

# **From Sabbath to Saturday: The Story of the Jewish Rest Day**

by  
**John D. Keyser**

edited by  
**Avraham Rempel**



## Hope of Israel Ministries (Ecclesia of YEHOVAH):

# From Sabbath to Saturday: The Story of the Jewish Rest Day

The journey of the Sabbath, from its lunar beginnings to the last day of a continuous week divorced from the moon's phases, is a fascinating one. From Adam down to the disciples of Yeshua the Messiah, we see YEHOVAH's Lunar Sabbath day being kept by those "righteous pillars" of YEHOVAH -- the Sabbath observers. Then, with the introduction of the planetary week and the rise of the Babylonian rabbis, YEHOVAH's true Sabbath day goes into eclipse and a radically different Sabbath emerges into view -- one governed by man's disobedience and the drive for commercial gain. Now YEHOVAH's true Sabbath day is being restored to those who, like the Bereans, "search the Scriptures daily to find out if these things were so."

Yeshua the Messiah had much to say about the Sabbath and its observance. In the gospel of Mark we read about the beginning of the Messiah's ministry and the message that he taught. Repeatedly he said that this message, or gospel, came directly from YEHOVAH Elohim the Father and was, therefore, YEHOVAH's message to mankind. In Mark 1:1 we read: "The beginning of the gospel of *Yeshua Messiah*." This gospel of Yeshua the Messiah is not a gospel from *men about* the person of the Messiah, but is the gospel of the Messiah himself -- the gospel the Messiah preached, the very gospel YEHOVAH Elohim the Father sent by the Messiah for mankind!

After John the Baptist was thrown into prison, Yeshua came to the Galilee region preaching the good news of the Kingdom (or government) of YEHOVAH on this earth, calling on men to repent and to believe that very message or gospel. He called his disciples and immediately, we read in Mark 1:21, "they went into Capernaum; and straightway on the SABBATH DAY he entered into the synagogue." It was Yeshua's custom or practice to attend the synagogue services on the Sabbath day, as the four gospels point out.

Yeshua preached in the synagogues in towns throughout Galilee -- see Mark 1:38-39. Some time later Yeshua and his disciples went through the cornfields on the Sabbath day (Mark 2:23) and were accused by the Pharisees of breaking the Sabbath by plucking ears of corn to eat. In reply, Yeshua showed the Pharisees how to observe the Sabbath by saying: "The sabbath was MADE FOR MAN, and not man for the sabbath: Therefore the Son of man is Master also of the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27-28).

The SABBATH is one of those things that was MADE or CREATED. Therefore it was YEHOVAH who MADE the Sabbath -- YEHOVAH made it *for* Yeshua the Messiah! Very few, it seems, realize it today -- but the Sabbath was MADE FOR YESHUA THE MESSIAH! No wonder, then, he plainly said that HE is Master also of the Sabbath! (Mark 2:28).

Now let's read Mark 2:27 again! The Sabbath was not only one of those things that was *made* (it not only had a Maker) but it was made *for* someone. We have seen that it was made for the Messiah -- but was it made for anyone else? People today seem to think it was made "for the Jews," but what did the Messiah himself say? He clearly said it was made "*for man*"! So the Sabbath was made for Yeshua AND man! Now if it was made *for* mankind, we should logically assume that it was made WHEN MAN WAS MADE! But let's not "assume" -- what do the Scriptures have to say? Let's turn back to the book of Genesis -- back to the time when MAN was made: "And Elohim said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness... So Elohim created man in his own image, in the image of Elohim created he him; male and female created he them" (Genesis 1:26-27).

When did this occur? Verse 31 clearly says it was the sixth day of the creation week. Also, *man* was the very *last* being created on that day. Man came into existence, then, probably in the late afternoon of the sixth day of the week. Now let's understand this! Did YEHOVAH Elohim *complete* the creation process on the sixth day? Does the Bible say that on the seventh day YEHOVAH ceased to CREATE? Absolutely not! "On the seventh day Elohim ended" -- WHAT? Not the act of creating! He ended "his WORK which he had made."

Let's continue -- "And *on the seventh day* Elohim ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And Elohim blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which Elohim created and made" (Genesis 2:2-3). There were, in fact, a full SEVEN DAYS of creation! Not six -- SEVEN! And on the seventh day He MADE THE SABBATH! But understand this, the Sabbath was made by REST -- not by work. What YEHOVAH Elohim *ended* on the seventh day of the creation week was the WORK of creation -- in other words, that which was created by *work*! On the seventh day He *rested*! He created the Sabbath by resting.

This day also points to YEHOVAH Elohim's plan of redemption for us as we cease from our labors and enter into His millennial rest. The Sabbath is given us for a memorial to remember the great creative power of YEHOVAH; that He made the heavens and the earth. It is also a day for us to remember that He is also our Redeemer -- He has called us out of the world of bondage and sin just as He redeemed ancient Israel from Egypt, a type of the world we find ourselves in.

Now, some have asked why did YEHOVAH Elohim-- who had done the WORK of creation -- rest? Was He exhausted from all His efforts? Was He so tired that He was forced to stop and rest? Absolutely not, for YEHOVAH "fainteth not, neither is weary"!

(Isaiah 40:28). Yet, let us realize, this was a *real rest* because it is written in Exodus 31:17 that "in six days the Master [YEHOVAH Elohim] made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested, and was refreshed." Since He was evidently "refreshed" by this rest, it had to be a REAL rest -- yet He was not tired or weary! So, then, WHY did He rest? To place His PRESENCE IN THAT DAY! In other words, He *made* the Sabbath on that day by *resting*, whereas He had made all other things by working!

Taking this a step further, we find He "*blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it!*" What does "sanctified" mean? If you check in a dictionary you will find that it means "*set apart, for use or purpose.*" YEHOVAH Elohim set this day apart from all the other days -- He set it apart for special use -- for a day of physical rest in which His people may assemble and worship Him!

### ***The "Soul" of the Sabbath!***

From the article ***Creation: The Jewish Oral Tradition***, we read something else about the Sabbath day that YEHOVAH Elohim "created" or set aside in Genesis 2:

Now we all know that Elohim created the world during the original six days, and rested on the Seventh. Everyone thinks that Elohim refrained from His creative activities on Shabbat, and did not introduce anything new into the world -- but did Elohim perhaps "create" something on the Sabbath? The Talmud indicates (BT Chagigah 12) that yes, something new certainly was introduced into the fabric of the world with the advent of the Sabbath.

What was this "something new" that YEHOVAH introduced with the Sabbath?

It was the element of permanence. "The world was unstable and shaky," say the rabbis, "until the arrival of the Sabbath -- then the earth was firmly anchored into place." Why? What is it about the Sabbath that brought "stability" to the world? Before the Sabbath, the whole of creation was a shaky and insecure thing. It is as if the permanence of creation was debatable, uncertain; an open question hanging in the balance until the arrival of the seventh day; it almost seemed as if there was some doubt as to whether or not this will be a sure thing -- the earth hung suspended in the universe, lacking a sense of cohesion -- quivering and heaving with the possibility that perhaps all is only temporary.

Continuing, this fascinating passage concludes:

Indeed, something about the Sabbath had the capacity to bring the world its sense of permanence, and lock it into place -- but just what is it?

The powerful answer is at once both beautiful in its simplicity and staggering in its depth: The set-apart Sabbath is the soul of the world; it is the soul of creation itself.

This is the mystery of the words "And on the seventh day, He refrained (from work) and 'Vayinafash' -- He rested..."

The Creator stopped His work, on account of this -- 'Vayinafash' -- "and He rested" according to its simple meaning, but actually a form of the word is '**nefesh**' meaning soul: for the secret contained within these words is that when the Set-apart One stopped the process of creation, in so doing, "vayinafash" -- the nefesh, the life-force was brought down into each level of creation and became fixed there within in a permanent fashion. Before the Sabbath came, the world literally stood by like a body without a soul, and every aspect of creation was devoid of the inner essence of life. The set-apart SABBATH day became the soul of all creation, and through it, existence became whole (*ibid.*).

It is also mentioned, in the *Encyclopedia Biblica*, that "the Hebrew *Sabbathon* conveys the idea of propitiation or appeasement of divine anger and [it] is... the opinion [of Professor Jastrow] that the Hebrew Sabbath (i.e. CREATION SABBATH) was originally a *Sabbathon* -- i.e. a day of propitiation and appeasement; marked by atoning rites... it was celebrated at intervals of seven days, CORRESPONDING WITH CHANGES IN THE MOON'S PHASES, and was identical in character with the four days in each month, i.e. 7th, 14th, 21st, and 28th! (The MacMillan Company, 1899. P. 4180).

The same encyclopedia adds (p. 4173) that :

The word "Sabbath" is a feminine form/word. The ROOT (of Sabbath) has NOTHING to do with resting in the sense of enjoying repose; in transitive forms and applications, it means: "to sever"; "to put an end to"; intransitively, it means "to desist" -- "to come to an end." In a transitive sense -- "the divider" -- indicates the Sabbath as dividing the month. It certainly cannot be translated 'The Day of Rest.'"

### ***Adam and the Lunar Sabbath***

When YEHOVAH Elohim "SET-APART" the seventh day of the week (Exodus 20:11), He made it special. It is, as the Scriptures show, SET-APART to YEHOVAH. Now the Sabbath is a day -- it is the particular seventh day *of the week* YEHOVAH brought into being in Genesis 1 and 2 (Matthew 28:1). Therefore what YEHOVAH did -- AND YEHOVAH DID IT FOR THE MESSIAH AND MANKIND -- *was to make future TIME set-apart!*

The Sabbath is a space of time that YEHOVAH Elohim set apart from the sixth day of the week at sunset to the seventh day of the week at sunset. Whenever that time comes to us -- and this is the point of this article -- *we are in set-apart time!* It is YEHOVAH's time, not ours! YEHOVAH made it special and the Ten Commandments back this up; and He commanded us to *keep it set-apart!*

It is a fact that since the very inception of the world -- from the dawn of man's

history -- there has never been even one Sabbath which was not kept to some extent. This world has never been without these "righteous pillars," the Sabbath observers, and every generation has, to at least some degree, seen each Sabbath observed.

This was so from the beginning of time -- since the very first Sabbath. The first man, Adam, was considered a righteous man who kept the Sabbath according to ***Bereshith*** Rabbah 22. He is also credited with the authorship of Psalm 92 -- "A Song for the Sabbath Day." After Adam, the Sabbath was observed by his son Seth, whom YEHOVAH considered to be a righteous man also. He was followed in turn by another righteous man -- Methuselah.

In the article ***Ages of Adam***, by Clark K. Nelson, we read that:

Luni-solar calendar foundations of the Jewish calendar extend from the earliest verses of scripture. Natural, uniform motions of the heavenly spheres are the pivotal markers of time reckoning. The list of ancient characters mentioned in the Scriptures used this lunar-solar calendar system of time recording. OBSERVATION OF LUNAR PHASES coupled with solar positioning graduated [marked] the lifetime ages of Adam and his descendants (1995).

Nelson goes on to say:

*Changes in the appearance of the moon provided the seven-day week.* Originating with ancient interpretations of lunar time, divisions of seven days separate THE FOUR BASIC LUNAR PHASES... Starting with a dark new moon, the moon gradually comes into view on following nights. In about seven days the first half of the moon is visible. The second half waxes until full moon and the end of two weeks. Lunar light reverses progression in the third week, waning to half visibility again. A fourth week completes the month, and visibility again diminishes toward a new moon. Completion of four lunar phases comprises the month.

In the ***Encyclopedia Biblica*** (1899) we find stated that "the stars served to mark divisions of time. They are set in the firmament 'to divide the day from the night,' and to 'be for signs, and for moeds/signs/festivals/appointed times, and for days and years!' 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" (The MacMillan Company. P. 4780).

In another part of his article (***Ages of Adam***), Nelson brings out the concept of masculine and feminine dualism in the luni-solar calendar:

Ancient time reckoning and recording affirmed the most basic counting procedures according to cycles of the sun, moon, and stars. Entrenched throughout the history of world civilization are the main ingredients of lunar-solar calendars. From the earliest conceptions of Adam and Eve to the wide array of mythology and folklore, humanity is aligned with masculine and

feminine dualism inherent to luni-solar calendar operations. Patterns of female fertility cycles have been forever linked with lunar, monthly periods of about 29 and one-half days.

Eve is the woman in literal Hebrew. She is the life giver, mother to the living, or child bearer. The feminine fertility issue has always been associated with LUNAR OBSERVATION. The lunar month has been forever etched on humanity right alongside with the moon-mother perceptions of ancient times. CYCLES OF NEW MOONS WERE THE BASIC TIME RECKONING INGREDIENTS FOR LUNAR-SOLAR CALENDARS. Where Eve represented the feminine side of human order according to lunar observation, Adam represented the masculine, solar side, according to solar positioning on the horizon. In other words, Adam's male image also implied meaning toward the rising and setting positions of the sun through all four seasons during the year. Clarification of Elohim resting on the seventh day *defines a separation between successive time frames*. Elohim again divides, separates, or is between the light and darkness of the moon. TRANSITION FROM ONE LUNAR PHASE ENDING TO COMMENCEMENT OF THE NEXT LUNAR PHASE WAS THE MOST REVERED UNIT OF TIME MEASUREMENT KNOWN. Elohim set aside the Sabbath Day as special. Elohim consecrated the Jewish Shabbat for all time to come. The sacred Jewish significance of the seven-day week, and the number seven elsewhere SUPPORT RELIGIOUS OBSERVATION OF THE MOON AS AN EARLY CALENDAR (***Ages of Adam***).

Confirmation of the fact that the lunar week goes all the way back to Adam and Eve is found in ***The Popular and Critical Bible Encyclopedia***:

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 [Adam and Eve] OF THE HUMAN RACE. 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 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 Scriptures, 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 (1904. Vol. 3, p. 1497).

### ***Noah Brings the Sabbath to Mesopotamia***

Now we come to Noah. Genesis 6:9 says "Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah WALKED WITH ELOHIM." Amos 3:3 says two cannot WALK TOGETHER unless they AGREE -- so Noah must have agreed with YEHOVAH about the Sabbath day. In 2 Peter 2:5 we read that Noah was "a preacher of RIGHTEOUSNESS" and we know that "all thy COMMANDMENTS are righteousness" (Psalm 119:172). So, therefore, Noah must have preached about the Sabbath, and also kept it himself since it is one of YEHOVAH's commandments.

The knowledge of the Sabbath was brought through the flood by Noah and his family, and when Noah's children and their descendants spread out into the area that later became known as Babylonia, the knowledge of the Sabbath went with them. As a result, we find a "Sabbatum" in the ancient records of Assyria and Babylonia where certain activities were prohibited on the 7th, 14th, 19th, 21st and 28th days of the lunar month.

### ***The Babylonian Connection***

In the year 1869 the late George Smith, a well-known pioneer student of Assyriology, discovered among the cuneiform tablets in the archives of the British Museum in London "a curious religious calendar of the Assyrians, in which every month is divided into four weeks, and the seventh days or 'Sabbaths,' are marked out as days on which *no work* should be undertaken." Some six years later Sir Henry Rawlinson published this calendar in the fourth volume of his standard collection of cuneiform inscriptions.

Records Hutton Webster:

It appears to be a transcript of a much more ancient Babylonian original, possibly belonging to the age of Hammurabi, which had been made by order of Assurbanipal and placed in his royal library at Nineveh. The calendar, which is complete for the thirteenth or intercalary month, called Elul II, and for Markheshwan, the eighth month of the Babylonian year, takes up the thirty days in succession and indicates the deity to which each day is sacred and what sacrifices or precautionary measures are necessary for each day (***Rest Days: A Study in Early Law and Morality***. New York: The MacMillan Company. 1916. P. 223).

Webster continues by saying:

All the days are styled "favourable," an expression which must indicate a pious hope, not a fact, since the words *ud-khul-gal* or *umu limnu* ("the evil day") are particularly applied to the SEVENTH, FOURTEENTH, nineteenth, TWENTY-

FIRST, and TWENTY-EIGHTH days... With regard to the reasons which dictate the choice of the seventh, fourteenth, twenty-first, and twenty-eighth days, two views have been entertained. It has been held, in the first place, that the "evil days" were selected as CORRESPONDING TO THE MOON'S SUCCESSIVE CHANGES; hence that the seventh day marks the close of the earliest form of the seven-day week, A WEEK BOUND UP WITH THE LUNAR PHASES (*ibid.*, p.224).

S. Langdon, in his book *Babylonian Menologies and the Semitic Calendars*, mentions the Asurbanipal calendar:

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. 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 (London: Oxford University Press, 1935. Pp. 86-87).

"A similar association with the moon's course," explains Hutton Webster, "is set forth in the case of a seven-day period in a text which specifically indicates *the seventh, fourteenth, twenty-first, and twenty-eighth days* as those of Sin, the moon god." "Another text," continues Webster, "connects several days of the month with the moon's course in the following order: first day, new moon; seventh day, moon as 'kidney' (half moon); fifteenth day, full moon."

"Finally," writes Webster, "in the fifth tablet of the Babylonian 'Epic of Creation,' a work which in its original form is traced to the close of the third millennium B.C., it is told how the god Marduk, having created and set in order the heavenly bodies, *then placed the moon in the sky to make known the days and DIVIDE THE MONTH WITH HER PHASES.*" "Although this interesting production, in its present mutilated state," elicits Webster, "*mentions only the seventh and fourteenth days*, we are entitled to believe that the original text also referred to the *twenty-first and twenty-eighth days of the month*" (*Rest Days: A Study in Early Law and Morality*, pp. 228-229).

### ***The Babylonian "Sabbatum"***

These cuneiform records of ancient Babylonia contain a term *shabattum*, which has been generally accepted as the phonetic equivalent of the Hebrew *shabbathon*, more than likely an intensive form of *shabbath* or *Sabbath* -- referring to a Sabbath of particular solemnity. Writes Hutton Webster:

Shabattum, a word which has been found as yet only five or six times in Assyro-Babylonian documents, occurs in a lexicographical tablet containing the equation shabbattu(m) = um nukh libbi. The accepted translation of the latter

expression is "day of rest of (or for) the heart" (s.c., "of the angered gods"). Various scholars in England and Germany... have therefore explained *shabattum* and its equivalent phrase by the five "evil days" found in the calendar already noticed. This identification was based on the observation that these seemed also to be penitential days, when by special observations the gods must be appeased and their anger averted. (**Rest Days**, pp. 235-236).

As is wont with all humankind, the original meaning and intent of the Sabbath day, as revealed by YEHOVAH to Adam and his descendants, became perverted after the flood and associated with pagan gods. However, the *timing* of these Sabbath or rest days was kept intact. Continues Hutton Webster:

A lexicographical tablet from the library of the Assyrian king Assurbanipal gives the names attached to several days of the Babylonian month; and among these is the designation *shabattum*, applied to the FIFTEENTH day [of the lunar month]. Still more recently a similar use of *shabattum* has been found in a text which contains an account of the *moon's course* during the month. Reference is here made to the *first appearance of the new moon*, its ash-grey light until about the seventh day thereafter, its opposition with the sun on *the fourteenth day*, its aspects on *the twenty-first, twenty-eighth*, and twenty-ninth days, and finally its disappearance on the thirteenth day, being the time of conjunction with the sun. In this description, which for minuteness recalls the Polynesian naming of the nights from successive aspects of the moon, *the fifteenth day again appears as shabattum (ibid., pp. 238-239)*.

In the next several pages of his book, Hutton Webster makes these observations:

The choice of the *FIFTEENTH DAY as the shabbatum* was obviously determined by the length of the Babylonian month, which in the earlier period was regularly taken at thirty days duration. We have seen, however, that, where lunar reckonings are employed and the month begins at sunset with the visible new moon, the *fourteenth day* more commonly coincides with the full of the moon. SHABATTUM being the technical expression *for the FIFTEENTH day* as the time of full moon, it is only reasonable to conclude that, if not the name, at any rate the observances belonging to this day would be often transferred to the *fourteenth of the month*, or to any other day on which the moon became full... And if for practical purposes the fourteenth day might be a SHABATTUM, it is not difficult to assume that this was also the case with the days (*seventh, twenty-first, and twenty-eighth*, perhaps, also, the nineteenth), which marked other characteristic *stages of the lunation*. In the developed Babylonian cult all these were "evil days," when the gods must be propitiated and conciliated. In the primitive faith of Semitic peoples they were occasions observed with superstitious concern as times of fasting, cessation of activity, and other forms of abstinence (**Rest Days**, pp. 240-241).

Webster goes on to associate the Babylonian "shabattum" with the Hebrew

"Sabbath" as found in the Scriptures:

"And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith Jehovah." This *remarkable association of the Sabbath with the day of the new moon* had been previously noticed by such acute critics as Wellhausen and Robertson Smith, who were unable to offer a satisfactory solution of the problem thus presented. When, however, the cuneiform records disclosed the fact that the *Babylonian SHABBATTUM fell on the fifteenth* (or fourteenth) day of the month and referred to *the day of the FULL MOON*, it became clear that in these Scripture passages we have another survival of what must have been the PRIMARY MEANING of the Hebrew term SHABBATH [SABBATH]. As late, then, as the eighth century B.C., popular phraseology retained a lingering trace of the original collocation of the new-moon and full-moon days as festival occasions characterized by abstinence from secular activities. How long-lived were the *old ideas* is further illustrated by the provision in Ezekiel's reforming legislation that the inner eastern gate of the new Temple at Jerusalem should be shut during the six working days, but should be opened on the Sabbath and on the new-moon day for the religious assemblage of the people. That the term SHABBATH [SABBATH], *the designation of the full-moon day*, should have come to be applied to *every seventh day of the month* seems to be quite in accord with BOTH Babylonian and Hebrew usage, which, as we have seen, led the month itself to be called after the new-moon day.

The Hebrew seven-day week, ending with the Sabbath, presented so obvious a resemblance to the Babylonian septenary period, which closed with an "evil day," that scholars have felt themselves compelled to seek its origin in Babylonia (*ibid.*, pp. 252-252).

### ***The Common Semitic Antiquity***

The Hebrew seven-day week, ending with the Sabbath, did not, of course, originate in Babylonia. The Sabbath day -- both Hebrew and Babylonian -- originated with the creation week and was transmitted down through the flood to Babylonia where Abraham was born. "The celebration of new-moon and full-moon festivals," remarks Hutton Webster, "which BOTH BABYLONIANS AND HEBREWS appear to have derived from a *common Semitic antiquity*, underwent, in fact, a radically unlike evolution among the two kindred peoples." "To DISSEVER the week from the lunar month," continues Webster, "to employ it as a recognized calendrical unit, and to fix upon one day of that week for the exercises of religion were *momentous innovations*, which, until evidence to the contrary is found, must be attributed to the *Hebrew people alone*" (*Rest Days*, p.254).

According to M. Jastrow, there is a passage in the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Hebrew Scriptures) which was in dispute several centuries before the Messiah concerning its meaning. In the 23rd chapter of Leviticus the word "Sabbath" appears

to be used in a sense precisely THE SAME as that of the Babylonian SHABATTUM, referring to the FIFTEENTH DAY OF THE MONTH. In this passage it is directed that on "the morrow after the Sabbath" the sheaf of the first-fruits of the harvest is to be brought to the priest, who shall wave it before YEHOVAH Elohim and then count fifty days from "the morrow after the Sabbath" to the commencement of the Feast of Weeks or Pentecost.

Professor Jastrow clearly shows that the word "Sabbath" is used in Leviticus 23, not in its later sense of a seventh day of rest, but as a *survival of the old designation of the Sabbath as the FULL-MOON DAY!* Jastrow concludes by saying, "The two references in Leviticus stand out as solitary signposts of an abandoned road" ("The Day After the Sabbath," ***American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures***, 1914, xxx, 104).

The fact that the Babylonians kept Sabbath days that lined up with the phases of the moon is noted by a number of different sources. According to the ***Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*** by James Hastings:

The Babylonian... seven-day week... is the week with which we are so well acquainted... this was the 7th, 14th, 21st, and 28th days of every [lunar] month. Of special interest in connection with the seven-day week is the 19th of the month, which was a "week of weeks" from the first day of the preceding month."

In the ***Ten Commandments*** by Joseph Lewis we find written:

In 1869 George Smith, well known as a pioneer student of Assyriology, discovered among the cuneiform tablets in the British Museum "curious religious calendars of the Assyrians, in which every month is divided into four weeks, and the seventh days, or 'Sabbaths,' are marked out as days on which no work should be undertaken." Authorities contend that this reckoning of the days of the week and the taboo prescribed for the seventh day [which falls on the moon's phases] probably belonged to the age of Hammurabi.

***The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia***, also acknowledges that:

The idea of the week, as a subdivision of the month [was found]... in Babylonia, where 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* 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 (vol. 10, p. 482. Article "Week.").

***The Popular and Critical Bible Encyclopedia*** states that "among ALL early

nations the lunar months were the readiest large divisions of time... (and were divided into 4 weeks), corresponding to THE PHASES OR 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 (1904, p. 1497).

Almost all scholars today agree that the primal seven-day calendar, as used among the very ancient Semites (including the Babylonians and Hebrews), was based upon the moon. Furthermore, this unique weekly cycle was observed in tandem with the lunar phases. An example of the early week, based upon the phases of the moon, is described in the ***Fifth Tablet of the Semitic Story of the Creation*** (12-18). Note that the moon is said to "*make known the days*" and its horns "*the seasons*," creating the Sabbath on the 7th and 14th days of the lunar month:

[The **moon**] He caused to shine, ruling the night:  
He set him then as a creature of the night, **to make known the days.**  
Monthly unfailing, He provided him with a tiara.  
At the beginning of the month then, appearing in the land,  
The horns shine forth to make known the seasons.  
**On the seventh day** the tiara perfecting,  
**A sa[bath] shalt thou then encounter, mid-[month]ly.**  
(From ***Hastings***, on Sabbath: Babylonian).

Another ancient reference -- a writer by the name of Aristobulus -- refers to Sabbaths and Set-apart Days being associated with lunar phases rather than with the modern practice of consecutive days. Notice!

Homer and Hesiod let us know, what they learned out of our books, that the seventh day was a set-apart day. Thus, says Hesiod: There is the **first day of the 'month,'** and the fourth, and **the seventh, that set-apart day** (Eusebius' ***Praep. Evang.*** 13:12, 13).

The seventh day of the lunar 'month' implies knowledge of a lunar-phase calendar! Aristobulus continues by saying:

The seventh day is also a day illuminated by the Sun [*when the crescent of the Moon is illuminated*].... All things were made by sevens in the starry heaven; and go around in circles in all the years succeeding one another [*again, implies a sequence of lunar quarters*]. (***Ibid.***).

Like the ancient lunar calendars, the Hellenistic calendar counts days from sunset to sunset and not from sunrise to sunrise or midnight to midnight. To the ancients in Athens, Jerusalem and Babylon, each new month began with the appearance of the young crescent moon in the evening sky and not when the moon was dark, i.e. the new moon. This evening was celebrated with the lighting of torches and fires, to announce to all in the countryside that the new month had officially begun.

The second day of the month began on the following evening and the third day began on the third evening.

According to Janet and Stewart Farrar in *The Witches' Goddess*, "The modern use of seven day weeks also stems from the ancient lunar calendar. The first of every lunar month was marked as the first day of a new week and a Sabbath was celebrated every seventh day *to mark the 4 quarters of the moon*. The last week was followed by the *days of the dark moon* when the goddess was held to be menstruating and so *an extended Sabbath* was observed until the waxing crescent moon reappeared and the new month began" (Phoenix Publishing, pp. 24-25, p.106).

### ***Abraham Goes to Canaan***

Abraham, the tenth generation from Noah through Shem, was born in the Chaldean city of Ur -- a thriving metropolis located in the land of Shinar, near the present junction of the Euphrates and Tigris rivers in Iraq. Ur of the Chaldees was about 150 miles southeast of Nimrod's onetime royal city of Babel, or Babylon, notorious for its unfinished Tower of Babel.

The Chaldean civilization, with its advanced mathematics and astronomy, has always baffled archaeologists. However, this phenomena can easily be explained as resulting from an influx of people from the Semitic branch of the family of Noah, after the Flood. In this country of the ancient Chaldees, the descendants of Shem, who was the father of the children of Heber (Ibiri, Abiri, or Hebrews), settled after the Flood.

"This," writes E. Raymond Capt, "would explain the famous astrology of the Chaldeans. The word 'astrology' is, in fact, synonymous with wisdom. The early Chaldean priests were genuine astronomers. They knew the accurate value of the Solar year, divided the day into 24 hours, and the circle into 360 degrees" (***Stonehenge and Druidism***. Thousand Oaks: Artisan Sales, 1979. P. 63). They also kept a lunar month with weeks based on the phases of the moon, and were able to calculate eclipses and recognize comets. They also discovered that the sun was "spotted."

"They knew," continues Capt, "the 12 signs of the Zodiac and from its constellations developed their famous 'Astrology.' The existence of certain values connected with the Procession of the Equinoxes, found in their records, indicate they had rules and methods of calculation, but did not know the principles that formed the basis of their calculations" (*ibid.*) This strongly suggests that they inherited their knowledge of astronomy from the descendants of Noah.

The Jewish historian Josephus (37 or 38 - about 101 A.D.) makes reference to the Adamic origin of astronomy and mathematics: "They [the Sethites] also were the inventors of that peculiar sort of wisdom which is concerned with the heavenly bodies and their order." Ancient Persian and Arabian traditions also ascribe the invention of astronomy to Adam, Seth and Enoch.

Abraham inherited this fund of knowledge and became known as a man of great learning. The Chaldean historian Berosus recorded that "In the tenth generation after the Flood, there was among the Chaldeans a man [Abraham] righteous and great, and skillful in the celestial science" (as quoted by Josephus in ***Antiquities of the Jews***).

In Abraham's day, however, the city of Ur had become steeped in Babylonian idolatry and the worship of its patron moon-god Sin. Writes Josephus:

He [Abraham] was a person of great sagacity, both for understanding all things and persuading his hearers, and not mistaken in his opinions; for which reason he began to have higher notions of virtue than others had, and he determined to renew and to change the opinions all men happened then to have concerning Elohim; for he was the first that ventured to publish this notion, that there was but one Elohim, the Creator of the universe; and that, as to their [gods], if they contributed anything to the happiness of men, that each of them afforded it only according to his appointment, and not by their own power (***Antiquities of the Jews***, book I, chapter VII, verse 1).

Continues Josephus:

This his opinion was derived from the irregular phenomena that were visible both at land and sea, as well as those that happen to the sun and moon, and all the heavenly bodies, thus: "If [said he] these bodies had power of their own, they would certainly take care of their own regular motions; but since they do not preserve such regularity, they made it plain, that in so far as they co-operate to our advantage, they do it not of their own abilities, but as they are subservient to Him that commands them; to whom alone we ought justly to offer our honour and thanksgiving" (***ibid.***).

As a result of Abraham's preaching, the inhabitants of Ur rose up against him and were a factor in his decision to leave the city: "For which doctrines, when the Chaldeans and other people of Mesopotamia raised a tumult against him, he thought fit to leave that country; and at the command, and by the assistance of Elohim, he came and lived in the land of Canaan" (***Antiquities of the Jews***, book I, chapter VII, verse 1).

Abraham and his family left Ur and traveled northeastward to Haran -- some 600 miles distant -- and remained there until the death of his father Terah. Now 75 years old, Abraham began to move his household out of Haran to the land of Canaan, where he lived out the remaining hundred years of his life in tents as an alien and migratory resident. With Abraham went his wide-ranging knowledge of astronomy and the sciences and, of course, his understanding of YEHOVAH's Sabbath and set-apart days. It is interesting to note that when Abraham left Haran he crossed the Euphrates River on the 14th day of the month that later became known as Nisan.

Once established in Canaan, Nicolaus of Damascus tells us that:

Abram reigned at Damascus, being a foreigner, who came with an army out of the land above Babylon, called the land of the Chaldees" (cited in *Antiquities of the Jews*, book, chapter VII, verse 2).

### ***The Move to Egypt***

In Canaan, Abraham and his family continued to keep YEHOVAH's Sabbath and set-apart days, a fact brought out by Hutton Webster in *Rest Days*, "...the [early] 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" (page 254).

Indeed they were!

Of this time *The New Schaff-Herzog Religious Encyclopedia* records:

The association of sabbath rest with the account of creation must have been *very ancient* among the Hebrews, and it is noteworthy that no other Semitic peoples, even the Babylonians, have any tradition of the creation in six days. It would appear that the primitive Semites had FOUR CHIEF MOON DAYS, probably *the first, eighth, fifteenth, and twenty-second of each month*, CALLED SABBATHS from the fact that there was a tendency to end work before them so that they might be celebrated joyfully. Among the Babylonians these seventh days through astrological conceptions became ill-omened, while the sabbath in the middle of the month [15th] was made a day of propitiation, and its name was construed as meaning "the day for ending the wrath of the gods." The Israelites, on the other hand, made the sabbath the feasts of a living and set-apart Elohim. The work of man became symbolic of the work of the Father, and human rest of His rest, so that the sabbaths became preeminently days of rest. Since, moreover, the LUNAR MONTH had 29 or 30 days, the normal lapse of time between sabbaths was six days, although sometimes seven or eight; and six working days were accordingly assigned to the creation, which was to furnish a prototype for human life. THE CONNECTION OF THE SABBATH WITH LUNAR PHASES, however, WAS [LATER] DISCARDED BY THE ISRAELITES..." (pp. 135-136).

In time a severe famine ravaged the land of Canaan, compelling Abraham and his household to move temporarily to Egypt. Josephus describes for us Abraham's reputation and stature in Egyptian society during his sojourn in the land -- an account drawn from numerous ancient authorities:

[The Pharaoh] gave him [Abraham] leave to enter into conversation with the most learned among the Egyptians; from which conversation his virtue and reputation became more conspicuous than they had been before.... For

whereas the Egyptians were formerly addicted to different customs, and despised one another's sacred rites, and were very angry with one another on that account, Abram conferred with each one of them, and confuting the reasons they made use of, every one for his own practices, demonstrated that such reasonings were vain and void of truth; whereupon he was admired by them in those conferences as a very wise man, and of great sagacity, when he discoursed on any subject he undertook, and this not only in understanding it but to persuade other men to assent to him. He communicated to them in arithmetic, and delivered to them THE SCIENCE OF ASTRONOMY; for before Abram came to Egypt they were UNACQUAINTED with those parts of learning; for that science also came FROM THE CHALDEANS INTO EGYPT, and from thence to the Greeks also (*Antiquities of the Jews*, 87-88).

Abraham not only carried Mesopotamian culture and technology with him and "boosted Egypt from the early Chalcolithic into the late Bronze Age," but he also brought with him YEHOVAH's calendar and Sabbath days. Egyptologists have discovered that the earliest Egyptian calendar was based on the moon's cycles, and the hieroglyphic symbol for "month" shows a crescent moon (the first visible crescent of the NEW MOON) over a star.

After Abraham's departure, modifications were made to the calendar to give it a uniquely Egyptian flavor or character. They started counting the year when they saw the new moon right after the star Sirius. There were 12 months, each month containing 29 1/2 days, for a total of 354 days. Then the Egyptians added another month to the calendar to ensure that two factors -- the Nile river and the calendar -- would always match each other in terms of when the Nile would flood, and the date.

The calendar remained lunar based, however, until after the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt many centuries later.

### ***From Joseph to the Exodus***

Years later Joseph, the great-grandson of Abraham, was sold into slavery by his brothers for 20 pieces of silver and transported to Egypt by his Midianite captors. After being sold to Potiphar, the chief of Pharaoh's bodyguard, Joseph eventually rose to become the second most powerful man in the land of Egypt -- next to the Pharaoh himself. In this position Joseph introduced many innovations into the land (see our article ***Joseph and the Engineering Wonders of Egypt***) and saved the Egyptian people from a severe seven-year famine.

Samuel Kurinsky, in his book ***The Eighth Day: The Hidden History of the Jewish Contribution to Civilization***, points out that:

The most critical and important factor affecting the economy of Egypt was the engineering of an effective control of its water resources. Legends, both Hebraic and Arabic, have it that Joseph and his people made a great and

everlasting contribution to Egypt in this regard. The application of MESOPOTAMIAN MATHEMATICS served in the planning of new systems of irrigation and in expanding the primitive systems previously installed in Egypt. The storage of water is even more effective as a hedge against years of drought and famine than the storage of grain, which, we are told, was a first step recommended by Joseph to the pharaoh" (New Jersey: Jason Aronson, Inc. 1994. P. 127).

Being a righteous man and a friend of YEHOVAH Elohim, there can be no doubt that he introduced YEHOVAH's laws into the land -- including the weekly Sabbath and set-apart days. In order to correctly keep these days Joseph must also have reintroduced the lunar calendar or corrected the one introduced by Abraham. All evidence points to the fact that the Egyptians maintained a lunar calendar all through the Middle Kingdom (the time of the Israelite presence in Egypt).

When the Israelites left Egypt in a mass exodus at the end of the 12th and 13th dynasties of the Middle Kingdom, they were met by large numbers (the records indicate 240,000) of Amalekites that were heading for Egypt to fill the power vacuum left by the collapse of the ruling dynasties. These Amalekites, known to the historians as the Hyksos, brought with them into Egypt a new calendar. There is a gloss (a note of comment or explanation) found on a manuscript of Timaeus (a Greek historian of Tauromenium, now Taormina, Sicily; circa 356-260 B.C.) which states "that the Egyptian calendar of a 360-day solar year was introduced into Egypt by the Hyksos, following the fall of the Middle Kingdom."

When the seven-year famine forced Joseph's father Jacob to send his sons to Egypt for food, the Egyptian pharaoh approved the move of Jacob and his household into the land, and gave them the very best of the land in Goshen. History indicates that Jacob and his sons became rulers in Egypt, and also the island of Crete which was, at that time, under Egyptian control. There can be no doubt that with the powerful influence of Joseph and his family in Egypt, YEHOVAH's laws and Sabbath days were diligently kept while they remained alive. There can also be no doubt that many of the Egyptians, when confronted with the tremendous blessings that Joseph and his kin received for obeying YEHOVAH, also kept YEHOVAH's laws -- including the weekly Sabbath.

This enlightened state of affairs lasted until the death of Joseph. Then, we read in Josephus, "and having, in length of time, forgotten the benefits they [the Egyptians] had received from Joseph, PARTICULARLY THE CROWN BEING NOW COME INTO ANOTHER FAMILY, they became very abusive to the Israelites, and contrived many ways of afflicting them... (*Antiquities of the Jews*, chapter IX, verse 1). Evidently, with the usurping of the Egyptian throne by the founder of the 12th dynasty, a new dynasty came into power which did not revere the memory of Joseph and all he had done for the country. Following the Israelites plunge into virtual slavery, the memory of YEHOVAH's true Sabbath day also became lost and they were forced to work around the clock building pyramids and waterways for the new pharaohs.

In a statement that may have a bearing on the Egyptian captivity, the *Encyclopedia Biblica* makes this comment:

Hosea takes it for granted that in/during captivity, the CREATION LUNAR WEEKLY SABBATH will be suspended, like all the other feasts, because in his day, a feast implied A SANCTUARY (= 6944 = qodesh = a sacred, consecrated, dedicated Most Set-Apart Place)! The Sabbath marks Israel's separation from the heathen/pagans/Gentiles (1899, p. 4177).

### ***The Wilderness of Sin***

After the ten plagues and the exodus from Egypt at the end of the 12th and 13th dynasties, YEHOVAH led Moses and the Israelites to the Wilderness of Sin where He revealed to them His TRUE Sabbath day. We read about this in Exodus, chapter 16:

And they departed from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came to the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sina; and ON THE FIFTEENTH DAY, IN THE SECOND MONTH after their departure from the land of Egypt, all the congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron. And the children of Israel said to them, Would we had died smitten by YHWH in the land of Egypt, When we sat by the flesh-pots, and ate bread to satiety! For ye have brought us out into this wilderness, to slay all this congregation with hunger. And the YHWH said to Moses, Behold, I will rain bread upon you out of heaven: and the people shall go forth, and they shall gather their daily portion for the day, that I may try them whether they will walk in my law or not (Septuagint version).

This passage highlights TWO main points: (1) the Israelites murmured against Moses and Aaron on THE 15TH DAY OF THE SECOND MONTH after leaving Egypt and, (2) YEHOVAH God was planning to test the Israelites to see if they would WALK IN HIS LAW OR NOT. The intriguing part of this whole passage is where Moses mentions THE EXACT DAY that the Israelites murmured against him and Aaron in the wilderness. NOWHERE ELSE in the narrative of the Israelites' journey from Egypt to the Promised Land is an exact date mentioned! This clearly indicates that this date was VERY IMPORTANT TO YEHOVAH -- and that He wanted the Israelites to remember it. Also, on this same date, He was going to teach the Israelites something very important; He was going to test them and see if they would obey Him or not. What was this important lesson? Let's continue on in Exodus 16:

"And it shall be on the sixth day that they shall prepare what they bring in, and it shall be TWICE AS MUCH as they gather daily." Then Moses and Aaron said to all the children of Israel, "At evening you shall know that YHWH has brought you out of the land of Egypt. And in the morning you shall see the glory of YHWH; for He hears your murmurings against YHWH. But what are we, that you murmur against us?"... Now it came to pass, as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation

of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and behold, THE GLORY OF YHWH APPEARED IN THE CLOUD. And YHWH spoke to Moses, saying, "I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel. Speak to them, saying, 'At twilight [between the two evenings] you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread. And you shall know that I am YHWH your Elohim.'" So it was that quail came up at evening and covered the camp... (Verses 5-13).

This day -- the 15TH DAY OF THE SECOND MONTH -- was so important to YEHOVAH that He appeared in the cloud before the Israelites, and then caused thousands (maybe millions) of quail to be blown into the Israelites' camp "between the two evenings," i.e. the afternoon of the 15th. WHY was this day so important to YEHOVAH? Writes Herbert W. Armstrong:

I will show you that YHWH was speaking to them [the children of Israel] on a SABBATH. It is evident that the Eternal first preached to men on the FIRST SABBATH. Adam was created on the sixth day of the creation week. Evidently he was created in the late afternoon, since the creation of man was the last act of creation on that day. When the sun had set, immediately after Adam's creation, YHWH *preached to him*, offering him the GIFT of eternal life (through the tree of life), and warning [him] that the wages of sin is DEATH (Gen. 2:15-17).

And here YEHOVAH is *again* preaching to Israel, through Moses, ON THE SABBATH (***Which Day is the Christian Sabbath***. Ambassador College Press. Pp. 30-31).

Now let's continue with the narrative in Exodus 16:

...and in the morning the dew lay all around the camp. And when the layer of dew lifted, there, on the surface of the wilderness, was a small round substance, as fine as frost on the ground. So when the children of Israel saw it, they said to one another, "What is it?" For they did not know what it was. And Moses said to them, "This is the bread which YHWH has given you to eat."

And now YEHOVAH Elohim starts to teach the Israelites about the Sabbath:

So they gathered it every morning, every man according to his need. And when the sun became hot, it melted. And so it was on THE SIXTH DAY, that they gathered TWICE AS MUCH BREAD, two omers for each one. And all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses. Then he said to them, "This is what YHWH has said: "TOMORROW IS A SABBATH REST, A SET-APART SABBATH TO YHWH. Bake what you will bake today, and boil what you will boil; and lay up for yourselves all that remains, to be kept until morning!" So they laid it up till morning, as Moses commanded; and it did not stink, nor were there any worms in it. Then Moses said, "Eat that today, for today is a Sabbath to YHWH; today you will not find it in the field. SIX DAYS YOU SHALL GATHER IT, but on the SEVENTH DAY, which is THE SABBATH, there will be none."

As is normal with human nature, some of the Israelites went out on the seventh day looking for the manna (bread):

Now it happened that some of the people went out on the seventh day to gather, but they found none. And YHWH said to Moses, "How long do you refuse to keep My commandments and My laws? See! For YHWH has GIVEN YOU THE SABBATH; therefore He gives you on the sixth day bread for two days. Let every man remain in his place; let no man go out of his place on the seventh day." So the people RESTED ON THE SEVENTH DAY (verses 13-30).

We see here that, starting on the 15th day of the month, YEHOVAH Elohim provided food for all the Israelites. Then, on the seventh day after the 15th, He did not provide any manna -- thereby showing that this day (the 22nd day of the month) was a SABBATH. Obviously, if the 15th was seven days before the 22nd, it too was a Sabbath day! This Herbert Armstrong clearly understood. We can see here that YEHOVAH was revealing *His weekly Sabbath cycle* for the Israelites. If the 15th and the 22nd were Sabbath days, so too were the 8th and the 29th days of the month! So we here see a pattern -- the 8th, 15th, 22nd and 29th. What significance do these dates have? Just this -- THEY CORRESPOND TO THE PHASES OF THE MOON!! YEHOVAH was showing the Israelites that His Sabbath days were to fall on the days of the month CORRESPONDING TO THE MOON'S PHASES, thus revealing that the weekly Sabbaths were to be observed using THE SAME CALENDAR or reckoning used to determine the annual Sabbaths or feast days!

Unfortunately, Herbert Armstrong never clearly made the connection (to our knowledge) between these Sabbath days in Exodus 16 and the phases of the moon.

In the article ***Creation Weekly Sabbath*** the author DOES make the connection. However he seems to have a problem with arithmetic!

In Exodus 16:1-30 Yahweh brought Israel into the Wilderness of Sin (which means "Moon") to teach them the set-time ordinance of the Weekly Sabbath. The keeping of the Sabbath was a test to prove Israel's obedience to Yahweh's torah/instructions. They entered the Wilderness of Sin on the second month AND THE FIFTEENTH DAY that they left Egypt. Counting six days: 2/15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21 -- the Sabbath fell on the 21st day of the month. (Lunar weekly Sabbaths fall on the 7th, 14th, 21st, and 28th days of the month).

The author's arithmetic notwithstanding, if you count seven days from the 15th you will arrive at the 22nd -- not the 21st! Since he mentions that the weekly Sabbaths fall on the 7th, 14th, 21st and 28th days of the month, it seems evident that he is going by lunar observations. The miscounting of the days may be intentional to make the Exodus 16 account fit the author's own personal theory.

Regarding the Israelites' new understanding of YEHOVAH Elohim's weekly

Sabbath, Hutton Webster makes the following observations:

The brief prohibitions of work found in the Pentateuch cannot be separated, by any subtleties of exegesis, from the numerous other taboos with which the institution was invested. The rest on the Sabbath is only one of the forms of abstinence in CONNECTION WITH LUNAR CHANGES; and if the Sabbath began as a festival at NEW MOON and FULL MOON, it may well have been observed BY THE ISRAELITES BEFORE THEIR CONTACT WITH CANAANITISH CULTURE (*Rest Days*, p. 246).

### ***From Joshua to the Babylonian Captivity***

After wandering for 40 years in the wilderness because of their disobedience, the Israelites finally crossed into the Promised Land under the able leadership of Joshua. After conquering the various Canaanite tribes, the land was divided up and given to the 12 tribes as an inheritance. During this time, and up to the Assyrian captivity of the House of Israel, the lunar calendar was observed -- even though surrounding nations were moving away from this type of calendar.

In 1200 B.C. the Egyptian calendar was reformed to the Sothic calendar, in which the year started when they could see a new moon right after the star Sirius. The Egyptians were the first to replace the lunar calendar with a calendar based on the solar year. They measured the solar year as 365 days, divided into twelve months of thirty days each, with five extra days at the end.

Meanwhile, according to Hutton Webster, in Palestine "the Hebrews employed LUNAR SEVEN-DAY WEEKS, perhaps for centuries preceding the Exile; weeks, that is, which ended with special observances on the seventh day but none the less were TIED TO THE MOON'S COURSE" (*Rest Days*, p.254).

The *Jewish Encyclopedia* mentions that during this time "the months of the year were LUNAR, and began with the NEW MOON (hodesh, which came to mean "month"). During the era of the Kings the new moon was observed by a TWO-DAY FESTIVAL (I Sam. 20:24-27)." (*The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia*, article "Calendar," p. 631).

This new moon festival, according to Webster, was "considered an exceptional solemnity as early [at least] as the time of Saul. The twentieth chapter of the First Book of Samuel records a conversation between David and Jonathan in which the former says, "Behold, tomorrow is the new moon, and I should not fail to sit at meat with the king." It appears from this chapter that the first two days of the month were marked by feasts at which all members of the household were expected to be present, unless prevented by some ceremonial uncleanness. The occasion was also observed by COMPULSORY ABSTINENCE from all servile work" (*Rest Days*, p.249).

***The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia*** comments that "in the pre-Exilic period all

work and trade ceased on the New Moon, as on the Sabbath."

In I Samuel 20 the narrative continues with David saying "But let me go that I may hide in the field until THE THIRD DAY at evening" (verse 5).

Then, in verses 24-27, we read:

So David hid in the field. And when the NEW MOON had come, the king sat down to eat the FEAST. Now the king sat on his seat, as at other times, on a seat by the wall. And Jonathan arose, and Abner sat by Saul's side, but David's place was empty. Nevertheless Saul did not say anything that day, for he thought, "Something has happened to him; *he is unclean, surely he is unclean.*" And it happened the next day, THE SECOND DAY of the month, that David's place was empty. And Saul said to Jonathan his son, "Why has the son of Jesse not come to eat, EITHER YESTERDAY OR TODAY?"

Jonathan Brown, in his booklet *Keeping Yahweh's Appointments*, explains these verses in a cogent manner:

**First**, it appears from the context that it was a **special** gathering because in verse 5 he states "**behold**, tomorrow is the [chodesh -- new moon]," drawing attention to the fact that **at that time** he "should not fail to sit with the king at meat." If it were just an ordinary "day" then there would have been no need to deliberately associate the "sitting down to meat" with the **chodesh** [new moon]. He could have simply stated something like, "the king is expecting me for an appointment at dinner tomorrow." But the **chodesh** [new moon] is the FOCAL POINT.

**Second**, he is going to hide himself in the field "unto the third day at even." The point to which the term **third** may be referenced is the current **day** he is speaking in, i.e. the day **before** the **chodesh** [new moon].

Continues Brown:

**Then** in verse 27, Saul notices David's absence again **on the second** of the **chodesh** [new moon]. This shows the length of this special "new moon" gathering at the king's table to be TWO DAYS IN A ROW. He tries to explain to himself that David's absence was due to him being "unclean." The events then culminate in Jonathan shooting arrows as planned **on the third day** (counting from the day **before** the chodesh) **at even**. Saul doesn't ask again the next day why David didn't come. The special new moon gathering or **chodesh** appears then to have ended -- AFTER TWO DAYS. We can safely assume then that because there were **two** days in which David was expected, THAT PARTICULAR [LUNAR] MONTH WAS 30 DAYS IN LENGTH. We can also assume that both those days were not normal "work days" by the very existence of the feast. -- Pp. 57-58.

This also proves that up to the time of Saul and David the Israelites were still observing the weeks (and therefore the SABBATH) according to the LUNAR CALENDAR OR RECKONING!!

"So," concludes Brown, "with this story of David we can begin to understand how 'feasting' is attached to the *chodesh* or 'new moon.' Everyone just sort of went 'on hold' and enjoyed the barbeque! The sighting of the crescent moon then ended it because that was the day wherein the counting of the new month AND WEEK began again" (*ibid.*, p.58).

Further evidence is supplied by the *Encyclopedia Biblica* (1899) which says:

The New Moon and the Sabbaths alike called men to the sanctuary to do sacrifice as in: Isaiah 1:12-17, Isa. 56:1-7, and Ezekiel 20:10-20. Hosea takes it for granted that in captivity the Sabbath will be suspended along with the other feasts, because in his day a feast implied a sanctuary. The Sabbath is a Mark of Separation or division from the heathen. In I Samuel 20:18, 24, and 27, the New Moon was celebrated TWO DAYS. The Sabbath is on the 7th, 14th, 21st, and 28th days FROM EACH NEW MOON. (Note: The dark side of the moon would be 1 or 2 days, i.e. intercalary days.) -- The MacMillan Company, p. 4177.

The same encyclopedia, on page 5290, notes that "the subdivision of the month was into weeks... the week representing approximately a fourth. This quadripartite division of the month into weeks was suggested by THE PHASES OF THE MOON. The mode of reckoning AMONG THE ISRAELITES was by dividing the first 28 days of each month into 4 weeks, i.e. 7th, 14th, 21st, and 28th day and by making THE FIRST WEEK OF THE NEW MONTH ALWAYS BEGIN WITH THE NEW MOON."

Further, on pages 4178 and 4179, we read:

The *four quarters of the moon* supply an obvious division of the month... it is most significant that in the older parts of the Hebrew scriptures THE NEW MOON AND THE SABBATH ARE ALMOST INVARIABLY MENTIONED TOGETHER. The (Lunar) month is *beyond question* an old sacred division of time COMMON TO ALL THE SEMITES; even the Arabs, who received the WEEK at quite a late period from the Syrians, greeted the New Moon with religious acclamations. Thus this must have been *an old Semitic usage*, for the word which properly means "to greet the new moon" (*ahalla*) is... etymologically connected with the Hebrew words used by any festal joy. Among the Hebrews... the joy at the New Moon became the type of religious festivity in general. Nor are other traces wanting of the connection of sacrificial occasions, i.e., **religious feasts with the phases of the moon** among the Semites. That the FULL MOON as well as the NEW MOON had a *religious significance* among the ancient Hebrews seems to follow from the fact that when the great agricultural feasts were fixed to set days, the Full Moon was chosen. In olden times these

feast-days appear to have been SABBATHS... there seems to be in I Samuel 20:27, compared with verses 18 and 24, an indication that in old times the feast of the New Moon lasted TWO DAYS... It appears from Judith 8:6 that EVEN IN LATER TIMES there were *two days at the New Moon* on which it was improper to fast. We cannot tell (exactly) when the Sabbath became DISSOCIATED from the month (*ibid.*).

In pre-exilic times the individual months were usually designated simply by numbering according to their position in the year, from the 1st through to the 12th. However, four months were actually named prior to the exile in Babylon -- namely *Abib*, the first month (Exodus 13:4); *Ziv*, the second (I Kings 6:37); *Ethanim*, the seventh (I Kings 8:2); and *Bul*, the eighth (I Kings 6:38). The meanings of these names are strictly seasonal, thus giving additional proof of a luni-solar year that incorporated lunar months and weeks.

### ***From Babylon to the Messiah***

The exile of the House of Judah in Babylon had a profound effect upon the calendar used by the Jews, as upon many other aspects of their religious life. "It was during the Exile," states the ***Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics***, "that they became acquainted with the names of the months which they retain to the present day, and to which a Babylonian origin is actually assigned by the Talmud" (edited by James Hastings. Vol. III. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1924. P. 117).

The ***Encyclopedia Britannica*** explains that "the ancient Hebrew names of the months disappeared in the Exile and were *replaced by Babylonian names* [as we saw above]; but... before the Exile the months were more commonly designated by numbers." The encyclopedia goes on to say that "in Babylon the Jews adopted the Babylonian names, seven of which (Nissan, Sivan, Tebeth, Ellul, Kislev, Shebat, Adar) occur in Nehemiah and Esther, while six, (Tammuz, Ab, Ellul, Tishri and Shebat) are mentioned in the Assouan Papyri (5th century B.C.)" (Vol. 4, p.580. 1943).

According to ***Scribner's Dictionary of the Bible*** (1898), "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 (See Eze. 26:1; 29:17, 31:1, and 32:1) describes the gate of the inner court of the (new) temple looking eastward as kept shut for the six working days, but *opened on the Sabbath and the New Moon*" (p.521).

We find that in the book of Ezekiel the prophet begins his book by dating it while he was by the river Chebar in the 5th year of King Jehoiachin's captivity on the 5th day of the 4th month (Ezekiel 1:1-2). He was commanded by YEHOVAH Elohim to go to the House of Israel and speak to them (Ezekiel 3:4-5). Then, he sat before them seven days (verses 15-16) and, in chapter 4, YEHOVAH commanded Ezekiel to act out a prophecy concerning both Israel and Judah. Acting out this prophecy required Ezekiel to lay on his left side for 390 days, then turn to his right side and lay on it for 40

days (Ezekiel 4:1-6). Upon completion of YEHOUAH's instructions, Ezekiel again dated his prophecy in the 6th year, 6th month, and fifth day (Ezekiel 8:1) -- exactly one year and two months later.

Now if Ezekiel was using a purely solar calendar (such as we use today), this period of time should have been 425 days or possibly 432 days if it was the 28th year when an extra week was added. Adding up the days that Ezekiel counted (this does not include any travel time), we get  $7+390+40=437$  days.

With this number of days in this period of time, *it is not possible* for the calendar to be a solar type -- as some people have proposed. Nor could it be a regular lunar/solar calendar year of 12 months. The only possibility is *a lunar/solar calendar year that has the extra month added*. Adding up the time allowed in a 13-month year plus two months, gives us a period of time that lasts 443 days plus or minus one or two days to correct for the variable number of 29 or 30-day months. This agrees with Ezekiel's account of 437 days plus a few days of traveling time.

It is obvious from scripture, then, that the calendar of Israel during the time of the prophets was a lunar/solar calendar of the type that incorporated weeks that were *determined by the phases of the moon*. It is also beyond doubt that the lunar weekly cycle was not lost from the time of the prophets to the time of the Messiah.

When the Dead Sea Scrolls were uncovered, the archaeologists found three manuscripts dating to around the first century B.C. that had one purpose in common: to synchronize the 354-day lunar calendar with the 364-day solar calendar. In addition, the archaeologists found that two of these manuscripts -- 4Q320 and 4Q321 -- record the beginnings of the solar months and the festivals. The third, 4Q321a, may have done so as well, but, unfortunately, the relevant portion of the text has perished. All of these texts designate the name of the *priestly rotation* in service at the temple in Jerusalem at the time in question. Twenty-four courses of priests served altogether -- rotating into service for a week at a time. The names of these courses follow the Biblical list found in I Chronicles 24:7-18.

Now in manuscript 4Q320 Mishmerot A (fragment 1, column 1) we find:

**Line 7:** On the SABBATH of the course of Hakkoz is THE THIRTIETH DAY OF THE LUNAR MONTH, on the thirtieth day of the second solar month.

**Line 12:** On the SABBATH of the course of Seorim IS THE TWENTY-NINTH DAY OF THE LUNAR MONTH, on the twenty-fifth day of the seventh solar month.

Going now to manuscript 4Q321 Mishmerot Ba (fragment 1, column 1) we read:

**Lines 4 & 5:** ...and the FIRST CRESCENT [of the moon] is on the SABBATH of the course of Pethahiah, ON THE NINTH OF THE MONTH.

Finally, in manuscript 4Q321a Mishmerot Bb we discover:

**Line 5:** The FULL MOON IS ON THE SABBATH of the course of Koz, on the thirtieth day of the second month...

Right here is plain evidence that the priests in Jerusalem were keeping the lunar-based calendar that included *weeks pegged to the phases of the moon!* This was in the first few centuries before the Messiah. In a note found in ***The Dead Sea Scrolls: A New Translation*** we find mentioned that without correction "the LUNAR CALENDAR of the scroll writers lost nearly half an hour a month. These differences might be relatively insignificant for a few years, but eventually the seasons would begin to wander through the year, and THE PHASES OF THE MOON would not correspond to what was expected" (Wise, Abegg and Cook. San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1996. P. 298).

### ***The "New Testament" Era***

One thing is self-evident -- the Messiah had absolutely no problem with the day of the week the religious leaders of his day (the Pharisees) were observing the Sabbath on! He had plenty to say about the wall of restrictions and the dos and don'ts surrounding the Pharisees' concept of the Sabbath, and blasted them for their nit-picking and hypocrisy. But he never once corrected them over the TIMING of the Sabbath. So *when* were the Pharisees -- and the main part of the populace -- keeping the Sabbath? And, later, *when* were the early Christians keeping the Sabbath?

In the article ***Shawui Sabbath: Ancient Sabbath Observance*** we find written the following: "Most theologians and some scholars assume that mainstream Jewish society, at the time of Yeshua... was practicing a fixed seven-day week which was the same as the *modern fixed seven-day week*. *This is extremely doubtful*. The change, from a lunar to a fixed week, was brought about by the power and influence of Rome. As long as the Nazarenes held power in Jerusalem, all Roman practices and customs, including that of THE CONSECUTIVE WEEK, WERE HELD AT BAY" (<http://www.geocities.com/Athens/3607/sabat.htm>).

(Editors note: This article, frequently quoted, cannot be located at this web address.)

This article goes on to explain that:

Yeshua... observed a Sabbath, but this Sabbath was NEITHER SATURDAY NOR SUNDAY. The Nazarene Sabbath was a LUNAR Sabbath *observed on the seventh, fourteenth, twenty-first and twenty-eighth day* of THE LUNAR MONTH. (A lunar month starts on the New Moon). This was standard practice among the Beni-Aumen Nazarene Order and most of the other orthodox Jewish sects of the time... Lunar Sabbath observance is an ancient Semitic custom concurrent and ante-dating the time of Yeshua..." (*ibid.*).

Further, states the article, "It is a mistake to assume the ancient followers of Yeshua... kept the modern week consisting of Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday. THEY DID NOT. Their week was a LUNAR WEEK which started over EACH QUARTER MOON. Most scholars agree that the modern concept of the week began in the first century and was made popular by Rome, although there is not unanimous agreement on this point."

At the time of the Messiah the observance of the weekly Sabbath was a national law for those in Judah. "All seven sects, including the Nazarenes and Osseans, observed it, although NOT ALWAYS ON THE SAME DAY. The Ben-Zadok Order appears to have observed the Sabbath on a fixed week irrespective of the lunar cycle, whereas the Beni-Aumen [Nazarenes] OBSERVED THE SABBATH ACCORDING TO THE LUNAR QUARTERS (on the 7th, 14th, 21st, and 28th day of the lunar month)" (*ibid.*).

But what of the gentile Christians? Did this early split-off from the Nazarenes also observe a lunar Sabbath cycle? Early historical records clearly confirm that at a very early date gentile Christians ALSO KEPT THE SAME SABBATH CALENDAR AS THE NAZARENES!

In the article ***Shawui Calendar: Ancient Shawui Observance***, the author expounds on the fact that "the Sabbath observed by Yeshua (Jesus) and His family, was on NEITHER A SATURDAY NOR A SUNDAY, and is calculated in a manner all together different than the modern custom of weekday observance... The method of calculating weekdays on Yeshua's calendar is at variance with the modern fixed week system. According to the... system, each week begins on either THE NEW, FIRST QUARTER, FULL MOON, or LAST QUARTER OF THE MOON."

Continuing, we read: "After the fourth lunar week of the month ends on the 28th, THE NEXT DAY OR TWO IS A DARK MOON DAY which is *not* part of any lunar week. (A new week does not begin until the following New Moon occurrence.) This may seem odd to one used to using the modern fixed week, but to the ancients it made perfect sense to pause and prepare themselves before entering and beginning a new month and a new cycle of weeks" (*ibid.*).

James Dwyer, in his article ***Advanced Astronomy in Bible Texts***, writes that "the early Christian descriptions of a weekly cycle (containing periodic single days) are VERY CLEAR, and this information (coupled with evidence provided by the measurable lunar/solar phenomena) STRONGLY INDICATES THAT EARLY CHRISTIANS WERE PRACTICING A LUNAR-BASED CALENDAR" (p.42).

The same author, in another article entitled ***A New Look At the Christian Sabbath***, expresses the fact that "it now seems almost certain that some additional definitions of the early Sabbath Cycle are missing from the modern tradition of the seven-day week. Essentially, the modern week -- as a continuous cycle of seven days -- does not seem to equate to the definition of the week AS IT WAS USED DURING

## THE EARLY CHRISTIAN ERA."

Writing about his article, Dwyer asserts that "this new research looks at the Sabbath calendar -- as it would have been known to a MAINSTREAM JEW LIVING IN THE SECOND TEMPLE ERA -- and it finds *the Sabbath* to have been a rather sophisticated interface *with the lunar-solar system*. In this earlier time, the Sabbath Cycle -- surprisingly -- WAS DEFINED BY THE PHASES OF THE MOON, and -- even more surprising than this -- the Sabbath Cycle also revolved into precise alignment with the annual circuit."

Later on, in the second century A.D., proof that the Jews were still keeping the Sabbath day according to the lunar week can be found in the writings of Clement of Alexandria (circa 150-215 A.D.): "[Peter] inferred thus: 'Neither worship as the Jews... [for] IF THE MOON IS NOT VISIBLE, they do not hold the SABBATH, which is called *the first*; nor do they hold the NEW MOON, nor the FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD, nor the FEAST, nor the GREAT DAY'" (*The Stromata*, or *Miscellanies*, chapter 5).

This clearly indicates that at this time the weekly Sabbath was still dictated by the moon's course. Further, in chapter 16 of *The Stromata*, Clement plainly writes that "in periods of SEVEN DAYS the MOON undergoes its changes. In the FIRST WEEK she becomes HALF MOON; in the SECOND [WEEK], FULL MOON; and in the THIRD [WEEK], in her wane, AGAIN HALF MOON; and in the FOURTH [WEEK] she DISAPPEARS."

This is about as plain as it can get. Obviously, in Clement's day, the week (as kept by the Jews) was still tied to the moon's phases and, by extension, the weekly Sabbath was also still tied to the moon! It appears, however, that by this time (150-215 A.D.) some of the Christians had gotten away from a week and Sabbath that was dependent upon the lunar reckoning.

### ***The Christian Divorcement of the Sabbath***

In the years following Clement of Alexandria's time, an ominous change started to take place that was to radically change the Christian concept of the Sabbath. "This intimate connection," records the *Encyclopedia Biblica*, "between the week and the month was soon dissolved. It is certain that the week soon followed a development of its own, and it became the custom -- without paying any regard to the days of the month (i.e. the lunar month) -- ...so that THE NEW MOON NO LONGER COINCIDED WITH THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK" (The MacMillan Company, 1899. P. 5290).

Then, on page 4179 of the same encyclopedia, we read: "The introduction... of the custom of celebrating the Sabbath every 7th day, IRRESPECTIVE OF THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE DAY TO THE MOON'S PHASES, led to a complete *separation* from the ancient view of the Sabbath..."

In the article ***Shawui Calendar: Ancient Shawui Observance***, we find

confirmation of this radical change in YEHOVAH's calendar:

The [lunar]... calendar was used by ALL the original disciples of Yeshua... This original Nazarene lunar-solar calendar was supplanted by a Roman "planetary week" and calendar in 135 C.E. -- when the "Bishops of the Circumcision" (i.e. legitimate Nazarene successors to Yeshua) *were displaced from Jerusalem*. This began a three hundred year controversy concerning the TRUE CALENDAR AND CORRECT SABBATH:

This [calendar] controversy arose after the exodus of the bishops of the circumcision and "has continued until our time" (***Epiphanius***, HE4, 6, 4).

"The groundwork for this supplanting of the true calendar", suggests the ancient historian Iranaeus, "began in Rome with a Bishop Sixtus" (c.a. 116-c.a.126).

According to Iranaeus, "Sixtus was the first to celebrate a Sunday Easter in Rome instead of the traditional Nisan 15 [full moon] date on the lunar calendar. This change from the luni-solar to a fixed solar calendar occurred in Rome during the repressive measures which were enacted against ALL Jewish customs and practices, INCLUDING THE LUNAR CALENDAR, during the reign of Emperor Hadrian. With the fall of the Nazarene headquarters... at Jerusalem, this new Roman calendar quickly spread throughout 'Christendom.' This NEW CALENDAR not only replaced yearly festival dates such as Passover, BUT IT ALSO REVAMPED THE CONCEPT OF THE WEEK AND ITS SEVENTH DAY."

Hutton Webster points out that "the early Christians had at first adopted the Jewish [lunar] seven-day week with its numbered weekdays, but by the close of the third century A.D. this began to give way to *the planetary week*; and in the fourth and fifth centuries the pagan designations became generally accepted in the western half of Christendom. The use of the planetary names by Christians attests to the growing influence of astrological speculations introduced by converts from paganism" (***Rest Days: A Study in Early Law and Morality***. New York: The MacMillan Company, 1916. P. 220).

It should be noted that the oldest dated Christian inscription to employ a planetary designation belongs to the year 269 A.D. (***Inscriptiones Christianae urbis Romae***, ed. De Rossi, 1861, i, No. 1).

In the article ***Shawui Sabbath: Ancient Sabbath Observance***, the author asks these questions:

But what of Gentile Christians? Did this early break-off of true Nazarene[s]... also observe a Sabbath cycle? Early historical records clearly confirm that very early Gentile Christians also kept the same [lunar] Sabbath Calendar as the... Nazarenes. This practice was first changed by [Pope] Sixtus in 126 A.D. and later officially changed by a royal Roman decree from the emperor Constantine.

Observance of the Sabbath day was made illegal and observance of a "Sunday" of a FIXED WEEK was made mandatory for all except farmers. Previous to this time the ROMAN SATURDAY was the *FIRST DAY OF THE ROMAN WEEK*. The veneration of the Sun in the second century A.D. began to pressure Roman culture to *change* the first day of their week FROM SATURNDAY TO SUNDAY. (Had the Jews been observing this same Roman calendar at this early date, as some maintain, then their seventh day Sabbath would have been on FRIDAY which was the the traditional seventh day of this Roman calendar during the first century A.D.)

Hutton Webster adds that "the change from such [lunar] cycles to those UNCONNECTED WITH THE LUNATIONS would not have involved so abrupt and sudden a departure from the previous system of time reckoning as that from a bipartite division of the lunar month *to a week which ran continuously through the months and the years*" (**Rest Days**).

### ***Babylonian Rabbis Divorce the Sabbath***

While the influence of Rome caused the early Christians to adopt a continuous seven-day week with the Sabbath on every seventh day, the Jews came under a more subtle influence.

Following the destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D., the Palestinian Jews struggled hard to retain control of the sacred calendar. Notes the ***Encyclopedia Britannica***:

The calendar was originally fixed by observation, and ultimately by calculation. Up to the fall of the Temple (A.D. 70), witnesses who saw the new moon came forward and were strictly examined and if their evidence was accepted the month *was fixed by the priests*. Eventually the authority passed to the SANHEDRIN and ultimately to the PATRIARCH. When necessary, a second "Adar" was inserted in order that the reaping of the corn should come at Passover. Gradually observation gave place to *calculation*. The right to determine the calendar was reserved to the PATRIARCHATE; the JEWS OF MESOPOTAMIA tried in vain to *establish their own calendar* but the prerogative of Palestine was zealously defended.

Continues the encyclopedia:

So long as Palestine remained a religious centre, it was naturally to the homeland that the Diaspora looked for its calendar. Uniformity was essential, for if different parts had celebrated feasts on different days confusion would have ensued. IT WAS NOT UNTIL THE 4TH CENTURY A.D. THAT BABYLON FIXED THE CALENDAR... The Talmud speaks of *various* New Year's Days. It may be regarded as certain that in Palestine the New Year [Rosh Hoshana] began in NISSAN (cf. Exod. xii. 2) and IN BABYLON in TISHRI (volume 4, article

"Calendar").

What is not realized by many is that control of the calendar implied ultimate POLITICAL AUTHORITY in Judaism. In other words, whoever controlled the calendar also controlled the destiny of the Jewish people -- for good or for evil!

"In the period after 70 C.E." writes Herschel Shanks, "THE RABBIS ARROGATED THIS AUTHORITY TO THEMSELVES. In the story that appears in the Talmudim, Rabbi Hananiah, an emigre Judaeen scholar, tried to assert the SUPREMACY OF BABYLONIAN JEWRY by asserting its right (that is, *his own right while in Babylonia*) to intercalate the calendar. His attempt was unsuccessful because it was SEVERAL CENTURIES TOO EARLY. This authority remained for some time with the rabbis in the land of Israel" (*Christianity and Rabbinic Judaism*, p. 197).

Notes Shanks:

All this BEGAN TO CHANGE IN THE THIRD CENTURY C.E. Ultimately the rabbis of Babylonia themselves cited, in retrospect, the return of one of their own, Rav (Abba), to Babylonia in 219 C.E., as the BEGINNING OF A NEW ERA in the relative status of the two great Jewish communities: "We have made ourselves [or, consider ourselves] in Babylonia like Eretz Israel -- from when Rav went down to Babylonia." While this may seem to telescope a long drawn out process into one identifiable event, the fact is that the date designated in that statement indeed POINTS ACCURATELY TO THE EARLY THIRD CENTURY, when Babylonia's star began to rise (*ibid.*, p. 262).

While the control of the calendar remained in the hands of the Palestinian Jews it was inviolate; but when control passed to the Babylonian Jews events transpired that affected the calendar and the keeping of YEHOVAH Elohim's true Sabbath day. The environment that brought this about is discussed by Herschal Shanks in the following pages of his book:

As we enter the third century, we find that the Jews of Babylonia have at their head an EXILARCH (resh galuta, "HEAD OF THE DIASPORA") with [false] claims to Davidic lineage... But the exilarchate did not rule the Babylonian Jewish communities single-handedly. Alongside the exilarch a new framework of leadership -- THE RABBIS OF BABYLON -- emerged.

Continues Shanks:

If the rabbis of Babylonia were PRUDENT in their relationship with the exilarch, they were EVEN MORE CAUTIOUS in defining and publicly stating their attitude toward the GOVERNMENT. As we have already noted, it is in Babylonia [not Palestine] that we encounter the well-formulated principle that "THE LAW OF THE GOVERNMENT IS LAW" (*ibid.*, pp. 263-264).

Shanks brings out the fact that there were very marked differences in the ATTITUDE TOWARD GOVERNMENT and the preservation of Jewish religion and life between the Palestinian and Babylonian Jews. The Palestinian Jews jealously guarded their religion and way of life while the Babylonian Jews were clearly willing to accommodate the government of their area and COMPROMISE certain principles they held. This included the Sabbath day.

During this time a major revival of the Zoroastrian religion took place (226 A.D.) when the first Sassanian King, Ardeshir, came to the Persian throne. He made reforms to the old lunar-based calendar that had a far-reaching effect on his people (especially the Jews) who initially rejected his new calendar since it affected their religious observances. This resulted, for a while, in TWO CALENDARS, one decreed by the king and the other, older one, followed by the majority of the people in the Kingdom. Eventually, however, the new calendar won out and the Persians, as well as the Jews of Babylonia, began to organize their sabbaths according to the new solar calendar.

Hutton Webster makes mention of this fact, stating that:

There is extant a Pehlevi tract, said to have been composed in Persia during the FOURTH CENTURY A.D., which mentions among other matters FIVE DAYS IN EVERY MONTH, namely, THE 1ST, 7TH, 14TH, 22ND, AND 30TH, as times to be observed by *abstinence from all worldly business...* These precepts are no longer observed; in fact, their very existence is unknown to most Parsis at the present day. See D.F. Karaka, *History of the Parsis*, London, 1884, i, 132 sqq. (***Rest Days: A Study in Early Law and Morality***. New York: The MacMillan Company, 1916. Footnote p. 166).

In the early centuries of the Christian era many Christians became confused over the proper date for Passover. This is made clear by the early 5th century church historian Socrates Scholasticus (born circa 379 A.D. in Constantinople) in his ***Ecclesiastical History***:

In Asia Minor most people kept the fourteenth day of the moon, DISREGARDING THE SABBATH: yet they never separated from those who did otherwise, until Victor, bishop of Rome, influenced by too ardent a zeal, fulminated a sentence of excommunication against the Quartodecimans in Asia. Wherefore also Irenaeus, bishop of Lyons in France, severely censured Victor by letter for his immoderate heat; telling him that although the ancients differed in their celebration of Easter [Passover], they did not desist from intercommunion. Also that Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, who afterwards suffered martyrdom under Gordian, continued to communicate with Anicetus bishop of Rome, although he himself, according to the usage of his native Smyrna, kept Easter on the fourteenth day of the moon, as Eusebius attests in the fifth book of his ***Ecclesiastical History***. While therefore some in Asia Minor observed the day above-mentioned, OTHERS IN THE EAST KEPT THAT FEAST ON THE

SABBATH INDEED, but differed as regards the month. THE FORMER [those in Asia Minor] THOUGHT THE JEWS SHOULD BE FOLLOWED, THOUGH THEY WERE NOT EXACT: the latter kept Easter [Passover] after the equinox, REFUSING TO CELEBRATE WITH THE JEWS; "for," said they, "it ought to be celebrated when the sun is in Aries, in the month called Xanthicus by the Antiochians, and April by the Romans." In this practice, they averred, THEY CONFORMED NOT TO THE MODERN JEWS, WHO ARE MISTAKEN IN ALMOST EVERYTHING, *BUT TO THE ANCIENTS*, and to JOSEPHUS according to what he has written in the third book of his Jewish Antiquities. Thus these people were at issue among themselves. But all the other Christians in the Western parts, and as far as the ocean itself, are found to have celebrated Easter after the equinox, from a very ancient tradition (book 5, chapter 22).

Notice here that the early Christians were sharply divided over the correct date for Passover. Two ideas were prevalent: (1) That Passover should be observed on the 14th day of the moon while *disregarding* the lunar weekly Sabbath cycle. (This belief was based upon the premise that "the Jews should be followed"). However, this idea was vigorously contested by (2) "Others in the East [who] kept that feast ON THE SABBATH indeed, but differed as regards the [use of a calendar based exclusively upon the whole moon] month." "Based upon the Eastern practice," notes James Dwyer, "it was believed that the then Jews WERE NOT IN COMPLETE ADHERENCE WITH MORE ANCIENT JEWISH PRACTICES" (***A New Look at the Christian Sabbath***).

"Essentially," continues Dwyer, "one group adhered to the *practice of current Jews* (which was the determination of Passover by the 14th day of the Moon, and by a strictly lunar-based calendar). The other group adhered to a *more ancient Jewish determination* which computed the date of Passover according to the SABBATH CALENDAR (the same as the ancient Chodesh Cycle -- or fixed weeks plus renewal [or new moon] days" (*ibid.*).

This passage from Socrates Scholasticus clearly shows that the Jews had gone astray by the early 5th century and were no longer keeping the weekly Sabbath cycle (which was in tune with the moon's phases) as ordained by YEHOVAH Elohim in Exodus 16. The fact that "others in the East kept that feast [Passover] *on the sabbath*" indicates that this group was still keeping YEHOVAH's lunar weekly Sabbath calendar -- under this calendar the first high day of Passover ALWAYS fell on a weekly Sabbath (the 15th of Nisan).

### ***Saturn and the Sabbath***

Talking about the time prior to the Diaspora, Hutton Webster tells us that:

An old and still common theory derives the Sabbath institution from the worship of SATURN after which planet the *first day* of the astrological week [Saturday] received its designation. The theory is untenable for more than one reason. In

the first place the Hebrews did not name their weekdays after the planets, but indicated them by ordinal numbers. In the second place SATURN'S DAY [SATURDAY] BEGAN THE PLANETARY WEEK, while the Jewish Sabbath was regarded as the LAST DAY of the seven, a suitable position for a rest day. And in the third place neither the Hebrews nor any other Oriental people ever worshipped the planet Saturn as a god and OBSERVED *HIS DAY AS A FESTIVAL* (*ibid.*, p. 243).

However, in the Diaspora, this soon changed with the influence of the Zoroastrian revival and the Roman planetary week:

These imported [from Babylon] superstitions eventually led Jewish rabbis to call Saturn SHABBTI, "the STAR OF THE SABBATH," [and]...*it was not until [after]the first century of our era*, when the planetary week had become an established institution, THAT THE JEWISH SABBATH SEEMS ALWAYS TO HAVE CORRESPONDED TO SATURN'S DAY [SATURDAY]" (*ibid.*, p. 244).

"*The association of the Sabbath Day with Saturday*," explains Webster, "was probably one reason why Saturn, a planet in Babylonian astrological schemes regarded as beneficent rather than malefic, should have come to assume in late classical times the role of an unlucky star (sidus tristissimum, stella iniquissima)... Dio Cassius [Roman historian born 155 A.D., died after 230 A.D.] also speaks of the Jews having DEDICATED TO THEIR ELOHIM THE DAY CALLED THE DAY OF SATURN [SATURDAY], 'on which, among many other most peculiar actions, they undertake no serious occupation'... Tacitus [another Roman historian] (*Historiae*, V, 4) thinks that the Jewish Sabbath may be an observance in honour of Saturn..." (*Rest Days*, p. 244-245).

Notes the *Universal Jewish Encyclopedia*: "With the development of the importance of the Sabbath as a day of consecration and the emphasis laid upon the significant number seven, the week became more and more DIVORCED FROM ITS LUNAR CONNECTION... "(volume 10, 1943. Article, "Week," p. 482).

Also, writes Hutton Webster, "the establishment of a periodic week ending in a Sabbath observed every seventh day was doubtless responsible for the gradual obsolescence of the NEW MOON FESTIVAL AS A PERIOD OF GENERAL ABSTINENCE, since with continuous weeks the new-moon day and the Sabbath Day would from time to time coincide" (*ibid.*, p. 255).

This obsolescence of the New Moon festival is also noted by the *Universal Jewish Encyclopedia*:

However, in the Diaspora the New Moon came to occupy a secondary position in contrast to the Sabbath; the prohibition against work and the carrying on of commerce was LIFTED, and the New Moon, although still celebrated by means of increased offerings, soon was *reduced* to the rank of a *minor half holiday*. Its

importance was confined to the fact that it remained of great value and necessity for the fixing of the festivals (volume 8, p. 171. Article "New Moon").

Eviator Zerubavel, in his book ***The Seven Day Circle: The History and Meaning of the Week***, observes that:

The Jewish and astrological weeks evolved quite independently of one another. However, given the coincidence of their identical length, it was only a matter of time before some permanent correspondence between particular Jewish days and particular planetary days would be made. A PERMANENT CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN THE SABBATH AND "THE DAY OF SATURN" WAS THUS ESTABLISHED... [some time] later than the first century of the present era, Jews EVEN CAME TO NAME THE PLANET SATURN SHABTAI, AFTER THE ORIGINAL HEBREW NAME OF THE SABBATH, SHABBATH. Moreover, as they came into closer contact with Hellenism, their conception of their set-apart day was evidently AFFECTED BY THE ASTROLOGICAL CONCEPTION OF SATURN AS A PLANET that has an overwhelming negative influence (a conception which, incidentally, is still evident even from the association of the English word "saturnine" with a gloomy disposition). There are traditional Jewish superstitious beliefs about demons and evil spirits that hold full sway on the Sabbath, and an old Jewish legend even links the *choice* of "the day of Saturn" as the official Jewish rest day with the superstition that it would be an inauspicious day for doing any work anyway! (New York: The Free Press, 1985. P. 17).

### ***Commerce and the Sabbath***

On page 11 Zerubavel makes some interesting comments about the Jewish divorcement of YEHOVAH's true Sabbath day from the lunar phases:

The dissociation of the week from a natural cycle such as THE WAXING AND WANING OF THE MOON can be seen as part of a general movement toward introducing a *supra natural deity*. Not being personified as any particular natural force, the Jewish god was to be regarded as untouched by nature in any way. Accordingly, *the day dedicated to this god* was to be regarded as part of a divine temporal pattern that *transcends even nature itself*. That obviously involved DISSOCIATING THE WEEK FROM NATURE AND ITS RHYTHMS. Only by being based on an entirely *artificial mathematical rhythm* could the Sabbath observance BECOME TOTALLY INDEPENDENT OF THE LUNAR OR ANY OTHER NATURAL CYCLE.

Zerubavel goes on to say that:

A continuous seven-day cycle that runs throughout history *paying no attention whatsoever to the moon and its phases* is a distinctly JEWISH INVENTION. Moreover, the dissociation of the seven-day week from nature has been one of the most significant contributions of Judaism to civilization. Like the invention of the mechanical clock some 1,500 years later, it facilitates the establishment of what Lewis Mumford identified as "mechanical periodicity," thus essentially

increasing the distance between human beings and nature. Quasi [lunar] weeks and [continuous] weeks actually represent TWO FUNDAMENTALLY DISTINCT MODES OF TEMPORAL ORGANIZATION OF HUMAN LIFE, the former involving partial adaptation to nature, and the latter stressing TOTAL EMANCIPATION FROM IT. The invention of the continuous week was therefore one of the most significant breakthroughs in human beings' attempts to BREAK AWAY from being prisoners of nature [and from under YHWH's law] and create a social world of their own (*The Seven Day Circle*, p. 11).

The author further expounds, on page 8 of his book:

The establishment of a seven-day week based on the *regular* observance of the Sabbath IS A DISTINCTIVELY JEWISH CONTRIBUTION [?] TO CIVILIZATION... it is crucial to remember that the ANCIENT DWELLERS OF MESOPOTAMIA themselves did not have a real seven-day week [as we know it today]. While... the seven-day intervals entailed in the regular observance of *the seventh, fourteenth, twenty-first, and twenty-eighth days of the lunar month...* served as the model for the Jewish week, they themselves cannot be considered weeks. Such intervals, which I shall call *quasi-weeks*, undoubtedly bear a striking resemblance to the week and are often mistaken for it. Nevertheless, they are an essentially different phenomenon.

One of the most distinctive features of the [present] week is the fact that it is *entirely dissociated from the lunar cycle*. It is essentially defined as a precise multiple of the day, *quite independently of the lunar month*. Quasi [lunar] weeks, on the other hand, are generally defined as rough approximations of fractions of the lunar month, and are appropriately called "lunar weeks" by Francis H. Colson (*ibid.*).

Zerubavel concludes by saying that:

The indispensability of a CONTINUOUS week for the establishment of settled life with a high level of social organization, [was] particularly significant since the RISE OF A MARKET ECONOMY, which involved orderly contact on regular recurrent, periodic market days. Only by establishing a *weekly cycle of an unvarying, standard length* could society guarantee that the continuity of its life would never be interrupted by natural phenomena such as the lunar cycle. The DISSOCIATION OF THE WEEK FROM THE LUNAR CYCLE, is, therefore, the most significant breakthrough in the evolution of this cycle from its somewhat rudimentary and imperfect [?] predecessor. Only by defining the week as a precise multiple of the day, rather than... a fraction of the lunar month, could human beings permanently avoid the problem of having to handle LOOSE REMAINDERS and, thus, introduce into their lives the sort of temporal regularity that they could never attain with the quasi [lunar] week (*The Seven Day Circle*, p. 10).

## ***Other Lands***

While the weekly Sabbath was divorced from the lunar reckoning by the Babylonian rabbis, the lunar Sabbath continued to be kept in various parts of the world. Hutton Webster makes mention of the fact that:

The Buddhist Sabbath, or *uposatha*, like the Jain *posaha*, owed its existence remotely to the Vedic lunar rites. As celebrated anciently in India and in modern times in Nepal and Ceylon [Sri Lanka], the *uposatha* falls on the DAY OF THE NEW MOON, on the DAY OF THE FULL MOON, and on the TWO DAYS which are EIGHTH from new and full moons. The *uposatha* is marked not only by fasting but also by *abstinence from secular activities*: during its continuance buying and selling, work and business, hunting and fishing are forbidden, and all schools and courts of justice are closed... The *uposatha*, as contrasted with the *upavasatha*, is a ceremony attached to ALL FOUR OF THE LUNAR PHASES, instead of to two only; moreover, it is a REST DAY as well as a fast day... Elsewhere the *uposatha* service is referred particularly to the FIFTEENTH DAY OF THE MONTH, "it being full moon" (***Rest Days***, pp. 155-156).

The Chinese festivals at the moon's phases reach back into the past as far as the historical eye can follow them.

At this juncture I would like to leave you, the reader, with some Jewish insight into YEHOUAH Elohim's set-apart Sabbath day. In ***Creation: The Jewish Oral Tradition***, we read:

Its [the Sabbath's] unique quality and power is that it recharges and renews the spiritual energy of the world. The other weekdays literally derive their nourishment from it. This applies to the entire structure of creation -- without this system of replenishment, the world would not survive, but after six days would immediately implode, returning to the chaotic state of "emptiness and void" -- as the Torah states: "For in six days Elohim created the world"; meaning, for six days after this, without the life-giving energy of the set-apart Shabbat, Elohim would have to create the world anew.

The article goes on to say:

This is so, even today. Every new week which passes over us is actually sustained and receives its very life-force courtesy of the set-apart Shabbat, and all of creation is given the ability to function for yet another week by the influx of His influence which it receives on this day (***ibid.***).

There is a passage in the ***Talmud*** which brings forth another intriguing concept which is clarified by what we have just read: "Whoever sets apart the Shabbat, and recites the 'kiddush' blessing over the wine together with the verse 'Va'yechulu' on

Shabbat, is considered like THE SET-APART ONE'S PARTNER in the creation of the world" (BT Shabbat 1 19:B).

"At first glance," comments the article, "this would seem to be a most extreme statement for the Rabbis to make, and certainly not meant to be taken literally. If the Sages are attempting to impart some sort of ethical teaching or example, its plain meaning is lost on us by what would appear to be the sheer exaggeration of such a statement -- for how could a person become a partner in something which has already been completed previously, before his time? Has anyone ever heard of such a thing -- that someone can come along and be considered a partner in something he had nothing to do with?"

"And even if such a concept could somehow be understood," continues the article, "why should it be said in reference to 'kiddush' -- what is so special about this particular action that it could bring a person to such a level of identification with YEHOVAH that he should be called A PARTNER TO ELOHIM? If the act of 'kiddush' itself is so significant, then it would be understandable if the Rabbis want to emphasize the greatness of the reward which one merits for its observance -- but to speak of a 'partnership with Elohim -- is that not a bit much?"

But according to what we have just read, this makes perfect sense! Since the Sabbath day is literally what keeps the world alive; and every six days a new Sabbath arrives at the phases of the moon and resuscitates the world -- breathing new life into it again for yet another six days -- we should understand that the Sabbath would not exist in this world *if it were not for those who observe it!* If no one kept the Sabbath -- for whom could it be said to exist?

In this light we can clearly see the intentions behind this teaching; for whoever sets apart the Sabbath, observing it at the right time (at the moon's phases) and safeguarding its set-apartness, INSURES THAT THERE IS A SABBATH FOR THE WHOLE WORLD! The Sabbath exists through the Sabbath-keeper, and through the Sabbath the whole world continues to exist. Therefore, in reality, he is most certainly supporting the world, and is truly A PARTNER IN CREATION -- the creation which is renewed each week through the special presence of YEHOVAH Elohim in the Sabbath day! THERE COULD BE NO GREATER PARTNERSHIP THAN THIS!

"And so not only does Shabbat keep the world alive, but he who observes the Sabbath, keeps the Shabbat alive... such is the level of the 'shomer shabbat' that he could rightfully be called 'the righteous', the 'tzaddik,' [and] is the foundation of the world -- for it is HE WHO LITERALLY UPHOLDS THE WORLD" (***Creation: The Jewish Oral Tradition***).

Keep this in mind when you start observing YEHOVAH Elohim's set-apart Sabbath day according to YEHOVAH's injunction in Exodus 16 -- according to the moon's course through the heavens!

The evidence for YEHOVAH's weekly Sabbath days being tied to the phases of the moon is overwhelming. In fact, so much material is available that I have elected to cut short this article in order not to overload the reader with facts. It is my sincere hope and prayer, that you, the reader, will have an open mind and see the irrefutable truth that YEHOVAH set up His Sabbath days on the four quarters of the moon (Exodus 16) and intends for us to worship Him on these very days. The Saturday sabbath is NOT YEHOVAH's day -- any more than Sunday is. In the search for truth we have uncovered vital new truth that, frankly, is going to separate the men from the boys; those who will obey YEHOVAH Elohim without equivocation from those who will continue to thumb their noses at YEHOVAH and resist to the very end.

Many of you may be asking, "how in the world can we keep YEHOVAH's Sabbath day on the phases of the moon and according to Exodus 16? It is the most impractical thing we could possibly do in the way we now live." It is like having been born into a trap -- because we're used to it, we think it is normal. The truth is, YEHOVAH's people have historically fallen into traps. These very traps are such that present us from fully doing what YEHOVAH Elohim requires. They develop by (1) circumstances that He leads us into in order to be tested; (2) the stubbornness of our own hearts *while* being tested (remember what Jeremiah said about our hearts being desperately wicked); (3) so that He (YEHOVAH) can make His power known; or all three.

Just as surely as YEHOVAH Elohim brought the Israelites out of Egypt and revealed to them His Sabbath calendar, it is prophesied that His people will once again return to it IN THE FUTURE. The prophet Isaiah records the culmination of the ages in chapter 66:

"For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before Me," says the YHWH, "so shall your descendants and your name remain. And it shall come to pass that from one New Moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, all flesh shall come to worship before Me," says YHWH. (Verses 22-23, NKJ).

If we are going to keep the new moons and the Sabbaths *in the future*, why not start NOW? Why not say to YEHOVAH Elohim's, "help me do this in my personal life so that I may be found faithful when you return." I fully realize that to accomplish this with all of His people simultaneously will require a deliverance greater than the one from Egypt at the end of the Middle Kingdom. We have nowhere to "exodus" to. But, in the meantime, the remnant of His people must occupy till He comes. Part of this "occupying" is with regard to leading our families to OBEY HIS NATURAL LAW, lest He fall upon us and we be destroyed. Remember, the Israelites kept the Passover *before* they left Egypt. As we begin to keep His true weekly Sabbaths in *our Egypt*, let us cry out to our Elder Brother again that he would deliver us. Let us pray for His deliverance, but *make ready to be delivered!*

Editor's note:

I call upon you, therefore, brothers, through the compassion of Elohim, to present your bodies a living offering - set-apart, well-pleasing to Elohim - your reasonable worship.

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you prove what is that good and well-pleasing and perfect desire of Elohim. (Romans 12:1-2)

**For more information, you may contact the author at:**

**Hope of Israel Ministries  
P.O. Box 2186  
Temple City, CA 91780  
U.S.A.**

**[www.hope-of-israel.org](http://www.hope-of-israel.org)  
[kiwihope@gmail.com](mailto:kiwihope@gmail.com)**

**You may also contact the editor:**

**Avraham Rempel  
P.O. Box 29020  
St. Catharines, ON L2R 7P9  
905-687-8988**

**[www.mennoniteisrael.org](http://www.mennoniteisrael.org)  
[avraham@cogeco.ca](mailto:avraham@cogeco.ca)**