

# When is the Sabbath Day?



*by Matthew Janzen*

## Introduction

Many Bible students in the world today believe the weekly, seventh-day Sabbath is on Saturday (beginning Friday evening), while others believe it has changed to Sunday (under the "Christian age" or New Covenant). I began my Sabbath journey by keeping the weekly Sabbath from Friday evening to Saturday evening back in 1997. It began by just reading in the Bible that the 7th day is to be remembered as holy (Exodus 20:8-11). In my mind Saturday was a better choice than Sunday, seeing it was the 7th day of our modern week (rather than the 1st). From 1997 to 1999 I observed the Sabbath this way until further Bible study steered me in the direction of finding the weekly Sabbath by looking to the method of time calculation laid down by YHWH<sup>1</sup> from the very beginning. If I could not find my foundation for when to keep the Sabbath in the Bible I was reading, something had to be amiss.

Let me give you a simple illustration: Let's say that you and I wanted to observe the Day of Atonement. We read in the Bible that it takes place on the 10th day of the 7th month (Leviticus 23:26-32). We then turn to our modern calendar and find that the 7th month is the month of July, so we count 10 days from July 1, making the decision to keep the Day of Atonement on July 10th. After all, this is the 10th day of the 7th month, right? Well sure it is, but is it the 10th day of the 7th month that YHWH is speaking about in Leviticus 23?

Here lies the problem with how people generally try to find the 7th day Sabbath. We read verses of Scripture that teach the 7th day to be the Sabbath. We then look to the modern calendar to find when this 7th day is. We find that Sunday is the 1st day of the week and Saturday is the 7th day of the week. Is Saturday really the 7th day of the week? Well yes, but is it the 7th day of the week that YHWH is speaking about in Scripture? I do not believe so, and I hope to spark your interest in why I take that position.<sup>2</sup>

## The Foundation

When I was first introduced to the possibility that the Sabbath might be determined by the moon (late 1999) I began by hearing three texts of Scripture<sup>3</sup> explained:

---

<sup>1</sup> The Sacred Name YHWH (often pronounced Yahweh) of the Creator is used in this booklet in lieu of GOD, LORD, and Jehovah. For more detailed information visit the YouTube channel "Ministers of the New Covenant," and watch the Play-list titled "What's in a Name?"

<sup>2</sup> A more detailed study can be found on my website at [ministersnewcovenant.org](http://ministersnewcovenant.org). The book title is "Weekly Sabbath Days are Determined by the Moon."

<sup>3</sup> All Scripture quotations are taken from the King James Version of the Bible, unless otherwise noted.

**Genesis 1:14-19**

[14] And Elohim<sup>4</sup> said, **Let there be lights** in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; **and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years:** [15] And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. [16] And Elohim made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also. [17] And Elohim set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, [18] And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and Elohim saw that it was good. [19] And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

**Psalm 104:19**

He appointed the moon for seasons. The sun knoweth his going down.

**Leviticus 23:1-3**

[1] And YHWH spake unto Moses, saying, [2] Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, **Concerning the feasts of YHWH**, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, even **these are my feasts**. [3] Six days shall work be done: but **the seventh day is the sabbath of rest**, an holy convocation; ye shall do no work therein: it is the sabbath of YHWH in all your dwellings.

When these texts were shown to me I was already familiar with each of them, as I was a Sabbath, New Moon,<sup>5</sup> and annual Feast keeper. I'd witnessed to others about these holy times by showing them Genesis 1:14-19, Psalm 104:19, and Leviticus 23 (among other verses). The King James Version of two of these texts uses the word seasons, and the underlying Hebrew word is *moedim* (moe-eh-deem), which is translated as "festivals" in other Bibles (HCSB, LEB, JB). This Hebrew word refers to an appointment, fixed time, festival, or season; that's why the KJV translates this Hebrew word as "feasts" in Leviticus 23:2.

As we read Genesis 1:14-19, we get a brief overview of how time is to be properly reckoned. It is to be determined by the greater and lesser lights (the sun, moon, and stars (Psalm 136:7-9; Jeremiah 31:35; Sirach 43:1-10).<sup>6</sup> YHWH set these heavenly lights in the sky so that man would be able to calculate time. Times like

---

<sup>4</sup> I've used the title Elohim in place of the more popular English rendering "God," and Adonai in place of the more popular English rendering "Lord."

<sup>5</sup> Bible students are generally aware that there are three major annual festivals celebrated in Scripture. Less known is the monthly celebration of the *New Moon*. I would encourage you to get a concordance of the Bible and look up the phrase "new moon(s)." Take time to study the context in every passage in Scripture that uses these words. Also, visit my website, where you will find both written studies and audio sermons on this topic.

<sup>6</sup> Psalm 136:8-9, "The sun to rule by day: for his mercy endureth forever: The moon and stars to rule by night: for his mercy endureth forever." Jeremiah 31:35, "Thus saith YHWH, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; YHWH of hosts is his name." Sirach 43:6-8, "He made the moon also to serve in her season for a declaration of times, and a sign of the world. From the moon is the sign of feasts, a light that decreaseth in her perfection. The month is called after her name, increasing wonderfully in her changing, being an instrument of the armies above, shining in the firmament of heaven."

days, weeks, months, and years,<sup>7</sup> as well as holy appointments; appointments where He meets with His people.

The passage in Psalms helps us understand more about the specifics in Genesis, by telling us that it is the **moon** that plays a key role in determining the seasons, festivals, or *moedim*. The passage in Sirach (also called Ecclesiasticus) does as well, and this book was part of the original 1611 King James Version, as well as the earlier 1560 Geneva Bible used by the Pilgrims.

At that time in my life I had learned all of this. I observed Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread, Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles, all by the lunar cycle. I also observed the New Moon. I realized that these set appointments of YHWH could not be found by looking to the modern calendar that began in the winter month of January (named after a pagan deity). What I did not realize is that **the weekly Sabbath is a feast of YHWH** as well. It is actually the first feast mentioned in Leviticus 23, a chapter dedicated to the appointed times of our Creator. This is where Leviticus 23:1-3 surprised me. I remember reading it over and over and coming to the realization that the Sabbath was the first feast mentioned in the chapter. I still remember thinking to myself that day, "If I find the other feasts of YHWH by the moon, why do I not keep the primary feast, the Sabbath, by the moon?"<sup>8</sup>

### **New Moon in Ezekiel**

I was blessed at that time to already understand and celebrate the day of the New Moon as a sanctified day. It helped me greatly in understanding this next piece of information.

#### **Ezekiel 46:1**

Thus saith Adonai YHWH; The gate of the inner court that looketh toward the east shall be shut the six working days; but on the sabbath it shall be opened, and in the day of the new moon it shall be opened.

---

<sup>7</sup> The Aramaic Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan) reads at Genesis 1:14 and following, "And the Lord said, Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens, to distinguish between the day and the night; and let them be for signs and for festival times, and for the numbering by them the account of days, and for the sanctifying of the beginning of months, and the beginning of years, the passing away of months, and the passing away of years, the revolutions of the sun, the birth of the moon, and the revolvings (of seasons)."

<sup>8</sup> I believe the Sabbath is listed at the head of all the remaining festivals in Leviticus 23 because it is the primary commandment upon which all the other appointed times (statutes) hang.

This was one of the verses, about a year prior to my encounter with the "lunar Sabbath,"<sup>9</sup> that caused me to realize that I needed to be setting the New Moon day apart as a special, no-work-day to YHWH. I knew other brothers and sisters in the faith that recognized the New Moon, but this only consisted of them determining when the New Moon would be and then going about their regular, daily routine; they only used the New Moon for a marker of sorts. The passage in Ezekiel<sup>10</sup> was one of many that persuaded me to do more than just recognize the New Moon. About the middle of 1998 I began to have a special worship service on the day of the New Moon (Numbers 10:1-3, 10; Isaiah 66:22-23), and I started refraining from gainful, commercial employment (2 Kings 4:23; Amos 8:5). It felt strange at first - stopping my work week once a month - but at the same time it felt wonderful that YHWH was showing me more in His word than I had understood before. After a while, I began feeling like I was more on His schedule than the world's schedule. Little did I know that He would soon place me even more in line with His schedule.

As I read Ezekiel 46:1 over and over the blinders fell off; my spiritual eyes started to peek through. I was already keeping the New Moon, but I was keeping it during one of the six working days. I would keep the Sabbath on Saturday, work on Sunday and Monday, and then a New Moon would sometimes come in on a Tuesday so I would keep the New Moon on Tuesday, which I still counted as one of my six working days. That gave me Sabbath, two work days, New Moon, three more work days, then Sabbath again. This would vary from month to month because the New Moon can fall on any day of the modern, Gregorian week. As I continued to meditate on Ezekiel 46:1, I began to see that the New Moon was separated from the six working days in the exact same context as the weekly Sabbath.

Here's my point: All Sabbatarians agree that the weekly Sabbath will never fall on one of the six working days - it's impossible - but **the New Moon is mentioned in the same sentence as the weekly Sabbath here, disassociated from the six working days.** This means that the New Moon, like the Sabbath, will not fall on one of the six working days. This placed a huge "kink" in my way

---

<sup>9</sup> The method of observing the Sabbath by the lunar cycle has come to be termed the "lunar Sabbath." I do not have a problem with this term, but this method of Sabbath observance can just be referred to as "the Sabbath" as it is in Scripture. The reason many call it the "lunar Sabbath" is to differentiate it from the "Saturday Sabbath" more prevalent in Sabbatarian groups today.

<sup>10</sup> Some people say that the New Moon is not commanded in the Torah, but that is based on a false understanding of what Torah is. Torah simply means "the teachings and instructions of our Creator." YHWH's instructions can be found in and through all His prophets, not just Moses. In Ezekiel 46 it begins with "Thus saith YHWH," so that is Torah.

of doing things at that time. How could the Sabbath be on Saturday if neither the New Moon or the Sabbath could fall on one of the six working days? It wouldn't work, and I knew this first hand because I kept many New Moons on various days of the modern American (Gregorian) week.

After looking at all of these Biblical texts, a proposition was shared with me: The New Moon begins the Scriptural month and is not one of the six working days. After the New Moon day you begin to work for six days. After working for six days you then rest on the seventh day Sabbath. This is done four times in a month ( $4 \times 7 = 28$ ), and brings you back to the New Moon again. The pattern looks like this:

**Day 1 | New Moon**  
**Day 2 - 7 | Working Days**  
**Day 8 | Sabbath<sup>11</sup>**

|    |    |    |    |    |    |           |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----------|
|    |    |    |    |    |    | <i>1</i>  |
| 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  | <b>8</b>  |
| 9  | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | <b>15</b> |
| 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | <b>22</b> |
| 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | <b>29</b> |

My initial response was "Why does the Sabbath day land on day 8 instead of day 7?" I remembered Exodus 20:8-11 which states that *the 7th day* is the Sabbath of YHWH. This "problem" was soon resolved by recognizing that this was the 8th day **of the month** rather than **of the week**. This method of Sabbath observance always yielded Sabbaths on the 7th day of each week, but at the same time the Sabbaths fell on the 8th, 15th, 22nd, and 29th days<sup>11</sup> of the month.

I also began to notice in my studies that the day of the New Moon was constantly showing up in Scripture right beside the Sabbath day. Scriptures like 2 Kings 4:23, Amos 8:5, Isaiah 66:22-23, Ezekiel 46:1-3, and Colossians 2:16 mentioned the New Moon and Sabbath together. This was another "piece to the puzzle."

### **A Natural Pattern**

I began to meditate on these things, thinking much about calculating time naturally. Anyone who has studied the Biblical calendar knows that (1) the year does not begin in January, (2) the month doesn't begin arbitrarily (or consist of

---

<sup>11</sup> In the chart that follows, the italicized number represents the day of the New Moon, and the bold numbers represent the weekly Sabbaths.

31, 30, 29, or 28 days), and (3) the day doesn't begin at midnight. If the year, month, and day can be found solely by YHWH's natural calendar, why not the week and in turn the Sabbath? It did not make sense for me to keep most holydays by the heavenly lights, but turn to the calendar hanging on my wall in order to find the most essential holyday of all.

I found in nature a phenomenon in the cycle of the moon. The moon begins new and then about 7 days later (7.3) builds to a half orb, followed by a full moon in seven more days, then down to a waning half in another seven days, followed by a final sliver seven days after that, and then the cycle renews again. It is no coincidence that YHWH timed the moon to phase at these intervals. The Bible does tell us that nature teaches principles in life (Romans 1:26-27; 1 Corinthians 11:15). Anytime nature teaches something it is YHWH who is doing the teaching, because He is the Creator and Designer of nature.

### **The Giving of the Manna**

After being shown those foundational Scriptures, I was shown Exodus 16, the chapter where the manna came down from heaven to feed the Israelites in the wilderness. I was (once again) familiar with this chapter in Scripture, but I had never seen what I am about to show you. The first verse of Scripture we walked through was this:

#### **Exodus 16:1-2**

[1] And they took their journey from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came unto the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, **on the fifteenth day of the second month** after their departing out of the land of Egypt. [2] And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness:

#### **Exodus 16:1-2, (Brenton Septuagint)**

[1] And they departed from Ælim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came to the wilderness of Sin, which is between Ælim and Sina; **and on the fifteenth day, in the second month** after their departure from the land of Egypt, [2] all the congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron.<sup>12</sup>

Before, I never really noticed that the 15th day of the month was mentioned. Specific days of the month are not mentioned that often in the Pentateuch unless there is something significant taking place. I began to see that it was no

---

<sup>12</sup> I've added the Septuagint reading here because it shows that it was the grumbling that took place on the 15th day of the month, not the traveling. I deal with this in more detail in my full-length book.

coincidence that here in a chapter **about the weekly Sabbath**, a day of the month - *a day of the moon* - was mentioned.

As I began to study I saw that the Israelites grumbled against Moses and Aaron on the 15th day of the month, and after this they were promised manna for 6 days beginning the next morning (Exodus 16:4-5, 8, 11-13). If the Israelites were grumbling on the 15th day of the month, that would mean manna would begin the morning of the 16th day of the month; the 16th would be the 1st morning the manna fell. Counting from the 16th would yield this:

1st day of manna = 16th  
2nd day of manna = 17th  
3rd day of manna = 18th  
4th day of manna = 19th  
5th day of manna = 20th  
6th day of manna = 21st

Counting the days of manna brings us to the 22nd day of the month/moon. This 22nd day of the month would be the 7th day of the week. The seventh day Sabbath that was mentioned directly after the sixth day of manna (Exodus 16:21-26). If the 22nd day of that month was the Sabbath, then counting backwards would make the 15th a Sabbath. This would in turn mean the 8th day of that month was a Sabbath. Counting forward (from the 22nd) yields a Sabbath on the 29th day of the month. Thus we have Sabbaths on the 8th, 15th, 22nd, and 29th days of the month. Using this method, the New Moon would not have to be counted as a working day, falling directly in line with what YHWH said in Ezekiel 46:1.

At this point I thought to myself, "Could the weekly Sabbath really be determined by the moon?" It was not an easy thought at first. Letting go of something you've been doing and believe to be true is never easy. I had been honoring what I believed to be YHWH's Sabbath (on Saturday), but that was slowly becoming more of a tradition in my mind because I couldn't find it in Scripture.

What was especially interesting about Exodus 16 is that it was not a festival month; the 2nd month on YHWH's calendar is not a month in which annual



festivals are commanded.<sup>13</sup> I couldn't just say that the Sabbath fell on the 15th because it was an annual Sabbath, like the first day of Unleavened Bread or the first day of Tabernacles. These Sabbaths in the second month were simply weekly Sabbaths or weekly festivals (Leviticus 23:1-3).

### **Instructions for Tabernacles**

After this I was shown the instructions found in Numbers 29:12-38. In this text we have the instructions for all of the various offerings that were commanded by YHWH to be offered during the Feast of Tabernacles. The first day of this Feast is the 15th day of the 7th month (Numbers 29:12). YHWH instructs the Israelites concerning what to offer on this first day, and He then continues to instruct them in the offerings for the second day, third day, fourth day, etc. YHWH mentions that on the first day there is to be a holy convocation or sacred assembly, and it is not until what YHWH calls the 8th day (Numbers 29:35) that He gives a commandment for another sacred assembly. If the first day is the 15th of the month, then the 8th day is the 22nd of the month (counting from the 15th).

This is significant because in these days there are no other commanded sacred assemblies. This is also significant because these instructions are not just for one year but for *all* years. This was showing me that there did not exist any sacred assembly on days 16 through 21 of the 7th month, and this would be impossible if the day I was keeping as Sabbath (Saturday) was really the Sabbath. According to these instructions in Numbers, the weekly Sabbaths should always be on the 15th and 22nd days of the 7th month. I thought to myself, "That would have to mean that counting backwards the 8th of the month was a Sabbath, and counting forward places the 29th of the month as a Sabbath."

### **The Creation Account**

By this time my head was spinning with information; it was all I could think about. One of the first things that came to my mind after all this was, "What about Genesis 1 and 2?" I asked myself this question seeing that in Genesis we had the very first count to the weekly Sabbath. The count began on day 1 and ended on day 7. I did not see a New Moon in this count, so it seemed like a problem if I was going to believe that the Sabbath count each month did not begin until after the day of the New Moon. I did not completely figure it out the day that "lunar Sabbaths" were introduced to me, but through continuing to

---

<sup>13</sup> It is true that in Numbers 9 Yahweh made a provision for those who were unable to celebrate Passover in the 1st month to do so in the 2nd month. However, the 2nd month is an exception to the general rule. It is not a commanded/prescribed festival month.

study I found out that the creation of the heavens and earth (Genesis 1:1) actually took place *before* the first working day in Genesis.

Not only did it take place before the first working day, but it took place on the New Moon. I obtained this information by studying the instructions found in Leviticus 23:24 concerning what I then called the Feast of Trumpets. In Hebrew this day is termed *Yom Teruah*, and a more literal English translation of this phrase is "Day of Joyful Noise." The word day in Hebrew (*yom*) refers to a particular space of time, and the word *teruah* refers to jubilation or joyful noise.

YHWH said that this day was to be a **memorial** of *teruah*, a **memorial** of shouts or jubilation. What are we memorializing? In order to remember something, that something would have had to take place prior to its being remembered. Furthermore, whatever took place prior to the memorial would have taken place on the day of the New Moon seeing it was on the New Moon that YHWH wanted us to memorialize the *teruah*.<sup>14</sup> My study led me to the book of Job 38:1-7. There I found that YHWH was answering Job's frustrated rant by asking him "Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?" In other words, YHWH was showing Job that he needed to trust in the Almighty Creator, and Job was not permitted to talk back to or question the working of the Most High. YHWH's point was that Job was *not* there at the initial creation, so YHWH was much mightier than Job. In this speech YHWH mentions that as He was laying the foundations of the earth, the Sons of Elohim **shouted** for joy (Job 38:7). I knew that Sons of Elohim in Scripture were often angelic beings (Genesis 6:1-4; Job 1:6; 2:1), so this was showing me that the angels were there, but Job was not. When I looked up the word "shouted" in Job 38:7 I found the Hebrew word *ruah*, which is a word closely related to *teruah*. The angels shouted for joy and applauded the handiwork of YHWH, and this took place on the New Moon! This is why YHWH gives the memorial of this occurrence to be on the New Moon.

I began to see how that the 7th month (Leviticus 23:24) was a replica of that first time period in Genesis 1. You had "in the beginning" (Genesis 1:1) which was a space of time correlating to what we call the New Moon. After the New Moon you had YHWH working or advancing upon His creation for 6 days and then resting the 7th day. This is the 7th day of the week, but the 8th day counting from the space of time called "in the beginning." I soon began to relate this mention of

---

<sup>14</sup> Yahweh's festivals are always kept or memorialized on the day they were initially instituted. For example, we keep both the Feast of Unleavened Bread and the Feast of Tabernacles beginning on the 15th day of a month because it was on the 15th day of the month that the Israelites were released from Egyptian bondage.

"in the beginning" with the similar statements in the Hebrew Scriptures of "in the beginnings of your months" (Numbers 10:10; 28:11).

### The Harmony

I was thankful at this point that I could harmonize everything Genesis had to teach me. I knew that YHWH said the heavenly lights were to be for His calendar (Genesis 1:14-19), but now I was beginning to see how the 7th day Sabbath was determined by these great lights. I was seeing how that the sun, moon, and stars were not created on the 4th day, but rather were created "in the beginning" as part of the heavens (Psalm 8:3; 148:1-6).<sup>15</sup> YHWH *appointed* the lights in the heavens on the fourth day. Psalm 104:19 tells us (KJV) that YHWH appointed the moon for seasons. When did He appoint the moon? It would have to be on the fourth day (Genesis 1:14-19). It is interesting to note that the same word translated *appointed* in Psalm 104:19 (KJV) is translated *made* in Genesis 1:14; the same Hebrew word is used in both cases (*asah*), in spite of two different English translations.

### The Jericho March

I soon came across the seven marching days around the city of Jericho (Joshua 6:2-4). I had always wondered why YHWH would have commanded an *offensive* march around the walls of Jericho on the Sabbath day. If the march was for seven *consecutive* days then the Israelites would have marched around the city on the Sabbath, that is, **unless the Sabbath did not always come on consecutive seven day intervals**. I knew there were travel restrictions on the Sabbath (Exodus 16:27; Acts 1:12), but I always reasoned that the Jericho March must have been a short distance or an exception to the rule. It bothered me though because this was not defensive action by the Israelites, it was offensive action commanded by YHWH.

If the Sabbath was only to be counted towards after celebrating the New Moon each month, then it was possible for the Israelites to march around Jericho for seven consecutive days without marching on the weekly Sabbath. Further study led me to the book of Jasher 88:14 (mentioned in Joshua 10:13 and 2 Samuel 1:18).<sup>16</sup> Jasher tells us that the march around Jericho began on the New Moon! If

---

<sup>15</sup> I also later in my studies found that Yahweh considered the heavens as part of His heavenly tabernacle (Psalm 19:1, 6). I found it interesting that Yahweh constructed His heavenly tabernacle on the New Moon, and He also instructed Moses to set up the earthly tabernacle - *a copy of the one in heaven* (Exodus 25:40; Hebrews 8:5) - on the New Moon (Exodus 40:1, 17).

<sup>16</sup> Some people argue that the Jasher (literally "Upright") we have today is not the same Jasher mentioned in Joshua and Samuel. My position is not one which believes Jasher to be Scripture, but rather to be an old, historical writing about things which are found in inspired books of Scripture. This means it could contain

the New Moon was day 1 of the march then day 7 of the march would have been on the 7th day of the month. This would place day 8 of the month (7th of the week) as the weekly Sabbath on which no offensive marching would have had to take place. If the Sabbath fell on the 8th day of the month, then the 15th, 22nd, and 29th followed suit yet again.

### **The Wave-Sheaf of Barley**

Something else I found in my studies dealt with the Sabbath of Leviticus 23:11 where the Priest is instructed to wave the sheaf of first-fruits (barley harvest) on the morrow after the Sabbath. This begins the count to what is called Pentecost in later Scripture (Tobit 2:1; 2 Maccabees 12:32; Acts 2:1). I was very familiar with the debate among feast-keepers concerning what Sabbath was being spoken of in this text. Some say it was the 15th of the first month (*Abib*) while others said that it was the weekly (Saturday) Sabbath that falls inside the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

When you consult the Greek Septuagint (LXX) there is only one of these two choices that will fit. This is because the Septuagint reads that the sheaf is to be waved **“on the morrow of the first day”** instead of reading “on the morrow of the Sabbath.” The first day (Leviticus 23:11, LXX) is none other than the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread mentioned just before in Leviticus 23:6-7. So according to the Septuagint, the sheaf was to be waved on the 16th day of the first month.

The interesting thing about this is that if we believe the Septuagint, but at the same time believe the Hebrew text should be in harmony, we are forced to believe that **the Sabbath being spoken about is the 15th day of the first month.** The Hebrew text calls this day **the Sabbath** while the Greek text calls this day **the first day, i.e. the first day of the Feast, the 15th. This places the 15th day of the first month as the Sabbath each and every year.** If the 15th day of the first month is a weekly Sabbath every year then the 8th, 22nd, and 29th days of this month would also have to be weekly Sabbaths **each and every year.** This could never happen if Saturday was/is the true, weekly Sabbath day.

---

errors or mistakes, but don't let that cause you to reject everything you find therein. I believe it was written a very long time ago, and then handed down as a fuller record of many occurrences in early Hebrew history. What are the chances that a text like this would place the beginning of the "Jericho Marching" on the new moon? I don't think it's wise to just dismiss this outright.

### **Dead Sea Scroll History**

As I continued in my studies I ran across a piece of information that showed a lunar week to have existed during the time period when the writings known as the "Dead Sea Scrolls" were written. This particular fragment reads:

On the eighth day of the month, the moon [rules all the day in the midst] of the sky... and when the sun sets, its light [ceases] to be obscured, [and thus the moon begins to be [revealed] on the first day of the week.<sup>17</sup>

The scroll describes the moon as being in the sky during the day-time period on the 8th day of the month. When I first read this I went outside on the 8th day of the month to see if this was the case and I did see the moon (a half moon) up in the sky. After sunset (just as the scroll says) the light of the moon becomes brighter (being much more revealed). The scroll finishes by saying that this "after sunset period" is the first day of the week, i.e. the 9th day of the month. The only way the 9th day of the month can be the first day of the week is if the 8th day of the month was the 7th day of the week. This was astonishing to me, especially seeing this reference was originally written in ancient Paleo-Hebrew and connected the quarters of the moon to the weeks, dating to around the first century B.C.

### **Babylonian Influence?**

Many people (myself included in the past) hear the word Babylonian and immediately put up a barrier to listening to anything else, but in my new calendar studies, I was led to view the Babylonian calendar quite differently than I previously had. When the Babylonians took the Israelites captive, it "just so happens" that the Babylonian calendar included Sabbaths tied to the moon's phases. The year began with the new moon around the spring equinox,<sup>18</sup> the month began with the new moon, and the weeks were based upon the phases of the moon. Out of all the calendars found in Babylon there were none that portrayed a continuous uninterrupted cyclical Sabbath. I also found in reading the book of Daniel, and seeing Daniel's influence upon four separate Kings while in captivity, that he must have had a tremendous impact upon calendar

---

<sup>17</sup> The Dead Sea Scrolls, A New Translation, Translated with Commentary by Michael Wise, Martin Abegg Jr., and Edward Cook, Harper San Francisco Publishing, 2005, page 386.

<sup>18</sup> This is evidenced in the fact that the Hebrew name for the first month (Abib) and the Babylonian name for the first month (Nisan) are used interchangeably in Scripture (Exodus 12:2; 13:4; Nehemiah 2:1; Esther 3:7). This would not be possible unless both months aligned with each other.

calculations in Babylon.<sup>19</sup> I believe this evidence shows that the Israelites influenced Babylon's calendar.

### **Conclusion & Reference Works**

So much more could be said about this method of calculating the weekly Sabbath, but that is not the purpose of this introductory booklet. I have written and spoken more extensively on this issue (*ministersnewcovenant.org*) and continue to do so as YHWH permits. I'm giving here a brief overview of the "lunar Sabbath;" I guess it is somewhat of a personal testimony of mine. I want to make you fully aware of the fact that I did struggle with this concept for quite some time in the beginning of my journey. For the first few years of keeping the Sabbath by the lunar cycle I would often feel alienated from other Sabbath keepers. I reasoned about this over and over in my mind, and I wondered if I had made a mistake in abandoning Saturday. I almost switched back one time in my journey, but I could never bring myself to do it after combing through the Scriptures again and again. I felt like switching back would have been trusting in the arm of flesh rather than the arm of YHWH. Today I am persuaded that I am on the right track when it comes to the timing of the weekly Sabbath. I do not claim to understand it all, but I do believe that looking to YHWH's original calendar, His created time pieces, can only lead to a much purer method of Sabbath observance.

I remember back to early 1998 when I was doing some work for an elderly woman. As I was writing a receipt for her, we began to discuss the Scriptures. Soon into our discussion the Sabbath day was brought up and she asked me, "How do you know for sure that the Sabbath is on Saturday?" I remember feeling a lump in my throat and a knot in my stomach because I didn't know what to say. What did I tell her? I asked her to look at her calendar hanging in the kitchen. I told her that it placed Sunday as the 1st day of the week and Saturday as the 7th day of the week. I was so relieved when she said to me, "Well, that makes sense." I felt relieved because I didn't know what I was going to say next if she questioned me on how I knew the calendar on her wall accurately kept track of the Biblical Sabbath. I probably would have just told her that someone kept track of it, but I still remember driving home that day wondering what I would do if someone else asked me this question and pressed me further. I'm so glad I don't have to worry about that anymore.

---

<sup>19</sup> This is based upon passages in the book of Daniel where the Kings of Babylon held him and his Mighty One in high esteem because of his great wisdom and also because of how his Mighty One protected him in the midst of a foreign nation (Daniel 2:46-49; 3:29-30; 4:34-36; 6:25-28).

Since I have been keeping the Sabbath by the moon (late 1999) I am always delighted when someone asks me about when the Sabbath is. I usually tell them that I keep the Sabbath and they ask, "You mean Saturday?" I say no. They reply, "You keep it on Sunday?" I say no. Then I have the opportunity to actually do a brief walk-through of the Scriptures, explaining to them YHWH's calendar in the heavens. You would be surprised at how many people "light up" when they listen to me explain how the sun and moon work in tandem to tell time; it's like the long and short hand on a clock. They always remark at how simple it is and how neat it is to see a natural calendar at work. Instead of worrying about what I will say in response to people's questions about the Sabbath, I now look forward to being able to explain my position based upon the written text of inspired Scripture. I don't have to go outside the Bible to find the Sabbath. Something as important as the 4th Commandment should be easy to find in Scripture.

I hope this small work inspires you to do your own homework. Get your Bible out and go back through all the Scriptures I have mentioned. Once you understand the points in this booklet, you can move on to more detailed material. May YHWH bless you for your effort!

What now follows is some of the reference works I have found that lean towards the conclusion of this study. This is all secondary information, but I do find it quite interesting that other scholars and students have come to similar conclusions.

It is quite conceivable that some form of Sabbath observance, depending upon the phases of the moon, was practiced by the Hebrews in the desert...<sup>20</sup>

It might be proposed as a hypothesis that the Sabbath was originally, not merely the feast of the full moon, but a feast celebrated at each of the four quarters of the moon...<sup>21</sup>

As with other peoples, the basis of the Hebrew calendar was astronomical. The year was, roughly speaking, the solar year; the month was a moon period or lunation; the week comprised very nearly a quarter of a lunation; and the day was, of course, the period of the earth's rotation on its axis.<sup>22</sup>

In fact the four quarters of the moon, supply and obvious division of the month; and wherever new moon and full moon are religious occasions, we get in the most natural way a sacred cycle of fourteen or fifteen days, of which the week of seven or eight days

---

<sup>20</sup> *Dictionary of the Bible*, by James Hastings, year unknown, pp.807-808.

<sup>21</sup> *Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Bible*, by A. Van de Born, 1963, p.2072.

<sup>22</sup> *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, V3, 1911, p.108.

(determined by the half moon) is the half.<sup>23</sup>

Sabbath and new moon (Rosh Hodesh): both periodically recurring in the course of the year. The new moon still is, and the Sabbath originally was dependant upon the lunar cycle.<sup>24</sup>

Brittany says, "The Sabbath was in use among the Semites of arranging their religious festivals in accordance with the four quarters of the moon..." [Judaism and Christianity, pg. 34] Referring to the lunar origin of the Sabbath, Wellhausen declares that "no other explanation can be discovered" [History of Israel, pg. 112] Tirin asserts, "The Jews observe the lunar system, and their months consisted of 29 and 30 days alternatively." [The Great Pyramid, pg. 252] The same truth is borne out by R.A. Proctor - "The Jewish Sabbath is the quarter month rest day." [The Great Pyramid, pg. 160]<sup>25</sup>

Among all early nations, the lunar months were the readiest large divisions of time... (And was divided in 4 weeks), corresponding (to) the phases or 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.<sup>26</sup>

The Hebrew sabbaton... was celebrated at intervals of seven days, corresponding with changes in the moon's phases...<sup>27</sup>

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 temple looking eastward as kept shut for the six working days, but opened on the Sabbath and the new moon.<sup>28</sup>

...the Hebrews employed lunar seven day weeks ... which ended with special observances on the seventh day but nonetheless were tied to the moon's course.<sup>29</sup>

---

<sup>23</sup> *The Encyclopedia Britannica*, 11<sup>th</sup> edition, V23, 1911, p.961.

<sup>24</sup> *Universal Jewish Encyclopedia*, p.410.

<sup>25</sup> *Scientific Basis for Sabbath and Sunday*, by Robert John Floody.

<sup>26</sup> *The Popular Critical Bible Encyclopedia*, 1904, V3, p.1497.

<sup>27</sup> *Encyclopedia Biblica*, 1899, p.4180.

<sup>28</sup> *Scribner's Dictionary of the Bible*, 1898, p.521.

<sup>29</sup> *Rest Days*, by Hutton Webster, p.254.



