

## God's Reckoning of Time from Creation Forward

The very first phrase of the Bible mentions time:

***"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."*** Gen 1:1 NASB

An unknown amount of time that could have been an instant or billions of years are encompassed in the words "in the beginning." We just aren't told how long a period of time that was, nor did any reckoning of time even exist then by which we could know. However long it was, it was when "God created the heavens and the earth" out of nothing in their ancient primordial form. At some point after that "beginning", God set about ordering the universe during a period of seven creative days. It was not until the fourth creative day that a means was finally provided by which time could be accurately counted:

***Then God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night, and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years; and let them be for lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth"; and it was so. God made the two great lights, the greater light to govern the day, and the lesser light to govern the night; He made the stars also.*** Gen. 1:14-16 NASB

In the beginning "God created..." meaning in this instance that He brought something into existence out of nothing. Here "God made" ('asah Strong's 6213H) the sun, the moon and the stars. God made i.e., ordered what had already been created, into a purposeful form. His purpose for the heavenly bodies as ordered on the fourth day was not only to give light upon the earth, but that they would "serve as signs and for seasons (moed Strong's 4150H) and for days and years." The word here translated as "seasons" is the Hebrew word "**moed**" which, according to Strong's, has the primary meaning of "**appointed time.**" This is exactly the same word used in the Bible to describe **the holy days including Sabbaths and Festivals that God later set to meet with His people.** Therefore, a Hebrew-speaking Israelite would read this verse and understand immediately that God ordered the movement of the heavenly bodies as "signs" by which He could set His "appointed times" with His people. The movement of the sun, moon and stars were ordered from the fourth day forward to serve as God's great appointment book in the sky!

This is an amazing thing to contemplate. Before God ordered the heavens in this way the all-knowing Creator, of course, comprehended the passage of time. However, He was the only one that could, since no mechanism existed by which His creatures could comprehend it. However, now He had changed that! He had formed a mechanism in the sky, visible to all generations to come, that could put His creatures on exactly the same time He was on so that He could make appointments to meet with them. When man, who was yet to be created, was finally brought forth, he would have a means to know and comprehend God's time and be "on the same schedule" with his Grand Creator. Friends, being brought into God's measure of time is a matter of intimate fellowship with Him!

When man was finally created on the sixth creative day God already had everything "all set" for this, His crowning achievement, in the earth. Adam, the first man, was made for fellowship with God. It seems he and God spent time in fellowship together every day "in the cool of the day." Adam may have had an appointment with God each day at that time. If so, it meant that something was terribly wrong one day when Adam failed to "show up" for that appointment! It could only mean that Adam had fallen into sin (Gen 3:8,9).

What about before sin? What did they talk about in those times together when Adam had shown up? I'm sure the first thing on Adam's list would have been "how did I get here and what is this all about?" This is likely where the creation story that we now have in Genesis first came from. Therefore, Adam knew what God had done on the fourth day in making the heavenly bodies as a

"sign" - His "appointment book" in the sky - and all the rest of it. This has got to be why from Adam's creation forward the Bible marks off time according to an unchanging method of time reckoning. Thus, we have a reliable record of the life spans of Adam and his descendants through the line of his son Seth, all the way to Noah and beyond. God told Adam how to reckon the passing of time, and that information was passed on from generation to generation thereafter.

At the conclusion of the sixth creative day God looked at all He had made and said it was "very good." Clearly, sin had not yet marred the world as the sixth day gave way to the seventh. On the seventh day God did something new:

*On the seventh day God finished his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. God blessed the seventh day, and made it holy, because he rested in it from all his work which he had created and made.* Gen 2:2,3 WEB

God "finished (kalah 3615) His work" on the seventh day. The sense is correct here. The word kalah means "completed." God completed His work by "resting." It is only when you can step back and look at your work and pronounce it "finished," and then rest from doing any more, that your work is finally done. God's seventh day rest marked a separation point from the previous six days that had led up to it. It set apart all that was done previously as having been completed. Thus, the entire seven day creative period forms a unified span of time in which work is purposefully done, then is finally brought to completion in rest on the seventh day. We learn something important about the Sabbath from this. Sabbath is as much about completion of a purposeful cycle as it is about rest. **Sabbath is the culmination of a creative cycle in which one's work is finally completed and then enjoyed in rest!** No wonder God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy i.e., set apart.

Notice that from the completion of creation forward man has known about God's seventh day rest. This writer believes that from that time forward righteous men in fellowship with God have honored God as Creator by keeping His seventh day holy. Later, keeping the seventh day holy was even included among the great moral Laws of God known as the Ten Commandments.

So when is the seventh day? Some say Saturday. Some say Sunday. An examination of the facts herein presented will prove that the seventh day which the Fourth Commandment says we are to commemorate as holy is neither of those days. What we will find is that this modern age has slipped far away from God's reckoning of time given to Adam, so far that most of us can't even comprehend when the real Sabbath is! This is very serious, because, as we have seen, being on God's time is critically connected to fellowship with Him. Let us, then, consider the rest of the "Old Testament" period to see what we can learn about God's reckoning of time.

### Civilization Began in the Fertile Crescent

According to the Bible, the Garden of Eden, birthplace of Mankind, was located in or near the area of the world known as Mesopotamia. The Bible identifies Eden with the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, both still flowing today in that part of the world (Gen 2:8-14). Two other rivers also are identified with the Garden of Eden, namely, the Pishon and the Gihon, which have remained unknown in modern times, though some believe the Gihon to be the Nile. In 1996 what seems to be the Pishon was discovered by a NASA scientist. [see right panel]

#### The Garden of Eden?

Former NASA scientist Farouk El-Baz was assessing environmental damage to the Kuwaiti desert after the Persian Gulf War when he first noticed smooth pebbles of basalt and granite that looked out of place amid the local limestone.

"We can find these rocks in abundance only in the western part of the Arabian peninsula," he said, "right on the east side of the Red Sea." El-Baz is now director of the Boston University Center for Remote Sensing. His satellite photo analysis revealed a dry channel connecting the western mountains with Kuwait, partially covered by sand dunes.

Genesis describes four rivers that water the Garden of Eden, two of which are the well-known Tigris and Euphrates. About the third, the Pishon, it says, "it winds through the land of Havilah, where there is gold."



More and more, science confirms the Bible as the source of the most reliable ancient information available about man's history. As with this newly-discovered ancient river, the Bible reveals many secrets about our most ancient past not yet generally accepted or known. This newly discovered river apparently identified in the Bible with the Garden of Eden harkens back to a time before the earliest civilization known to archaeologists, although the earliest civilization known to them did begin in this same part of the world, in what is called "the Fertile Crescent."

The Hijaz Mountains, from which spring this "Arabian River," do produce gold, and the river passes a city called Hadiyah. The discovery makes it much harder for skeptics "to ignore the possibility that the biblical texts accurately preserve many earlier traditions," archaeologist James Sauer wrote in *Biblical Archaeology Review*.

El-Baz says the climate in the Arabian desert and other nearby areas was much wetter about 5,000 years ago. He believes some of the river's flow may still be in an underground aquifer and available for irrigation. The sand dunes covering the middle part of the river may also preserve intact riverside villages, which would interest archaeologists. [Christianity Today, October 7, 1996](#)

The Fertile Crescent is a crescent-shaped region that stretches south of modern-day Jerusalem and northward along the Mediterranean coast to present-day Syria. Then it moves eastward through present-day Iraq. Finally, it moves southward along the Tigris and Euphrates rivers to the Persian Gulf. (See map below)

Agriculture was first believed to have been developed in this fertile valley. Wild wheat and barley were grown in abundance, encouraging wandering tribes-people to settle down along the lush banks of the rivers to become the world's first known farmers. Farming soon gave rise to settled communities and civilization. Innovations like irrigation and city-living came with the growing population. The Bible indicates this area was where the first city was built after the flood of Noah, with its famed "Tower of Babel". Other cities were also built in due course.

## Was The Tower of Babel Real?

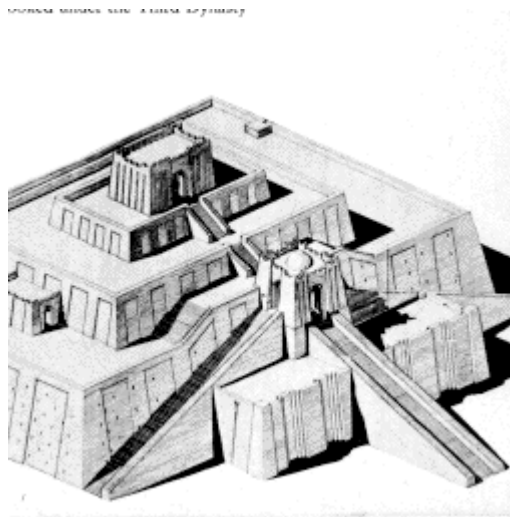
Many people today think that the Biblical story of the Tower of Babel, where God confused the languages of mankind, is nothing but a myth. However, this tower, like many other things mentioned in the Bible record, has been confirmed by scholars as true. One Professor Oppert was sent by the government of France to report on cuneiform inscriptions found in the ruins of Babylon. Oppert, being an expert in the ancient language, translated an inscription of King Nebuchadnezzar in which he refers to the tower in the Chaldean language as Borsippa, which means **Tongue-tower**. Nebuchadnezzar was rebuilding the then-ancient tower and tells of his rebuilding of the structure as well as its earlier history as follows:

*The tower, the eternal house, which I founded and built. I have completed its magnificence with silver, gold, other metals, stone, enameled bricks, fir and pine. The first which is the house of the earth's base, **the most ancient monument of Babylon ... this edifice, the house of the seven lights of the earth, the most ancient monument of Borsippa. A former king built it, (they reckon 42 ages) but he did not complete its head. Since a remote time, people***

**had abandoned it, without order expressing their words.** [Travels and Researches in Chaldea and Sinai (William Kennett Loftus, Travels and Researches in Chaldea and Sinai, [London: James Nisbet, 1857], p. 29]

Notice that Nebuchadnezzar calls this "tongue-tower" **the most ancient monument of Babylon.** He says it was built but not completed by a former king of many ages past. Then he says why it was not completed: **people had abandoned it, without order expressing their words.** He is clearly describing the Tower of Babel. Read Genesis 10 & 11 and compare for yourself. He calls this edifice **the house of the seven lights**, no doubt referring to the seven "planets" known and worshipped by ancient man.

## Sumeria



After the confusion of language at Babel, groups of people spread out to other areas in the region and eventually beyond. Some of the first cities known to have existed are said to have been constructed in the southern part of the Fertile Crescent, near the Persian Gulf. These were built by a civilization known as the Sumerians. Their capital, Sumer, is said to have been a bustling city where the first known writing and alphabet are believed to have been invented. Another great city built by the Sumerians was the city of Ur. A famous "ziggurat" temple was excavated there and may give us a clue as to what the "Tower of Babel" may have been like. (Gen 11, see photo).

This early people introduced the Bronze Age to civilization; and are said to have invented the wheel and the fundamentals of mathematics. Perhaps. However, Biblically speaking, it is more likely that they carried forward pre-Flood knowledge preserved by Noah through the Flood and entrusted to his descendants, which knowledge the Sumerians implemented and built upon. This is to take nothing away from their accomplishments. Their impact on the world of their day was beyond monumental.

It is noteworthy that when God chose one man through whom He would bless every nation He chose a native of Sumeria to do it. Abraham, the father of the Hebrews and of all those having faith, was from the ancient city of Ur of the Sumerians. Thus, the father of our faith was privy to all the greatest knowledge of the civilization of His day and brought it with him as he followed God into places he did not know.

## Sumerian Time-Reckoning

The Sumerians knew how to keep track of time. The way they did it was passed down to them through the generations from the beginning, being essentially identical with the lunar method Noah used in recording the "moon-ths" of the Flood. The Genesis record contains Noah's log of events which carefully notes the passing of lunar months through the monumental events he witnessed. The word translated as "month" in our Bible is the same Hebrew word literally meaning "new moon" referring to the time from one new moon to the next. Interestingly, Noah's logs

indicate at one time the complete lunar cycle was a uniform 30 days every month. Since that cataclysmic event the heavenly "clock" has changed a little bit, with the average lunar cycle now being about 29.5 days. Genesis records the lifetimes of men according to lunar cycles from the very beginning of man's existence on Earth, with Noah using that same method of lunar time-reckoning that was passed down to him from the previous generations of man dating back to creation (See Gen. 6-9).

Given these Biblical facts, we cannot credit the Sumerians with inventing the lunar reckoning of time. As we have seen, God created it and gave it to man. We'll credit the Sumerians with preserving in writing a lot about how they used it though, even though they incorporated their false gods into the picture rather than the Creator. Note this excerpt of a text from Ur, in the Mesopotamia of the third Millennium BC:

*Nanna, great lord  
light shining in the clear skies,  
wearing on his head a prince's headdress  
right god for bringing forth day and night,  
establishing the month  
bringing the year to completion.*

The Sumerian calendar was lunar. Its months began when the first crescent was sighted in the west. The text above describes the "prince's headdress," the moon as a crown with its points, as the delineator of days, months and the year.

Some of the Sumerian month names have been discovered in cuneiform texts referring to the month's main feasts: "the Month of the Feast of Shulgi" and "the Month of the Eating of Barley of Ningursu." Consistent with the texts above, feasts were scheduled according to the moon's phases, with regular observances documented at the first crescent, first quarter (seventh day), full moon (mid-month), and last day. The month was delineated by the quarters of the moon.



## **Babylonian Time-Reckoning**

The moon is the moon, whatever you happen to name its "god." Therefore, the Babylonian calendar was essentially the same as the Sumerian, apparently being from the same ancient source, though the names of the gods may have been different. As with the Sumerian calendar, the months began at the first visibility of the new crescent at sunset.

A text from Babylon uses similar terminology to the Sumerian text above:

*He bade the moon come forth; entrusted night (to him)  
assigned to him adornment of the night to measure time;*

*and every month, unfailingly, he marked off by a crown.  
"When the new moon is rising over the land  
shine you with horns, six days to measure;  
the seventh day, as half (your) crown (appear).  
and (then) let periods of fifteen days be counterparts  
two halves each month.  
As, afterward, the sun gains on you on heaven's foundations,  
wane step by step, reverse your growth!"*

Again, the moon is spoken of as a crown, the new moon crescent with its "horns" marking the beginning of the month. Seven days are counted out when a "half crown" describes the half-lit first quarter moon. From there we proceed to the full moon in the middle of the month where "periods of fifteen days [are] counterparts two halves each month." Finally the text refers to the wane of the moon in the second half of the month when the moon "reverses its growth."

### **A Different Kind of Week**

The seven-day cycle makes its earliest appearance in Babylonian documents in the 7th century BC. It is not the week as we know it today, i.e. unrelated to anything in the heavens. The Babylonian "week" seems to have been one fourth of the 28 days in a month when the moon was visible (7 days x 4 "weeks" = 28 days). The days when the moon is dark before the new moon crescent are not included in these "weeks," so that the "weeks" do not make a continuous cycle. To understand what the Babylonian "week" was like, imagine one of our months with four regular weeks, and then a couple of extra days at the end of the month, which do not belong to any week – sort of an extended weekend every four weeks. This seems weird to us, only because we don't have a "lunar" state of mind.



Ancient Cuneiform Tablet

## Its All In the Diaries!

All of this is extremely well documented. Astronomical records were kept by professional observers whose job it was to make and record their observations of the heavens. These records are said to go back as far as the seventeenth century BC, though most of them are said to have been written between 650 and 50 BC. These records are well-preserved, having been written on clay tablets in cuneiform writing. They are known as astronomical diaries, being unmistakable observations of professional astronomer-scribes.

The diaries follow a particular format which meticulously tracks the beginning, middle and ending of each lunar month. A diary entry begins with a statement on the length of the previous month, whether of 29 or 30 days. Then, the present month's first observation of the new moon crescent is noted, complete with the time between sunset and moonset on the day of the first waxing crescent. This is followed by similar information on the times between moonsets and sunrises and between moonrises and sunsets, at full moon. At the end of the month, the interval between the rising of the last waning crescent moon and sunrise is noted.

In addition to time-keeping functions, the heavens were closely observed and tracked in this way because events in the heavens were believed to foretell events here on earth. Assyriologist R. Campbell Thompson (1900) compiled hundreds of such astronomical omens in his book entitled "The Reports of The Magicians and Astrologers of Nineveh and Babylon." Many of the reports concern the moon, such as this one: "When the Moon at its appearance stands in a fixed position, the gods intend the counsel of the land for happiness."

This text refers to the first crescent ("its appearance") occurring on the expected date ("stands in a fixed position"). Basically, its saying that if the moon shows up on time then we are ok. However, "When the Moon out of its calculated time tarries and is not seen, there will be an invasion of a mighty city ..." This means if the moon seems to be later in its appearance than expected we are in trouble! In that case it was believed to be time to call in the priests and soothsayers to recite a spell or two to calm down the wrath of the gods.

## When is a Calendar Not a Calendar?

These ancient diaries and notations reveal something interesting about the ancient lunar calendar. We think of a calendar as something that fixes the days in advance. In that sense the ancient "calendar" of the fertile crescent was really not a calendar at all. Rather, it was an observation and reckoning system for tracking the moon - the "calendar" in the sky. As we have seen, the length of the month could not be known with certainty until the new moon crescent was observed. Only then would it be known for sure how many days, whether 29 or 30, were in the now-

previous month. There were expectations regarding when the new moon would arrive, but the diaries reveal that the moon did not always do what was expected in that regard and could only be certainly fixed after the fact by observation of the new moon crescent. Note too, that most of these diaries are from a very late date, during the last 6 centuries before Christ till only 50 years before Christ. This then, was the observation and reckoning system used throughout the Fertile Crescent through the entire Old Testament period. One more thing. This was not rocket science. A little kid could do it. All it took was to look at the moon and keep track of what you saw. That's all it still takes. Anyone can do it.

The lunar "calendar" is very "user-friendly" - completely intuitive. If you were the only person on the earth and you never heard of a calendar and you started watching the moon it wouldn't be long before you would notice the repeating cycle of the visible moon. You would track it from the time it could first be seen as a little sliver in the sky. You would note the first quarter 7 days later when half the moon is visible. You would notice the moon looked "full" in 7 more days. It becomes very apparent that the phases of the moon seem to work in quarters marking off 7-day periods till the moon is dark after 4 of these 7-day periods. You would watch and wait for the moon to make its appearance again. All of this is exactly what these people did. For them the moon was a "sign" marking the passing of time.

### **What is Intercalation?**

Here is an interesting notation passed on to us by Thompson: "When at the Moon's appearance in the intercalary month Adar its horns are pointed and dark, the prince will grow strong and the land will have abundance."

This reminds us that the ancient lunar calendars used intercalation to keep the lunar year in sync with the seasons. "Intercalation" is a fancy word for a very simple idea. Basically, when the months were slipping a little too far out of sync with the seasons, another month would be allowed to go by at the end of the year to get the year back on track with the seasons. All lunar time-keeping must do this, since intercalation is the only way to keep a lunar "calendar" in step with the seasons. Again this is very intuitive. You would know the signs of spring in your environment by when certain plants bud etc, and perhaps even by the position of the stars in relation to the moon. By observation you would know when you needed to let another cycle of the moon go by before starting to count off a new year. Its as simple as that.

At around 1000 BC Babylonian calendar priests are said to be intercalating months in an eight-year cycle, with three extra months added in eight years. This worked well, though not perfect. The "Metonic" 19-year cycle is said to have been the norm in Chaldean times, well before the time of Meton, after whom the cycle is named. The Metonic cycle includes 7 extra months intercalated over the course of 19-years. This method keeps the lunar calendar virtually in perfect harmony with the solar year.

### **Ancient Hebrew Time-Reckoning**

The lunar calendar of Sumeria and Babylon was the dominant calendar of the ancient middle east. As such, it was also essentially the same calendar used by the ancient Canaanites and other peoples of the area. The Hebrew reckoning of time by lunar months as given to Israel by God followed the same lunar pattern used by the Sumerians, Babylonians and Canaanites, being from a common source.

Let's take a look at how Israel named the months of the year for a better understanding of this big picture. Three different sets of month names are clearly definable in the Old Testament as having been used by the Israelites.

## **Israelite-Canaanite Month Names**

One set of month names used by Ancient Israel was that derived from the Canaanites. Of this set of month names, only four are found in the Bible. These are:

**"Aviv"** (Deut. 16:1) meaning something like "new ears of grain." This is the spring lunar month falling within parts of March and April. The name "Aviv" indicates this to be the lunar month when immature ears of grain ('aviv) begin to grow on the stalks. The name is reported to specify the phase of growth when the grain is still green and the seeds are full of milky liquid that occurs at springtime. This month with its definite signs of spring was the first month of the year for Israel. (Ex. 9:31; Lev. 2:14)

**Ziv** (1 Kings 6:1, 37) meaning "brightness" and falling after Aviv in our April-May.

**Ethanim** (1 Kings 8:2) from 'eitan and having to do with water flowing in wadis (for 'eitan in connection with wadis, see Deut. 21:4; Amos 5:24; Ps. 74:15). This month falls in our October-November.

**Bul** (1 Kings 6:38) likely referring to "flooding" and occurring in our November-December.

At least two of these names adopted by the Israelites from the Canaanites are also said to be known in Phoenician. The interchangeability of these month names between peoples confirms that all the cultures of the region were on a similar reckoning of the lunar months. It is also noteworthy that each month name refers to a phenomenon of nature usual in that lunar month. For the months to track so well with the seasons they identify by their names, it is clear that intercalation was being used to keep the lunar months in sync with their right place in the seasons.

## **Torah Numbered Month Names**

The second set of lunar month names used by the Israelites is the naming system employed by the Torah. This system designates all the months by number, starting with the first month, the month that includes spring. Thus the holy days of Passover and Unleavened Bread fall in the first month and the Day of Atonement and Tabernacles fall in the seventh (Leviticus 23). This numerical system of tracking the months through the year was established at the time of the exodus from Egypt. It is noteworthy that God established Israel on this particular lunar reckoning of time as part of His first instructions to the Israelites as a nation. This means that the touchstone from which all the months are counted is that first month when God delivered His people from bondage. Thus, the numerical month-names serve as a constant reminder through the cycles of the year of that Divine national origin.

This brings us to the only discernable difference of any consequence between the lunar calendars of the region. Namely, different peoples at different times counted the months of the year starting from different seasons. Generally, some started with the month in which spring occurs while others started at the end of summer. In this case the lunar months would still be the same as compared to one another, but the years would begin and end with different months. Same

monthly time reckoning by the appearance of the new moon crescent each month - different starting points for the year.

### Israelite-Babylonian Month Names

The third set of month names is found in the books of the Bible from the post-exilic period, adopted from the Babylonian calendar during the exile in Babylon (Babylonian exile began in 586 BC). These names are still in use today as the names of the traditional Jewish system.

These Babylonian names are said to be derived from Akkadian and Sumerian month names. They are thought to be based on nature, mythology, and religious practices. These names were taken over into Aramaic, which is said to have become the spoken language of most Jews.

Babylon started their year with the month of Tishri. Even though God specifically said the year should start with Abib, the spring month, the Jews in Babylon incorporated the Tishri new year into their tradition, known as *Rosh Hashanah*, meaning Head of the Year. Thus, the Jews came to have essentially two new years, one counted from the first month according to the Torah and the other, after the Babylonian custom, counted from the seventh. Despite the difference of which lunar month is chosen to be the first month of the year, the actual reckoning of the lunar months themselves remains the same. All of this interchangeability of month names from one people-group to another again suggests the universality of the lunar months among the ancient peoples surrounding the ancient Hebrews.

Below is a chart which shows the three month-naming systems employed by the Israelites. Notice the similarity of the Post-Exilic Hebrew month names with the Babylonian names. Also, notice the interchangeability of the month names, with the exception of the months of our Gregorian calendar:

Comparative Names of the Lunar Months				
Torah Numbered	Canaanite Adapted	Post-Exilic Hebrew	Sumero-Babylonian	Gregorian Solar
1.	Abib ("new grain")	Nisan	Nisannu ("first produce")	March-April
2.	Ziv ("brightness")	Iyyar	Ayaru ("rosette"?)	April-May
3.		Sivan	Simanu ("sign," "season")	May-June
4.		Tammuz	Du'uzu (a god)	June-July
5.		Ab	Abu	July-August
6.		Elul	Elulu/Ululu ("purification")	August-September
7.		Tishri	Tashritu ("beginning")	September-October
8.	Ethanim ("flowing streams")	Marheshvan	Arahsamna ("eighth month")	October-November
9.	Bul ("flooding")	Kislev	Kissilimu	November-December
10.		Tebet	Tebetu	December-January
11.		Shebat	Shabatu	January-February
12.		Adar	Addaru	February-March

### Lunar Time-Reckoning of the Old Testament - Conclusion

We now have tracked ancient lunar time-reckoning from its use in the Bible, through its use in Sumeria, Canaan and Babylon and found it to be so much the same method of designating the lunar months and the annual passage of time that month names were interchangeable from one culture to another. Why not? They were all observing the same moon!

As we have pointed out, this already-ancient calendar was the one in use in the land of his birth where Abraham grew up. Abraham left Ur to follow the one true King of the Universe into what came to be the promised land. When he did, he took his knowledge of the ancient lunar calendar with him. Abraham was no unintelligent barbarian. The first century Jewish priest Flavius Josephus, being privy to the ancient records of Israel preserved into the first century by the priesthood at the Temple, confirms what an examination of the facts suggests. Josephus recounts that the patriarch Abraham when in Egypt taught the Egyptian astronomers accurate astronomy, the science on which time reckoning is based, as well as mathematics which he had learned when he resided in Sumeria-Babylonia (*Antiquities*: Bk 1:8:2). He also notes that Moses used this same reckoning of time known to Abraham, when he led the tribes of Israel out of Egypt. Josephus even states the amount of time that had elapsed from Adam to the Exodus as tracked through succeeding generations according to this very same reckoning of time! (*Antiquities*: Bk. 1:3:3).

Josephus frequently, exactly and easily translates Jewish lunar month names into month names of the other cultures and peoples that interacted with Israel. He treats them as being exactly the same lunar months by different names. Note this example; "[The] month called by the Macedonians *Dius*, but by the Hebrews, *Marchesuan*; for so did they order the year in Egypt; but Moses appointed that *Nisan*, which is the same with *Xanthicus*, should be the first month..." (*Antiquities*: Bk. 1:3:3). Different names - exactly the same months.

The writings of Josephus thus agree with the Bible and indicate that the ancient lunar reckoning of time used throughout the entire Old Testament period from the beginning of the world forward was essentially identical to the lunar time-reckoning method still in use by the Jews at the time Josephus wrote his extensive volumes. This is exciting. It means from the beginning of time through the era of Messiah, which we call the first century, the Hebrew reckoning of time remained essentially the same.

We have shown that God put the heavenly bodies in their places in such a way that man could use them as a means of reckoning time. God taught lunar time-reckoning to Adam and this method was used from Eden forward to Israel. We have also shown that Israel and her neighbors used the same method of lunar time reckoning from the beginning till the time of the Jewish priest Josephus, which means till the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD and beyond. In other words, through the entire period of the writing of the Bible. Further, we have seen that in the lunar time-reckoning method the lunar phases are divided up into 7-day periods corresponding with the quarters of the moon. These lunar-weeks are the "weeks" of the Bible, not the continuous planetary cycle of 7 days standardized by the Roman empire in the 4th century (more about that in another article). The fact of the lunar-based calendar with its lunar based weeks is well attested to:

*It is powerfully urged by the believers in a primitive Sabbath, that **we find from time immemorial the knowledge of a week of 7 days among all nations --Egyptians, Arabians, Indians --in a word, all the nations of the East, have in all ages made use of this week of 7 days, for which it is difficult to account without admitting that **this knowledge was derived from the common ancestors of the human race [Adam, Noah, etc]. Among all early nations the lunar months were the readiest large divisions of time...corresponding to the phases of the quarters of the moon. In order to connect the reckoning by weeks with the lunar month, we find that all ancient nations observed some peculiar*****

**solemnities to mark the day of the New Moon. Accordingly, in the Mosaic Law the same thing was also enjoined** (Numbers 10: 10; 28: 11, etc.), though it is worthy of remark that, while particular observances are here enjoined, the idea of celebrating the New Moon in some way is alluded to as if already familiar to them. **In other parts of the Bible, we find the Sabbaths and New Moons continually spoken of in conjunction;** as (Isaiah 1: 13, etc.) the division of time by weeks prevailed all over the East, from the earliest periods among the Assyrians, Arabs, & Egyptians. It was found among the tribes in the interior of Africa.... **The Peruvians counted their months by the moon, their half-months by the increase and decrease of the moon, and the weeks by quarters, without having any particular names for the Week Days.** (The Popular and Critical Bible Encyclopedia, 1904. Vol. 3, p. 1497).

It is quite amazing that not only the lunar reckoning of time with its 4 lunar weeks was preserved in ancient cultures, but even a remembrance of the Sabbath on the seventh day has been documented among them. Consider, for example, the discovery of the calendar of Asurbanipal:

*Asurbanipal in the seventh century promulgated a calendar with a definite scheme of a seven-day week, a regulation of the month by which all men were to rest on days 7, 14, 19, 21, 28 (of the lunar cycle). The old menology of Nisan made the two days of the dark of the moon, 29, 30, rest-days, so that each lunar month had 9 rest-days, on which neither the sick could be cured nor a man in difficulty consult a prophet; none might travel and fasting was enforced.* (S. Langdon, *Babylonian Menologies and the Semitic Calendars*, London: Oxford University Press, 1935. Pp. 86-87).

*In Babylonia ... each lunar month was divided into four parts, corresponding to the four phases of the moon. The first week of each month began with the new moon, so that, as the lunar month was one or two days more than four periods of seven days, these additional days (during the dark of the moon) were not reckoned at all. Every seventh day (sabbatum) was regarded as an unlucky day. This method of reckoning time spread westward through Syria and Palestine, and was adopted by the Israelites, probably after they settled in Palestine.* (The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, vol. 10, p. 482. Article "Week.").

Hebrew sources confirm this lunar reckoning of time. For example *The Book of Enoch*, an ancient Jewish book highly regarded enough to be quoted in the Bible book of Jude, says this about the moon;

**And on the first day she is called the new moon, for on that day the light rises upon her. She becomes full moon exactly on the day when the sun sets in the west, and from the east she rises at night, and the moon shines the whole night through till the sun rises over against her and the moon is seen over against the sun. On the side whence the light of the moon comes forth, there again she wanes till all the light vanishes and all the days of the month are at an end, and her circumference is empty, void of light.** (BOOK OF ENOCH Chapters LXXII-LXXXII, *The Book of the Heavenly Luminaries*, Chapter 78, 1. From *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, R.H. Charles Oxford: The Clarendon Press Section III.)

What we see here is that Israel had essentially the same method of lunar time-reckoning as the other nations of the Fertile Crescent. The month began with the new moon crescent marking the beginning of the first day of the month on the first evening of the new moon. Days were thus marked off from sunset to sunset, as the moon shined forth to rule the night. The lunar weeks were counted off with the phases of the moon, finally finishing up the month during the dark period of the moon. Let us now look at the Bible record of Israel and see how well it agrees with this ancient lunar method of reckoning time.

## **A New Nation Starts On God's Time**

God had promised faithful Abraham that a great nation would come through his son Isaac. God made the same promise to Isaac regarding his son, Jacob. In course of time Jacob, renamed Israel by God, had twelve sons, the family heads of what became the twelve tribes of Israel. Israel and the twelve tribal patriarchs and their families all moved down from Canaan into Egypt, where one of the patriarchs, Joseph, had been elevated by God to the second-most position in the land. There they stayed for generations, eventually multiplying into a nation of several million people. This nation came to be called "Israel" after the patriarch from whom its twelve tribes descended.

*Now a new king arose over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. He said to his people, "Behold, the people of the sons of Israel are more and mightier than we. "Come, let us deal wisely with them, or else they will multiply and in the event of war, they will also join themselves to those who hate us, and fight against us and depart from the land." So they appointed taskmasters over them to afflict them with hard labor ... But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and the more they spread out, so that they were in dread of the sons of Israel. The Egyptians compelled the sons of Israel to labor rigorously; and they made their lives bitter with hard labor in mortar and bricks and at all kinds of labor in the field, all their labors which they rigorously imposed on them. Exodus 1:8-14*

Seeing the slavery by which the sons of Israel were being afflicted, the Lord raised up a deliverer from among them, namely Moses. The book of Exodus tells how Moses was raised up and sent to Pharaoh in the name of Israel's God, Yahweh, to secure the freedom of Israel. Yahweh brought nine terrible plagues on Egypt, each worse than the one before, but Pharaoh would not let Israel go. We pick up the story before the tenth and final plague. With this final plague God knew that Israel would finally go free to become a new nation of its own before God. The very first thing Yahweh did anticipating this, was to put Israel on the same reckoning of time with Him!

## **The First Month Designated By Israel's Deliverance**

*This month (the month of Abib according to Ex 13:4) shall be the beginning of months for you; it is to be the first month of the year to you. Exodus 12:2*

As we have seen in Lesson 1, the name of the month *Abib* refers to the new growth of barley which appears in the month in which spring occurs. Yahweh designated this spring month to be the first month in Israel's year. The word translated month here is the same Hebrew word so translated throughout the Hebrew Bible, the word *chodesh*, which literally means "new moon." It refers to one complete cycle of the phases of the moon commencing with the appearance of the new moon i.e., a lunar month. From this time forward both God and Israel would count the passing of time from this particular new moon of Abib marking the beginning of the lunar month in which Israel was set free to become the Covenant nation of God.

Yahweh specified certain actions according to a definite schedule to prepare for Israel's deliverance and exodus from Egypt. He also indicated that these events were to be commemorated each year. The first of these events was to occur on the tenth day of the month: *Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying, 'On the tenth of this month they are each one to take a lamb for themselves, according to their fathers' households, a lamb for each household. 'Now if the household is too small for a lamb, then he and his neighbor nearest to his house are to take one according to the number of persons in them; according to what each man should eat, you are to divide the lamb. 'Your lamb shall be an unblemished male a year old; you may take it from the sheep or from the goats. Exodus 12:3-5 NASB*

## Passover on the 14th of Abib at Twilight

Thus, on the tenth of the month a perfect lamb was to be selected. Yahweh then goes on to say what should be done with the lamb, and when: **'You shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month, then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel is to kill it at twilight. Moreover, they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. They shall eat the flesh that same night, roasted with fire, and they shall eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. Do not eat any of it raw or boiled at all with water, but rather roasted with fire, both its head and its legs along with its entrails. And you shall not leave any of it over until morning, but whatever is left of it until morning, you shall burn with fire.** Exodus 12:6-10 NASB

God said that at "twilight" of "the fourteenth day of the same month" the lamb was to be slaughtered and some of its blood put on the doorframe of each house. The lamb was to be roasted "and they shall eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs." None should be left till morning.

So when is "twilight" of "the fourteenth"? "Twilight" is translated from the Hebrew word *ereb* (Strong's 6153H ). Strong's says it means "dusk." There is some confusion about the word because it literally means "between the evenings." Since the Hebrew day ran from evening to evening (sunset to sunset) "between the evenings" is somewhat vague. This is sometimes thought to mean in the afternoon before the second evening at sunset. This cannot be right though, because if the Israelites waited till the afternoon before the second evening when the fourteenth came to a close their firstborn would all have been dead!

Notice what God told them: *'Now you shall eat it in this manner: with your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it in haste--it is the LORD'S Passover. For I will go through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments--I am the LORD. The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live; and when I see the blood I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.* Exodus 12:11-13 NASB

At midnight that same night of the fourteenth God struck down the firstborn of the Egyptians (Exodus 12:29). His people had been instructed how to prevent the same from happening to them. That "twilight" on the first evening of the fourteenth they would kill the Passover lamb and place some of its blood on the doorframe of their houses so the angel of death would see it and pass over them! They would eat that Passover lamb together with unleavened bread and bitter herbs in haste prepared to march out on very short notice! This in fact is exactly what happened.

## A Mighty Passover Deliverance on Abib 14!

Now it came about **at midnight that the LORD struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the firstborn of the captive who was in the dungeon, and all the firstborn of cattle. Pharaoh arose in the night, he and all his servants and all the Egyptians, and there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was no home where there was not someone dead. Then he called for Moses and Aaron at night and said, "Rise up, get out from among my people, both you and the sons of Israel; and go, worship the LORD, as you have said. Take both your flocks and your herds, as you have said, and go, and bless me also." The Egyptians urged the people, to send them out of the land in haste, for they said, "We will all be dead." So the people took their dough before it was leavened, with their kneading bowls bound up in the clothes on their shoulders.** Exodus 12:29-34 NASB

Thus, while it was still dark in the early morning hours of that same night of Abib 14 the children of Israel began to mobilize to hasten out of the land of Egypt! They were prepared with their unleavened dough which they brought with them, so that they could make the bread of haste on their trip.

*Now the sons of Israel had done according to the word of Moses, for they had requested from the Egyptians articles of silver and articles of gold, and clothing; and the LORD had given the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they let them have their request. Thus **they plundered the Egyptians**. Now the sons of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand men on foot, aside from children. **A mixed multitude also went up with them, along with flocks and herds**, a very large number of livestock. **They baked the dough which they had brought out of Egypt into cakes of unleavened bread**. For it had not become leavened, since they were driven out of Egypt and could not delay, nor had they prepared any provisions for themselves. Now the time that the sons of Israel lived in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years. And **at the end of four hundred and thirty years, to the very day, all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt**. It is a night to be observed for the LORD for having brought them out from the land of Egypt; **this night is for the LORD, to be observed by all the sons of Israel throughout their generations**. Exodus 12:35-42 NASB*

Praise the Lord! What a mighty deliverance God wrought for His people! They did not go out empty handed, but they took great wealth from the Egyptians with them. Also, a "mixed multitude" of other subjugated peoples went out in freedom with Israel! God's timing is perfect, as we see from the fact that they left Egypt exactly 430 years, to the day, from when they went in. This also indicates that Israel had been keeping track of the passing of time for all those years for them to be able to report this number to the exact day. This was the first day of Israel organized as a nation, so it is not surprising that the Lord said it should be observed by the sons of Israel "throughout their generations." Let us now return to God's commands about exactly when and how this miraculous birth of a nation should be celebrated.

### **A Permanent Annual Ordinance**

Yahweh commanded; *'Now **this day will be a memorial to you**, and you shall celebrate it as a feast to the LORD; throughout your generations you are to celebrate it as a permanent (owlam - eternity) ordinance. 'Seven days **you shall eat unleavened bread**, but **on the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses**; for whoever eats anything leavened from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel. 'On the first day you shall have a holy assembly, and another holy assembly on the seventh day; no work at all shall be done on them, except what must be eaten by every person, that alone may be prepared by you. 'You shall ... observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread, for on this very day I brought your hosts out of the land of Egypt; therefore you shall observe this day throughout your generations as a permanent ordinance. 'In the first month (chodesh- lunar month), on the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread, until the twenty-first day of the month at evening. Exodus 12:14-18 NASB*

Passover commemorates the day Israel was delivered from Egypt. Notice that Passover day was to be followed annually by another seven day festival during which no leaven at all was to be allowed in the house or in the food. This seven day festival is called "the Feast of Unleavened Bread" and commemorates the first seven days of freedom in which Israel was on the march with no time for bread to rise, in which unleavened bread was eaten. What we have then is the feast of Passover on the fourteenth and the feast of Unleavened Bread starting on the fifteenth, with the whole period running from the fourteenth through the twenty-first of the month. The book of Leviticus more clearly spells this out, saying; *'In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the*

*month at twilight is the LORD'S Passover. 'Then on the fifteenth day of the same month there is the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the LORD; for seven days you shall eat unleavened bread.*  
Leviticus 23:5, 6 NASB

The Jews sometimes referred to the entire eight day festival as Passover, and sometimes as Unleavened Bread. For example, the Jewish priest-historian writes; *we keep a feast for eight days, which is called the feast of unleavened bread.* (JOSEPHUS' WRITINGS - BOOK 2, CH. 15 1.)

### **When Are The Holy Assemblies?**

Let's now consider what the "first" and seventh days are on which "holy assemblies" are to be held. *On the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses.* This "first day" has to be Passover since it is the day in which leaven would have to be removed before the seven days of ULB (Unleavened Bread). The Israelites partook of unleavened bread with the Passover lamb, but no mention is made of getting rid of leaven. They just left it behind as they left Egypt! Thus Passover is the "first day" on which unleavened bread is eaten and it is also the day when all leaven is carefully removed from the house in preparation for the upcoming 7 day festival of ULB.

This understanding is greatly aided when we realize the word here translated as "first" is *rishown*, Strong's 7223H. Depending upon the context, it can mean "first" or it can also mean "before," as in "before what comes next." In fact, the King James Version translates this word as "before" instead of "first" in a number of other verses of the OT (Examples: Numbers 6:12; Joshua 8:33b; 1 Kings 13:6).

I submit that the context requires *rishown* to be translated as "before" in these verses referring to Passover as the "day before" ULB. Notice how clear this becomes with that translation:

*'You shall keep it (the lamb) until **the fourteenth day** of the same month, then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel is to kill it at twilight. 'They shall **eat the flesh that same night**, roasted with fire, and they shall eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs ...it **is the LORD'S Passover** ... 'Now **this day will be a memorial to you, and you shall celebrate it as a feast to the LORD**; throughout your generations you are to celebrate it as a permanent ordinance. **'Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, but on the day before you shall remove leaven from your houses; for whoever eats anything leavened from the day before until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel.** (Exodus 12:6,8,11-15 NASB)*

Notice how much sense this makes translated this way. Leaven is removed on the day of Passover - the "day before" the seven days in which no leaven at all is allowed in the houses of Israel (vs 12). Let's look at the parallel verses in Leviticus translated in the same way to see just how well this works:

***'In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at twilight is the LORD'S Passover.***

***'Then on the fifteenth day of the same month there is the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the LORD; for seven days you shall eat unleavened bread.***

***'On the day before (rishown) you shall have a holy convocation; you shall not do any laborious work.***

*'But for seven days you shall present an offering by fire to the LORD.*

***On the seventh day is a holy convocation; you shall not do any laborious work.'***  
(Leviticus 23:5-8 NASB)

This is very clear. The Passover is again specified as the fourteenth day of the month. Then we are told of the seven day Feast of Unleavened Bread that follows Passover. We are then offered a chronological explanation of what happens through this entire eight day festival period as follows:

1. *On the "day before" (Passover - the 14th) you shall have a holy convocation; you shall not do any laborious work.*
2. *For seven days (of the Festival of Unleavened Bread) you shall present an offering by fire to the LORD.*
3. *On the seventh day (of the Festival of Unleavened Bread - the 21st) is a holy convocation; you shall not do any laborious work.*

We see that translated in this way both accounts are completely harmonious with themselves, with each other and with the events of the first Passover and ULB. Let us now return to the rest of the verses in Exodus to see how they continue to track with this translation of *rishown*:

***'On the day before (on Passover) you shall have a holy assembly, and another holy assembly on the seventh day (of ULB); no work at all shall be done on them, except what must be eaten by every person, that alone may be prepared by you.*** *'You shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread, for on this very day I brought your hosts out of the land of Egypt; therefore you shall observe this day throughout your generations as a permanent ordinance. 'In the first month, on **the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread, until the twenty-first day of the month at evening.** 'Seven days there shall be no leaven found in your houses; for whoever eats what is leavened, that person shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he is an alien or a native of the land. (Exodus 12:6,8,11-19 NASB)*

Passover (the 14th) is the "day before" the seven day festival of ULB, and is therefore the day on which a "holy assembly" must be held. The "seventh day" which is the day of the other "holy assembly" is clearly the seventh day of ULB, the last day of the festival period (the 21st). While this "seventh day" is the seventh day of ULB it is the eighth day of the entire festival period. This fills the requirement of 8 days of unleavened bread specified as the 14th through the 21st inclusive (vs. 18). This reckoning of the verses therefore agrees well with the 8 day scenario of Leviticus 23:5-8. It is the only scenario that fits the actual events of the Exodus. It is also attested by Josephus, the first century priest: *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. (Antiq. 3:10:5)*

### ***Lunar Sabbath Days Harmonize with Festival Days***

Thus the eight day festival period begins and ends with a "holy assembly" on days when "you shall not do any laborious work." Besides being the orderly manner in which we would expect the festival period to be commemorated, with a special meeting on the first and last days of the festival period, we notice something else that is significant. The 14th is the 7th day Sabbath of the second lunar week of the month of Abib. The 21st is the 7th day Sabbath of the third lunar

week of Abib. This tracks perfectly with the command not to *do any laborious work* on these days of the Abib festival period! This is strong evidence that God designed His calendar of appointments with Israel to harmonize perfectly with the lunar Sabbaths of the month! By contrast, it is literally impossible to coordinate a continuous 7 day cycle (in which "Sabbath" may fall on any day at random) with the holy calendar of God's set appointments.

8 Days of Passover and Unleavened Bread							
Abib 14 <b>Passover</b>  <b>Lunar Sabbath</b>	Abib15 Begins Feast of Unleavened Bread	Abib 16 Feast Unleavened Bread	Abib 17 Feast Unleavened Bread	Abib 18 Feast Unleavened Bread	Abib 19 Feast Unleavened Bread	Abib 20 Feast Unleavened Bread	Abib 21 <b>7th day of Unleavened Bread Lunar Sabbath</b>
"Day before" remove leaven	<b>"Seven days there shall be no leaven found in your houses."</b>						
"day before" no work at all shall be done	<b>Lunar Sabbath days fit perfectly with Passover &amp; Unleavened Bread Commands</b>						<b>seventh day no work at all shall be done</b>

Some might wonder if this harmony of lunar Sabbath days with the appropriate days of the Exodus story might just be a coincidence. As we continue following Israel on their trek out of Egypt will we find a similar pattern? Let's go to the next lesson to see.

Yahweh provided a great deliverance for Israel, bringing them out of Egypt with a mighty hand. However, as they left the familiarity of Egypt they found they would be challenged in many new ways. Let us now trace them on their route to the location where God gave them a lesson about the Sabbath. Moses recorded their encampments on their journey as follows:

***These are the journeys of the sons of Israel, by which they came out from the land of Egypt by their armies, under the leadership of Moses and Aaron. Moses recorded their starting places according to their journeys by the command of the LORD, and these are their journeys according to their starting places. They journeyed from Rameses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month; on the next day after the Passover the sons of Israel started out boldly in the sight of all the Egyptians, while the Egyptians were burying all their firstborn whom the LORD had struck down among them. The LORD had also executed judgments on their gods. Then the sons of Israel journeyed from Rameses and camped in Succoth. They journeyed from Succoth and camped in Etham, which is on the edge of the wilderness. They journeyed from Etham and turned back to Pi-hahiroth, which faces Baal-zephon, and they camped before Migdol. They journeyed from before Hahiroth and passed through the midst of the sea into the wilderness; and they went three days' journey in the wilderness of Etham and camped at Marah. They journeyed from Marah and came to Elim; and in Elim there were twelve springs of water and seventy palm trees, and they camped there. They journeyed from Elim and camped by the Red Sea. They journeyed from the Red Sea and camped in the wilderness of Sin.*** Numbers 33:1-11 NASB

### Israel Sets Out From Rameses

We see that Israel converged in Rameses on Passover day and departed from Rameses "on the fifteenth day of the first month; on the next day after the Passover." Abib 15, the day after Passover and the day on which Israel actually left Egyptian soil, is commemorated as the first day of the seven day Feast of Unleavened Bread, for Yahweh said; *'You shall also observe the Feast of*

*Unleavened Bread, for on this very day I brought your hosts out of the land of Egypt; therefore you shall observe this day throughout your generations as a permanent ordinance. Exodus 12:17*  
NASB

Setting out from Rameses, Israel then encamped at Succoth, Etham, then Migdol. After the mighty deliverance through the Red Sea they traveled 3 days to camp at Marah, then to Elim - then the wilderness of Sin. It is in the wilderness of Sin that God taught them about the Sabbath.

### **The Wilderness of Sin on the Fifteenth Day of the Second Month**

*Then they set out from Elim, and all the congregation of the sons of Israel came to the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, **on the fifteenth day** of the second month after their departure from the land of Egypt. Exodus 16:1* NASB

They arrived at the wilderness of Sin exactly one month after their departure date from Egypt, on the 15th day of the second month. This date must be significant, because this is the only stop since they left Egypt where the date is given. Being a month since they left Egypt, they were by now running low on any provisions they had brought with them. As they set up camp and turned attention to preparing meals it would be painfully apparent that they had nothing left to eat!

*The whole congregation of **the sons of Israel grumbled against Moses** and Aaron in the wilderness. The sons of Israel said to them, "Would that we had died by the LORD'S hand in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat, when we ate bread to the full; for **you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.**" Exodus 16:2, 3* NASB

The LORD was not unaware of their needs:

*Then **the LORD said to Moses, "Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a day's portion every day, that I may test them, whether or not they will walk in My instruction. "On the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as much as they gather daily."*** Exodus 16:4,5 NASB

### **Yahweh Teaches about the Sabbath**

Here God intends to use the bread from heaven to teach His people the lesson of the Sabbath, which is a lesson of faith. The Scripture already established that this encounter with God occurred on the 15th of the month. Starting a count from the first crescent of the new moon beginning the first day of the month, the 15th would be the first day of the 3rd lunar week of the month. Now God is saying for the people to go out every morning and gather the bread from heaven for that day, and on the "sixth day" to gather twice as much. The 15th was therefore the "first day" so that the "sixth day" would be the 20th and the "seventh day" would be the 21st. This is exactly the same Sabbath pattern we found with the Feast of Unleavened Bread!

*So Moses and Aaron said to all the sons of Israel, "At evening you will know that the LORD has brought you out of the land of Egypt; and in the morning you will see the glory of the LORD, for He hears your grumbings against the LORD; and what are we, that you grumble against us?" Moses said, " This will happen when the LORD gives you meat to eat in the evening, and bread to the full in the morning; for the LORD hears your grumbings which you grumble against Him. And what are we? Your grumbings are not against us but against the LORD." Exodus 16:6-8*

### God's Provision Arrives that Very Evening!

Notice that God said He was going to give them meat to eat in the evening and bread to eat to the full in the morning. They did not have to wait long! God's provision was about to start that very evening of the fifteenth!

*So **it came about at evening that the quails came up and covered the camp, and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. When the layer of dew evaporated, behold, on the surface of the wilderness there was a fine flake-like thing, fine as the frost on the ground.** Exodus 16:13,14 NASB*

### When the Cupboard is Bare - God is There!

So it is that when the cupboard is bare and there is no hope of being filled that the Lord can provide. Oh friends, how He wants us to understand that He Himself is our provision! It is only when we come to understand that truth that we can finally learn to rest from our own works to trust in God. It is sad that most of us are too much like those Israelites were, slow to learn that our God is trustworthy. Like them, we are often too quick to grumble and complain because we don't have what we think we need. Yet, He is so patient with us, meeting our need as He met theirs. And note how He met their need. When they saw the heavenly bread they could not even recognize it for what it was. They said; "What is it?" And that came to be its name, *manna*, what is it! How often this is like us too. God meets our need in a way we don't expect and that we may not even recognize. May the Lord give us eyes to see how tenderly He cares for us. (Exodus 16:15-18)

### Did They Listen?

Now though, let us return to our story. Moses told them to gather only what they needed and to leave none till morning. But did they listen? Predictably, no: *they did not listen to Moses, and some left part of it until morning, and it bred worms and became foul; and Moses was angry with them.* Exodus 16:20 NASB

People always seem to think they know better than God. The flesh is not willing to be totally dependant on God. What if the food isn't there tomorrow morning? Then what will I eat? I'll just save some up from today then I won't have to worry! ...It is so hard to let go of that take-charge attitude and just trust God! But God has His own way of dealing with that. The hedges that man puts up against dependence on God soon become wormy and foul. So it is that when you are enrolled in God's training school you will soon find you cannot outsmart God. He will have you on a very short leash and He will have HIS way!

### Taught the Sabbath Lesson

Through that lunar week the children of Israel were forced to seek out bread from God anew each morning, thus it was until the sixth day: **Now on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for each one. When all the leaders of the congregation came and told Moses, then he said to them, "This is what the LORD meant: Tomorrow is a sabbath observance, a holy sabbath to the LORD. Bake what you will bake and boil what you will boil, and all that is left over put aside to be kept until morning." So they put it aside until morning, as Moses had ordered, and it did not become foul nor was there any worm in it.** Moses said, "Eat it today, for today is a sabbath to the LORD; today you will not find it in the field. **"Six days you shall gather it, but on the seventh day, the sabbath, there will be none."**

What a wonderful way for God to teach them about the Sabbath! With the provision of their food tied directly to Sabbath observance they would soon have to learn the Sabbath pattern that God was setting for them.

### Israel Keeps Its First Lunar Sabbath

Lunar "weeks" are different than modern "weeks" in that the same day of the "week" always falls on the same day of the lunar month. The 1st, 8th, 15th and 22nd are always the first day of a lunar week. The 7th, 14th, 21st and 28th are always the seventh day of the lunar week. Realizing this, counting from the 15th as the first day of that 3rd lunar week of the month, the seventh day was the 21st of the month - falling perfectly as the seventh day of that 3rd lunar week. In this way God was setting the pattern for Israel that the seventh day of every lunar week would be a Sabbath. Some might disagree, feeling that if you add 7 to 15 you get 22 - not 21. However, that math does not go along with what God said. He did not say "after a full seven days," which is what He would have had to have said to justify adding a full 7 to the 15th. What God said was "on the seventh day [from now]." That means the "seventh day" with the day in which He was speaking i.e., the 15th, as the "first day" in the count. Thus, the "seventh day" of that lunar week would be the twenty-first day of the month.

*"Israel came to the wilderness of Sin on the fifteenth day of the second month." Ex 16*

#### ***The first Sabbath of Israel was on the seventh day of a Lunar Week***

Day of the Month:	15th	16th	17th	18th	19th	20th	21st
Day of Lunar Week:	1st day	2nd day	3rd day	4th day	5th day	6th day	7th day

### Smarter Than God

It is noteworthy that even though God told them exactly what to do some of the Israelites didn't follow instructions. On Sabbath morning they were out there looking for bread! ***It came about on the seventh day that some of the people went out to gather, but they found none. Then the LORD said to Moses, "How long do you refuse to keep My commandments and My instructions? "See, the LORD has given you the sabbath; therefore He gives you bread for two days on the sixth day. Remain every man in his place; let no man go out of his place on the seventh day." So the people rested on the seventh day.*** Exodus 16:27-30 NASB

How persistent is the old nature! The flesh nature wants to do things its own way no matter what God says. Thus after all the provision and instruction of an entire lunar week some of these people still chose to ignore everything God said and do it their own way. You wouldn't think it would be so hard to make people take a rest! This is still one of the hardest lessons for God's people to learn. Go! Go! Go! Go! Go! We can do that. But just stop and rest and give a whole day to fellowship with God? We can come up with every excuse imaginable to avoid that! Friends, on the Sabbath it is time to rest and meet God. It is a matter of obedience.

### Get on the Same Page with God

The lesson God taught Israel about the Sabbath is that it is not just a matter of resting on the Seventh day. It is just as much about preparing through the week to facilitate that seventh day rest! Plan your schedule to have things done as the Lord taught the Israelites to do, so that you can give that time on the Sabbath to Him. Trust Him to help you change your schedule to get on His schedule if need be. He did it for the Israelites and He can do it for you. You will be amazed at what will happen if you will just get on the same page with God.

Israel did that, even if they did so reluctantly. And God was always faithful. ***The sons of Israel ate the manna forty years, until they came to an inhabited land; they ate the manna until they came to the border of the land of Canaan.*** Exodus 16:35

All of this is very relevant to our lesson. Not only does it prove that the Sabbath God gave Israel was a lunar Sabbath, but it also helps to identify the problems we will have to battle in our own nature to obey God. Like those Israelites, many of us think the Sabbath is stupid and unnecessary and we would just rather not change the way we do things to observe the Sabbath - especially if it is not at a convenient time for us. Many of the Israelites felt the same way. They obviously couldn't see the importance in it and just tried to ignore it. However, God was teaching them that on its simplest level, the Sabbath is about obedience to God - and obedience all by itself is a good enough reason to keep the Sabbath. Yet, could it be that there is more to it than we realize? Could there be some blessing in keeping the Sabbath that we just can't understand unless we start keeping it? Something to think about as we progress on to learn more about the appointments of the Lord.

The only reason people today have any problem comprehending the lunar reckoning of time, especially as it pertains to a lunar "week," is that it's not what we are used to. Most of us are extremely conditioned to life on the continuous 7 day cycle. The degree to which that cycle dominates modern thinking and life is truly amazing - as you will soon find out if you try to break free of it to any degree. "Lunar" living involves a whole other state of mind! That means you're going to have to do a bit of creative thinking to even imagine the Biblical experience of the passing of time.

Thus, in the Biblical reckoning every segment of time relates most directly to the phases of the Moon, whether "days," "weeks," "months," "weeks of months," "years," "weeks of years" or "Jubilees" - all are related to the Moon. The Sun directly regulates the seasons and the length of daylight - that's it for the Sun. The Sun handles the big picture and the Moon, like mom, handles all the details! This may be why the Sun has traditionally pictured the masculine aspect and the Moon has pictured the feminine aspect. [Women are well aware of this feminine connection with the Moon. The female cycle is said to be the same as the lunar cycle, and pregnancy is reckoned as 40 lunar weeks. Further, it is believed that more babies are birthed at full moon than any other time!]

### **The New Moon Crescent Begins the Month**

The starting point from which days, lunar "weeks," months and years are counted according to the original Hebrew method is the sighting of the New Moon crescent. This is not true of the modern Hebrew calendar which is regulated by the astronomical New Moon, the conjunction, which is invisible to the human eye. Anciently, the New Moon was considered the New Moon crescent visible after the darkness of the Moon at the end of the lunar cycle. Thus we are told regarding the ancient Hebrew calendar:

***"In the early times of our history the solution was found by the following practical procedure. The beginning of months were determined by direct observation of the moon. The new months were sanctified and their beginnings announced by the Sanhedrin, the Supreme Court in Jerusalem, after witnesses had testified that they had seen the new crescent and after their testimony had been thoroughly examined..."*** (Arthur Spier, *The Comprehensive Hebrew Calendar*, published by Behrman House, Inc., 1261 Broadway, New York, USA, Page 1)

The moon is called "a faithful witness in the sky" (Ps. 89:37). For the moon to be a "witness" bringing in the new lunar month it only makes sense that one would need to be able to see it! A witness whom you can't see is no witness at all! Therefore, the idea that the conjunction, which is invisible, should serve as the "witness" of the new month is absurd. In fact, God commanded that at the sighting of the New Moon at the beginning of each month silver trumpets were to be blown:

*"Make thee two trumpets of silver ... And the sons of Aaron, the priests, shall blow with the trumpets ... in the beginnings of your months (chodesh - lit. new moon)..."* Numbers 10:2, 10 KJV

The day was understood by the Israelites to begin at evening, at sunset. For example, Atonement was kept from sunset to sunset, beginning at the close of the ninth day of the seventh month at sunset and proceeding to the tenth day of the month at sunset (Lev. 23:32). Seen from a lunar perspective, a "day" could thus be seen as from moon-dominance to moon-dominance.

Taking this fact into consideration, Numbers 10 above pretty clearly means that at the sunset when the New Moon crescent was sighted the silver trumpets were blown signifying the end of the old month and the start of the new month. While the new month was thus recognized as starting, there is no mention here of this first day of the month being a rest day. Therefore, it must be considered the first work day of the month and the beginning of the first lunar week of the month. Only in the seventh month was the first day of the month treated as a special holy day unto itself requiring a Sabbath rest, distinct from how other first days of the months were treated (Lev.23:24,25). The seventh month is therefore a special case that will be discussed when we get into the unique appointments characterizing the seventh month. The seventh month aside for the moment, the sighting of the New Moon crescent at sundown signified the beginning of the new month and start of the work "week" the next morning.

### **He Made the Moon for ALL His Appointments**

God's ancient people did not need to have a calendar on the wall or have modern communications to find out when the month was starting, the silver trumpets notwithstanding. Even if they were in a place where they could not hear the silver trumpets they could look up at the Moon in the sky and be on the same time as everybody else in their nation. For them, to tell time by the Moon was second nature, as looking at a clock is for us today. Further, the Moon tied God's ancient people directly to God's system of time-keeping! In fact, the Moon is recognized in Scripture as having been made for the very purpose of being God's time-reckoning calendar by which He sets His appointments! ***He made the Moon for*** (mowed Strong's 4150H) ***appointments.*** (Psalm 104:19)

Note well this unequivocal statement regarding the Moon as God's instrument for fixing appointments. In God's reckoning of time all of God's *mowedim* or "appointments," are fixed according to the Moon. Scripturally this includes Sabbaths, since Sabbaths are listed among the rest of God's mowedim/feasts/appointments in Leviticus 23. In keeping with this fact, Jewish and non-Jewish authorities have understood that all God's appointments including Sabbath were regulated by the Moon in Biblical times.

***"... the Hebrews employed lunar seven-day weeks... which ended with special observances on the seventh day but none the less were tied to the Moon's course."***

(Hutton Webster, *Rest Days*, page 254).

### **Grasping Lunar Weeks**

If you have a Moon-based system of reckoning time then it is only natural that "weeks" along with days, months and years should be related to that system. Especially since the quarters of the Moon lend themselves so naturally to just such a division of time. Thus we read: ***The Hebrew***

**month is a lunar month and the quarter of this period -- one phase of the Moon -- appears to have determined the week of seven days.** (*Encyclopedia Biblica*, 1899, The MacMillan Company. P. 4780).

As we have seen in Lesson 1, this was a common division of the lunar month in Biblical times. As Stephen Langdon explains: **...days 7, 14, 21, [&] 28 in the [Babylonian] calendar of the seventh century obviously constitute the seven-day division of the month ... Here the weeks do not continue in a regular cycle regardless of the new moon. Each month has four weeks, beginning with the new moon. Days 29 and 30, or in case of a 29-day month, day 29, are simply thrown out [not counted separately as part] of the four-week system. I have no doubt but that this was the old Hebrew scheme also. In other words the fourth week has one or two extra days.** (*Babylonian Menologies and the Semitic Calendars*, Stephen Langdon, London: Oxford University Press, 1935. Pp. 89-90).

This seems a little weird to modern people on an endless cycle of 7-day weeks. However, there is an order to it originating in the divine and having to do with the entire concept of what Sabbath is all about. This will become clearer as we develop a bit more information.

### **How a *Shabuwa* Differs from a Week**

When we read the word "week" in Scripture we likely assume it means the same as our modern week cycle of seven days. If so, we assume incorrectly. The word translated "**week**" in Hebrew has a much greater depth of meaning. It is derived from the word **shabuwa** (Strong's 7620H).

This word is derived from the word **shaba'** (Strong's 7650H) meaning **to be complete**.

This concept of a *shabuwa* meaning "to be complete" is very much tied in with the concept of the Sabbath. Consider the first Sabbath that all other Sabbaths commemorate:

*On the seventh day **God finished his work** which he had made; **and he rested** on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. God blessed the seventh day, and made it holy, because he rested in it from all his work which he had created and made.* Gen 2:2,3 WEB

In our first lesson we said: God "finished (kalah 3615) His work" on the seventh day. The sense is correct here. The word *kalah* means "completed." God completed His work by "resting." It is only when you can step back and look at your work and pronounce it "finished," and then rest from doing any more, that your work is finally done. God's seventh day rest marked a separation point from the previous six days that had led up to it. It set apart all that was done previously as having been completed. Thus, the entire creative period forms a unified span of time in which work is purposefully done, then is finally brought to completion in rest on the seventh day. We learn something important about the Sabbath from this. Sabbath is as much about completion of a purposeful cycle as it is about rest. **Sabbath is the culmination of a creative cycle in which one's work is finally completed and then enjoyed in rest!** No wonder God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy i.e., set apart.

Are you starting to get into a lunar state of mind? A *shabuwa* is much more than just a count of a certain number of days. It is a creative cycle in which one's work is completed and culminates in a Sabbath rest. Thus the fourth commandment says; "Six days you shall labor and *asah* (Strong's 6213H meaning **accomplish**) all your work." Exodus 20:9 NASB

When we think of the Sabbath we usually focus on the rest aspect. However, the Sabbath Commandment includes an injunction to **complete our work and then rest** on the Sabbath just as God completed His work then rested on His Sabbath. Thus, a *shabuwa* is a period of time in which something is completed and then finished with a Sabbath rest. This term *shabuwa* can thus

be a seven day lunar month segment ending in a "normal" Sabbath day, or it can be a longer period, even involving years, in which certain labors are completed and rested from. The focus of a *shabuwa* is on the completing and resting - not on a specific 7 days of exactly 24 hours each (Deut. 16:9; Jer. 5:24; Dan. 9).

In this regard it is interesting that the fourth commandment specifies the number of days in which one must "accomplish all your work" as six days, followed by a Sabbath. However, the Fourth Commandment does not limit the length of the Sabbath to one day of exactly 24 hours as we think of a day in modern times. Therefore, the fourth *shabuwa* of the month could be an extended one without doing any violence to the fourth commandment. Further, it is very reasonable and in harmony with God's cycles of completing and resting that the longer period of a month would be completed with a longer Sabbath rest during the dark of the Moon. In fact, the "resting" of the Moon itself suggests that the period of lunar darkness is the lunar Sabbath, completing the month and bringing in the new month. This is a divine thing we don't have each month on our modern break-neck calendar - a conclusion and opportunity to reflect on and enjoy the fruit of our labors for the month.

### **Joshua Teaches about Solar and Lunar Days**

In this regard we need to carefully consider that the length of a "day" was not regarded with the same 24 hour precision we apply to the term in modern times. The Hebrew term for "day" can have wide and varied meaning. As we have pointed out above, in one sense a day was the period from sundown to sundown. From a lunar perspective that's from moon-dominance to moon-dominance. This could make, and did make, for lunar days of varied lengths. Perhaps the strangest such "day" was when Joshua asked God to make the Sun and Moon stand still. ***Then Joshua spoke to the LORD in the day*** when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the sons of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, ***"O sun, stand still at Gibeon, And O moon in the valley of Aijalon."*** So ***the sun stood still, and the moon stopped***, Until the nation avenged themselves of their enemies. Is it not written in the book of Jashar? And ***the sun stopped in the middle of the sky and did not hasten to go down for about a whole day. There was no day like that*** before it or after it, when the LORD listened to the voice of a man; for the LORD fought for Israel. Joshua 10:12-14 NASB

Here God made the Sun and Moon stand still for about the length of an extra solar day. It is interesting that this portion of Scripture very naturally uses "day" in two entirely different ways, once according to the common solar reckoning ("about a whole day") and the other as the lunar reckoning allowing for a longer period of time ("the day" & "no day like that"). Obviously, there is no great concern about exact precision of the length of a "day" here. This whole period of something like 48 hours is spoken of as a single "day" rather than as "days." From a lunar standpoint this was only one lunar day, being the period from moon-dominance to moon-dominance. This same principle applies to the period of the darkness of the moon at the end of the month. From a solar perspective this period can be several days long. However, from a lunar perspective the darkness of the moon is all just one day, from moon-dominance to moon-dominance. Therefore, the fourth *Shabuwa* of the month, as viewed from a lunar perspective, is still "six days" followed by only one lunar Sabbath "day" - even if that final day is extra long.

### **How the Feast of Weeks is Counted**

This also explains for us the thinking by which the "feast of weeks" is counted. Being included in God's appointments, it is officially fixed by the Moon according to lunar days rather than by the Sun. We are therefore talking lunar days rather than solar days. Thus, there is no problem that seven weeks plus one day must equal 50 lunar days. Counting seven *Shabuwa* from the day after a Sabbath gives seven complete "lunar weeks" of 49 lunar days - even if two of those lunar days from the end of months, if measured as solar days, would be two or more solar days each. God's appointments are set according to the Moon, not the Sun, so the length of those lunar days as

compared with solar days is irrelevant. Counted according to a strictly lunar count, seven lunar weeks perfectly adds up to 49 lunar days. (Ex 34:22; Num 28:26; Duet 16:9-12; Lev 23:15, 16)

All of this suggests that the fourth *Shabuwa* Sabbath is troublesome only if you are lacking a lunar mindset. Actually, the fourth "week" Sabbath leading up to the New Moon was anciently of great importance, being the culminating Sabbath, not only of the fourth "week," but for the entire month. Thus we read: ***The New Moon festival anciently stood at least on a level with that of the Sabbath.*** (J Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Israel*, 1885, p. 113).

### **The New Moon First Day of the Month Not a Sabbath**

Without a lunar mindset one might mistake the mention of a New Moon festival to be a Sabbath celebration on the first day of the new month. However, as we have seen above, although the silver trumpets were blown on the sighting of the New Moon, the New Moon day itself (1st day of the month) was not specified as a Sabbath.

We have Biblical evidence of things being done on the first day of the month that would not be done on a day regarded as a day of Sabbath observance. For example, extensive traveling involving carrying of loads was not permitted on a Sabbath day. Thus, Nehemiah writes; ***It came about that just as it grew dark at the gates of Jerusalem before the sabbath, I commanded that the doors should be shut and that they should not open them until after the sabbath. Then I stationed some of my servants at the gates so that no load would enter on the sabbath day.*** Nehemiah 13:19 NASB

A prohibition against carrying a load on Sabbath is also found in Jeremiah; ***Thus says the LORD, "Take heed for yourselves, and do not carry any load on the sabbath day or bring anything in through the gates of Jerusalem.*** Jeremiah 17:21 NASB

Thus we see that no load was allowed to be carried on a Sabbath, let alone to enter Jerusalem. These verses clearly indicate that travel involving the carrying of heavy loads was not permitted on the Sabbath. Yet, we find Ezra the priest, a man who *had prepared his heart to seek the law of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments* (Ezra 7:10 NASB) doing extensive traveling on the first day of the month. The Scripture tells us ***upon the first day of the first month began he to go up from Babylon, and on the first day of the fifth month came he to Jerusalem*** (Ezra 7:9 NASB). Thus, Ezra began a four month trip from Babylon on the first day of the first month, arriving in Jerusalem on the first day of the fifth month! Such a long trip would involve a lot of work carrying heavy loads. Surely, if the first day of the month had been a festival day requiring Sabbath observance Ezra would not have begun a four month journey on it! Likewise, what kind of example would he be setting as a priest by coming into Jerusalem on a festival Sabbath day loaded down with the baggage of a four month journey, especially when no load was even allowed to enter the gates of the city on a Sabbath?!

What we must deduce from this is that the New Moon festival did not involve Sabbath observance on the actual New Moon first day of the month.

### **Chodesh can = The New Moon Festival = The Last Sabbath of the Month**

Since it is demonstrated that the first day of the month was a work day in OT times we are logically left to believe that the New Moon festival was actually the extended Sabbath of the fourth *shabuwa* completing the month and bringing in the sighting of the New Moon crescent on the final evening of the period. That final evening culminated in a celebration of the arrival of the new month that evening. People engaged in a normal work day the next morning - still the first day of the new month and no problem for Ezra to travel.

Thus we have a third meaning for *chodesh* (New Moon) in the OT.

Besides referring to

- (1.) the literal New Moon crescent and  
 (2.) a period of a lunar month, it can also refer to  
 (3.) the New Moon festival that was actually the fourth *Shabuwa* Sabbath culminating in the arrival and celebration of the New Moon crescent of the new month.

It should be noted that this last meaning of *Chodesh* is understandably lost to those with no knowledge or belief in a lunar Sabbath system. With no understanding of (3.) they have translated *Chodesh* as either (1.) or (2.) above, since that's all they know. Nevertheless, there are verses that clearly seem to be using *Chodesh* in this 3rd sense when we examine them closely. For example, the prophet Amos quoted the greedy of his day saying; ***When will the new moon be over, So that we may sell grain, And the sabbath, that we may open the wheat market, To make the bushel smaller and the shekel bigger, And to cheat with dishonest scales.***  
 Amos 8:5 NASB

We have already seen that the actual New Moon first day of the month allowed for work, so was not a Sabbath. So then, what was this "new moon" equated with the "sabbath" that the greedy were longing to have over with? It must have been the festival called the "New Moon" which ends with the evening of the appearance of the New Moon! This was actually the fourth *Shabuwa* Sabbath of two or three solar days length at the end of the month, at the end of which the New Moon makes its appearance. Even the longing of the greedy to have this New Moon festival period over with is suggestive of something more than the length of an ordinary Sabbath - more like the two or three solar days of the darkness of the Moon culminating in the arrival of the New Moon crescent. Thus *Chodesh* as used in Amos 8:5 seems to be referring to the New Moon Festival of (3.) above.

### **David, Jonathan and Saul Observed the New Moon Festival**

Another example of *Chodesh* used in the sense of the New Moon festival is found in the story of David, Saul and Jonathan of 1 Samuel 20. As we pick up the story we find that Saul is extremely jealous of David to the point of wanting to kill him. However, Saul has hidden his murderous intentions from Jonathan because of Jonathan's close friendship with David. David, in fear for his life, has left Saul's court to go into hiding.

David tells his friend; ***Behold, tomorrow is the new moon, and I ought to sit down to eat with the king. But let me go, that I may hide myself in the field until the third evening.*** *"If your father misses me at all, then say, 'David earnestly asked leave of me to run to Bethlehem his city, because it is the yearly sacrifice there for the whole family.'* *"If he says, 'It is good,' your servant will be safe; but if he is very angry, know that he has decided on evil.* 1 Samuel 20:5-7

Here David speaks of something called *Chodesh*, "New Moon", that starts "tomorrow" and continues long enough to require David to hide "until the third evening." It must be a festival period because everyone is expected to be home. In fact, this is the reason for David's concern, because he knows that it would be out of the ordinary for him to be gone during this time. *Chodesh* cannot mean the actual New Moon or the first day of the month in this case because neither of these meanings fit this situation. There is no mention anywhere in Scripture of any festival on the first day of the month lasting for several days. Therefore "New Moon" in this case is used in the sense of the festival of the New Moon which occurs as the Sabbath of the last *Shabuwa* of the month during the 2 or 3 solar days of the darkness of the Moon. When David says "tomorrow is New Moon" he is not saying the actual New Moon crescent is visible tomorrow. Rather, he is speaking of the New Moon festival starting tomorrow, which will last 2 or 3 solar days until the actual New Moon crescent appears. This requires him to stay in hiding "until the third evening" when finally the New Moon festival will be over. Contextually, "New Moon" in this case refers to the New Moon festival at the end of the month.

The rest of the story fully conforms to this picture. Jonathan says; ***Tomorrow is the new moon, and you will be missed because your seat will be empty*** (1 Samuel 20:18 NASB). After this Jonathan enters into a plan with David that involves David waiting to hear from him until the 3rd evening (vs. 19-23). Obviously, something is special about "new moon" for David to be required to be present. It is clearly a festival time involving multiple solar days of "New Moon".

What actually happened with Saul confirms this; *So David hid in the field; and when the new moon came, the king sat down to eat food* (1 Samuel 20:24). The story describes how Saul noticed David's absence, but let it go at that time. *It came about the next day, the second day of the new moon, that David's place was empty; so Saul said to Jonathan his son, "Why has the son of Jesse not come to the meal, either yesterday or today?"* 1 Samuel 20:27 NASB

"The second day of the new moon" certainly is a curious phrase when considered in the light of conventional thinking. It just doesn't fit in with conventional thinking at all. What is the "second day of the New Moon"? It clearly is not just the second day of a new month, because this entire story assumes a festival period where all are expected to be present and there is no festival anywhere in Scripture involving the second day of the month. However, when we look at this in the light of an understanding of the monthly lunar cycle, all becomes clear. This is the second solar day of the Sabbath festival at the darkness of the Moon which brings in the New Moon! This is the New Moon Festival at the end of the month!

As a side note, I anticipate that some might feel that the mention of two or three solar days of this festival "proves" that the darkness of the lunar month was not regarded as a single lunar day for counting the Festival of Weeks. To such folks I would say you are really reaching here. We saw in Joshua how the term "day" was used in two different senses, both a common solar sense and a longer lunar sense, both in the same verse! The context and meaning determine the understanding of the word "day", not some fixation with exact precision of expression. In these verses in Samuel an official lunar count of days is not the point. In this context the more common use of the word "day" better serves the practical purpose of setting a time between Jonathan and David and breaking down the count of time through the course of the festival. To grasp at this to prove that these several solar days do not amount to a single lunar day is to compare apples and oranges - it just doesn't apply.

### **The Connection Between New Moon and Sabbaths**

Now, returning to our point regarding the New Moon Festival: I believe we have demonstrated that the New Moon festival is the Sabbath period at the end of the month that brings in the New Moon. This festival serves the purpose of completing the month at the darkness of the moon while also bringing in the new month, establishing the starting point of the count of time for the New Month. Thus the blowing of the Silver Trumpets at the sighting of the New Moon crescent.

Consistent with this, the Scriptures often speak of the New Moon and Sabbath together, because as we have seen, the New Moon (festival) was like a super Sabbath from which the other Sabbaths were counted. Many verses speak of the New Moon (festival) and Sabbaths in the same breath, as in these examples:

*Offer all burnt sacrifices unto the LORD in the sabbaths, in the new moons, and on the set feasts...* Chron 23:31

*It is neither new moon, nor sabbath...* 2 Kings 4:23

*"And it shall be from new moon to new moon And from sabbath to sabbath, All mankind will come to bow down before Me," says the LORD.* Isaiah 66:23

*The people of the land shall also worship at the doorway of that gate before the LORD on the sabbaths and on the new moons.* Ezekiel 46:3

A number of authorities have commented on this frequent connection between New Moons and Sabbaths. For example, Scribner states; *In the time of the earliest prophets, **the New Moon stood in the same line with another lunar observance, the Sabbath.** Ezekiel, who curiously enough frequently dates his prophecies on the New Moon describes **the gate of the inner court of the (coming) temple looking east-ward as kept shut for the six working days, but **opened on the Sabbath and the New Moon****" (Scribner's Dictionary of the Bible (1898) p. 521, see also Ezek 26: 1; 29:17, 31:1, and 32:1).*

Surely anyone can see from the way that New Moons and Sabbaths are linked in verses like these that they are related to one another. I have demonstrated what the connection is. The last Sabbath of the month is the "New Moon" festival from which the Sabbaths of the new month are counted.

### **One More Proof of 4 Lunar *Shabuwa* Cycles in the Month**

Once you start to grasp the flow of lunar time, you start to see it everywhere you look in the Scriptures. Lets do a little basic math to prove out what we've been saying. The usual lunar year of 12 months contains 48 *Shabuwa* cycles (12x4=48), each ending in a Sabbath. We know our solar year contains 52 back-to-back 7-day weeks. If the Sabbath were counted as each 7th day of back-to-back 7-day weeks there would normally be 52 Sabbaths in the solar year. If a standard Hebrew lunar year was counted in cycles of back-to-back 7-day weeks there would have to be at least 50 or more Sabbaths, but something less than 52 Sabbaths, since a lunar year is normally about 11 days shorter than a solar year. All of this becomes very much of interest when we look at the number of the courses of priests organized by David (1 Chron 23-25). Josephus the priest summarizes the courses of the priesthood as organized by David this way:

*But **David**, being desirous of ordaining his son king of all the people, called together their rulers to Jerusalem, with the priests and the Levites ... He **divided them also into courses:** ... **priests twenty-four courses** ... and he ordained that **one course should minister to God eight (lunar) days, from sabbath to sabbath.** ... **He also made twenty-four parts of the tribe of Levi; and when they cast lots, they came up in the same manner.** (JOSEPHUS' WRITINGS - BOOK 7, CH. 14, 7)*

David assigned 24 courses of priests and 24 courses of Levites assisting them, each course to go in and out of Temple Service on the Sabbath. Eight lunar days of service are specified to make it clear that on Sabbaths two full courses of priests would overlap in serving in the Temple, the departing course and the in-coming course. This makes sense to allow for twice the manpower on the Sabbath because Sabbath would obviously be the most demanding time for the priests at the Temple. By this division each course was to serve in the Temple 2 *Shabuwa* cycles (+1 Sabbath each cycle) in a normal year. That adds up to exactly 48 *Shabuwa* cycles ending in exactly 48 overlapped lunar Sabbaths! If back-to-back 7-day weeks had been in view (50+ weeks) 24 courses wouldn't have been a natural division of man-power. It must be conceded that intercalated years with 13 months don't fit the normal pattern either. However, one makes usual plans for the most usual situation and adjusts accordingly for the abnormal. David's plan with each course of the priesthood serving exactly twice in the normal year is no accident. It is a well-conceived plan indicative of the exact number of Sabbaths David was planning for. Further, it completely harmonizes with the lunar Sabbath and New Moon cycles explained herein.

### **Now let us summarize:**

1. The Moon is God's "faithful witness in the sky" which He "made for appointments" (Ps. 98:37; 104:19). Therefore, all of God's "appointments" listed in Leviticus 23, including the Sabbath, are set according to the Moon.

2. *Chodesh* is a Hebrew word which literally refers to the New Moon crescent visible at the beginning of the month. God commanded that Silver Trumpets were to be blown at the sighting of the *Chodesh* beginning each new month.

3. The months were divided up into four lunar "weeks" (*shabuwa*) each comprised of "six days" followed by a Sabbath. In this way the Sabbaths tracked closely with the phases of the Moon.

*Shabuwa* does not specify 7 24 hour days. It can amount to that sometimes - but it more correctly refers to cycles of completion and Sabbath, even up to years in length.

4. Israelite days normally occurred from sunset to sunset, or seen from a lunar perspective, from moon-dominance to moon-dominance. However, there is not one set meaning for "day" in Hebrew. In the context of this discussion we have observed two different periods called days which we have differentiated as solar days and lunar days. A lunar day is the period from moon-dominance to moon-dominance, even if encompassing the length of more than one solar day. This is demonstrated by the extra long "day" when the Sun and Moon stood still in the time of Joshua. Also in the count of lunar days in the Festival of Weeks.

5. We know the actual New Moon day, meaning the first day of the month, was not a Sabbath festival because we found Ezra the priest doing work on that day.

6. The Sabbath of the dark of the Moon at the end of the month bringing in the New Moon is the New Moon festival of Scripture. *Chodesh* can be a reference to this festival, as we found in Amos 8:5 and 1 Samuel 20.

7. New Moons and Sabbaths are mentioned together in many verses because they are related to one another. The New Moon festival is the extended fourth *Shabuwa* Sabbath culminating in the arrival of the New Moon crescent from which all the other Sabbaths of the month are counted. This is the connection between the New Moon and the Sabbaths.

8. The 24 courses of the priesthood as organized by David support all of the above

In this Section we will deal with the time-reckoning of three different groups in the New Testament Era. These three groups are the Romans, The Hebrews and Yeshua and His Disciples. Through this examination we will come to get a grasp on how time-reckoning evolved from the Biblical system into the calendar most of us are on in modern times. As we examine the facts be prepared for some startling surprises. We start with the Roman system that evolved into essentially the system we have today.

### **The Roman Republican Calendar**

The very earliest calendar used by the Romans was lunar, similar to others we have discussed in these lessons, although details of that most-ancient Roman Calendar are obscure. By later Republican times, the Roman Calendar is well documented. Certain Roman religious customs, as well as the monthly subdivisions of *Kalends*, *Nones*, and *Ides*, indicate that the calendar was lunar, and that months began upon direct observation by a priest of the new moon crescent.

In the Roman Republican calendar, the months contained three primary markers -- the Kalends, the Nones and the Ides. The Kalends were always the first day of the month. The Nones were usually the 5th but sometimes the 7th, and the Ides were the 15th but sometimes the 13th. All the days after the Ides were numbered by counting down towards the next month's Kalends. Incidentally, this Latin word, *Kalends* is where our English word *Calendar* comes from. This system was vaguely like the lunar "weeks" we have found in other calendars, in the sense of being tied to the moon's cycle. The holidays were generally bunched together to form continuous celebrations, and the remaining days of the month were usually nondescript workdays.

It is in the Roman Republican calendar that we find a recurring cycle distinct from the lunar cycle. This was still not a week such as we know it today, but after a few more centuries, well after the

time of Christ, eventually evolved into it. This "week" had a recurring cycle of 8-days called the *nundinae* = nine-days (nine because of inclusive counting). This was by no means an unchangeable cycle, as our modern 7-day week seems to be, however. This is shown from the fact that it was not always 8 days, at times it was 10, based upon convenience and commerce. The Roman "week" was not religious in significance, but originally indicated days upon which a market would be held in Rome. It was simply a schedule of when business could be done and was something like a train or bus schedule might be viewed today. In that sense it was not viewed strictly as a division of time as the week is viewed today. Extant Roman calendars indicate this interval by giving each consecutive day a letter A through H. Note that this was simply a space marker for each day. The Romans did not call the individual days "day A," "day B," "day C," etc.

### **The Julian Calendar**

The Julian calendar was a major modification by Julius Caesar of the Republican calendar. As *pontifex maximus*, Caesar was responsible for the smooth operation of Rome's calendar, which previous neglect by other pontifices had allowed to fall behind the seasons. In the second year of Caesar's dictatorship (47 BC) the calendar was running as much as 90 days behind the seasons, due largely to political manipulation of the calendar. Caesar began his calendar reform by ordering an ordinary leap year (intercalation of one lunar month). That was not sufficient to deal with the problem. Therefore, during his second consulship he inserted 67 days (exactly how isn't perfectly clear, but probably 2 months between November and December of 22 and 23 days, plus another intercalary month after February). With this "fix", by the end of the year we know as 46 BC, the calendar was pretty much back in sync with the seasons. As you might imagine, these changes caused a great deal of confusion at the time. In fact, later writers called it the *annis confusionis* (year of confusion).

*The New Encyclopedia Britannica* elaborates: *The origin of the calendric system in general use today - the Gregorian calendar - can be traced back to the Roman republican calendar, which is thought to have been introduced by the fifth king of Rome, Tarquinius Priscus (616-579 BCE)...*

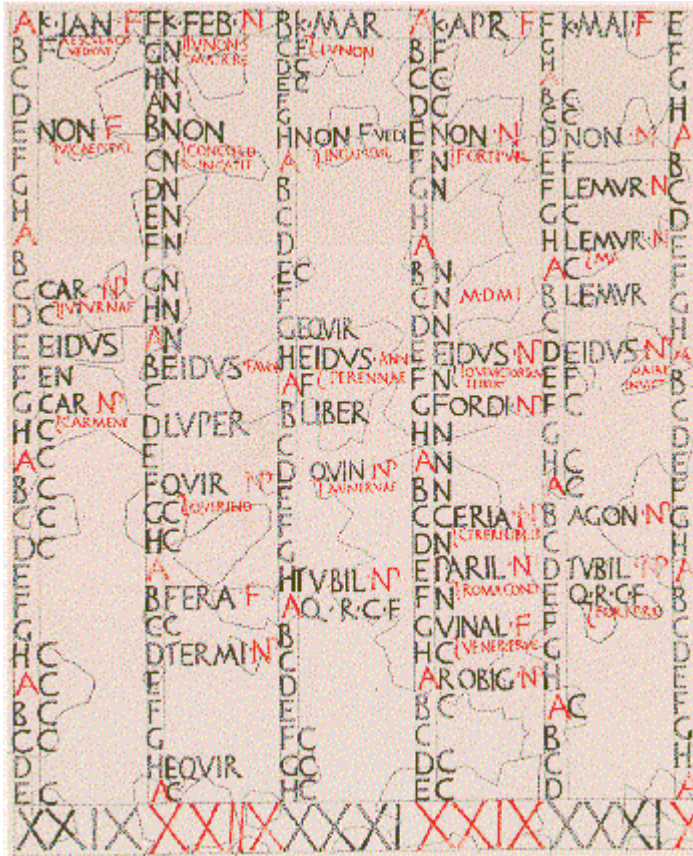
*By 46 BCE the calendar had become so hopelessly confused that Julius Caesar was forced to initiate a reform of the entire system. Caesar invited the Alexandrian astronomer Sosigenes to undertake this task. Sosigenes suggested abandoning the lunar system altogether and replacing it with a tropical year of 365.25 days. Further, to correct the accumulation of previous errors, a total of 90 intercalary days had to be added to 46 BCE, meaning that January 1, 45 BCE, occurred in what would have been the middle of March. To prevent the problem from recurring, Sosigenes suggested that an extra day be added to every fourth February. The adoption of such reformatory measures resulted in the establishment of the Julian calendar, which was used for roughly the next 1,600 years.*

Thus, the Julian Calendar marked a major change from the Lunar Republican Calendar, being a Solar calendar and the predecessor of the Calendar still in use today. It was not until 1582 AD that Pope Gregory XIII decreed a modification to the Julian calendar, giving us the "Gregorian Calendar" that governs modern time. The *New Encyclopedia Britannica* explains why that became necessary: *During that time (since the initiation of the Julian calendar in 46 BC), however, the disagreement between the Julian year of 365.25 days and the tropical year of 365.242199 gradually produced significant errors. The discrepancy mounted at a rate of 11 minutes 14 seconds per year until it was a full 10 days in 1545, when the Council of Trent authorized Pope Paul III to take corrective action. No solution was found for many years. In 1572 Pope Gregory III agreed to issue a papal bull drawn up by the Jesuit astronomer Christopher Clavius. Ten years later, when the edict was finally proclaimed, 10 days in October were skipped to bring the calendar back in line.*

Considered as a theoretical calendar (i.e., projecting it back before it was actually invented), the Gregorian calendar matches up with the Julian in the third century CE. Because the pre-Julian Roman calendar was not regular, the custom of historians is to use the Julian calendar

proleptically for earlier dates. That is, dates before 45 BC, which are naturally recorded in different calendars, are translated into the Julian calendar.

**Actual Julian Calendars c. First Century**



The actual Julian calendar represented here is from the time when the Julian calendar was already well-established. Although the original calendar of the Roman Republican period was replaced, some conventions of the earlier Republican era calendar continued to be maintained in the new calendar. One important feature carried over into the Julian Calendar from the earlier Republican Calendar was the 8 day "market" cycle, represented by letters A through H on the calendar. The 7-day Roman planetary week (7 day cycle named after the planet gods) had not yet evolved and is nowhere to be found on this first century Julian calendar. As we shall see, the 7-day planetary week was a later innovation initially unrelated to market days.

This is significant for Bible study. **We must understand that the Romans had no 7-day week in the time of Yeshua/Jesus and His apostles. Any reference to a "week" in the New Testament IS NOT a reference to the same cycle known today as a week. The 7-day cycle known today as a week was completely unknown to the Romans of New Testament times, having not been invented by them yet!**



### A 7 Day Planetary Week Emerged After the New Testament Period

The 7-day week as we know it today eventually arose among the Romans from a pagan religious superstition. It was based on the ancient astrological notion that the gods of the seven known celestial bodies influence what happens on Earth and that each of these celestial gods controls the first hour of the day named after it. This system was brought into Hellenistic Egypt from Mesopotamia, specifically Babylon, where astrology had been practiced for millenniums and where seven had always been a propitious number ("lucky" 7). This pagan idea developed into a scheme among the Romans where certain days became connected with each of the seven planetary "gods." A connection of each day with one of the seven planetary gods began to spread through the Roman empire around the turn of the first century. The earliest evidence of the beginning of the development of the planetary week was found at Pompeii, the amazing Roman city destroyed by a volcanic eruption during the final quarter of the first century. A wall inscription with the heading 'days of the gods' lists the planets in the order Saturn, Sun, Moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus.

This original order of the planetary week (starting with Saturn's day) varies from the week eventually written into Roman law in the fourth century, which features the Sun's day as the first day of the planetary week. We should stress again that this innovation of a 7-day planetary week did not arise in the Roman Empire till after the writing of most if not all of the New Testament books; *"Since the earliest evidence for the existence of the planetary week is to be dated toward the end of the first century A.D."* - W. Rordorf

Even then, the religious planetary 7-day cycle did not have the force of time-reckoning later associated with it. It would take over a century more for the ceremonial planetary week to evolve into the institution of a continual 7-day weekly cycle used in dates. The earliest known instance of this is from 205 AD, in an inscription from Karlsburg, Transylvania, while the earliest case from the eastern empire is a school lesson from Egypt, dated 294 C.E.



**Constantine Enforces Roman / Babylonian Time at the Late Date of 321 AD.**

In 321 AD the Emperor Constantine the Great permanently grafted the astrological planetary week system onto the Roman calendar, making the first day of this new week the day of the Sun and a day of rest and worship for all, and imposing the sequence and names to the days of the planetary week as we know them today. With this official edict the market week and the planetary week were finally and permanently fused into one continuous seven day cycle named after the "gods". By edict of the Emperor Roman-Babylonish time was suddenly transformed into "Christian" time. While there were holdouts for a while, the new Roman system of time was adopted throughout most of western Europe: in the Germanic languages, such as Old English, the names of four of the Roman gods were converted into those of the corresponding Germanic gods.

**PAGAN WEEK DAY NAMES TELL THE STORY**

All of this should be sufficient to demonstrate that the week we are so familiar with today originated as an amalgamation of paganism and commercialism and was not in any sense given to us by Yahweh. In fact, the pagan origin of the planetary week is still to be seen in the names of the days of the week in use today:

Planetary "god"	Latin	Germanic "god"	Modern English	Modern Italian
Sun	Solis		Sunday	domenica
Moon	Lunae		Monday	lunedì
Mars	Martis	Tiu	Tuesday	martedì
Mercury	Mercurii	Woden	Wednesday	mercoledì
Jupiter	Jovis	Thor	Thursday	giovedì
Venus	Veneris	Freya	Friday	venerdì
Saturn	Saturni		Saturday	sabato

**The Pagan Planetary Week Has No Correlation to Biblical Time**

The above facts are not in tune with the common perception that the current seven day week has always existed, and has existed in the same order in which we find it today. Historically that just isn't true, yet quotes such as the following are produced and repeated as "proof" that the seven day week has been an uninterrupted institution from the beginning of time: *"It is to be noted that in the Christian period, the order of days in the week has never been interrupted. Thus, when Gregory XIII reformed the calendar in 1582, Thursday, 4 October, was followed by Friday, 15 October. So in England, in 1752, Wednesday, 2 September, was followed by Thursday, 14 September."* (The Catholic Encyclopedia (1910 Edition, Vol. 3, page 740, in the article "Chronology")

In reality, it is irrelevant that the order of the days of the planetary week "in the Christian period" may have remained "uninterrupted" with the Gregorian calendar change in 1582 AD. The

"Christian period" *The Catholic Encyclopedia* is necessarily talking about is not since the time of Christ, but from 321 AD when Emperor Constantine, the first historic Pope, institutionalized the planetary week. The salient point here is therefore obvious to the avid Bible student and truth-seeker. Namely, 321 AD is just too late a time to be Biblically relevant. Further, the order of the Roman planetary week was never tied to any Biblical numbering of days of the "week." Indeed, the Roman week evolved completely separately from Biblical time and changed in order with "Saturday" being moved from the first day to the last day of the Roman week. In short, even if there were such a thing as a Biblical weekly cycle continuing unbroken from creation forward we could not assume that "Saturn's day", now the last day of the Roman week, is the same as the "seventh day" of the creation week. If Sabbath-keeping depended upon identifying the true seventh day of a continuous cycle of weeks from creation forward then Sabbath-keeping is impossible, for there is no unbroken cycle of Roman weeks that tie in directly to the Biblical calendar! Saturday and Sunday Sabbath-keeping are both equally based on the myth of the first century Roman week that never existed. Thank God that He "made the moon for appointments!" Unless He had done so we would have no way to determine when to meet Him to keep His Sabbaths.

### **Out of Sync with the Creator's Time Cycles - In Sync with Babylon**

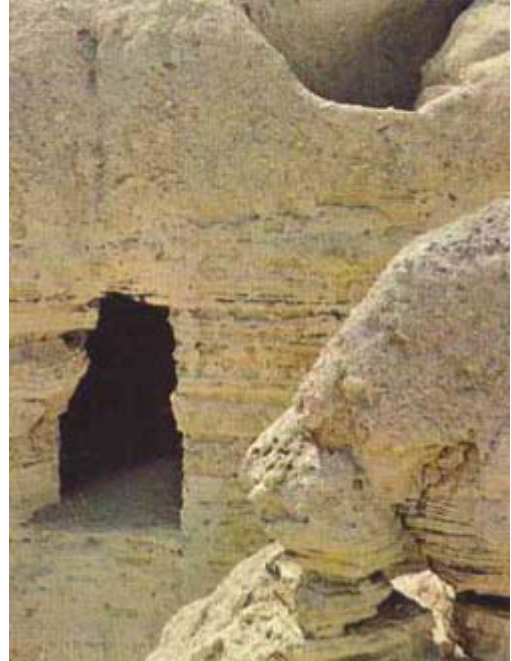
I would conclude this lesson by suggesting that the Roman system of time reckoning institutionalized by Constantine the Great has had a much more profound effect on us than we can scarcely realize. Yahweh gave us a system of time-reckoning tied directly to the natural order he created. By it any child can easily keep in step with Him according to the natural cycles that are meant to bless us in body, mind and spirit. By contrast, the Roman system, based on commercial greed and pagan Babylonian religion, has the effect of divorcing us from the natural order. It has put us on a 7-day treadmill that has little or no connection whatever with anything God created and that tends to keep us out of sync with both creation and Creator. Its purpose is to keep us in sync with an artificial and de-humanized hamster-wheel mindset controlled by the ungodly world system of "Babylon" in rebellion to the healthful natural order and rule of God. This has harmful effects upon us in body, mind and spirit that we probably can't even begin to imagine. Friends, we have been almost totally asleep at the wheel, intoxicated by poisons we have taken for granted because we've never known any different. Its time to wake up and get a grip while it is still barely possible.

### **First Century Jewish Calendars**

We have seen that the lunar calendars from the Sumerian all the way down to the Roman Republican figured the days of the month as delineated by periods within the month that tracked in some way with the phases of the moon. Thus, it is not strange to find the Jews of the first century continuing the use of just such a lunar calendar in the celebration of their Sabbaths and Holy Days. While it is quite provable that first century Judaism continued to abide by the lunar calendar, it is also true that there were differences between varying Jewish sects regarding some specifics of interpretation regarding the calendar. This is well illustrated by the case of the first century Jewish sect known as the Essenes.

### **The Essene Calendar**

In the period of time preceding the destruction of the Temple a splinter group called the Essenes broke away from the Jewish establishment. During this period the Jewish people were divided into several groups, including the Sadducees, the Pharisees, and the Essenes. The Samaritans and the Nazarenes filled out the picture. A large group of the Essenes withdrew to Qumran, an exclusive religious community in the Judean wilderness. When I visited the Qumran ruins in 1988 I was impressed by the size of the area of the ruins and the austere setting in the inhospitable desert overlooking the Dead Sea. This is the site where, in 1948 AD, a little Bedouin boy went after his goat that had fallen into a cave. In the cave the little boy discovered the "Dead Sea Scrolls" which had remained hidden in clay jars for at least 2,000 years, some dating to hundreds of years before Christ!



The scrolls reveal an amazing amount of information. For example they include all or parts of every single book of the OT. They also include other documents significant to the group. These documents seem to indicate that one of the major issues that sent the Qumran community into separation from the rest of Jewish society revolved around the calendar. Study of the scrolls reveals a unique solar/lunar calendar which computes fixed Sabbath intervals by the phases of the moon. It is like the ancient lunar calendar in the respect that it includes four lunar "weeks" marking out the phases of the moon through the month. The lunar month is divided into 2 Sabbath intervals during the waxing moon and two Sabbath intervals during the waning moon. An important difference in this calendar of the Essenes is that it essentially takes all the time previously included in the new moon Sabbath of the darkness of the moon and divides it into two extended Sabbaths rather than retaining a single longer extended Sabbath at the end of the month. One extended Sabbath is placed at the middle of the month at the end of the waxing moon (at full moon) and the other at the darkness of the moon into the new moon.

### **Lunar Days Longer than 24 Hours Documented**

The two extended Sabbaths were considered to be a "day" each, though being about two solar days each in length. We see this because only 28 days are included in the month, even though a complete month of 29/30 solar days is described. (Scroll 4Q317, see *The Dead Sea Scrolls, A New Translation* by Wise, Abegg, and Cook, 1996, Section 57)

Milik confirms this, saying; "Not one fragment of 4Qenastr contains a complete description of days 15 and 30 for the (lunar) months of 30 days and of day 29 for the (lunar) months containing 29 days..." *The Astronomical Books Of Enoch*, by Milik. Pages 283-284).

Notice in this quote from the scrolls that the new moon is described as occurring on the 28th of the month, though if figured by solar days this would have to occur on day 29 or 30 of the month; "and in night 28 of this (month, the moon) is covered by six sevenths and a half, and there is subtracted from its light [six sevenths and a half. And then it emerges (from the same door as before) and it shines during] the rest of this night with a half of a seventh (part)." (4Qenastr, Pls. XXV-XXX).

## 4 Sabbath Cycles

This Qumran calendar system involves 14 fixed stages of lunar waxing and 14 fixed stages of lunar waning that worked out monthly as follows:

Numbered Sabbath Cycle	Lunar Monthly Sabbath Schedule	
First Sabbath Cycle	7 evenings and daylights	moon waxing
Second Sabbath Cycle	7 evenings and daylights	moon waxing
Extended Sabbath	Full moon evening	Full moon visible
Third Sabbath Cycle	7 daylights and evenings	moon waning
Fourth Sabbath Cycle	7 daylights and evenings	moon waning
Extended Sabbath	New moon daylight	moon invisible

Like the ancient Hebrew calendar we have already described, this system of Sabbath-keeping revealed in the Dead Sea Scrolls fixed Sabbath cycles according to the phases of the moon rather than following a continuous 7-day rotation unrelated to the moon. Thus, this system, though not identical to the conventional Hebrew system, preserves a connection between the lunar cycles and the phases of the moon each month. In this respect Scroll 4Q317 indicates that the moon was once tracked in Sabbath cycles that directly relate to monthly lunar cycles AND that don't confine a "day" to rigid 24 hour units. This concept involves a "lunar" state of mind that is a holdover from the original Hebrew calendar, even if difficult for moderns on a continuous 24-7 cycle to relate to.

The calendar of the Essenes is proof that a lunar-based Sabbath system was definitely in use within first century Judaism. The Essenes lived their lives in fanatical devotion to the Torah Scriptures as they understood them and they had a system of tracking the Sabbath that ties directly to the lunar cycles – a powerful indication that the Jewish establishment of the era did too, even if it varied from the Essenes in other respects.

### The First Century Temple System - Lunar Sabbaths

The truth is, thanks to the extensive writings of Josephus the first century priest, we know that the first century Temple system was still earnestly endeavoring to implement the same lunar reckoning of time that we find in the OT Scriptures. Thus we find Josephus mentioning Sabbaths and new moons together in the same way that we find in the OT. Here is an example:

***THE law requires, that out of the public expenses a lamb of the first year be killed every day, at the beginning and at the ending of the day; but on the seventh day, which is called the Sabbath, they kill two, and sacrifice them in the same manner. At the New Moon, they both perform the daily sacrifices, and slay two bulls, with seven lambs of the first year, and a kid of the goats also, for the expiation of sins; that is, if they have sinned through ignorance. [JOSEPHUS' WRITINGS - BOOK 3, CH. 10, 1]***

These comments of Josephus explain how the sacrificial system was applied through the lunar month. He proceeds in logical progression from the day, to the Sabbath, to the new moon. This is highly suggestive of a system that is entirely lunar, with the days tied to Sabbath intervals and the Sabbaths tied to the new moon. This is essentially the same reckoning of time introduced to Israel through Moses. Indeed, it is clear in the writings of Josephus that the very object of the Temple system was to do as "the Law requires."

## 24 Courses of Priests x 2 Sabbath 'Weeks' = 48 Sabbath "Weeks" Per Year

Also, as quoted in an earlier lesson, Josephus indicated the first century Temple was still employing the system organized by David wherein the priesthood was organized into 24 courses, with each course going in and out of Temple service on the Sabbath, each serving two Sabbaths and the days in between. With each course of the priesthood serving exactly twice a year this provides Temple service for exactly 48 Sabbath intervals - **exactly correct for a normal lunar year with 48 lunar-based Sabbaths**. This is powerful evidence that the Sabbath system continued to be lunar-based in the first century. [JOSEPHUS' WRITINGS - BOOK 7, CH. 14, 7]

### Josephus the First Century Priest Writes About Passover

Also, unlike the Jewish calendar of today that makes the 7th month (Tishri) the first month of the year, The Temple system continued to begin the year as Yahweh had instructed Moses, with the spring month in which the Israelites came out of Egypt being the first month. Notice this as we read Josephus writing on the Passover:

*In the month of Xanthicus, which is by us called **Nisan**, and is the beginning of our year, on the fourteenth day of the lunar month, when the sun is in Aries, (for in this month it was that we were delivered from bondage under the Egyptians,) the law ordained that we should every year slay that sacrifice which I before told you we slew when we came out of Egypt, and which was called the Passover; and so we do celebrate this passover in companies, leaving nothing of what we sacrifice till the day following. 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.* JOSEPHUS' WRITINGS - BOOK 3, CH. 10, 5

Everything Josephus says here agrees with Scripture. They kept the right "lunar month" to begin the year, even adjusting intercalation by the stars to keep the first month in the spring as God's command requires. **The Passover was celebrated on the fourteenth of the month "leaving nothing of what we sacrifice till the day following."** We are then told **"the feast of unleavened bread succeeds that of the passover, and falls on the fifteenth day of the month, and continues seven days.."** This requires consumption of the Passover on the evening of the fourteenth followed by seven days of the feast of unleavened bread beginning on the evening of the fifteenth - all exactly what we found when Israel came out of Egypt. **Based on later writings and practices of Rabbinical Judaism some have believed that the first century practice was to slaughter the passover lamb on the afternoon of the fourteenth to eat it the fifteenth, but Josephus specifically states otherwise. Namely, that the Passover was slaughtered and eaten on the fourteenth "leaving nothing of what we sacrifice till the day following."** Thus, **Josephus describes an 8 day celebration including one day of Passover followed by 7 days of Unleavened Bread**, exactly as we find in the OT account of the deliverance from Egypt.

The fact that the beginning of the year and the timing of the feasts remained tied to the new moon suggests that the Sabbaths did too. **The feasts of Passover and Booths were not set simply by the general lunar calculation, but on the basis of the appearance of the new moon of the month in which they occurred ... it seems probable that the sabbath was originally also part of this natural cycle of time, related to the phases of the moon.** (*The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. 3, article New moon, p. 544).

### Months Set By Observation of the New Moon Crescent

If the Temple system of the first century was continuing the "natural cycle of time related to the phases of the moon" in which all the feast days and Sabbaths were tied to the appearance of the new moon, we would expect them to be reckoning time by direct observation of the new moon crescent. In point of fact, it is well documented that Jewish time-reckoning in the first century was indeed tied directly to the actual citing of the new moon crescent. *The Encyclopedia Judaica* explains, **Originally, the New Moon was allegedly not fixed by astronomical calculations, but was solemnly proclaimed after witnesses had testified to the reappearance of the crescent of the moon ... To inform the population of the beginning of the month, beacons were kindled on the Mount of Olives and thence over the entire land and in parts of the Diaspora.** (*Ency. Judaica*, Vol. 12, p. 1039).

The Sanhedrin held a special court each month to hear witnesses to the new moon and establish the beginning of the new month, which speaks strongly to the fact that the first century Jewish method of time reckoning was still entirely lunar-based. Unfortunately, it was this very system of "officially" establishing the beginning of the month by bureaucracy where the first century system sometimes broke down. For example, if the court had been sitting the entire 30<sup>th</sup> day and no witnesses had arrived and the old month was therefore declared to be full by the court, then a few days later witnesses arrived from a distance to inform the court they had seen the new moon at a different time, the court would try to intimidate, confuse and badger the witnesses with questions to try and discredit them. The court wanted to avoid being forced to sanction the new moon retroactively since the month had already been declared full. Only if it could not be avoided would the court readjust the count (Maimonides, 14–15).

### **Months Set By "Sanctification" of the New Moon Crescent**

After enough of this it was determined that the declaration of the court effectively began the month regardless of what later witnesses may have seen. Then the legal start of a new month was considered the declaration made by the court stating, "the new moon is hallowed" (Maimonides, 9). Once the day of the new moon was declared, it could not be changed even if the witnesses lied. If the court sanctified the new moon inadvertently, by mistake or even duress, the declaration was still considered valid and the people were required to keep the festivals according to the day which had been sanctified by the court. (Maimonides, 10). It was in this matter of replacing the witness of the moon itself with a court procedure that the first century system sometimes failed to conform as required to the lunar cycles, possibly throwing the official month off from the actual lunar month by one day. In this particular, the Temple system of the first century was out of step with the Law, which specifically put recognition of the beginning of the months as regards the Temple service in the hands of the priests, rather than establishing a court for that purpose (Numbers 10:8-10).

### **Yeshua and His Disciples Usually in Agreement with the Jewish Calendar**

Though the court system of declaring the new moon must have caused errors at times, it is most likely that the court system identified the correct new moon day most of the time, with the Sabbaths and feasts then falling on the correct days. We can assume this because we have so many cases in the New Testament when Yeshua/Jesus and His disciples kept the Sabbaths and feasts at the same time as other Jews. The Gospels contain many verses such as this one indicating that Yeshua could be found worshipping at the synagogue on the Sabbath; *[Yeshua and the disciples] went into Capernaum; and immediately on the Sabbath He entered the synagogue and began to teach* (Mark 1:21 NASB). Paul also followed the same custom of Sabbath worship at the synagogue wherever he traveled; *... they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. And according to Paul's custom, he went to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures.* Acts 17:1,2 NASB

Though the NT Scriptures report occasional disputing over appointment days, this probably had more to do with differences over how those days should be celebrated than the correctness of the dates. Considering the frequent references to Yeshua and/or disciples worshiping with the Jews on the Sabbaths and feast days we must assume that Yeshua and the disciples were generally worshiping according to the same Biblical lunar time as the majority of the Jews. Besides this, we don't find a record in the New Testament of Yeshua disputing over the timing of the feasts and Sabbaths with the religious establishment, as He did on other issues related to the Law. This could only be because they were getting the calendar right most of the time so that it was not generally an issue.

### **Yeshua's Final Passover - The Exception that Proves the Rule**

Of course, it is always the exception that proves the rule. We do have at least one instance in Scripture when it appears that Yeshua and His disciples were operating one day earlier in the monthly lunar cycle than the Jewish establishment. There can be no doubt that if there was a difference in a given month between the actual New moon and the declaration of the court, Yeshua would have ignored the court and lived out His month by the actual lunar cycle. It was His way to simply disregard commandments of men that differed from the truth. This instance where He seems to have differed with the Jewish establishment was in the month of His death, specifically regarding the Passover.

### **The Synoptic Gospels and the Passover Supper**

Matthew, Mark and Luke all give us a similar account of the timing of the Passover from the standpoint of Yeshua and His disciples. Here is the account from Luke;

*Then came the first day of Unleavened Bread on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed [Josephus also calls the entire 8 days of Passover and Unleavened Bread by the general title of Unleavened Bread]. And **Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and prepare the Passover for us, so that we may eat it."***

*They said to Him, "Where do You want us to prepare it?"*

*And He said to them, "When you have entered the city, a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him into the house that he enters. "And you shall say to the owner of the house, 'The Teacher says to you, "**Where is the guest room in which I may eat the Passover with My disciples?**"' "And he will show you a large, furnished upper room; prepare it there."*

*And they left and found everything just as He had told them; and **they prepared the Passover. When the hour had come, He reclined at the table, and the apostles with Him. And He said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I say to you, I shall never again eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God."***

Luke 22:7-16 NASB (See also Matthew 26:17-20; Mark 14:12-18)

A simple reading of this passage is clear. This text is telling us about the last Passover meal that Yeshua/Jesus had with His disciples the evening before He died. According to the Law this was to occur on the evening of the fourteenth of the first month - and Yeshua always obeyed the Law. We also saw above from Josephus that the actual first century practice agreed with this and was to eat the Passover the evening of the fourteenth "leaving nothing till morning." These verses in Luke tell us five times what was actually being celebrated was the eating of the Passover meal that evening, placing that beyond question. As we follow the account, after the Passover meal

that evening we find Yeshua in the Garden that night, arrested in the early morning, later crucified, and dead, then buried in the late afternoon - all within the actual "sunset to sunset" Passover day of Nisan fourteen.

### **The Passover of the Jews According to John**

By contrast with this we have the account of John's Gospel in which he appears to relate the events of that Passover season from the timing of the Jews rather than that of Yeshua and the disciples. Thus, he sets the stage for his narration of events by stating; ***Now the Passover of the Jews was near, and many went up to Jerusalem out of the country before the Passover to purify themselves.*** John 11:55 NASB

This gives us some perspective when later we read about Yeshua before Pilate, on what Matthew, Mark and Luke revealed as the day on which Yeshua had already celebrated Passover. John writes; ***Now it was the day of preparation for the Passover; it was about the sixth hour. And he said to the Jews, "Behold, your King!"*** John 19:14

Thus, a simple reading of this text from John suggests that it was not Passover, but "the day of preparation for Passover" i.e., the day before Passover. John repeats this same account of time when he expounds what happened after the final moments of the Lord on the cross that same day; *Therefore when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And He bowed His head and gave up His spirit. **Then the Jews, because it was the day of preparation, so that the bodies would not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day),** asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.* John 19:30, 31 NASB

### **The Jews Were A Day Late**

Again John says it is the "day of preparation" rather than the Passover itself. Further, he identifies the coming day as a Sabbath that was a "high day". Many attempts have been made to explain away the difference between the other Gospels which call the day before this the "day of preparation" and John's Gospel that identifies this day of Yeshua's death as "the day of preparation." Bible critics often cite this seeming difference between John and the other Gospels as a contradiction between them. However, one must only look to the context for the answer. The simplest and most likely explanation is the most obvious one, that on this occasion Yeshua and His disciples celebrated the Passover a day earlier than "the Jews." If this is what happened then rest assured that Yeshua celebrated it on the correct day and it was the Jews, due to a court problem "sanctifying" the new moon a day late, that were off a day. Thus, there is no contradiction in this among the Gospels. Matthew, Mark and Luke write from the standpoint of Yeshua's celebration of the Passover, while John, writing decades later, writes from the standpoint of the Jewish timing of the Passover events. Viewed in this light the Gospel accounts harmonize in an amazing way.

Even John's narration of the Jew's concern "that Sabbath was a high day" supports this. According to the lunar cycles, the fourteenth of the month was a Sabbath, and in that first month of the year each year was also Passover. Passover, being both a feast day and a Sabbath day was a "high day." The problem was that the Jews were a day late that month! They missed it! IT ALREADY WAS SABBATH! IT ALREADY WAS PASSOVER! IT ALREADY WAS A HIGH DAY - THE HIGHEST HOLY DAY IN HISTORY!

### **"It Is Finished!" - The Ultimate Sabbath**

Yeshua celebrated Passover on the evening of the fourteenth, then gave Himself as our Passover Lamb on that very day set before the foundation of the world. Besides that, the Lord of the Sabbath declared His work for His Father and for us to be "finished!" then gave up his final breath in the ultimate Sabbath rest. In this amazing day these two great truths converge into one - the Sabbath and the Finished work of Christ. As we have seen, the Sabbath truth is about finishing and resting. Just as the creation was finished on the Sabbath, likewise, the new creation was finished on the Sabbath! On that Sabbath of all Sabbaths our Savior "finished" sin! On that Sabbath of all Sabbaths He "finished" death! He "finished" the domain of darkness and replaced it with His own mighty Kingdom of truth, light and Life! On that amazing Sabbath the precious Blood of our spotless Passover Lamb satisfied every requirement of the Law that stored up condemnation and the terrible wrath of a holy God against us, because of the awful blotch of sin that hopelessly stains our hearts and every fiber of our lawless fallen lives. On that Sabbath all the terrible wrath of God that you and I so richly deserved to have poured out upon us - that wrath was poured out upon Him instead! You could say that on that Sabbath your ass was in the ditch, and the Lord of the Sabbath came along and pulled it out, doing what you could never have done for yourself. "It is finished!" Because it is finished, you and I can rest from our own works to live and grow in His.

Some say the Sabbath is "a Jewish thing" and therefore is somehow not "Christian." Yet, when we consider what Christ did for us on that Sabbath of Sabbaths, how could we possibly say that? "Salvation is from the Jews" said Christ. And so it is, since our Savior is a Jew. Since that special day His Life is now my life, so that makes me a Jew too. Sabbath, is indeed a "Jewish thing" - but not a Jewish thing only. Every Sabbath is now a memorial to the finished work of Christ. It is a celebration of the grace and peace with our Father that Yeshua secured for us on that Sabbath of Sabbaths. Sabbath therefore, is a special day to spend with our Savior. I can't imagine a better reason to "keep the Sabbath holy." Can you?

Forgive me if I have departed a bit from the intellectual flow of this article, but in the awe of what He did that Sabbath on the Cross how could I help myself? In any event, I will now leave this profound truth for you to contemplate on your own, as I get back into the flow of explaining the timing of those Passover events.

### **Day of the Week?**

Of course, all of this has a profound effect on our understanding of the timing of the death and Resurrection of our Lord. In this regard, much is often made of the "days of the week" on which Yeshua died and was raised. The most prevalent theory is that He died on Friday and was raised on Sunday. Other theories suggest a Wednesday or Thursday death and Sunday Resurrection. All of these theories are based on the idea that the Sunday through Saturday planetary week was in use at that time, which we have shown in the last lesson simply was not the case. This mistake is a matter of reading present realities back into history where they did not exist.

### **The *Sabbaton* Cycle**

So just what is the "week" of the New Testament? It is almost ironic that **the New Testament Greek word translated in our Bibles as "week" is *Sabbaton***, a Greek word borrowed from the Hebrew (Strong's 4521G) which has the literal meaning of **"Sabbath ...by extension ... the interval between two Sabbaths."** In other words, when in the New Testament we read "the first day of the week" we assume we are reading the Roman day "Sunday." This assumption is entirely incorrect. **As we've already shown in the previous lesson, there was no Roman 7-day week existing when the New Testament was written.** Actually, when we read the words translated as "first day of week" we should more correctly be reading "the first day of the

Sabbath Interval." **Literally every mention of the "week" in the New Testament is actually a reference to a Sabbath interval of the Lunar month!**

It is well attested by Jewish authorities that the first century "week" was actually a Sabbath cycle that tied in directly with the rest of the Hebrew time scheme. **By late Second Temple times we encounter the standard Jewish practice of referring to all the days but the Sabbath by number. The point of reference of these designations is the Sabbath itself. Just as the numerical month-names are a constant reminder of the exodus, the numerical day-names are a constant reminder of God and the historical events commemorated by the Sabbath, the creation and the exodus** (Exodus 20:11; 31:17; Deuteronomy 5:15). (J. Tigay, "Lifne Hashabbat and 'Ahar Hashabbat: 'On the Day Before the Sabbath' and 'On the Day After the Sabbath'." Vetus Testamentum 28 (1978):362-65; "Notes on the Development of the Jewish Week." In H.L. Ginsberg Volume. Eretz-Israel 14 (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1978), p. 116 (Non-Hebrew Section))

Mark this fact then! **The "first day of the week" had nothing to do with Sun-Day!** "The first day of the week" and each of the other days were counted by their relative position in the active Sabbath cycle. Once again, "the point of reference of these designations is the Sabbath itself."

**First Day of the Week - First Work Day after the Major Festival Days?**

This means **the "first day of the week" is the first day of the new Sabbath cycle, following the last Sabbath and pointing toward the next Sabbath.** Normally then, the day after the Sabbath of the fourteenth would be "the first day of the week." However, since the fifteenth of Nisan was also a major feast day, the term "first day of the week" could have been used in popular speech designating the first normal work day of the new Sabbath cycle after a Sabbath and feast day. Frankly, we don't have enough information to be sure about this, even though it seems to make sense that the term probably was used in this general way - much like we speak of the "week-end" today that is technically both the end and the beginning of the week. Though not technically accurate the way we use the term is meaningful to us. In this same vein, the actual "first day of the week," meaning first day of the new Sabbath cycle, after Passover/Sabbath would have been the fifteenth. However, in popular speech it may have referred to the sixteenth of the month of Nisan in this instance, since the sixteenth was the first normal work "day of the week" after Passover and then the fifteenth day feast of ULB.

**Putting it Together**

Let us now consider how all of this fits together in the New Testament account of the events surrounding the death and resurrection of our Lord. If the month was running a day late for the Jews when Yeshua was killed then that must be taken into account in counting the days between His death and Resurrection. If all of the above is correct then the death and resurrection of Yeshua interfaced with the one-day skewed Jewish month that year as follows:

<b>Jews Running a Day Late in Month of Yeshua's Passover Sacrifice</b>				
Days of Yeshua's Month:	14	15	16	17

Yeshua's Events:	Passover & Sabbath, died & buried Luke 22:7-16	In the tomb. "The Son of Man must ... be killed and be raised up on the <b>third day</b> ." Luke 9:22		Raised from the tomb! Luke 24:1-7
Days of Jew's Month:	13	14	15	16
Jew's Events:	Preparation for Passover & Sabbath John 19:14	Jewish Sabbath & Passover	Festival of Unleavened Bread	"1st (normal) day of the Sabbaton" *John 20:1
*If "first day of the Sabbaton" must literally be the day after the Sabbath then that would have fallen on Yeshua's 16th and Jew's 15th - the "third day" in an inclusive reckoning.				

Given the documented policy of the Jewish court to "sanctify" the new moon a day late at times, the scenario outlined above is more than plausible, and also seems to solve a number of the mysteries of the Gospel accounts of Yeshua's death and Resurrection.

**Consider these 3 key points:**

**1. This scenario explains how the day on which Yeshua died could have been a Sabbath (considering the spiritual significance of the "finished" work of the "new creation" it surely must have been) and Yeshua still could have been raised on "the first day of the week."**

**2. It completely explains the apparent discrepancy between the Synoptic Gospels and the Gospel of John regarding the timing of Passover.**

3. Note well that **this breakdown of events does not work if the Jews were on our modern Sunday through Saturday week**, because in that event even though the Jews messed up the beginning of the month the days of the week would have continued unaffected. **This breakdown of events only works with Sabbath cycles regulated by the new moon.**

Unless someone can come up with a better scenario which allows for Yeshua's finished work to have occurred on the Sabbath AND that explains the one day difference of the timing of Passover between the Synoptic Gospels and John, I will be sticking with this picture as the true account of events. If one accepts this picture then they must also accept the concept of lunar-based Sabbaths, since lunar-based Sabbaths are foundational to it.

**Truly, the events and timing of Messiah's death and resurrection offer compelling evidence that the Jewish Temple establishment of the first century preserved the lunar month based on the sighting of the new moon and with this, preserved lunar-based Sabbath cycles and lunar-based feast days.** Simply put, even in this case where the Jewish court apparently messed up by a day, it still all fits reckoned by lunar *Sabbaton* cycles.

**More Evidence of Lunar Sabbath Cycles**

At this point we have considered two first century Jewish calendars, that of the Essenes and that of the Jewish Temple establishment, which latter calendar we have also verified according to the New Testament account of Messiah's death and resurrection. On the basis of the evidence presented it seems clear that while each of the two first century Jewish calendar systems we have considered arrived at different Sabbath and festival days (explaining the theological split between them) both included the then-standard Hebrew practice of lunar Sabbath cycles numbered 1 through 4 within any lunar month. Our question now is; can we find any further support for this in other writings of the period?

Such references do exist in the ancient literature. For example, the Church historian Eusebius quotes Aristobulus as saying; *Homer and Hesiod let us know, what they learned out of our books, that the seventh day was a holy day. Thus, says Hesiod: **There is the first day of the 'month', and the fourth(teenth), and the seventh, that holy day.*** (Aristobulus, in Eusebius's Praep. Evang. 13:12,13)

Note that **Aristobulus spoke of the seventh day as a holy day in reference to the seventh day of the month - not the week!** That implies a Sabbath tied to lunar cycles.

Also interesting in this regard is that Clement of Alexandria (Second Century) specifically noted a system of four lunar-based "weeks" in a lunar month:

*And in periods of seven days the moon undergoes its changes. In the **first week she becomes half moon**; in the **second, full moon**; and in the **third, in her wane, again half moon**; and in the **fourth she disappears.*** (St. Clement of Alexandria, *The Stromata*, or *Miscellanies*, Chapter 16)

Notice that Clement uses the term translated as "week" in an entirely different manner than we think of the term today. **His use of the term "week" specifically ties the four "weeks" of the lunar month to the phases of the moon.** As we have seen, these four "weeks" identified by Clement identify closely with New Testament "weeks" that are more correctly identified as Sabbath cycles.

In fact, Clement specifically comments on Sabbaths fixed by the new moon, saying; *[Peter] inferred thus: "Neither worship as [some] Jews\_ [for] **if the moon be not visible, they do not hold the Sabbath, which is called the first**".* The 'Sabbath, which is called the first' is likely a technical term referring to **the first Sabbath cycle here related to the new moon.** (*The Stromata*, or *Miscellanies*, Chapter 5)

This respective Sabbath interval (called the 'first') is of special interest because it tracks closely with Biblical language. We have already seen that the days of the Sabbath intervals were called "first", "second" etc. It is a short step to the idea that the Sabbath intervals themselves were then also numbered "first", "second", "third" and "fourth" through the lunar month. Just as the months themselves were also called "first", "second" etc. through the year. Then the years were numbered "first", "second" etc. to the seventh year Sabbath. In any event, Clement's comments definitely tie the New moon and Sabbaths together.

### **More New Testament Evidence**

Looking once again to the New Testament Scriptures we find further evidence of Sabbath cycles. Let us do a word study on Colossians 2:16, 17. Here are the verses from the JKV with Strong's numbers to help us break down the actual Greek words:

Let<sup>2919, 0</sup> no<sup>3361</sup> man<sup>5100</sup> therefore<sup>3767</sup> judge<sup>2919</sup> you<sup>5209</sup> in<sup>1722</sup> meat<sup>1035</sup>, or<sup>2228</sup> in<sup>1722</sup> drink<sup>4213</sup>, or<sup>2228</sup> in<sup>1722</sup> respect<sup>3313</sup> of an holyday<sup>1859</sup>, or<sup>2228</sup> of the new moon<sup>3561</sup>, or<sup>2228</sup> of the sabbath<sup>4521</sup> days : Which<sup>3739</sup> are<sup>2076</sup> a shadow<sup>4639</sup> of things to come<sup>3195</sup>; but<sup>1161</sup> the body<sup>4983</sup> is of Christ<sup>5547</sup>.

OK, look at these verses. Notice that there are two words that are not in the original Greek. Neither is any of the punctuation of course. The two words not included in the Greek are "days" and "is." The word "days" has been inserted to indicate that the word translated "Sabbath" is a kind of plural word. There is no qualifying reason in the Greek why the word "is" has been inserted. Lets just take all this added stuff out. When we throw out the added word "day" we will still have to deal with the fact that "sabbath" in this instance is a plural word. To do that we will simply replace the word "Sabbath" with the actual Greek word it is here translated from, making the added word "day" unnecessary to express the plural. Here is what we've actual got left from the original Greek:

*Let no man therefore judge you in meat or in drink or in respect of an holyday or of the new moon or of the sabbaton which are a shadow of things to come but the body of Christ.*

Notice anything? **The word *sabbaton* is exactly the same word that we encountered earlier, the word that is translated as "week" in the Gospels! This is the Sabbath "week" or more correctly one of the four Sabbath cycles making up the lunar month.** Notice that it is **listed right after "the new moon."** That's **because the Sabbath cycles are counted from the new moon!** Conclusion? **This *sabbaton* of the New Testament is the same as the *shabuwa* of the Old Testament.**

Do you get what this means? Properly translated and understood, there is continuity between the Old Testament and the New Testament showing that **the people of God were on His lunar time, keeping lunar-based Sabbaths throughout the entire Biblical period!**

Armed with this knowledge let's take another go at these verses. The phrase, "which are a shadow of things to come" very clearly is a parenthetical thought inserted into the flow of the verse. Therefore, we are justified to put that phrase in parenthesis. Let's do that, and also translate *sabbaton* as "Sabbath cycles" as already explained. Here's how the verse looks now:

*Let no man therefore judge you in meat or in drink or in respect of an holyday or of the new moon or of the Sabbath cycles (which are a shadow of things to come) but the body of Christ.*

What is the verse now actually saying? Quite simply, it is saying 'Let no one judge you in regard to the observances listed but the body of Christ.' The point is that we should not allow ourselves to be judged by those who are not followers of Messiah regarding these observances. Only the body of Christ is able to grasp the fullness of what these observances mean, understanding that they are a shadow of things to come. This is well illustrated in the case of the Lord finishing the New Creation on the Sabbath when He gave His life for us, as explained above in this article. Only the body of Christ can grasp the meaning of this, so only the body of Christ can judge the true significance of the Sabbath and related observances.

### **First Century Believers Kept The Feasts**

What this IS NOT saying is that these observances are meaningless and "legalistic." We have already seen that Yeshua and Paul were both in the custom of worshipping on the Sabbath. We also know that many of the first century believers were Jewish. Thus James says to Paul; *You see,*

brother, how many **thousands** there are among the **Jews** of those who have **believed**, and **they are all zealous for the Law**. Acts 21:20 NASB

Of course all of **these Law-keeping Jewish believers kept the Sabbath and other appointments of Yahweh**, otherwise they would not be keeping the Law. However, **we also find Gentile believers in the first century keeping Yahweh's appointments**. For example Paul writes to the Corinthian believers; *Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even **Christ our passover is sacrificed** for us: **Therefore let us keep the feast**, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.* 1 Corinthians, 7,8 KJV

Please notice something important here. **The argument is often made that keeping the feasts, which Biblically includes the Sabbath, is unnecessary because the fulfillment they pointed to has arrived in Christ**. At first thought this seems to make sense, but in reality it is a specious and unbiblical argument. Why do I say that? Because the apostolic logic of Paul is exactly the opposite! **The logic of Paul says; BECAUSE Christ has fulfilled the feasts is exactly why we need to keep them!** He has made them something more than they were before. **He has brought a substance and reality to them that makes them more important than ever**. Rather than removing them, **Christ brings a substance to them that enriches the observance of Yahweh's appointments as a memorial for all time to all He has done for us in them**.

This is well attested here in Scripture and by many other early writings as well. For example; ". . . Following their example up to the present time **all the bishops of Asia** — as themselves also **receiving the rule from an unimpeachable authority, to wit, the evangelist John, who leant on the Lord's breast, and drank in instructions spiritual without doubt** — **were in the way of celebrating the Paschal feast, without question, every year, whenever the fourteenth day of the moon had come...**" [THE PASCHAL CANON OF ANATOLIUS OF ALEXANDRIA (died 283 AD)]

Brethren, let no one delude you with false arguments. First century believers did indeed keep the appointments of the Lord, and they did so, as the people of God had always done so, according to Yahweh's Lunar appointment calendar.

### **The True Appointments of Yahweh**

Nobody wants to get stuck with counterfeit money. Yet it happens all the time. Why? Because at first glance the counterfeit looks enough like the original that nobody questions it. Any banker can tell you there is only one defense against receiving counterfeit money. If you know what real money looks like - if you REALLY know - then when someone tries to pass you a phony bill you will know it just "ain't right."

The modern Jewish Rabbinical Calendar is as phoney as a three dollar bill! Yet, a lot of people are accepting it as the real thing. Not only the Jewish community either. There are many Christians and Christian groups who sincerely want to keep Yahweh's appointments who depend upon the modern Jewish calendar to do it. They assume that surely the Jewish calendar must be one and the same with the calendar of the Bible. However, if they REALLY knew what the calendar of the Bible looks like they would not accept the modern Jewish calendar for an instant! But don't just take my word for it. Take a good look yourself at the real thing - the appointments of Yahweh as recorded in His Sacred Word. Then we will compare the modern Jewish calendar to it.

The most succinct list of Yahweh's appointments is found in Leviticus 23, so we will be using that list here. Keep in mind though, that other passages offer additional and clarifying information. For example, Exodus 12 and 13, Numbers 28 and 29, and others. The translation we are using is the *New American Standard Bible* (NASB), considered a solid literal translation from the Hebrew into modern English. I have chosen this particular translation of this chapter because it is as literally true to the Hebrew as any popular English translation available, actually better than most. While this is a good English language Bible, no translation is perfect. A fault we find with this one, as with many others, is that it follows the religious tradition of replacing the Sacred Name, YHWH (Yahweh), with the title "The LORD." In the Preface of the NASB the Editorial Board explains; *There is yet another name which is particularly assigned to God as His special or proper name, that is, the four letters, YHWH. See Exodus 3 and Isaiah 42:8. This name has not been pronounced by the Jews because of reverence for the great sacredness of the divine name. Therefore, it was consistently pronounced and translated LORD.* On the basis of this Jewish custom the NASB and other Bible translators have consistently replaced the divine name from the Hebrew with the more generic LORD. I respectfully disagree with the NASB Editorial Board and other Bible translators who have followed this religious custom. I do not believe it is appropriate for a Jewish custom to be the basis for removing something from the Biblical text in translation that is originally there in the Hebrew text. I think that if Yahweh wanted the text to say "The LORD" instead of His "proper name" that is what it would say in the Hebrew. Therefore, we will do you the service of restoring the "proper name" from the Hebrew back into the English text. I think that other minor improvements could be made to this as to any translation, but these are debatable, therefore we shall accept the rest of the text as it is.

### **Here Are Yahweh's Appointed Times In Leviticus 23:**

**Lev 23:1** Yahweh spoke again to Moses, saying,

**Lev 23:2** "Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, 'Yahweh's appointed times which you shall proclaim as holy convocations--My appointed times are these:

**Lev 23:3** 'For six days work may be done, but on the seventh day there is a sabbath of complete rest, a holy convocation. You shall not do any work; it is a sabbath to Yahweh in all your dwellings.

**Lev 23:4** 'These are the appointed times of Yahweh, holy convocations which you shall proclaim at the times appointed for them.

**Lev 23:5** 'In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at twilight is Yahweh's Passover.

**Lev 23:6** 'Then on the fifteenth day of the same month there is the Feast of Unleavened Bread to Yahweh; for seven days you shall eat unleavened bread.

**Lev 23:7** 'On the first day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall not do any laborious work.

**Lev 23:8** 'But for seven days you shall present an offering by fire to Yahweh. On the seventh day is a holy convocation; you shall not do any laborious work.'"

**Lev 23:9** Then Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying,

Lev 23:10 "Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, 'When you enter the land which I am going to give to you and reap its harvest, then you shall bring in the sheaf of the first fruits of your harvest to the priest.

Lev 23:11 'He shall wave the sheaf before Yahweh for you to be accepted; on the day after the sabbath the priest shall wave it.

Lev 23:12 'Now on the day when you wave the sheaf, you shall offer a male lamb one year old without defect for a burnt offering to Yahweh.

Lev 23:13 'Its grain offering shall then be two-tenths *of an ephah* of fine flour mixed with oil, an offering by fire to Yahweh *for* a soothing aroma, with its drink offering, a fourth of a hin of wine.

Lev 23:14 'Until this same day, until you have brought in the offering of your God, you shall eat neither bread nor roasted grain nor new growth. It is to be a perpetual statute throughout your generations in all your dwelling places.

Lev 23:15 'You shall also count for yourselves from the day after the sabbath, from the day when you brought in the sheaf of the wave offering; there shall be seven complete sabbaths.

Lev 23:16 'You shall count fifty days to the day after the seventh sabbath; then you shall present a new grain offering to Yahweh.

Lev 23:17 'You shall bring in from your dwelling places two *loaves* of bread for a wave offering, made of two-tenths *of an ephah*; they shall be of a fine flour, baked with leaven as first fruits to Yahweh.

Lev 23:18 'Along with the bread you shall present seven one year old male lambs without defect, and a bull of the herd and two rams; they are to be a burnt offering to Yahweh, with their grain offering and their drink offerings, an offering by fire of a soothing aroma to Yahweh.

Lev 23:19 'You shall also offer one male goat for a sin offering and two male lambs one year old for a sacrifice of peace offerings.

Lev 23:20 'The priest shall then wave them with the bread of the first fruits for a wave offering with two lambs before Yahweh; they are to be holy to Yahweh for the priest.

Lev 23:21 'On this same day you shall make a proclamation as well; you are to have a holy convocation. You shall do no laborious work. It is to be a perpetual statute in all your dwelling places throughout your generations.

Lev 23:22 'When you reap the harvest of your land, moreover, you shall not reap to the very corners of your field nor gather the gleaning of your harvest; you are to leave them for the needy and the alien. I am Yahweh your God.'"

Lev 23:23 Again Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying,

Lev 23:24 "Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, 'In the seventh month on the first of the month you shall have a rest, a reminder by blowing *of trumpets*, a holy convocation.

Lev 23:25 'You shall not do any laborious work, but you shall present an offering by fire to Yahweh.'"

Lev 23:26 Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying,

Lev 23:27 "On exactly the tenth day of this seventh month is the day of atonement; it shall be a holy convocation for you, and you shall humble your souls and present an offering by fire to Yahweh.

Lev 23:28 "You shall not do any work on this same day, for it is a day of atonement, to make atonement on your behalf before Yahweh your God.

Lev 23:29 "If there is any person who will not humble himself on this same day, he shall be cut off from his people.

Lev 23:30 "As for any person who does any work on this same day, that person I will destroy from among his people.

Lev 23:31 "You shall do no work at all. It is to be a perpetual statute throughout your generations in all your dwelling places.

Lev 23:32 "It is to be a sabbath of complete rest to you, and you shall humble your souls; on the ninth of the month at evening, from evening until evening you shall keep your sabbath."

Lev 23:33 Again Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying,

Lev 23:34 "Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, 'On the fifteenth of this seventh month is the Feast of Booths for seven days to Yahweh.

Lev 23:35 'On the first day is a holy convocation; you shall do no laborious work of any kind.

Lev 23:36 'For seven days you shall present an offering by fire to Yahweh. On the eighth day you shall have a holy convocation and present an offering by fire to Yahweh; it is an assembly. You shall do no laborious work.

Lev 23:37 'These are the appointed times of Yahweh which you shall proclaim as holy convocations, to present offerings by fire to Yahweh--burnt offerings and grain offerings, sacrifices and drink offerings, *each* day's matter on its own day--

Lev 23:38 besides *those of* the sabbaths of Yahweh, and besides your gifts and besides all your votive and freewill offerings, which you give to Yahweh.

Lev 23:39 'On exactly the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the crops of the land, you shall celebrate the feast of Yahweh for seven days, with a rest on the first day and a rest on the eighth day.

Lev 23:40 'Now on the first day you shall take for yourselves the foliage of beautiful trees, palm branches and boughs of leafy trees and willows of the brook, and you shall rejoice before Yahweh your God for seven days.

Lev 23:41 'You shall thus celebrate it *as* a feast to Yahweh for seven days in the year. It *shall be* a perpetual statute throughout your generations; you shall celebrate it in the seventh month.

Lev 23:42 'You shall live in booths for seven days; all the native-born in Israel shall live in booths,

Lev 23:43 so that your generations may know that I had the sons of Israel live in booths when I brought them out from the land of Egypt. I am Yahweh your God."

Lev 23:44 So Moses declared to the sons of Israel the appointed times of Yahweh.

### **Characteristics Of Yahweh's Sacred Appointment Calendar**

Now that we have Yahweh's sacred appointment calendar before us let us examine it more closely to determine its essential characteristics. The first two verses of the chapter define what the rest of the chapter is about as follows:

*"Yahweh spoke again to Moses, saying, "Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, 'Yahweh's appointed times which you shall proclaim as holy convocations--My appointed times are these:"*

### **Yahweh's Appointed Times**

The translation of these first two verses is very accurate. "Appointed times" here translates the Hebrew word *mow`ed* (Strong's 4150H) which is first defined as "properly, an appointment." This exact same word is also translated as "feast" and sometimes as "seasons" elsewhere in this chapter and/or throughout the OT Scriptures. Therefore, keep in mind that when you read "feast" it is really talking about an "appointment" with God. That is very consistent with these first two verses which tell us what this chapter is all about. Namely, these are "Yahweh's appointed times" that He is setting with His people.

Please notice here that Yahweh is not asking us when we would like to set these appointments.

He calls them "My appointed times" because they are the times that He has set. If an appointment is set for a particular time and you show up at a different time, or not at all, you have missed the appointment. Your reason for missing it doesn't really matter in the sense that you are either there on His schedule or you are not. He has already set the appointment times and our obligation is to conform to His schedule. Therefore, there is no room here to "monkey" with His calendar to come up with a calendar we like better.

### **Sacred Meetings**

The other major point of these introductory verses is that Yahweh's "appointed times" are to be proclaimed as "holy convocations." What does that mean? The word "holy" is translated from *qodesh* (Strong's 6944H from 6942H) meaning "a sacred place or thing." The word "convocation" is translated from *miqra* (Strong's 4744H from 7121H) meaning "something called out i.e. a public meeting." Therefore a "holy convocation" is a "sacred public meeting" where the people of Yahweh

meet together with one another and with Him at His "appointed times." Yahweh doesn't say that His people can't meet with one another and with Him at other times of their choosing also. However, these particular "sacred public meetings" are set at His "appointed times" so, in that sense, are not optional.

### **Appointed Times Based on the New Moon Crescent**

Considering how exact "Yahweh's appointed times" are it is very important that we are working with the same reference point He is in observing them. As the earlier lessons in this series well establish, the reference point for all of Yahweh's appointments is the new moon understood as the first crescent of the moon visible after the period of darkness of the moon at the end of the lunar month.

For example Leviticus 23:5 says; *In the first month (H. chodesh), on the fourteenth day of the month (H. chodesh) at twilight is Yahweh's Passover.* Our English word "month" is derived from the Old English "moon-th." It refers to one complete cycle of the phases of the moon. Thus "month" is here used to translate Strong's 2320H, *chodesh*, defined as "the new moon; by implication, a month:--month(-ly), new moon." God's appointment calendar according to which His appointments are scheduled is therefore specified to be the moon, specifically starting with the "new moon" as the term was understood at the time Yahweh spoke it. Therefore, Leviticus 23:5 can literally be translated; *In the first new moon, on the fourteenth day of the new moon at twilight is Yahweh's Passover.* The new moon is the one reference point from which all "Yahweh's appointed times" are counted. As Psalm 109:19 says, **"He made the moon for (mowed) appointed times."**

This is a very specific way for Yahweh to schedule His appointments. *Chodesh* signifies a month as counted from the new moon, according to the definition of a new moon at the time that God issued His appointments. From earliest times till past the time of Christ a new moon was determined as the actual sighting of the new moon crescent. ***Historically, the lunar cycle was regarded as the moment the crescent of the moon could be seen, following a period of invisibility.*** *The lunar month varies in length, from slightly over 29 days but never less than 29, and never more than 30 days (The Anchor Bible Dict., s.v. "Calendars").*

Jewish history and scholarship unanimously agree that the earliest observance of "Yahweh's appointed times" was by observation of the visible first crescent as the "new moon" and the first day of the month. ("Calendar", The Encyclopaedia Judaica Jerusalem, pp. 43-54, Keter Pub. House Ltd. Jerusalem, Israel, 1971. "Calendar", The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. 2, pp. 630-634, Univ. Jewish Ency. Inc, New York, 1940. "Calendar, Jewish", The Book of Jewish Knowledge, An Encyclopedia of Judaism and the Jewish People, Nathan Ausbel, 1964, pp.70-71. "Calendar (Jewish)", Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, Edit. by James Hastings, Vol. III, 1971, pp.117-124. "Calendar, History of:", The Jewish Encyclopedia, Funk and Wagnalls, 1903, pp. 498-504.

Despite how well documented this point is, there continues to be confusion over what constitutes the new moon. The reason is that with the advancement of science something called "the conjunction" during the darkness of the moon came to be regarded as the astronomical new moon, and continues to be regarded so today. That is why the "new moon" as reported in calendars and almanacs is not at the same time as the actual appearance of the new moon crescent. This astronomical new moon is invisible to the human eye and can only be detected by the use of special scientific equipment. By contrast, the new moon by which Yahweh scheduled His appointments is the new moon crescent which any person may look up at the sky to see. The way Yahweh set His appointments does not require scientists or other experts. It requires no

calendar or almanac – something not attainable to the average person in ancient times. God put His appointment book right in the sky so that any person can observe the new moon and know for himself when Yahweh's appointed times are scheduled – no “experts” needed!

### **The First Month of the Year**

Once we understand that Yahweh's appointments are set by the new moon crescent each month the only other information we need is which new moon is the "first" of the year. That first new moon of the year is set by Yahweh as the month in which the exodus from Egypt occurred. At the time of the exodus Yahweh said; *This month shall be the beginning of months for you; **it is to be the first month of the year** to you* (Exodus 12:2). There can be no doubt which month that is since the exodus account clearly states; *On this day in the month of **Abib**, you are about to go forth* (Exodus 13:4). As we have explained in more detail in an earlier lesson, the month name *Abib* refers to green ears of barley that appear in the first month of spring. The first month of the year is therefore the lunar month in which the spring equinox occurs.

### **Sabbaths are Listed as Lunar-Based Appointment Times**

Having these basics settled we are ready to look at the specific appointments that Yahweh has set. The first of these appointments He mentions is the Sabbath at the end of the Sabbath cycle. *For **six days work may be done, but on the seventh day there is a sabbath of complete rest, a holy convocation.** You shall not do any work; it is a sabbath to Yahweh in all your dwellings.* Leviticus 23:3

Please note that the Sabbath cycle is listed as one of Yahweh's appointments along with the other appointments listed. There is absolutely no good reason, therefore, to assume that the days of the Sabbath cycle, and the Sabbath itself, should be counted from any other starting point than the other appointments of Yahweh are counted from, especially since "the moon was made for appointed times." Therefore, each new moon is the start of a cycle of six days of work and a seventh that is a Sabbath. This tracks closely with the phases of the moon.

From the point of the new moon crescent, the period in which the moon first appears then gets larger each evening, progressing toward the full moon at the middle of the month, is when the moon is “waxing” and, in that sense, continues as “new.” The period when the moon attains its full size at the middle and then gets smaller each evening until disappearing completely is called the “waning” moon – that is the “old” moon. The period in which the moon is visible lasts for 28 solar days, in other words, four 7-day periods or "quarters." These 28 days of the moon's visible cycle are followed by the period in which the moon is completely dark, called the “molad.” This period of darkness was considered by the ancients as the period in which the moon was resting and renewing itself to appear once again as the new moon when the first moon crescent is sighted once again. Thus, the Sabbaths commanded in Leviticus 23:3 track closely with the phases of the moon. Being scheduled at the 7th, 14th, 21st, and 28th of the month, with the final Sabbath of the month as an extended Sabbath lasting through the "rest period" at the darkness of the moon till the new moon appears again.

### **All of Yahweh's Appointments listed in Leviticus 23 include:**

1. **The Sabbaths** following each six days of work through the four Sabbath cycles of each month.
2. **Passover**, on the 14th day of the first month.

3. The "**Feast of Unleavened Bread**" on the 15th day of the first month for seven days, through the twenty-first (see Ex. 12). The first (more correctly, "the day before" meaning Passover on the 14th - see Lesson 2) and seventh days of this appointment are "holy" and "Sabbaths," falling on actual seventh-day Sabbath days, namely, the 14<sup>th</sup> and the 21<sup>st</sup> of the month.
4. **Firstfruits**, occurring the day after "seven complete sabbaths" from a specified event in Abib.
  5. The day of "**Trumpets**" on the first day of the seventh month.
  6. The "**Day of Atonement**" on the tenth day of the seventh month.
  7. The "**Feast of Tabernacles**" in the seventh month on the fifteenth.

While most of these are very clear, there is some dispute regarding the starting date and duration of some of these appointment days by various individuals and groups. It is beyond the scope of this particular lesson to explain the details of each of these appointments, or to delve into these differences. One important principle I must acknowledge though, is that all of these days have their ultimate fulfillment in Messiah. Therefore, all sacrificial offerings required as part of these appointments have now been satisfied forever in the perfect sacrifice of the Lamb of God. "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." Hebrews 10:14 KJV

At this point I have demonstrated the following unalterable characteristics of Yahweh's true calendar of appointments:

### **The Characteristics of Yahweh's Authentic Calendar of Appointed Times**

- 1. They are Yahweh's appointed times - not ours. He sets the schedule, not us.**
- 2. He has chosen to set His schedule of appointments by the new moon according to the meaning of the term when He first set the appointments i.e., by the new moon crescent.**
- 3. The first lunar month of the year is the month in which spring occurs, when Israel came out of Egypt.**
- 4. He includes the Sabbath cycles with these other moon-thly appointments because they, like the other appointments, are figured from the new moon.**

Based on these unalterable characteristics of Yahweh's calendar I will now demonstrate that the Jewish Calendar in use today is but a poor counterfeit of the original.

### **The modern Jewish Calendar is a counterfeit based on these two facts:**

- 1. It is impossible to reconcile an unending 7-day cycle with the other appointments of God that are clearly fixed from the appearance of the new moon.**
- 2 The Jewish calendar currently in use is not reliable in giving us the correct appointments of God – in large part because of adopting an unending 7-day cycle and altering the calendar to accommodate it.**

## **Babylonian Development of a Calculated Jewish Calendar**

As we have seen, according to both Jewish and secular history, visual observation of the new moon and the seasons was used to establish holy days until the calculated calendar became available. Jews in Babylon began to develop a calculated lunar/solar calendar at a fairly early date, although it was not the official calendar. An "early form" of a calculated calendar was sent to the priests in Jerusalem by the Babylonian astronomer Samuel (165-250 AD).

Although there clearly was knowledge to create a calculated calendar, it was used only to check the actual new moon observations. This was so till 359 AD when Hillel II is said to have published an early version of the calculated Jewish Calendar in use today. This was a response to Roman hatred of the Jews and everything Jewish. ("Hillel II", The Encyclopedia Judaica Jerusalem, Keter Pub. House Ltd. Jerusalem, Israel, 1971, Jewish Ency. p. 486)

## **Roman Pressure on the Jews Leads to Adoption of a New Jewish Calendar**

Consider the political climate of the times. It was during this Fourth Century that the planetary week, the continuous 7-day cycle named after Roman planet-gods, was written into Roman law. The first day of the planetary week, "Sunday" was named as the day of rest for the Empire. This occurred about 325 AD, the same time Emperor Constantine put in place a Roman formula for determining Passover (contrary to the Biblical method) the very method still used today to determine "Easter." These innovations had ominous implications for the Jews. Note this letter from Emperor Constantine regarding his reasons for enacting the new "Easter" date:

### **In 325 AD - A LETTER OF CONSTANTINE**

***....Constantine, August, to the Churches.***

*...When the question arose concerning the most holy day of Easter (Pascha as written in Latin or Greek English **Passover**) it was decreed by common consent to be expedient, that **this festival should be celebrated on the same day by all, in every place...***

*...And truly, in the first place, **it seemed to every one a most unworthy thing that we should follow the custom of the Jews in the celebration** of this most holy solemnity, who, **polluted wretches, having stained their hands with a nefarious crime, are justly blinded in their minds...***

*...It is fit, therefore, that rejecting the practice of this people, we should perpetuate to all future ages the celebration of this rite, in a more legitimate order...*

***Let us then have nothing in common with the most hostile rabble of the Jews.***

*...For what can they rightly understand, who, after the tragical death of our Lord, being **deluded and darkened** in their minds, are carried away by an **unrestrained impulse** wherever their **inborn madness** may impel them...*

*...it is necessary that this fault should be so amended that we may **have nothing in common with the usage of these parricides and murderers of our Lord;***

*...it should be considered that any dissension in a business of such importance, and in a religious institution of so great solemnity, would be **highly criminal...***

Thus, it became "highly criminal" to uphold the Biblical calendar. With the power of Rome behind them, "Christian" rulers prohibited the Jewish leadership from proclaiming intercalary years or from informing the Diaspora, with meetings for that purpose outlawed. Under this pressure the fixing of the annual calendar eventually became impossible. The Diaspora was completely dependent upon the Sanhedrin for the calendar, and fixing the calendar dates and notification became impossible (*Jewish Ency.*, s.v. "Hillel II").

In AD 351–352 Roman persecution flared and the Jews revolted. They were soon crushed. Many Jewish towns were destroyed and decrees issued against the local authorities and against Judaism. The privileges of the head of the Sanhedrin and the freedoms of the Sanhedrin itself were curtailed. Hillel II agreed to limit the functions of the head of the Sanhedrin, as well as the Sanhedrin itself, with respect to proclaiming the new moon, setting festival dates, and employing intercalation. With the decline of the Jewish power-base in Israel, the Jewish community in Babylon had been rising in influence to fill the vacuum. Hillel II published details informing all Jews of the methods of the calculated calendar developed in Babylon. From that time on the Sanhedrin in Judea ceased to function or to maintain calendar experts. Hillel II is thus given the credit for the present fixed Jewish calendar, but in reality it was just the starting point of the development of the Jewish calendar in use today (*Ency. Judaica*, s.v. "Hillel").

The calculated calendar was a source of great disputing among the Jews at the time, even involving threats of excommunication and divisions. Hillel's calendar of 359 AD continued to incorporate changes and revisions till the 9th century. ("Calendar (Jewish)", *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, edited by James Hastings, Vol. 3, pp. 117-124)

### **Not the Calendar of the Bible**

The present calculated Jewish Calendar therefore is not the calendar of the Bible. The modern Jewish calendar is a calculated calendar not based on observation of the new lunar crescent each month. The Jewish calculations are based on the "mean" conjunction of the moon with the sun in relation to the earth. The conjunction occurs at high noon at a different location on the earth each month. Everyone including the Jews acknowledge that, unlike the visible first lunar crescent, the conjunction "is not visible." ("Calendar", *The Encyclopaedia Judaica* Jerusalem, pp. 43-54, Keter Pub. House Ltd. Jerusalem, Israel, 1971.)

This one problem is reason enough to dump the Jewish calendar in the trash can. This change gives a different first day of the month than is meant by the term "new moon" in Leviticus above. This change alone will cause you to "show up" for God's appointment at a different time than He has set. Just try this with your doctor, dentist, lawyer or any other person with whom you have a specific appointment set and see how it works with them!

This change in determining the first day of the month is bad enough, but it gets worse. Complicating the situation further is the fact that a continual 7-day cycle used as the basis for the rabbinical Sabbath is simply incompatible with the other appointment days of God's calendar. The Roman planetary-week system and God's appointment system are irreconcilable. It is like trying to mix oil with water or even more like mixing baking soda with vinegar. The two are completely hostile to each other and could not possibly have been envisioned in the schedule of appointments outlined by God in Leviticus, which a simple examination will shortly clearly demonstrate.

### **Fixing Rosh HaShanah (Jewish New Year's Day)**

The first day of the rabbinical Calendar is known as *Rosh HaShannah*, Jewish New Year. It is on the day set according to the Rabbinical Calendar as the first day of the month of *Tishri*, roughly

the seventh month of the Biblical calendar (this is the wrong month, according to the Bible). Why I say roughly will become very apparent as we continue.

In the Rabbinical calendar the first day of Tishri and the new year is not set strictly according to the new moon, as in Scripture above. Instead, there are four Rabbinical rules used in fixing the first day of the year. These rules are called *dehiyyah*. Each *dehiyyot* may cause a postponement of two days. The main purpose of these rules is to adjust the other appointment days of the year to fit the present day 7-day "Sabbath" planetary-week cycle. The object is to prevent the Day of Atonement (Tishri 10) from falling on Friday or Sunday, and Hoshana Rabba (the seventh day of Sukkot; Tishri 21) from falling on Saturday, the Rabbinical "Sabbath." (Encyclopedia Judaica)

Consider the reason why these rules are applied:

What if the Day of Atonement fell on the sixth day, the day before the weekly Sabbath? Then the Scripture would be in contradiction, for how could you prepare for the Sabbath on the Day of Atonement? That is just wrong.

If Trumpets was on a "Wednesday" then the Day of Atonement, Tishri 10, would fall on a "Friday," regarded as the "preparation day" for the Saturday "Sabbath!" Then the Passover would also be observed Saturday night, falling the day after the "Sabbath," allowing no preparation day for Passover.

If Trumpets occurred on a "Friday," then the Day of Atonement would be on a "Sunday," making the day before a Saturday "Sabbath." This just wouldn't do because the day before the Day of Atonement is commanded to be a preparation day requiring work!

Honestly friends, are we to believe that God was really this confused?

### ***Dehiyyah* Rules Prove Planetary-Week Sabbath Untenable**

I think you can see why the *dehiyyah* rules were invented. A planetary-week Sabbath rotation and a lunar-based calendar are completely at odds with one another. However, even the *dehiyyah* rules are not the answer because they throw the calendar off as much as two days from the true first day of the lunar month! By contrast, a lunar-based 7-day Sabbath preceding through the month counting from the new moon forward does no violence whatsoever to the other appointment days. Lunar-based Sabbaths are completely harmonious with the entire lunar system, requiring no *dehiyyah* adjustments.

The more you try to reconcile an unending 7-day cycle Sabbath and God's fixed appointment days the more obvious the impossibility of doing so becomes. Why is this? There can only be one answer. God did not intend for His "appointments" to be subjected to a continuous 7-day cycle Sabbath- or to some man-made system seeking to change His "appointed times." Simple observation of the incompatibility of these two opposing systems is thus evidence on its face that the Sabbath was originally tied into the lunar cycle, making it compatible with the other appointment days of the month.

### **Why Were the *dehiyyah* Rules Suddenly Needed?**

Please realize that there is no evidence whatsoever that these *dehiyyah* rules which were created to reconcile the planetary-week Sabbath with the lunar calendar ever existed before the present calculated Jewish calendar. For example, with the voluminous amount of meticulous information

that Josephus gives us regarding every aspect of the holy days and services, he never once mentions such rules or a need for such rules. He always speaks in such a way as to assume that the Sabbaths fit with no conflict into the rest of the calendar system. Clearly, if a planetary-week Sabbath had always been the rule than the incompatibilities between non-lunar Sabbaths and lunar-based holy days would have always been a problem requiring some method of address. So why, long after the Biblical period, does reconciling the planetary-week Sabbath with the other appointments of the calendar suddenly pop up as such a problem where it never had been a problem before? There can only be one answer. The Sabbath cycles were changed from the lunar-based cycles of the Biblical period to the planetary-week cycles of Rome.

Therefore, when one looks at the reason for the *dehiyyah* rules which are required to make the modern Jewish calendar functional, we are left with only one possible conclusion regarding the Rabbinical Sabbath and calendar system. The Roman planetary-week must have been adopted at some later point in Jewish history and the Sabbath system changed to that cycle, even if the actual record of this change has been obscured from general knowledge. However it happened, at this point it is now a long-entrenched tradition. The rabbinical response to the problems this causes with God's appointments is to effectively change those appointment dates to accommodate their now-traditional continuous 7-day cycle. Thus the Rabbinical Jewish calendar alters the dates for the monthly appointment days, including the true Sabbath, forcing them to conform to "commandments of men" rather than to the pure Word of God.

### More Problems with the Calculated Jewish Calendar

these are not the only problems with the calculated Jewish calendar. Modern Jews themselves are aware of another inherent error in their calculated calendar. It is a very small rate of error, but multiplied centuries this accumulated error affects their calculated calendar significantly, causing the holy days to fall an entire month late in some years, as compared to the agricultural seasons (1997 being an example). ("Calendar, The Jewish Encyclopedia, Funk and Wagnalls, 1903, pp. 498-503.)

This problem with the calculated calendar is not surprising. It is mathematically and astronomically impossible to calculate an absolutely accurate, perpetual, lunar/solar calendar. It simply can't be done. There is therefore only one reason anyone relies on the Jewish calculated calendar - "tradition." ("Calendar (Jewish)", Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, edited by James Hastings, Vol. 3, pp. 117-124)

Compare The Real Deal with the Counterfeit	
Characteristics of Yahweh's Calendar	Characteristics Of Modern Jewish Calendar
1. They are Yahweh's appointed times - not ours. He sets the schedule, not us.	Rabbinical rules throw the modern Jewish calendar off of Yahweh's stated schedule by a minimum of one day to as much as a month!
2. He has chosen to set the beginning of months by the new moon crescent.	Beginning of the month is set by the invisible "molad" and <i>dehiyyah</i> rules.
3. The first lunar month of the year is <i>Abib</i> in which spring occurs, when Israel came out of Egypt.	Roughly the 7th month is the 1st month of the Jewish calendar, following the practice of Babylon rather than a stated command of God.
4. He includes the Sabbath cycles with the other moon-thly appointments because they, like the others, are figured from the new moon.	The Roman planetary-week Saturn's-day Sabbath is incorporated into the calendar using <i>dehiyyah</i> rules that alter the start of the month and year by up to four days!

**The modern Jewish Calendar is counterfeit because of these facts:**

1. It is impossible to reconcile an unending 7-day cycle with "Yahweh's appointed times" that are clearly fixed from the appearance of the new moon.

2. The Jewish calendar currently in use is not reliable in giving us the correct appointments of Yahweh – largely because of adopting an unending 7-day cycle and altering the calendar to accommodate it.

### **A Final Note on the Present Jewish Calendar**

Even Jewish scholars recognize the need for calendar reform. However, their traditions do not allow them to "just do it." Such a change, according to their tradition, requires a Sanhedrin to be convened in Jerusalem to enact the reform. Only then can they "return to the calendar in the Bible." Why isn't this done? No doubt political and doctrinal differences between the different sects of Judaism continue to make that level of cooperation impossible among them. (Calendar ,The Encyclopedia Judaica Jerusalem, Keter Pub. House Ltd. Jerusalem, Israel, 1971, pp. 43-54)

Where does that leave you and I? Fortunately, we don't have to rely on the counterfeit calendar. Neither do we need a Sanhedrin to "return to the calendar of the Bible." All we need is the precious Word of God, Yeshua as our Savior, Head and King, the Holy Spirit guiding our understanding, and the heart-felt desire to meet Yahweh at His "appointed times."

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Our chart of expected new moon crescent sightings for Jerusalem for this year:

<http://israel.bfree.org/calendar/calendar.htm>

**Send Questions & Comments To: [webmaster@bfree.org](mailto:webmaster@bfree.org)**

### **NT Evidence of Passover on a Lunar Sabbath**

Q. Luke chapter 6:1 and Luke 4:31; are they talking about sukkot sabbathon? It does not mention in Scripture that sukkot was upon them yet the corn was in harvest. ...is the long sabbath considered Rosh chodesh? - Brian

A. Thanks for your questions about Luke 4:31 and Luke 6:1. Following is Luke 4:31; "And (Yeshua) came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught them on the sabbath days."

This verse is pretty straight forward, using the plural of the standard NT expression for Sabbaths and Sabbath periods. It does not specify any particular Sabbaths, but has the sense that He taught them on Sabbaths generally while He was in the area.

Luke 6:1 is a verse that has been more controversial. Indeed, Bible commentators have postulated many theories to explain what grain the "corn" of the verse is referring to and what day, translated in the KJV as "the second sabbath after the first," actually refers to. This expression is not common in the NT and seems to be a very specific reference to a specific day. Here is the verse in question:

"And it came to pass on *the second sabbath after the first*, that he went through the *corn* fields; and his disciples plucked the ears of corn, and did eat, rubbing them in their hands." Luke 6:1 KJV

"Corn" is an old English word used in the KJV to signify any sort of grain. In this case the grain is barley, which makes its first appearance in Abib, the first month of the year. Barley is also the first kind of grain to grow in the year. When picked it was customary to rub it between the hands to remove the chaff, so that it could then be eaten chaff free. To answer your question we must therefore start by providing background information on the events of the month of Abib, the month associated with barley.

I will explain how barley is directly related to Passover, which occurs on the 14th of the month of Abib. The day after Passover the seven days of Unleavened Bread occur, from the 15th through the 21st, which together with Passover Day, give us 8 days in the entire "Passover" festival period. Since Sabbaths are lunar-based occurring on the 7th, 14th, 21st, and 28th of each lunar month then Passover, on the 14th of Abib, was always a Sabbath. (See: <http://israel.bfree.org/calendar/lesson2.htm> )

Leviticus 23 explains that an offering of the new barley would be waved before Yahweh on the day after "the Sabbath" by which it means the Sabbath of Passover on Abib 14 (I shall offer more proof of this momentarily). We read; "And he shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it." Lev 23:11

New growth of the barley could not be eaten until the sheaf of the first fruits of the barley was "waved" as an offering before Yahweh. Yahweh was to get it first. After that the people could eat it. Till then the people would have to eat whatever was left of the previous year and not eat of the new growth. "And ye shall eat neither bread, nor parched corn (roasted grain), nor green ears (green ears refer to the color of unripe barley), until the selfsame day that ye have brought an offering unto your God: It shall be a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings." Lev 23:14

How do we know that the Sabbath, the day after which the barley would be waved before Yahweh, is Passover? Well, the context of Leviticus 23:14 indicates that. Note also Joshua 5:10, 11: "And the children of Israel encamped in Gilgal, and kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month at even in the plains of Jericho. And they did eat of the old corn of the land on the morrow after the Passover, unleavened cakes, and parched corn in the selfsame day."

This verse clearly indicates that Joshua interpreted the Sabbath of Leviticus 23:14 as being Passover; since he and all Israel ate of the grain of the land on the day after Passover. This would not have been lawful unless the wave offering had first been made on "the morrow" of that same day after Passover. Thus, to this point, we have established that the new barley was waved on the day after the Sabbath which fell on Passover. Make a mental note of that and we will go on to see the significance of that point.

The significance of that point is related to the "counting of the Omer" as presented in Leviticus 23:15,16; "And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the Sabbath (which Sabbath we have established above as Passover), from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete: Even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the LORD."

Are you seeing the significance of that day after Passover day? That was the day from which "the counting of the Omer" – counting seven Sabbaths plus one day - would begin. Thus, the first Sabbath of the count would be the First Sabbath after the second day of Passover. The one after that would be the second Sabbath after the second day of Passover. The next would be "the third Sabbath after the second day of Passover, and so on, through all seven Sabbaths. This brings us back to Luke 6:1. Let's look at that verse again: "And it came to pass on the second sabbath after

the first, that he went through the corn fields; and his disciples plucked the ears of corn, and did eat, rubbing them in their hands." Luke 6:1 KJV

In translating *deuteropro* as "the second sabbath after the first" the KJV gets it exactly backwards. Vulgar Latin of the roughly contemporary period renders δευτεροπρωτον as *secundoprimum*, which is the literally correct translation. It means "the first after the second." This expression of Luke 6:1 is thus a sort of "shorthand" way of saying the longer and more awkward phrase; "the first Sabbath after the second day of Passover", referring to the first of the seven Sabbaths of the Omer count. (See Clark's Commentary)

The implication of this phrase in Luke 6:1 (which by its very nature is obviously a standard first century Jewish expression) is that Passover was always a Sabbath since the second day of Passover was always the start of the Omer count with the Sabbaths of the Omer Count routinely counted from that day. This is more NT textual evidence confirming the Lunar Sabbath.

Now for your final question. The extended Sabbath designated on the 28th of each lunar month, while being a Sabbath, is also sometimes called Rosh Chodesh, since it brings in the new moon.

Shalom!

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