

Why Juda counts the Omer from the day after the first day of Unleavened Bread

by Tony Robinson



When Does Passover Begin?

	Nisan 13	Nisan 14	Nisan 15	Nisan 16	Nisan 17	Nisan 18	Nisan 19	Nisan 20	Nisan 21	Nisan 22
Passover			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
		Passover	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

- Ezekiel 45:21 – “In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, you shall **observe the Passover, a feast of seven days**; unleavened bread shall be eaten.
- Is Ezekiel confused??? Passover is on the 14th!
- Unleavened bread is a feast of seven days!!!



When Does Passover Begin?

- How Can Ezekiel Say That Passover is a Feast of Seven Days?
 - Hebrew Idiomatic Expressions!
 - Hebrew is just like English or any other language and the Israelites were people just like any other people group
 - “It’s raining cats and dogs.” This American idiom simply means it raining



When Does Passover Begin?

- How Can Ezekiel Say That Passover is a Feast of Seven Days?
 - Words take on new meanings when used idiomatically
 - Idiomatics #1 – To the Hebrew mind, sometimes Passover is used to speak of the Feast of Unleavened Bread!
 - Luke 22:1 – Now ***the Feast of Unleavened Bread*** drew near, ***which is called Passover.***



When Does Passover Begin?

- How Can Ezekiel Say That Passover is a Feast of Seven Days?
 - Nonetheless, sometimes they are clearly separated and sometimes not . . .
 - II Chronicles 35:17-19 – And the children of Israel who were present kept **the Passover at that time, and the Feast of Unleavened Bread for seven days.**



When Does Passover Begin?

- How Can Ezekiel Say That Passover is a Feast of Seven Days?
 - Historical evidence from a secular historical primary record
 - Antiquities 17.9.3 – Now, upon the approach of that **feast of unleavened bread**, which the law of their fathers had appointed for the Jews at this time, **which feast is called the Passover** and is a memorial of their deliverance out of Egypt,
 - Elsewhere, Flavius Josephus separates them!



When Does Passover Begin?

- How Can Ezekiel Say That Passover is a Feast of Seven Days?
 - Antiquities of the Jews 3.10.5 – The **feast of unleavened bread succeeds that of the Passover**, and falls on the fifteenth day of the month, and continues seven days, wherein they feed on unleavened bread . . .



When Does Passover Begin?

- How Can Ezekiel Say That Passover is a Feast of Seven Days?
 - But, sometimes Passover is Called the Feast of Unleavened Bread!
 - Mark 14:12 – Now on **the first day of Unleavened Bread**, when they **killed the Passover lamb**, His disciples said to Him, “Where do You want us to go and prepare, that You may eat the Passover?”



When Does Passover Begin?

- How Can Ezekiel Say That Passover is a Feast of Seven Days?
- But, sometimes Passover is Called the Feast of Unleavened Bread!
- Luke 22:7 – Then came **the Day of Unleavened Bread**, when **the Passover must be killed**.



When Does Passover Begin?

	Nisan 13	Nisan 14	Nisan 15	Nisan 16	Nisan 17	Nisan 18	Nisan 19	Nisan 20	Nisan 21	Nisan 22
Passover			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
		Passover	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

- Why would Ezekiel do this? Why would Israelites call Passover, Unleavened Bread? Why would they call Unleavened Bread, Passover. Why would they call the combination of Passover and Unleavened Bread, “a feast of seven days”?
- Since Passover was on the 14th going into the 15th the two festivals were seen as ONE!!!!!!!!!!



When is the 1st Day of the Omer?

- The Jewish Calendar
 - Today's Jewish calendar is based on the Pharisaic theology of counting the omer
 - The Jewish calendar begins the count of the omer the day after the Sabbath of the 1st Day of Unleavened Bread, i.e., Nissan 16
- The "Problem"?



When is the 1st Day of the Omer?

- Leviticus 23:9-11 – And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, “Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘When you come into the land which I give to you, and reap its harvest, then you shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest. **He shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted on your behalf; on the day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it.**”



When is the 1st Day of the Omer?

- **Leviticus 23:15-16** – ‘And you shall count for yourselves from the day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering: seven Sabbaths shall be completed. Count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath; then you shall offer a new grain offering to the Lord.
- First, you must count from the day after the Sabbath
- Second, you must count seven Sabbaths



When is the 1st Day of the Omer?

- Therefore, many reason the following:
 - The Sabbath mentioned in Leviticus 23 is the weekly Sabbath
 - Shavuot must always be on a Sunday since we're to “count seven **Sabbaths** from the day after the Sabbath”
 - If you just take the Scripture literally then Shavuot has to occur on a Sunday (hint)
- But that's the problem – Taking it Literally!



When is the 1st Day of the Omer?

Mon Night	Tues Day	Tues Night	Wed Day	Wed Night	Thur Day	Thur Night	Fri Day
Nisan 13		Nisan 14		Nisan 15		Nisan 16 (2 nd)	
		Passover		1 st Night of UB		2 nd Night of UB	

- The Jewish (Pharisaic) Reckoning of the Omer
 - The 1st day of the omer begins on the 2nd day of the feast of unleavened bread (Nisan 16) and will not necessarily be on a Sunday



When is the 1st Day of the Omer?

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- So the question is this . . .
 - Is there any way we can accept the Pharisaic reckoning and yet be true to the text?
 - Before dealing exclusively with the text, what do we know from history?
 - First Hand Testimony
 - Flavius Josephus



When is the 1st Day of the Omer?

- Now these lambs are entirely burnt, besides the kid of the goats which is added to all the rest, for sins; for it is intended as a feast for the priest on every one of those days. **But on the second day of unleavened bread, which is the sixteenth day of the month, they first partake of the fruits of the earth, for before that day they do not touch them.** And while they suppose it proper to honor God, from whom they obtain this plentiful provision, in the first place, **they offer the first-fruits of their barley, and that in the manner** following:



When is the 1st Day of the Omer?

- The Testimony of the Septuagint!
 - Septuagint – A Jewish translation of the Tanakh into Greek
 - Written approximately 3rd century BCE
 - Let's compare the standard translation of Leviticus 23:11 with its translation by the Septuagint scholars



When is the 1st Day of the Omer?

- The Testimony of the Septuagint!
 - Standard Translation of Leviticus 23:11 – He shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted on your behalf; **on the day after the Sabbath** the priest shall wave it.
 - Septuagint Translation of Leviticus 23:11 – and he shall lift up the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted for you. **On the morrow of the first day** the priest shall lift it up.



- What does it mean by “of the first day”?

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When is the 1st Day of the Omer?

- The Testimony of the Septuagint!
 - We simply need to go to Leviticus 23:5-7
 - Leviticus 23:5-7 – On the fourteenth *day* of the first month at twilight *is* the Lord’s Passover. And on the fifteenth day of the same month *is* the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the Lord; seven days you must eat unleavened bread **On the first day** you shall have a holy convocation; you shall do no customary work



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When is the 1st Day of the Omer?

- The Testimony of the Septuagint!
 - On the first day is a reference to the first day of unleavened bread
 - Thus, the Septuagint translators explicitly placed the timing of the omer wave offering on the day after the first day of unleavened bread, which is Nisan 16.
 - It is true that “on the first day” is NOT true to the Hebrew!



When is the 1st Day of the Omer?

- The Testimony of the Septuagint!
 - This does not invalidate the translation for they were simply making it clear which Sabbath was being referred to.
 - Some take issue with the Septuagint translation since it was not literal
 - The Septuagint was a standard text used amongst the Jews



When is the 1st Day of the Omer?

- The Testimony of the Septuagint!
 - The Apostolic writers quoted from the Septuagint more often than from the Hebrew text! Of 189 quotes, 105 agree with the LXX



When is the 1st Day of the Omer?

- The Testimony of the Septuagint!
 - The LXX has supplied the meaning/interpretation of the time period
 - The Septuagint was written only a couple of hundred years after the beginning of the 2nd Temple period and we can't escape the obvious likelihood of the influence of the 120 men of the Great Assembly on the accepted interpretation



When is the 1st Day of the Omer?

- The Testimony of the Scriptures
 - Leviticus 23:11 – He shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted on your behalf; **on the day after the Sabbath** the priest shall wave it.
 - How are we to understand the word Sabbath here and in Leviticus 23:15-16?



When is the 1st Day of the Omer?

- The Testimony of the Scriptures
 - Leviticus 23:10 – “Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘**When you come into the land which I give to you, and reap its harvest**, then you shall bring a sheaf of the first fruits of your harvest to the priest.
 - Clearly, **the offering of the firstfruits of the omer is linked to Israel’s entrance into the land**
 - This leads us to the second clue shedding light on how to interpret the usage of the word Sabbath in Leviticus



When is the 1st Day of the Omer?

- The Testimony of the Scriptures
 - Now the children of Israel camped in Gilgal, and kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month at twilight on the plains of Jericho. **And they ate of the produce of the land on the day after the Passover, unleavened bread and parched grain, on the very same day . . .**



When is the 1st Day of the Omer?

- The Testimony of the Scriptures
 - **And they ate of the produce of the land**
 - This passage is clearly the fulfillment of Leviticus 23:10, connecting the omer offering to entrance into the land
 - Therefore, this passage will help us understand how we are to interpret the phrase “on the day after the Sabbath”



When is the 1st Day of the Omer?

- The Testimony of the Scriptures
 - **“on the day after the Passover”**
 - Note the similarity of this phrase to “**on the day after the Sabbath**”!
 - Again, the phrase “**on the day after the Passover**” in Joshua 5:11 is a clear, in your face allusion to “**on the day after the Sabbath**” thus emphatically connecting Joshua 5:10-12 to the instructions found in Leviticus 23:9-16 as a fulfillment of the commands concerning the omer.



When is the 1st Day of the Omer?

- The Testimony of the Scriptures
 - According to Joshua 5:10 they observed Passover on the 14th
 - According to Joshua 5:11 they ate “of the produce of the land” the day after Passover, “on the very same day” EMPHASIS!
 - Leviticus 23:10 states that they have to bring the barley sheaves “when they enter the land”
 - Furthermore, Leviticus 23:14 states they cannot eat any of the barley harvest until the SAME DAY they make the barley omer offering.



When is the 1st Day of the Omer?

- The Testimony of the Scriptures
 - Since they ate “of the produce of the land” the day after Passover “on that same day,” they had to have offered the omer wave offering on that same day also. Else, if they had eaten from the land on the day after Passover without having made the omer offering first, they would have sinned greatly.
 - Leviticus 23:14 is emphatic that eating from the land is to occur “on the same day” as the omer wave offering! And this was fulfilled “on the day after Passover”



When is the 1st Day of the Omer?

- The Testimony of the Scriptures
 - Do You see the “problem” with this???
 - Joshua 5:11 – If we take the phrase, “on the

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- According to Leviticus 23:11 the omer is to be offered “on the day after the Sabbath”!
- How can an omer offering “on the day after Passover” fulfill “on the day after the Sabbath”?



When is the 1st Day of the Omer?

- The Testimony of the Scriptures
 - Taken literally, Joshua 5:11 is NOT a fulfillment of Leviticus 23:11, which requires an offering

Night	Day	Night	Day	Night	Day	Night	Day
	Nisan 13		Nisan 14		Nisan 15		Nisan 16 (2 nd)
			Passover		1 st Night of UB		2 nd Night of UB

- If taken literally, Israel offered the omer on the first day of unleavened bread!



When is the 1st Day of the Omer?

- The Testimony of the Scriptures
 - What is the solution?
 - First, when Leviticus 23:11 commands that the omer be offered “on the day after the Shabbat,” **it means the Sabbath of the first day of unleavened bread [Nisan 16],** not the weekly Sabbath!



When is the 1st Day of the Omer?

- The Testimony of the Scriptures
 - What is the solution?
 - Second, when Joshua 5:11 mentions that Israel ate of the produce of the land “on the day after the Passover” [after having made the omer offering on the same day], **Passover is not to be taken literally, but as an idiom for that first day of unleavened bread**, thus fulfilling Leviticus 23:11, “on the day after the Sabbath”.



When is the 1st Day of the Omer?

- The Testimony of the Scriptures
 - Passover is being used idiomatically as the 1st day of the feast of unleavened bread. The day

Night	Day	Night	Day	Night	Day	Night	Day
	Nisan 13	Nisan 14	Nisan 15	Nisan 16 (2 nd)			
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- the day after the Shabbat” of Leviticus 23:11, i.e., Nisan 16.



When is the 1st Day of the Omer?

- The Testimony of the Scriptures
 - Thus, just like the Septuagint translators who used the phrase “on the morrow of the first day” to ensure that people understood that Leviticus 23:11 referred to the first day of unleavened bread, so likewise the writer of Joshua 5:11 uses the word Passover idiomatically to indicate that Israel fulfilled the command of Leviticus 23:11 by offering the omer on the day after Passover, meaning the day after the first day of unleavened bread.



When is the 1st Day of the Omer?

- The Testimony of the Scriptures
 - We have already seen how Passover has been used in the Tanakh, in the Apostolic writings and in historical writings to mean the feast of unleavened bread
 - Ezekiel 45:21 – “In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, you shall **observe the Passover, a feast of seven days**;
 - Luke 22:1 – Now **the Feast of Unleavened Bread** drew near, **which is called Passover**.



When is the 1st Day of the Omer?

- The Testimony of the Scriptures
 - Antiquities 17.9.3 – Now, upon the approach of that **feast of unleavened bread**, which the law of their fathers had appointed for the Jews at this time, **which feast is called the Passover** and is a memorial of their deliverance out of Egypt,



When is the Omer Offered?

- Historical Evidence (From Primary Sources)
 - *Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews 3.10.5* – The feast of unleavened bread succeeds that of the passover, and falls on the fifteenth day of the month, and continues seven days, wherein they feed on unleavened bread . . . **But on the second day of unleavened bread, which is the sixteenth day of the month, they first partake of the fruits of the earth**, for before that day they do not touch them.



When is the Omer Offered?

- Historical Evidence (From Primary Sources)
 - And while they suppose it proper to honor God, from whom they obtain this plentiful provision, **in the first place, they offer the first-fruits of their barley, and that in the manner following . . .**



When is Shavuot?

- Historical Evidence (From Primary Sources)
 - Remember the two problems we need to solve with reference to Leviticus 23:9-16
 - First, you must count from the day after the Sabbath
 - Second, you must count seven Sabbaths
 - Clearly, we have all sorts of proof that “the day after the Sabbath” means the Sabbath of the 1st day of unleavened bread
- Now let's deal with counting seven Sabbaths



When is Shavuot?

- The Testimony of the Scriptures
 - Leviticus 23:15-16 – **And you shall count** for yourselves from the day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering **seven Sabbaths** shall be completed. Count fifty days **to the day after the seventh Sabbath**; then you shall offer a new grain offering to the Lord.
 - If we take Sabbaths **literally** then Shavuot has to be on a Sunday



When is Shavuot?

- The Testimony of the Scriptures
 - The answer? This time, the word Sabbath is not to be taken literally
 - In the Tanakh, in the Apostolic writings, in the Septuagint, AND in the secular and religious writings of the Jews near the 1st century, **Sabbath** is used extensively as an idiomatic expression for the word “week.”



When is Shavuot?

- The Testimony of the Scriptures
 - Leviticus 25:8 – And you shall count **seven sabbaths** of years for yourself, **seven times seven years**; and the time of the seven sabbaths of years shall be to **you forty-nine years**
 - Here, sabbaths is CLEARLY used idiomatically as a week or group of seven



When is Shavuot?

- The Testimony of the Scriptures
 - In the Rabbinic literature the word sabbath is often used to mean week
 - In the LXX, the Hebrew word for week, shavua is translated by the Greek word Herdamos
 - Despite this fact, the Greek word for week, herdamos is never used in the Apostolic writings! They always use the word



When is Shavuot?

- The Testimony of the Scriptures
 - Each mention in the Gospels of “first day of the week” is literally “first day of the sabbath(s)”



When is Shavuot?

- The Testimony of the Scriptures
 - Luke 18:12 – I fast twice a **week**; I give tithes of all that I possess
 - The word **week** in the Greek is **shabbat** not herdamos! How can one fast twice in a Sabbath??? Sabbath is clearly being used idiomatically
 - Lastly, note the parallel text for Leviticus 23:15-



When is Shavuot?

- The Testimony of the Scriptures
 - Deuteronomy 16:9-10 – **You shall count seven weeks (Shavuot) for yourself; begin to count the seven weeks** from the time you begin to put the sickle to the grain. **Then you shall keep the Feast of Weeks [NOT THE FEAST OF SABBATHS]** to the Lord your God with the tribute of a freewill offering from your hand, which you shall give as the Lord your



When is Shavuot?

- The Testimony of the Scriptures
 - Thus, we are justified to conclude that the word sabbath in Leviticus 23:15-16 is being used idiomatically as the word for week.
 - There is firm Scriptural and historical evidence that Rabbinic Judaism has correctly interpreted passages pertaining to the determination of the timing for Passover, Unleavened Bread, the Omer offering and Shavuot.



When is Shavuot?

- The Testimony of the Scriptures
 - Our two problems are easily solved once we understand the idiomatic usages of words in the Scriptures
 - First, you must count from the day after the **Sabbath** [the 1st day of unleavened bread], idiomatically called Passover in Josh 5:10-11



When is Shavuot?

- The Testimony of the Scriptures
 - Our two problems are easily solved once we understand the idiomatic usages of words in the Scriptures
 - Second, you must count seven **sabbaths** [count seven weeks] being an idiomatic expression for weeks

