

PART TWO

Phasekh and Shabuath: Background and Controversy

CHART B

MONTH EQUIVALENCY CHART

No. of Month	Known Ancient Israelite Month-names	Jewish (Babylonian– Assyrian) Month-names	Equivalent Macedonian Month-names in Josephus	Approx. Modern Day Equivalent
1st	Abib	Nisan (Nisânu)	Xanthicus (Xanthikos)	March / April
2nd	Ziu	Iyyar (Aiaru)	Artemisius (Artemisios)	April / May
3rd		Siwan (Simânu)	Daesius (Daisios)	May / June
4th		Tammuz (Duzu)	Panemos (Panemus)	June / July
5th	Tsach (?)	Ab (Abu)	Lous (Loos)	July / Aug.
6th		Elul (Ululu)	Gorpieus (Gorpiaios)	Aug. / Sept.
7th	Ethanim	Tishri (Tashritu)	Hyperberetaeus (Hyperberetaios)	Sept. / Oct.
8th	Bul	Marheshuan (Heshuan Arahsamnu)	Dius (Dios)	Oct. / Nov.
9th		Khisleu (Kislimu)	Apellaios (Apellaeus)	Nov. / Dec.
10th		Tebeth (Tebetu)	Audynaïos (Audyneus)	Dec. / Jan.
11th		Shebat (Shabatu)	Peritios (Peritus)	Jan. / Feb.
12th		Adar (Addaru)	Dystros (Dystrus)	Feb. / March
13th	<i>Every few years an intercalary month was required. This extra month was labeled "Be-Adar" or the "Second Adar."</i>			

PHASEKH AND UNLEAVENED BREAD EXODUS, 12:3–20, AND 23:15

Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying, On the tenth (day) for this moon (named *ha-Abib*),¹ they shall take for themselves a flock animal, each one for a father's house, a flock animal for a house. And if the house is too small for a flock animal, he and his neighbor next to his house shall take according to the number of נִפְשֹׁת (nepheshth; persons).² You shall count, each one by the mouth of his eating, concerning the flock animal. The flock animal shall be for you a perfect one, a male, and a son of a year. You shall take it from the sheep or from the goats. And it shall be for you to keep until the fourteenth day for the moon. And all the assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it בֵּין הָעֶרְבִים (*byn ha-arabim*; within the periods of twilight).³ And they shall take from the blood and put it upon the two door-posts and upon the lintel upon the houses within which they eat it. And they shall eat the flesh in this night, roasted with fire and unleavened bread; together with bitter herbs they shall eat it. Do not eat it raw or boiled in water at all, for it shall be roasted with fire, its head with its legs and with its innards. And you shall not leave any of it until morning; and that left from it until morning you shall burn with fire. And this is the way you shall eat it: your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. And you shall eat it in haste. It is the Phasekh for Yahweh. And I will pass through, in the land of Egypt, in this night and I will smite all the first-born in the land of Egypt, from man and as far as beasts. And on the *eloahi*⁴ of Egypt I will execute judgments. I am Yahweh. And the blood

¹ The reference to "this moon" is to the moon or month named חֹדֶשׁ אֲבִיב (*ha-Abib*; the Abib) (see Exod., 13:4, 23:15, 34:18; Deut., 16:1). During the post-Exile period, this month-name was changed by the Judahites to the Babylonian form נִסָּן (Nisan) (see Neh., 2:1; Esther, 3:7). Also see our Chart B. For the definition of *ha-Abib* and how one determines the first moon see FSDY, 3.

² The Hebrew term נֶפֶשׁ (*nephesh*), plural נִפְשֹׁת (*nepheshth*), means, "prop. a breathing creature, i.e. animal or (abstr.) vitality" (SEC, Heb. #5315); "breath . . . an animal (that which breathes) . . . a person" (HEL, p. 171; CHAL, pp. 242f). "'Nefesh' is the person himself, his need for food, the very blood in his veins, his being" (quoting Dr. H. M. Orlinsky of the Hebrew Union College, in reference to his translation of the Torah, NYT, Oct. 12, 1962, p. 20).

³ For proof that *byn ha-arabim* is the period of twilight extending from sunset until dark see FSDY, 2.

⁴ For the use of the term *eloah* (plural *eloahi*, and collective noun *eloahim*), the Hebrew generic term for a deity, see Chap. I, p. 9, n. 25.

shall be for you a sign upon the houses where you are. And I will see the blood and פִּסְחָתִי (*phasekh-thy*; I will pass over) you, and the plague shall not be upon you for destruction when I smite the land of Egypt. And this day shall be a memorial for you and you shall celebrate it a festival for Yahweh for your generations; you shall celebrate it an *olam* (world-age)⁵ statute. Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. Indeed, on the first day you shall cause leaven to cease from your houses, because anyone eating anything leavened that נֶפֶשׁ (*nephesh*; person)⁶ shall be cut off from Israel, from the first day to the seventh day. And on the first day shall be a sacred convocation and on the seventh day shall be a sacred convocation for you. Not any work shall be done by you. And you shall observe the unleavened bread, because on this very day I brought your armies out from the land of Egypt. And you shall observe this day for your generations, an *olam* (world-age) statute. In the first (moon), on the fourteenth day for the moon, at עֶרֶב (*arab*; twilight),⁷ you shall eat unleavened bread until the twenty-first day for the moon, at *arab* (twilight). Seven days no leaven shall be found in your houses, because anyone eating anything leavened that *nephesh* (person) shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, among the resident aliens and among the natives of the land. Not anything leavened shall you eat. In all your dwellings you shall eat unleavened bread. (Exod., 12:3–20)

You shall keep the Festival of Unleavened Bread. Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, as I have commanded you, for the *moad* (appointed time)⁸ of the Abib moon, because in it you came out from Egypt, and they shall not appear unworthy before me. (Exod., 23:15)

⁵ For the translation of the Hebrew term עֹלָם (*olam*) as a “world-age” in time see above Intro. to Part I, p. 26, n. 10.

⁶ See above n. 2.

⁷ For proof that *arab* is the period of twilight just after sunset see FSDY, 2.

⁸ For the definition of *moad* see Chap. I, p. 15, n. 70.

SHABUATH (PENTECOST) LEVITICUS, 23:15–17, 21, AND DEUTERONOMY, 16:9–10

And you shall number for yourself from the day after the Sabbath, from the day you bring in the עֶמֶר (*omer*) wave offering, they shall be seven complete Sabbaths, until the day after the seventh Sabbath. You shall number 50 days. And you shall bring near a new food offering to Yahweh; you shall bring in bread out of your dwellings for a wave offering, two (loaves); they shall be of two-tenth parts of flour; they shall be baked with leavening, firstfruits to Yahweh . . . And you shall make a proclamation on this same day, a sacred convocation it is to you. You shall not do any laborious work. It is an *olam* statute in all your dwellings in your generations. (Lev., 23:15–17, 21)

You shall number for yourself seven weeks. From the sickle beginning to cut on the growing stalks of grain you shall begin to number seven weeks. And you shall perform the Khag of Shabuath (Weeks) to Yahweh your *eloahi*, according to the measure of the free-will offering of your hand, which you shall give, accordingly as Yahweh your *eloahi* has blessed you. (Deut., 16:9–10)

Introduction to Part II

At first thought, it would seem that the dates for the Phasekh supper, the seven days of eating unleavened bread, and the Khag of Shabuath (Pentecost) should hardly be controversial issues. One would suppose, for instance, that those of the Jewish faith would have been aware of the correct timing of these festivals from time immemorial. One would also assume that a quick check of the relevant statements from Scriptures should solve any apparent problems. Unfortunately, this optimistic view is simply not the case.

Few realize that the issues of just how and when to celebrate the Khag of Phasekh and Unleavened Bread and the Khag of Pentecost have been hotly debated for centuries. Indeed, as early as the second century B.C.E. strongly divergent interpretations over exactly what the Scriptures had commanded in this regard were being voiced within the Jewish community. The Christian assemblies began to struggle over these issues in the second century C.E. The search for the correct Phasekh and Shabuath systems, accordingly, must begin by laying out these various ancient constructs. At the same time, our study must remain cognizant of the fact that these different systems can only be understood within their historical and cultural backdrop.

The Task of Part II

The task of Part II of our first volume is to examine and define the different Jewish and Christian schools with regard to their observance of Phasekh, with its seven days of unleavened bread, and Shabuath (Pentecost). We will begin with two introductory chapters. These chapters shall define relevant terms, such as Phasekh (Passover), unleavened bread, Shabuath (Weeks), Pentecost, and the like. The instructions and reasons for keeping these celebrations will also be examined. The study shall then divide our subject matter into two sections: one examining the Jewish schools and a second investigating the Christian schools.

Section I: Different Jewish Schools

Our initial inquiry shall delve into the practices of the Jewish schools. In this effort, we will explore the history, culture, and origin of three major Jewish schools of thought regarding the Festival of Phasekh and Unleavened Bread and the Festival of Pentecost. We will show that the issues separating each school are derived from their diverse interpretations concerning the time of day called ערב (*arab*) and בין הערבים (*byn ha-arabim*). The three basic Jewish systems for observing the Phasekh and the seven days of unleavened bread were as follows:

- The Aristocratic system celebrated both the Phasekh sacrifice and supper after sunset on the 14th day of the first moon. The seven days of unleavened bread lasted from the beginning of the 14th until the end of the 20th day (sunset marking the beginning and ending of a legal day).
- The Hasidic system celebrated the Phasekh sacrifice on the afternoon of the 14th day of the first moon while the Phasekh supper was eaten after sunset during the nighttime portion of the 15th day. The seven days of unleavened bread continued from the beginning of the 15th until the end of the 21st day.
- The third school was the neo-Aristocratic system. This system used two parallel reckonings for a day, one ending at sunset (legal) and one ending at dark (common). Its advocates celebrated the Phasekh sacrifice after sunset, still being part of the 14th day by common-day reckoning but the first part of the 15th day by legal reckoning. They ate the Phasekh supper after dark, being the first part of the 15th day (i.e., at a time falling within both the legal and common-day reckonings).

In the process of this discussion, the competition between the various Jewish factions will be examined, especially the conflict between the Aristocratic Sadducees and the Hasidic Pharisees. The eventual victory of the Pharisees shall be placed in its proper historical context.

Finally, the date for the Khag of Shabuath (Pentecost) was heavily reliant upon how one calculated Phasekh and the seven days of unleavened bread. As a result, there developed four competing Jewish systems for counting the 50 days to Pentecost: the Aristocratic, the neo-Aristocratic, the Hasidic, and the neo-Hasidic. Section I shall investigate and explain each of these views and place them within their proper historical context.

Section II: Early Christian Schools

Section II is devoted to examining the systems of the early Christian assemblies, from the first until the early eighth century C.E. Four major Christian views were practiced: Quartodeciman (= Aristocratic), quasi-Quartodeciman, Roman (later called Roman Catholic), and the Syrian Hybrid (which was in part Quartodeciman but largely built upon Roman Catholic reckoning). Several minor variant views shall also be touched upon when they become relevant.

It will be demonstrated in this discussion that the most primitive Christian assemblies followed the Aristocratic system for both the Khag of Phasekh and Unleavened Bread and for the Khag of Pentecost. These primitive Christian assemblies were called *Quartodecimani* (14th keepers) because they kept Phasekh on the 14th day of the moon of Abib, the first lunar month, just as some of the Aristocratic Jews did who continued to follow the ancient priestly system. Like their Aristocratic Jewish counterparts, they also kept the seven days of unleavened bread from the 14th until the end of the 20th of Abib. The Quartodecimans differed from the Aristocratic Jews in that they believed in Yahushua as the messiah and saw no need for animal sacrifices or offerings,

⁹ We will use the phrase "Phasekh Eucharist" when referencing the thanksgiving offered with the bread and wine at Passover.

only for the repast and the seven days of eating unleavened bread. With their Phasekh meal they observed the Eucharist (i.e., the Phasekh Eucharist).⁹

As time moved on, a large number of the Quartodecimans began altering their views and strayed from their original doctrines. As a result, several variations developed, which are all classified as quasi-Quartodeciman. This study shall demonstrate that in the early part of the second century C.E. an important quasi-Quartodeciman view about Phasekh took root among Western Christians. Under this school, heavily influenced by the joyful celebration of the resurrection of the messiah and its connection with the first day of the 50-day Pentecost season, the Phasekh Eucharist celebration, originally performed on the 14th day of the first moon, was moved permanently to the first day of the week falling within the seven days of unleavened bread (i.e., from the 14th until the end of the 20th of the month of Abib).

In the last half of the second century C.E., a newer version of this quasi-Quartodeciman view arose among the Western Christian assemblies who were led by Rome. The Roman assembly adopted the seven-day system of unleavened bread that was advocated by the Hasidic branch of Judaism, i.e., from the 15th until the end of the 21st day of the first month. The Phasekh Eucharist, accordingly, was placed on the first day of the week falling within those seven days. This became the Roman Catholic system and was subsequently followed by the Protestants.

During the years when Roman assembly dominance became increasingly present throughout the Christian world, a compromise developed in the East forming a hybrid Syrian system. Under this system, Phasekh was kept on the 14th but the seven days of unleavened bread were observed from the 15th until the end of the 21st. Its advocates nonetheless followed the Roman Catholic guide and celebrated the Phasekh of the resurrection on the first day of the week during these seven days.

This section shall also investigate the history and evidence for the transformation of the Christian Phasekh, as it moved from its original Aristocratic roots to the Roman assembly system. The key element for this change was the Christian Pentecost system, which was modeled after the Jewish Aristocratic Pentecost system. It shall be demonstrated that the first day of the 50-day Pentecost count, the day of the עֲמֵר (omer) wave offering, was also the anniversary of the messiah's resurrection.

In the process of separate development, it was the Western Christian groups who abandoned their original Aristocratic construct for Phasekh and replaced it with a Phasekh celebration on the day of the messiah's resurrection. Resurrection day had become a time of joyous celebration and for many Western Christians this day was deemed a more appropriate time to celebrate the Phasekh Eucharist. The 14th of Abib, on the other hand, was now viewed by many Westerners as far too sad an occasion for celebration due to its remembrance of the messiah's death. The Phasekh Eucharist for the Western Christians, as a result, became the first day of the week (Sunday) that fell during the week of unleavened bread.

Essential Christian Differences

The evidence from these chapters will reveal that there are seven basic Jewish and Christian systems for the celebration of Phasekh that we must consider. Other minor variations are all ultimately based on one of these seven views. Separating these systems are some essential differences. In all cases, the 14th of the moon of Abib—counted as the first month of the year—is recognized as the day commanded in the written Torah (Old Testament) for the Phasekh lamb to be slaughtered. The Phasekh supper was then eaten in the night immediately following that sacrifice.¹⁰ Here the agreement ends.

As our investigation shall prove, the advocates of the Christian Quartodeciman (Aristocratic) system, which view was held by the early assemblies who followed Yahushua the messiah, contended that the seven-day Festival of Unleavened Bread began with the 14th of Abib and ended at the close of the 20th of Abib. This system recognized that the 14th was not only the date for the ancient Phasekh sacrifice (an event no longer required) but was the correct date for both the Phasekh supper and the first high Sabbath day of that *khag*. In this construct, Phasekh is the first day of the seven days of unleavened bread.

This research shall also prove that the early assemblies believed that the messiah did in fact observe the 14th of Abib as the date of his famous “Last Supper,” and that most Christians believed that Yahushua celebrated this dinner as the Phasekh repast. In the afternoon of that same day (Hebrew reckoning, sunset-to-sunset), the Pharisees, who dominated the Judaeen state religion in those days, sacrificed their Phasekh lamb. It was at that time that the messiah was wrongfully executed. The following night, i.e., on the 15th of Abib, the Pharisees ate their Phasekh supper.

Disregarding whether any particular system believes that the legal Phasekh supper was held on the 14th or 15th of Abib, there is another essential difference between the Aristocratic Phasekh system (which includes the Quartodeciman and some aspect of the quasi-Quartodeciman models) and all of the other varieties. All of the other systems disassociate the 14th of Abib from being the high Sabbath which marks the first of the seven days of the Festival of Unleavened Bread. Indeed, this was at the heart of the ancient debate between the Quartodecimans (14th day keepers) and the Quintodecimans (15th day keepers) in the early Christian assemblies. The debate was never just about what day one was to eat the Phasekh Eucharist.

Practice of the Aristocratic system, which was followed by Yahushua and the early assemblies, or anything like it, has been totally suppressed since the eighth century C.E. Except for the most ardent students of history, few are even aware that it existed. The Hasidic or Pharisaic model, on the other hand, which in some way or another serves as the basis for the constructs of almost all the remaining systems (despite its late appearance relative to the Aristocratic system), has become so well-entrenched that few pundits have thought to search beyond its perimeters to solve the several contradictions presented by its format. This study shall expose these problems.

¹⁰ The basis for this belief is Exod., 12:6–8; Lev., 23:5; Num., 28:16; Deut., 16:2–5; and so on.