

Olam would delete 165 years of Persian history, also ruinous to Daniel 9. They would then designate the Sabbath before Passover as the 'Great Sabbath,' and then conveniently fail to call the Passover holy day the Sabbath. And then they wonder why they themselves are confused, and why their battles with the Karaites and the Church are less than successful? Is there a conspiracy among the elders of Judah? Was their a conspiracy? They conspired against the way the truth and the life. And they conspired against the prophets before that.

What do you think! Am I not being even handed here. Ephraim also has fallen into the pit because Israel does not seek the Word of God, and because of this truth is tossed to the ground both within and without. Someday the survivors of Judah and Israel are going to realize that those whom they perceived as their enemies were their friends, and those who they counted as their friends wanted to kill them. Yet God has allowed such stumbling because they did not seek Him first.

Exegesis of "First of the Sabbaths"

There are many bibles that give the translation "first of the Sabbaths"; some like Young's Literal Translation are directly from the Greek.⁴³⁵ Some are based on the Latin, "Prima autem sabbatorum" which is directly from the Greek, Τῆ δὲ μιᾷ τῶν σαββάτων "first of the Sabbaths". In New Testament usage, this phrase always occurs immediately after the Passover.⁴³⁶ This is obvious in Matthew 28:1; Mark 16:2; Luke 24:1; John 20:1, 19. For Acts 20:7, the Passover is referenced in 20:5-6, and for 1st Cor. 16:2, Pentecost is referenced later in the passage implying that vs. 2 is right after the Passover.

The reason that all these usages are joined with the Passover comes from Leviticus 23:11-16 (see Exegesis of Lev. 23:11-16, page 86). There, instructions are given to count "seven complete Sabbaths" following the annual Passover Sabbath. Our analysis of this passage in the light of the chronology of the Exodus and the meaning of מִן־חַרְתָּ confirmed that the Pharisees calculation of Shavuot (Pentecost) was correct. However, it also demonstrated that the counting of seven literal Sabbaths "in the time after" the Passover Sabbath is the plain meaning of the text, and that the attempt to fend off Samaritan and Karaite counter-reasoning by inserting שְׁבַעַת into the passage for שְׁבַתוֹת is unnecessary.

With this introduction, I now return to the Greek Τῆ δὲ μιᾷ τῶν σαββάτων. The literal translation is "first of the Sabbaths." In order to counter this inconvenient truth, Church scholars argue that the first century Greek really was a Jewish method of counting days of the week. They cite the late Talmudic phrase for "first day in the week*" חַד בְּשַׁבְּתָא, and claim that this justifies the sense of "week" for the word "Sabbath" in the enumeration of the days of the week. Indeed, the Talmud does have a method for enumerating the days of the week, but the usages tell a differ-

⁴³⁵ Coverdale, "first day of the Sabbaths"; Wycliffe, "oon of the sabotis"; Tyndale, "On a Saboth daye"; Bishops' Bible, "first day of the Sabbatths"; Rheims, "first of the Sabboth[s]"; Latin versions, "In una autem sabbatorum" or "Prima autem sabbatorum"; Concordant Version "one of the Sabbaths".

⁴³⁶ The phrase only occurs eight times in the new testament.

ent story to the glottochronologist.⁴³⁷ Also it makes no more sense than using a modern translation to determine the meaning of the original Greek.

The Talmudic idiom חַד בְּשַׁבְּתָא is an Aramaic dialect. So also the rest of the days of the week:⁴³⁸

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| 1. | בַּחַד בְּשַׁבְּתָא | on one in the week* |
| 2. | בַּתְּרֵי בְּשַׁבְּתָא | on second in the week* |
| 3. | בַּתְּלִיתָא בְּשַׁבְּתָא | on third in the week* |
| 4. | בְּאַרְבַּעָא בְּשַׁבְּתָא | on fourth in the week* |
| 5. | בְּחֻמְשָׁא בְּשַׁבְּתָא | on third in the week* |
| 6. | בְּמַעְלֵי שְׁבַתָּא | on preparation to Sabbath |
| 7. | בְּשַׁבְּתָא | on the Sabbath |

What should first be observed is that חַד is rejected in the forms for days one to five. In a few cases the חַד is retained (e.g. *Shabbath 18, daf: qkt,b,gemara*), which is explained below. The form שַׁבְּתָא does not really originate with *Shabbat*.

It derives from the Aramaic word for "seven" שְׁבַע only with an א exchanged for ע.⁴³⁹ This is merely an alternate spelling of the Aramaic for "seven," or "week" which is שְׁבוּעָא.

שַׁבְּתָא < שְׁבוּעָא < שְׁבַעַת⁴⁴⁰ is a defective spelling of

⁴³⁷ A glottochronologist is a linguist who studies the history of changes in languages.

⁴³⁸ These usages are found the Jerusalem and Babylonian Talmud. See *Shabbat 9 (daf: pz,a, gemara)*, 18 (*daf: qkt, b, gemara*), 24 (*daf: qnv,a, gemara*).

⁴³⁹ Both these letters are indistinguishable in spoken Hebrew. In written Hebrew they stand as place holders for vowels and serve to identify the root meaning.

⁴⁴⁰ The form שְׁבוּעָא is Mandaean, and שְׁבַעַת is biblical Aramaic. See Koehler 252.71, *Lexicon In Veteris Testamenti Libros*.

The Mandaic language is the liturgical language of the Mandaean religion; a vernacular form is still spoken by a small community in Iran around Ahvaz. It is a variety of Aramaic, notable for its use of vowel letters (see Mandaic alphabet) and the striking amount of Iranian influence in its grammar and lexicon. Classical Mandaic is a Northwest Semitic language of the Eastern Aramaic sub-family, and is closely related to the language of the Aramaic portions of the Babylonian Talmud, as well as the language of the incantation texts found throughout Mesopotamia. It is also related to Syriac, another member of the Eastern Aramaic sub-family, which is the liturgical language of many Christian denominations throughout the Middle East.

Jewish Babylonian Aramaic is the form of Middle Aramaic employed by Jewish writers in Babylonia between the 4th century and the 11th century CE. It is most commonly identified with the language of the Babylonian Talmud (which was completed in the seventh century) and of post-Talmudic (Geonic) literature, which are the most important cultural products of Babylonian Jewry. The most important epigraphic sources for the dialect are the hundreds of Aramaic magic bowls written in the Jewish script.

The language is closely related to other Eastern Aramaic dialects such as Mandaic and the Eastern Syriac of the Assyrian Church. Its original pronunciation is uncertain, and has to be reconstructed with the help of these kindred dialects and of the reading tradition of the Yemenite Jews. (The vocalized Aramaic texts with which Jews are familiar, from the Bible and the prayer book, are of limited usefulness for this purpose, as they are in a different dialect.)

Talmudic Aramaic bears all the marks of being a specialist language of study and legal argumentation, like Law French, rather than a vernacular mother tongue, and continued in use for these pur-