58, n. 1, “a bitter nickname”). Solomon Zeitlin similarly writes, “It seems that the term ‘Christian’ was coined by the pagans in Antioch as a nickname and a reproach for those who believed in and followed Jesus, called Christ” (SEHJ, 3, p. xiv).

The Term פֶּסַח (Phasekh)

One of the most important scriptural festivals is Passover. The Hebrew word for Passover is פֶּסַח (*Ph-s-kh*). In our present work we shall transliterate פֶּסַח as *Phasekh*. For many this usage may seem unusual. For that reason we would briefly like to explain our preference.

In modern literature the term פֶּסַח (*Ph-s-kh*) has been rendered as *Pesah*, *Paskha*, *Pesah*, *Pesach*, *Pasch*, and so forth. The name of this festival is also variously expressed in the Romance languages (e.g., Italian *Pasqua*, French *Pâques*). These find their origin in the ancient Latin *Pascha* and Greek πάσχα (*Paskha*). *The Encyclopaedia Britannica*, for example, notes:

The name of the festival in other languages (as Fr. *pâques*; Ital. *pasqua*; Span. *pascua*; Dan. *paaske*; Dutch *paasch*; Welsh *pasg*) is derived from the Lat. *pascha* and the Gr. πάσχα. These in turn come from the Chaldee or Aramaean form ܦܫܚܐ *pascha*, of the Hebrew name of the Passover festival פֶּסַח *pesach*, from פָּסַח "he passed over," in memory of the great deliverance, when the destroying angel "passed over the houses, of the children of Israel in Egypt when he smote the Egyptians" (Exod. xii. 27).⁵²

Though the late Jewish form *Pesah* is now popularly used, evidence from the ancient Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek, and Latin sources indicate that the original Hebrew pronunciation of this name was very close to *Phâ-sekh*.

To demonstrate, we find that, in the Hebrew-Aramaic language spoken in Palestine during the first century C.E., the consonant ֶס was uniformly pronounced as an aspirate "ph," even at the beginning of a syllable.⁵³ The Hebrew letter פ, meanwhile, is pronounced as, "A voiceless laryngeal fricative like h but more constricted."⁵⁴ Therefore, פ carries the sound of *h* or nearly *kh*, as the Greek transliterations (פ = κ and χ) demonstrate.⁵⁵ Aramaic, meanwhile, was a sister language to Hebrew. The ancient Aramaic form ܦܫܚܐ (*Ph-s-kh-a*), being very near in sound to the Hebrew, was pronounced *Phâ-sekha*.⁵⁶ Yet, unlike numerous instances found in the Aramaic dialect, early Hebrew words and names did not end with the letter ֶס (a), further indicating that the original Hebrew was pronounced *Phâ-sekh*.

Next, this Hebrew-Aramaic name was translated into the Greek language as πάσχα (*Paskha*), φάσχα (*Phaskha*), φασέκ (*Phasek*), φασέχ (*Phasekh*), and the like.⁵⁷ Gregory of Nazianzus (fourth century C.E.) helps clarify which form was nearer to the original Hebrew when he tells us, "This πάσχα (*Paskha*) of which I speak, the great and sacred (festival), is in Hebrew(-Aramaic) φάσκα

⁵² EB, 1910, viii, p. 828, s.v. EASTER.

⁵³ EWJ, p. 15, n. 1.

⁵⁴ IHG, p. 5.

⁵⁵ SEC, Gk., p. 5, "German **ch** = χ," nearly *kh*. For different examples of Greek transliterations see below n. 5.

⁵⁶ EWJ, p. 15, n. 1, makes the correct Aramaic pronunciation to be *Phasha*.

⁵⁷ The Greek form πάσχα (*Paskha*) is from the Aramaic and means, "the Hebrew *Passover* (from *pâsach* to *pass over*), the *paschal supper*" (GEL, p. 612; SEC, Gk. #3957). For examples of the

(*Phaska*).”⁵⁸ He adds that the Greeks had Hellenized the original Hebrew-Aramaic word $\phi\acute{\alpha}\sigma\kappa\alpha$ (*Phaska*) “by changing the $\phi\acute{\iota}$ (*phi* = ϕ) to $\pi\acute{\iota}$ (*pi* = π) and $\kappa\acute{\alpha}\pi\pi\alpha$ (*kappa* = κ) to $\chi\acute{\iota}$ (*khi* = χ)” and thereby had “named the day $\pi\acute{\alpha}\sigma\chi\alpha$ (*Paskha*).”⁵⁹ Gregory then states:

Custom took up the word ($\pi\acute{\alpha}\sigma\chi\alpha$; *Paskha*) and confirmed it, since the (non-Hebrew speaking) people approved of its being a more pious sounding way of speaking.⁶⁰

The proclivity of the Greeks to alter words and names to their own pleasure is well-documented. For example, while speaking of the names of ancient nations, the Jewish priest Josephus informs us of how these names came to be transformed.

It is the Greeks who are responsible for this change of nomenclature; for when in after ages they rose to power, they appropriated even the glories of the past, embellishing the nations with names which they could understand . . .⁶¹

As a result, Josephus, writing in Greek to the Greeks, informs his readers, “With a view to euphony and to my readers’ pleasure these names have been Hellenized.”⁶²

With regard to the Hebrew name פֶּסַח (*Ph-s-kh*), Origen (early third century C.E.) claims that among the Hebrews of his day it was pronounced with four sounds, “the three letters ϕ (*ph*) α (*a*) ς (*s*) and a rough breathing sound (at the end), which is much stronger with them (the Hebrews) than it is with us (those speaking Greek),” being pronounced “ $\phi\alpha\sigma\grave{\epsilon}\kappa$ (*phasek*).”⁶³ He then adds:

Because it is not possible in the Greek language to pronounce this word the way the Hebrews do, since Greeks are unable to pronounce $\phi\alpha\varsigma$ (*phas*) with any of the stronger breathing in force used among the Hebrews, the word was Hellenized: in the prophets it is called $\phi\alpha\sigma\grave{\epsilon}\kappa$ (*phasek*), and when Hellenized more completely, the word becomes $\pi\acute{\alpha}\sigma\chi\alpha$ (*Paskha*).⁶⁴

Eusebius, accordingly, refers to this Hebrew celebration as the “festival of $\phi\alpha\sigma\grave{\epsilon}\chi$ (*Phasekh*).”⁶⁵ Also reflecting this pronunciation, the Septuagint several times utilizes the form $\phi\alpha\sigma\grave{\epsilon}\kappa$ (*phasek*),⁶⁶ while the first century C.E. Jewish priest Josephus is found on occasion using the Hellenized form of the Aramaic $\phi\acute{\alpha}\sigma\chi\alpha$ (*Phaskha*).⁶⁷

Greek forms see Jos., *Antiq.*, 2:14:6, 3:10:5; 5:1:4, 9:13:3, 14:2:1, 2, 17:9:3; *Wars*, 2:1:3, 6:9:3; Philo, *Spec.*, 27, §145; LXX 2 Chron., 30:1–5.

⁵⁸ Gregory Naz., *Orat.*, 45:10.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ Jos., *Antiq.*, 1:5:1.

⁶² Jos., *Antiq.*, 1:6:1.

⁶³ Origen, *Pas.*, 1.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ Eusebius, *Pas.*, 1.

⁶⁶ E.g., LXX 2 Chron., 30:1, 2, 5, 15, 17, 35:1, 9, 16, 18; LXX Jer., 38:8 (MT 31:8).

⁶⁷ Jos., *Antiq.*, 5:1:4, 9:13:3, 14:2:1, 2.

The old Latin writers, such as Jerome and Bede, meanwhile, tell us that their form of the word, *Pascha*, was “called *phase* in Hebrew.”⁶⁸ We find *Phase* also used in the Latin Vulgate at such places as 2 Chronicles, 35:11, and Deuteronomy, 16:2. This form is indeclinable. It further demonstrates the initial *ph* sound in the Hebrew and also reflects the inability of those speaking Latin to simulate the rough breathing Hebrew sound at the end.

Based upon the above data, for consistency and in order that we might remain as close to the original pronunciation as possible, we have utilized throughout our study, whenever appropriate, the transliteration *Phasekh* (Phâ-seh or Phâ-sekh) to translate all of the ancient Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek, Latin, and other forms of the original Hebrew term פסח. Quotations from modern works and scholars shall remain unaffected.

Yahweh’s מועדי (Moadi)

Each of the festivals and sacred days of Yahweh are defined in Scriptures as a מועד (*moad*), in the plural מועדי (*moadi*) and מועדות (*moaduth*) or the collective noun form מועדים (*moadim*).⁶⁹ A *moad* is an appointed time for an assembly, whether for a festival or another sacred day.⁷⁰ The translation “seasons,” found in many English versions, is inappropriate and misleading. It does not refer to the four seasons of the year (i.e., spring, summer, fall, and winter) but rather to the sacred *moadi*, exact points in time when people are to assemble for Yahweh’s commanded observances. In Leviticus we read:

These are the מועדי (*moadi*; appointed times) of Yahweh, sacred מיקראי (*miqrai*; gatherings for reading)⁷¹ which you shall proclaim them in their מועדים (*moadim*; group of appointed times).⁷²

⁶⁸ Jerome speaks of the “*Pascha* which is called *phase* in Hebrew” (Jerome, *Com. Matt.*, 4, 26:2). Also see Jerome, *Com. Isa.*, 10:31:5. Bede similarly states the festival “is properly called *pascha* or *phase*” (Bede, *Hist.*, 5:21). Also see Ps.-Augustine, *Yves*, 1:30. Jerome, *Heb. Nam.*, Lag. 64, l. 21, and Lag. 70, l. 20f, defines *Fase* (*Phase*) as *transitus sive transgressio* and *Pascha* as *transscendens uel transgressio* (CChr.SL, 72, pp. 140, 148).

⁶⁹ Lev., 23:1–44; Num., 9:2–13, esp. v. 2; Deut., 16:5f.

⁷⁰ The Hebrew word מועד (*moad*), plural מועדי (*moadi*), collective noun מועדים (*moadim*): “prop. an *appointment*, i.e. a fixed *time* or season; spec. a *festival*; conventionally a *year*; by implication, an *assembly* (as convened for a definite purpose); technically the *congregation*; by extension, the *place of meeting*; also a *signal* (as appointed beforehand) . . . an *assembly*” (SEC, Heb. #4150–4151; HEL, p. 141). LXX translates *moadi* as “καίροις (*kairois*),” i.e., “the *right point of time*, the *proper time*” (GEL, p. 392) and as ἑορταί (*heortai*), i.e., “festivals” (GEL, p. 277). Also see below n. 79.

⁷¹ The Hebrew word מיקרא (*miqra*), plural מיקראי (*miqrai*), is from קרא (*qara*), “to *call out* to (i.e. prop. *address* by name, but used in a wide variety of applications) . . . to *encounter* . . . call, cry, read” (SEC, Heb. #7121–7123), “*cried, called, shouted* . . . called to or for . . . call upon in prayer . . . celebrate . . . call together, assemble, invite . . . read from a book, read aloud . . . read, recited, proclaimed” (HEL, p. 234). מיקרא (*miqra*) is “something *called out*, i.e. a public *meeting*” (SEC, Heb. #4744), “*act of assembly* . . . convocation . . . reading, reciting” (HEL, p. 234). To demonstrate, in Neh., 8:1–7, Ezra read the book of the *torath* to the people in a public reading. In Neh., 8:8, we read, “And they קרא (*qara*; read) in the book of the *torath* (laws) of the *eloahim* clearly; and they gave the sense and made to discern in that מיקרא (*miqra*; public reading).” The LXX renders this passage by saying, “And they read in the book of the law of the deity, and Ezra taught, and instructed them distinctly in the knowledge of the sovereign, and the people understood in the reading.” Another way of translating a “sacred מיקרא (*miqra*)” is to call it a “sacred convocation.”

⁷² Lev., 23:4.

Leviticus places as a first item of Yahweh's *moadi* the weekly Sabbath day.⁷³ In a second group the following list of *moadi* is given:

- 23:5–8. Phasekh and the Khag of Unleavened Bread. Phasekh falls on the 14th day of the first moon at *byn ha-arabim* (twilight). For seven days you must eat unleavened bread. The first and last of these seven days are sacred מִקְרָאִים (*miqrai*; gatherings for reading, convocations) and are days wherein no personal work is to be done.
- 23:9–14. Day of the *omer* wave offering.⁷⁴ No new grain of the year is to be eaten until this offering is made.
- 23:15–22. Festival of Weeks (Shabuath; Pentecost). It is celebrated on the 50th day after the Sabbath day which falls during the days of Phasekh and the Khag of Unleavened Bread. It is the time of a sacred מִקְרָאִים (*miqra*; gathering for reading, convocations) and a day wherein no personal work is to be done.
- 23:23–25. Day of Trumpets. It occurs on the first day of the seventh moon. It is the time of a sacred מִקְרָאִים (*miqra*; gathering for reading, convocation) and a day wherein no personal work is to be done.
- 23:26–32. Day of Atonement. It occurs on the 10th day of the seventh moon. It is a day of fasting. It is also the time of a sacred מִקְרָאִים (*miqra*; gathering for reading, convocation) and is designated as a Sabbath, a day wherein no personal work is to be done.
- 23:33–43. Festival of Tabernacles. It lasts from the 15th day to the 22nd day of the seventh moon. The first and eighth day of this festival are sacred מִקְרָאִים (*miqrai*; gatherings for reading, convocations) and days wherein no personal work is to be done.
- 23:44. “And Moses announced the *moadi* of Yahweh to the sons of Israel.” It is important to notice that these sacred days are defined as the “*moadi* of Yahweh,” not the “*moadi* of the Jews.”

אָחַד (Khag)

Three periods of מועדים (*moadi*) are each classified as אָחַד (*khag*) of Yahweh: the seven-day Khag of Unleavened Bread,⁷⁵ also defined as the seven-day Khag of Phasekh,⁷⁶ the one-day Khag of Weeks,⁷⁷ and the seven-day Khag of Tabernacles.⁷⁸ The Greek LXX translates the term *khag* as ἑορτή (*heorte*). Both terms make reference to the idea of a “celebration” and “a festival,”⁷⁹ and they en-

⁷³ Lev., 23:2f.

⁷⁴ The *omer* wave offering is also referred to as “the sheaf of the wave offering,” “the sheaf of offering,” “the wave sheaf offering,” and so forth.

⁷⁵ Exod., 23:14f, 34:18; Deut., 16:16.

⁷⁶ Exod., 12:11–14, 34:25; Ezek., 45:21.

⁷⁷ Exod., 23:14, 16, 34:22; Deut., 16:16; 2 Chron., 8:13; Lev., 23:1–4, 9–21.

⁷⁸ Exod., 23:14, 16; Lev., 23:34, 39f; Deut., 16:13, 16.

⁷⁹ אָחַד (*khag*), plural אָחַדִים (*khagim*), “a festival, or a victim therefore:—(solemn) feast (day), sacrifice, solemnity” (SEC, Heb. #2282), “a festival . . . a festival sacrifice, a victim” (GHCL, p. 260) and its

compass the “festival sacrifice.”⁸⁰ Yet the Hebrew term *khag* means much more than just a festival celebration or its sacrifice. A *khag* is also a recurrent pilgrimage,⁸¹ and a requirement to gather at a fixed location or shrine.⁸² Further, scriptural חַג (khagi; festivals) are always connected with Yahweh, either explicitly or implicitly.⁸³

The idea of gathering at a fixed shrine or location to observe the *khagi* is manifested in different ways. For sacrifices, offerings, prayers, or other religious duties, whether in connection with *khagi*, the other *moadi*, or the eating of meals dedicated to Yahweh, one is required under the Torah to go to a place where Yahweh has placed his name.⁸⁴ The only exception to this rule is if the place where Yahweh’s name is located is too far away. In that event, one is to carry out his obligations within his own gates.⁸⁵

In Hebrew thought, a “name is the person; the name is the person revealed; and the name is the person actively present.”⁸⁶ In a vague way, “the Deity and his name were considered as inseparable,”⁸⁷ and Yahweh’s name “represented His nature or character and His relation to His people. It thus came to partake of His essence, His glory and power.”⁸⁸ In effect, where Yahweh’s name is, there also is Yahweh. To go to that location was to present one’s self before Yahweh. Therefore, during the three *khagi* it was required that all male followers present themselves before Yahweh,⁸⁹ or in effect, come to a place where Yahweh’s name had been placed.

The manifestation of a shrine or location where Yahweh’s name is placed is expressed in two ways. One is a physical location, such as the altar and the ark of the covenant of Yahweh.⁹⁰ When the physical Temple of Yahweh was built by King Solomon in Jerusalem, which contained the royal altar and the ark of the covenant, Yahweh’s name was said to dwell on the Temple and on the city of Jerusalem.⁹¹ For this reason, the Israelites living at a great distance would only make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem during the three *khag* periods,

variant חַג (khagag), “prop. to move in a circle, i.e. (spec.) to *march* in a sacred procession, to observe a festival; by imp. to be *giddy*:—celebrate, dance, (keep, hold) a (solemn) feast (holiday), reel to and fro” (SEC, Heb. #2287; GHCL, p. 260). *Khag* and *khagag* are translated into Greek as εορτή (*heorte*), meaning, “a festival:—feast, holyday” (SEC, Gk. #1859), “a feast or festival, holiday . . . generally, holiday-making, amusement, pastime” (GEL, p. 277). J. B. Segal connects the word *khag* not only with “a processional circuit by celebrants” but also with “the revolution or circuit of the tropic year” (THP, pp. 128f, n. 3).

⁸⁰ Exod., 23:18, 34:25; Mal., 2:3; Ps., 118:27.

⁸¹ BCal, p. 3, “festival-gathering, feast, pilgrim-feast”; NBDB, p. 290b, s.v. ḥag, “**festival-gathering, feast, pilgrim-feast** . . . feast, esp. one observed by a *pilgrimage*.” Its meaning is similar to the Arabic word *hajj* (THP, p. 130).

⁸² Exod., 32:5; Ps., 42:5; Isa., 30:29; Ezek., 45:17, 46:11.

⁸³ Exod., 5:1, 10:9, 32:5f; Ps., 81:3–4; Isa., 30:29; Ezek., 46:11f; Hos., 9:5; Amos, 5:21.

⁸⁴ Exod., 20:24; Deut., 12:5f, 11f, 14:23f, 16:2, 6, 11f, 26:2.

⁸⁵ Deut., 12:21.

⁸⁶ NBD, p. 862.

⁸⁷ NSBD, p. 606.

⁸⁸ Freedman, *Kidd.*, p. 362, n. 8.

⁸⁹ Deut., 16:16; Exod., 23:14–17, 34:23.

⁹⁰ E.g., the altar of Yahweh (Lev., 6:14; Deut., 12:27; 2 Chron., 8:12, 29:19); the ark of the covenant (2 Sam., 6:2).

⁹¹ E.g., 1 Kings, 8:16–20, 29, 43f, 48, 11:36; 2 Kings, 21:4, 7; 1 Chron., 22:8–10, 19, 29:16; 2 Chron., 6:5–9, 33f, 38, 12:13, 20:8f, 33:4, 7; Jer., 7:10–14, 30, 25:29, 32:34. Jerusalem (Zion) is called the city of Yahweh (Isa., 60:14; Ezek., 48:35; Dan., 9:18f).

while those living in and around Jerusalem would go regularly for other *moadi* as well.⁹²

The second expression of a place where one could find Yahweh's name, and accordingly where Yahweh could be found, is at a gathering of Yahweh's people. Yahweh's name is placed on his people,⁹³ and they walk in his name.⁹⁴ Therefore, Yahweh states, "For where two or three are gathered together unto my name, there I am in the midst of them."⁹⁵

This concept is expressed in the parable rendering the higher meaning for the physical Temple of Yahweh, a building which anciently was located in Jerusalem. The followers of Yahweh are his true Temple,⁹⁶ each a living stone in the building,⁹⁷ the messiah being the foundation or cornerstone.⁹⁸ Because his name is on his Temple (his people), i.e., those who trust and follow him, Yahweh and his רוח (*ruach*; unseen force, spirit)⁹⁹ dwell in them.¹⁰⁰ When those following Yahweh are gathered together in his name, they form the building on which is placed Yahweh's name. In effect, in ancient times, when the followers of Yahweh gathered at the physical Temple of Yahweh, it was they who actually formed, as a body of people, the true Temple of Yahweh. For this reason, without a physical Temple, *khagi* could also be celebrated in the home with a gathering of Yahwehists.¹⁰¹

A שבתון (*Sabbathon*)

The Hebrew word שבתון (*sabbathon*) is found in Scriptures only in the Pentateuch (five books of Moses) and is used only in reference to certain specified *moadi* and years dedicated to Yahweh.¹⁰² The term is derived from שבת (*sabbath*), i.e., to "cease" from some action or work,¹⁰³ and means, "a time of

⁹² 2 Chron., 2:1–4.

⁹³ 2 Chron., 7:14; Dan., 9:19; Jer., 14:9, 15:16; Eph., 3:13–15.

⁹⁴ Mic., 4:5; Zech., 10:12.

⁹⁵ Matt., 18:20.

⁹⁶ Heb., 3:1–6; 1 Cor., 3:9f, 16f, 6:19f; 2 Cor., 6:14–16; 1 Tim., 3:15.

⁹⁷ Eph., 2:18–22; 1 Pet., 2:4f; Rev., 3:12.

⁹⁸ Eph., 2:18–22; 1 Pet., 2:6; Ps., 118:22; Isa., 18:16; Zech., 10:4.

⁹⁹ For clarity and consistency, we shall translate the Greek terms πνευμα (*pneuma*), πνευματος (*pneumatos*), etc. by the transliteration of the Hebrew form רוח (*ruach*). The Hebrew term רוח (*ruach*), plural form רוּחִים (*ruachuth*), properly means "to blow, i.e. breathe . . . wind," (SEC, Heb. #7306-7308); "air, breeze, cool breeze" (HEL, p. 242). The Greek translation of this Hebrew word is πνευμα (*pneuma*), πνευματος (*pneumatos*), etc., "a current of air, i.e. breath (blast) or a breeze" (SEC, Gk. #4151); "a blowing . . . a wind, blast . . . that is breathed forth, odour, scent" (SEC, Gk. #4151; GEL, p. 649). The *ruach* of Yahweh is compared to wind (John, 3:8), i.e., an unseen force. In English the terms "*ruach*" and "*pneuma*" are variously translated as spirit, ghost, wind, breath, and mind, and often carry with it the idea of a supernatural being. Though *elohim* (including those fallen angels called demons) are spirit beings, the two ideas are not interchangeable, for a *ruach* can also be the wind or the power in a machine (cf., Jer., 49:32, 36; Ezek., 1:20, 21). The term only means an "unseen force," whether that force is supernatural, a mental attitude, or merely the wind. Therefore, to maintain a more proper rendering of the idea behind the Hebrew and Greek, and for the sake of consistency, we shall translate both the Hebrew and the Greek words by *ruach*, a transliteration of the Hebrew. For a more in-depth discussion of the *ruach* see TNM.

¹⁰⁰ 2 Cor., 6:16–18; 1 Cor., 3:16.

¹⁰¹ For example, the *Khag* of the *Phasekh* (cf., Exod., 34:25) at the time of the Exodus was celebrated in the homes of the Israelites (Exod., 12:1–32).

¹⁰² The word *sabbathon* is only found at Exod., 16:23, 31:15, 35:2; Lev., 16:31, 23:3, 24, 32, 39 (twice), 25:4, 5.

¹⁰³ The Hebrew word שבת (*sabbath*) means, "ceased . . . intermission . . . cessation" (HEL, p. 260); "to repose . . . rest, interruption, cessation . . . intermission" (SEC, Heb. #7673–7676); to "cease, stop,

rest,”¹⁰⁴ “a *sabbatism* or special holiday.”¹⁰⁵ It is translated in the LXX by the Greek word ἀνάπαυσις (*anapausis*), which also means to “rest.”¹⁰⁶ A *sabbathon* is further defined in Scriptures as “a sacred Sabbath for Yahweh.”¹⁰⁷ This understanding explains why every seventh year on the Israelite calendar is referred to as “a year of *sabbathon*” and as a “שבת שבתון (Sabbath *sabbathon*) for the land, a Sabbath for Yahweh,” for in those years the fields remain unworked and the entire year is dedicated to Yahweh.¹⁰⁸

As with the Sabbath day,¹⁰⁹ those *moadi* designated as a *sabbathon* are stated to be a time for a “sacred מִקְרָא (*miqra*; gathering for reading),” i.e., “sacred convocation,”¹¹⁰ and a day upon which no laborious work should be done. The term is specifically used to distinguish between a holiday not commanded by Yahweh (wherein one might cease from his labors in order to take a vacation or have some relaxation) and the commanded *moadi* and special years (wherein Yahweh requires his people to cease from their personal work or agricultural pursuits to do Yahweh’s work).¹¹¹ A *sabbathon* differs from a *khag* in that it does not require a pilgrimage to a designated sight. Nevertheless, a *khag* day can also be a *sabbathon*.

A *sabbathon*, in short, is a special Sabbath commanded by Yahweh. A primary example of a *sabbathon* is the weekly Sabbath day. The weekly Sabbath day is on a number of occasions described as “a sacred שבת שבתון (Sabbath *sabbathon*).”¹¹² In Exodus, 35:2, for example, we read of “the seventh day, it shall be sacred for you, a Sabbath *sabbathon*.” Yet the term *sabbathon* is by no means restricted to the weekly Sabbath day. It is also applied to some of the other *moadi* of Yahweh. Four of these *moadi* are separately and specifically mentioned in the Torah as a *sabbathon*:

- The first day of the seventh moon, the Day of the Blowing of the Trumpets, is a *sabbathon*.¹¹³
- The tenth day of the seventh moon, the Day of Atonement, is specified as a Sabbath *sabbathon*.¹¹⁴ In the LXX this is the only day which, like the weekly Sabbath day, is specifically called a Σάββατα (*Sabbata*; Sabbath) σαββάτων (*sabbathon*). *Sabbathon* is everywhere else in the LXX called a time of ἀνάπαυσις (*anapausis*; rest).
- The first day of the Khag of Tabernacles and the eighth day are each called a *sabbathon*.¹¹⁵

be at a standstill (intrans.) . . . **stop working, take a holiday**” (CHAL, p. 360). Therefore, the primary meaning of “sabbath” is to “cease” or “rest” from some action or work.

¹⁰⁴ HEL, p. 260.

¹⁰⁵ SEC, Heb. #7677; CHAL, p. 360, “**sabbath feast** . . . *sabbat sabbathon* most solemn sabbath.”

¹⁰⁶ GEL, p. 59, *repose, rest* . . . *relaxation, recreation* . . . *rest from a thing*”; SEC, Gk. #372, “*intermission*; by imp. *recreation*:—rest.”

¹⁰⁷ Exod., 16:23.

¹⁰⁸ Lev., 25:2–7, esp. v. 4f. For the Sabbath and Jubilee year cycle see SJC.

¹⁰⁹ E.g., Exod., 20:8–11, 31:12–17, 35:2f; Lev., 23:3; Deut., 5:12–15.

¹¹⁰ See above n. 71.

¹¹¹ See FSDY, 3, for the definition of what kind of work which is allowed on a Sabbath day.

¹¹² Exod., 16:23, 13:15, 35:2; Lev., 23:3.

¹¹³ Lev., 23:24f.

¹¹⁴ Lev., 23:26–32.

¹¹⁵ Lev., 23:33–39, esp. v. 35.

By definition the title *sabbathon* should also be extended to three other *moadi*, each classified as a time of a “sacred convocation” and a day when no laborious work shall be done:

- The first and seventh days of the Khag of Unleavened Bread.¹¹⁶
- The 50th day of the Pentecost season, being the Khag of Weeks.¹¹⁷

Because of the scriptural definition of a *sabbathon*, the Jewish sect of the Pharisees later referred to the first day of their Khag of Unleavened Bread as a Sabbath day,¹¹⁸ and the book of John calls this Pharisaic observance a “great” or “high” Sabbath day.¹¹⁹ The existence of these seven other *moadi* high Sabbath days explains why Yahweh in other places of the Old Testament speaks in the plural of שַׁבְּתוֹתַי (*sabbathuthi*; my Sabbaths), i.e., the weekly Sabbath day and certain other *moadi*.¹²⁰

Different Observances

Our next effort is to distinguish the various types of observances: new moons, Sabbath days, *khagi*, and other *moadi*.

For example, a clear distinction must be made between Yahweh’s *moadi* (Sabbath and other sacred days) and the days of his new moons (first day of each month). The days of Yahweh’s new moons are never in Scriptures called a *moad*, *khag*, Sabbath, *sabbathon*, or sacred day, although the first day of the seventh moon is the *moad sabbathon* entitled the Day of Blowing the Trumpets. We are also instructed to “שָׁמְרוּ (shamur; attend to)¹²¹ the Abib moon,”¹²² the first moon of the year.¹²³ Nevertheless, this particular instruction was issued to make sure that the first moon of the year is determined correctly, since Phasekh and the other *moadi* of the year are dependent upon it.¹²⁴

The day of the new moon is also considered a day of worship.¹²⁵ Yet, much like the day of the *omer* wave offering and some of the *khag* days, it is not defined as a Sabbath or high Sabbath.¹²⁶ New moons are conspicuously absent from the list of the *moadi* of Yahweh, as itemized in Leviticus, 23. Ezra, likewise, separates the continual burnt offerings made on the new moons from those made on “Yahweh’s *moadi*.”¹²⁷ At the same time, Isaiah makes the Sabbath day, the day of the new moon, and the *moadi* all separate types of days.¹²⁸

¹¹⁶ Lev., 23:7f.

¹¹⁷ Lev., 23:15f, 21.

¹¹⁸ Men., 10:3, cf., 10:1; B. Men., 65b; Lek. Tob, Lev., 128f; KBFY, p. 277.

¹¹⁹ John, 19:31.

¹²⁰ Also spelled שַׁבְּתוֹתַי (*sabbathuthi*), e.g., Exod., 31:13; Lev., 19:3, 30; Ezek., 20:12, 13, 16, 20, 21, 24, 22:8, 26, 38.

¹²¹ SEC, Heb. #8104, “prop. to *hedge* about (as with thorns), i.e. *guard*; gen. to *protect*, *attend to*, etc.”; CHAL, pp. 377f, “**watch, guard . . . be careful about, protect . . . observe, watch . . . keep watch, stand guard.**”

¹²² Deut., 16:1.

¹²³ Exod., 12:2, cf., Exod., 13:4, 23:15, 34:18; Deut., 16:1.

¹²⁴ Ps., 104:19, states that Yahweh “made the moon for *moadim*.”

¹²⁵ Ezek., 46:1–3; cf., Isa., 1:14f; 2 Kings, 4:23; Amos, 8:4f.

¹²⁶ For example, the first and eighth days of the Khag of Tabernacles were called a *sabbathon* but the six days lying between, unless one of them happens to fall on a weekly Sabbath day, were not counted as a Sabbath *sabbathon* (Lev., 23:33–43). Nevertheless, these non-*sabbathon* days still remained *khag* days.

¹²⁷ Ezra, 3:5.

¹²⁸ Isa., 1:13f.

Next, Leviticus separates the *moad* of the weekly Sabbath from the *moadi* forming the *khagi* and other sacred days by making them two different categories.¹²⁹ Lamentations similarly lists both the “*moad* and Sabbath” as different items.¹³⁰ Nehemiah speaks of the agreement of the Judaeans people not to buy or sell “on the Sabbath day and on the sacred day.”¹³¹ Yet Sabbath days are also sacred days and *moadi*. Therefore, all these other sacred days fall within the second class of *moadi*. The Sabbath day and the other *moadi* are also on several occasions distinguished from the day of the new moon.¹³²

The weekly Sabbath day, meanwhile, is not a *khag*, though a *khag* can fall on a weekly Sabbath day. At times, *khagi* are listed separately from weekly Sabbath days, new moons, and the remaining *moadi* (sacred days). For example, Hosea speaks of Israel’s “*khag*, her new moon, and her Sabbath, and all her *moad*.”¹³³ Ezekiel writes of the offerings made “on the *khagi*, and on the new moons, and on the Sabbaths, in all the *moadi* of the house of Israel.”¹³⁴ Similarly, in the New Testament the separation is made between “festival, or new moon, or Sabbath.”¹³⁵

Jew, Jews, and Jewish

The terms “Jew,” “Jews,” and “Jewish” are among the most misunderstood, confusing, and controversial in popular usage today. At times these words are anachronistically utilized to refer to all of the ancient Israelites, i.e., the literal descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. At other times they hold only religious significance and serve as a large canopy for the various sects of Judaism. Due to this unusual mixture of ethnic and religious connotations, some take offense when the merits of Judaism are challenged and the words Jew and Jews, and sometimes even Jewish, are used. A criticism or negative comment against the Jews (religiously speaking) is unfortunately perceived as an attack against the Jewish people as an ethnic group. This becomes especially confusing in the New Testament when men like the messiah and his apostles, who were ethnically Judaeans, speak negatively against the “Pharisees, and all of the Jews.”¹³⁶ We shall therefore take a moment to explain our solution.

Simply put, the term “Jew” is an abbreviated form of the Hebrew term יהודי (Yahud)—plural יהודים (Yahudi), יהודאים (Yahudai), and so forth—meaning an inhabitant of יהודה (Yahuda; Judaea).¹³⁷ These terms are in Greek respectively rendered Ἰουδαῖον (Yudaion; Jew); Ἰουδαῖος (Yudaiois; Jews); and Ἰουδαία (Yudaia; Judaea).¹³⁸ Some of the Israelites were called Jews because

¹²⁹ Lev., 23:2f, is labeled as a group of *moadi* for which only the Sabbath day is named. Lev., 23:4, labels another group of *moadi*, which is followed by the list of *khag* days and other sacred days (Lev., 23:5–43). Lev., 23:44, then provides a summary statement that, “Moses announced the *moadi* of Yahweh to the sons of Israel.”

¹³⁰ Lam., 2:6.

¹³¹ Neh., 10:31.

¹³² 1 Chron., 23:31; 2 Chron., 2:4, 31:3; Neh., 10:33.

¹³³ Hos., 2:11. The terms *khag*, new moon, Sabbath, and *moad* are all used here as collective nouns (a noun that denotes a collection of things regarded as a single unit).

¹³⁴ Ezek., 45:17, cf., 46:11f. Also see 2 Chron., 8:13; Isa., 1:13f.

¹³⁵ Col., 2:16.

¹³⁶ Mark, 7:3; e.g., John, 5:1–18, 7:1, 9:22; Acts, 9:23, 13:50f, 18:12–14, 20:3, and so forth.

¹³⁷ SEC, Heb. #3061, 3062, 3064, 3065; HEL, p. 104

¹³⁸ SEC, Gk. #2453, 2449; e.g., Acts, 18:2, 13:45, 1:8.

they were associated with the people who lived in Judaea. The name Judaea was itself derived from יהודה (Yahudah; Judah), the Israelite kingdom named after one of the thirteen tribes of Israel. Anciently the Israelites occupied two kingdoms in the Promised Land, Israel—the land of the ten northern tribes—and Judah, which was occupied by three of the southern Israelite tribes: Judah, Benjamin, and the priestly tribe of Levi.¹³⁹ Only after the Babylonian exile ended (538 B.C.E.) and a remnant of the three tribes returned was the country of Judah called Judaea and its people referred to as Jews.¹⁴⁰ Josephus informs us:

So the Ἰουδαῖοι (Yudaioi; Jews) prepared for the work (of rebuilding the Temple of Yahweh): that is the name they are called by from the day that they came up from Babylonia, which is taken from the tribe of Judah, which first came to these places, and thence both they and the country gained that appellation.¹⁴¹

The ethnic term “Jews” subsequently became attached to all those participating in the different factions of Judaism. Having transcended its ethnic use, the label soon came to include the numerous converts to the various Jewish sects, including but not limited to those from the Persian empire, the Idumaeans of the Negeb, and later the Khazars of southern Russia.¹⁴²

Since ancient writers commonly used the terms Jew, Jews, and Jewish in both an ethnic and religious sense, we must clarify our own usage. We shall utilize the terms Jew and Jews to refer only to the followers of the various religious sects of Judaism, not as a reference to ethnicity. As H. L. Ellison poignantly notes, “Judaism is the religion of the Jews in contrast to that of the Old Testament . . . Judaism should be regarded as beginning with the Babylonian Exile.”¹⁴³ In this sense, we will apply these terms in the same way that we apply the title Christian, as a broad umbrella meant to cover various belief systems. The common bond connecting the various Jewish sects, and therefore our use of the terms Jew and Jews, is their belief that they are under the Torah of Moses and that Yahushua is not the messiah. On the other hand, when referring to the ethnicity of the Israelites, we shall employ such labels as Judahite, Judaeans, Israelite, Hebrew, and, when the context allows, Jewish.

Conclusion

These preliminary definitions and explanations shall provide an important basis upon which to begin our investigation. As this study proceeds, a large number of other definitions shall be added. With the understanding that this technique of defining terms is an integral part of the investigative process, our attention will now turn to the question of whether or not Christians—who are not under the Torah of Moses but are under grace—are required to observe Yahweh’s festivals and sacred days.

¹³⁹ Josh., 18:5; 1 Chron., 5:1f; Ezek., 37:15–22; Gen., 48:1–20; cf., Josh., 13:1–21:45; 2 Sam., 19:43, 24:9; 2 Kings, 16:6f; Isa., 8:14.

¹⁴⁰ Ezra, 1:5; 2:1–65; Jos., *Antiq.*, 10:1:1, 11:1:3.

¹⁴¹ Jos., *Antiq.*, 11:5:7.

¹⁴² Matt., 23:15; Acts, 2:5; Dio, 37:17; Esther, 8:17; Jos., *Antiq.*, 13:9:1; EJ, 10, pp. 944–953.

¹⁴³ NBD, p. 670.