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Edited – Emphasis added

Beware of the "Lunar Sabbath"

In the beginning... it was not so.

The Weekly Cycle, Genesis 1, Was Never Based on The Sun or The Moon

If you are new to the understanding of keeping Yahweh's Sabbath, you probably have never heard of "Lunar Sabbaths." But it is pretty likely that you will eventually find someone who practices and teaches it. Just as the traditional Christian Sabbath departs from keeping the Sabbath on the day that Yahweh made holy, so does the Lunar Sabbath. This study is written to help equip the body of Messiah with a scriptural basis of keeping the Sabbath on the 7th day of every week, and to establish why any deviance from that is unscriptural.

Bias & ulterior motives

As I did when studying out the validity of the traditional "Sunday Sabbath," when studying out this subject I tried to be as objective as possible, not caring one way or another if I have to change anything I believe. At this stage in my life I am a business owner, so I would not be affected in the least if the Lunar Sabbath doctrine were true. I would have no problem at all with resting on any day of any week if I needed to change it. I do not have a denominational hierarchy of men to answer to, and I'm not part of any man-made organization. I like to be free to study and learn the truth, and apply it to my life without hindrance.

I hosted a discussion on this topic in a private forum for almost 4 years in which there were over 5500 contributions by people promoting and disagreeing with the Lunar Sabbath doctrine. I'm not going into this topic as a novice and I've had plenty of time to mull over, pray, and meditate on this subject. To date, I have not seen anything that would prove the Lunar Sabbath doctrine to be scriptural. Rather, quite to the contrary.

What constitutes proof?

I have found that there are different levels of what constitutes "proof" in the mind of people. Some require just a little bit of evidence to support a doctrine or belief, and others require a lot of evidence to support a doctrine or belief. We need to be careful that we are relying on real evidence to support our belief rather than an interpretation of evidence. In my mind, the evidence used to "prove" the Lunar Sabbath doctrine rely on a person to already be predisposed to believing in the Lunar Sabbath in order to interpret the evidence in such a way that supports their doctrine.

I've found that in order to really believe in the Lunar Sabbath doctrine, one would need to rely on a certain level of (highly interpretive) evidence rather than real "proof." Yet, strung throughout some Lunar Sabbatarian literature are very strong terms such as "conclusive proof." When examining this "conclusive proof," it becomes clear that the evidence offered is far from proof, let alone conclusive. We need to beware of someone's broad-brushed use of terms like this and be a good judge of whether or not what they offer is really "proof." It's easy to be swayed by such strong terminology, so we should be willing to make our own judgments about whether or not their evidence really is "proof."

So at the heart of where we stand regarding this doctrine is determining "what truly constitutes a scriptural fact," and what is merely a surmising, or a theory which requires one believe a series of "possibilities" rather than real facts.

What is the Lunar Sabbath?

The Lunar Sabbath ignores the current weekly 7 day cycle in use today and uses the moon to determine when a new week begins and ends. So rather than observing the Sabbath on the 7th day of a recurring, uninterrupted 7 day week, Lunar Sabbatarians restart a weekly 7 day cycle near the beginning of each lunar month. A lunar month follows the phases of the moon rather than the 30-31 day calendar in use today.

Yahweh's annual feast days are indeed determined by certain days of certain lunar months. Starting from the crescent phase of the moon, Yahweh's Passover is on the 14th day of the first month of each year. But Lunar Sabbath keepers believe that the regular Sabbath falls on certain days of every month. They choose to keep the regular Sabbath on the 8th, 15th, 22nd, and 29th day of every lunar month. A few do it on the 7th, 14th, 21st and 28th days of each lunar month but for the sake of simplicity we will address those who keep it on the 8th, 15th, 22nd and 29th days. Here is an illustration to help clarify: Not included.

Because the Lunar Sabbath ignores the current weekly cycle in use today, their Sabbath

may fall on any day of our modern week. It depends completely and solely on the moon phases. One major problem that Lunar Sabbath keepers face is the fact that there are extra days in the month which prevent them from being able to keep the Sabbath every seven days.

The moon moves through one complete cycle (new moon, first quarter, full moon, last quarter, conjunction) in approximately 29.5 days (See graphic to the right). Since we cannot split a day in half, this means that some lunar months will last 29 days, but other lunar months will last 30 days.

So what do Lunar Sabbath keepers do on the 1st and 30th days of each month?

This is where some may differ. While everyone calls them "New moon days," some keep them as an extension of the Sabbath day on the 29th. This presents a problem though because there are scriptures which show men building (Exodus 40) and traveling (Ezra 7:9) on the new moon day. Also, it is not commanded anywhere that we must rest on any new moon day except the new moon day of the 7th month. The new moon on the 7th month is the Feast of Trumpets. This new moon would be what scripture alludes to in Amos 8:5 when some couldn't sell their grains on the new moon day.

Others only refrain from commerce or employment on those days but are free to do all other manner of work such as mowing the lawn, gardening, digging ditches, building houses, traveling, and doing housework. What this would essentially mean is they don't truly get a day of rest every seven days. They would have to wait for up to nine days to get a day of rest. For instance, if they kept the Sabbath on the 29th day of the month, they would be permitted to do various kinds of work on the 30th day of that month and the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, and 7th days of the following month. This means a person could potentially work 8 days rather than the 6 that Yahweh commanded, and rest on the 9th day instead of the 7th day that Yahweh commanded.

With either method, Yahweh's command to work six days and rest on the seventh is ignored at the end of every month.

"Moedim" scriptures proving Lunar Sabbaths?

The Lunar Sabbath doctrine is primarily founded upon three key scriptures. These three scriptures are foundational to the Lunar Sabbath believer, and they will be prominently quoted on their web sites and study papers when trying to prove their doctrine. One Lunar Sabbatarian says they are the "strongest points" for this doctrine, and most others seem to agree.

Since they are considered to be the strongest points, we should look to see if they are effective in establishing any facts. The first scripture is found in the book of Genesis:

Genesis 1:14 Then Elohim said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years;

A Lunar Sabbath believer will quickly point out that the moon, being one of the lights in the firmament of heaven, was created for "seasons." The word translated "seasons" in this scripture is the Hebrew word "Moedim," which most everyone will agree means "Appointed times."

Here is the Strong's Lexicon entry:

4150 mow`ed mo-ade' or moled {mo-ade'}; or (feminine) mowedah (2Chronicles 8:13) {mo-aw-daw'}; from [3259](#); properly, an appointment, i.e. a fixed time or season; specifically, a festival; conventionally a year; by implication, an assembly (as convened for a definite purpose); technically the congregation; by extension, the place of meeting; also a signal (as appointed beforehand):--appointed (sign, time), (place of, solemn) assembly, congregation, (set, solemn) feast, (appointed, due) season, solemn(-ity), synagogue, (set) time (appointed).

Now we will look at the second key scripture, the introduction to Yahweh's appointed times in Leviticus 23:

Leviticus 23:1-3 And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ² "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'The feasts <4150> of Yahweh, which you shall proclaim *to be* holy convocations, these *are* My feasts <4150>. ³ ' Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day *is* a Sabbath of solemn rest, a holy convocation. You shall do no work *on it*; *it is* the Sabbath of Yahweh in all your dwellings.

The word translated "feasts" in verse 2 is again the Hebrew word "Moedim." Notice that the weekly Sabbath is chiefly listed among the "moedim." This is a very important scripture to the Lunar Sabbath believer. For them, it proves that the moon must be involved in setting the time of the weekly Sabbath. Since the Sabbath is listed as one of the "moedim" along with the other festivals such as Passover and the Feast of Weeks later on in this chapter, and Genesis 1:14 says the moon is for the "moedim," the logic of Lunar Sabbatarians is that the moon must also be used to determine the regular weekly Sabbath.

Let's now move onto the third and final scripture which Lunar Sabbath believers use as the "strongest points" for their belief:

Psalm 104:19 He appointed the moon for seasons; The sun knows its going down.

Again, we have the Hebrew word "Moedim" in this verse, translated "seasons." For them, this scripture puts to rest any argument that the moon is not used to determine the weekly Sabbath, which is among the "moedim"

On the surface, this might sound like pretty sound logic:

- 1) The moon is for "moedim."
- 2) The regular Sabbath is called a "moedim" in scripture.
- 3) Therefore, the moon must somehow be used determine the regular Sabbath.

However, the above logic is not based on all the facts. It is important that we base our beliefs on the full counsel of Yahweh, and not on what "sounds plausible" from just looking at a few scriptures and assuming we have the truth.

~~This logic does NOT center around the understanding that the moon is for "moedim." This logic centers around the belief that the moon must be used in setting ALL "moedim."~~ It is very important to understand the difference.

If there are examples in scripture where the moon is not used to determine a "moedim," then their entire argument will fall to the ground. Why? Because if we have examples in scripture where the moon is not involved in setting some "moedim," it proves that the moon doesn't necessarily need to be involved in the weekly Sabbath either.

So let's take a look:

Judges 20:38 Now the appointed signal <4150> between the men of Israel and the men in ambush was that they would make a great cloud of smoke rise up from the city,

In the above scripture, the word "moed" is translated "appointed signal." "Moed" is the singular form of "Moedim." It comes from the same Strong's lexicon word number. Obviously, since the appointed signal was making a cloud of smoke rise up from the city, we would have to conclude that the moon had no involvement in this "moedim." Obviously we can't use the moon to light a fire.

Here the word is translated "appointed time:"

Numbers 28:2-4 "Command the children of Israel, and say to them, 'My offering, My food for My offerings made by fire as a sweet aroma to Me, you shall be careful to offer to Me at their appointed time. <4150> ' ³ "And you shall say to them, 'This is the offering made by fire which you shall offer to Yahweh: two male lambs in their first year without blemish, day by day, as a regular burnt offering. ⁴ "The one lamb you shall offer in the morning, the other lamb you shall offer in the evening,

This is describing a daily sacrifice in the temple or tabernacle. There were two lambs were offered daily, one in the morning and the other in the evening. Yahweh says, "you shall be careful to offer to Me at their appointed time <4150>." The

"appointed time" or "moed" here is morning and evening. The moon is not involved in determining the morning or evening, yet these are called "moedim." This clearly demonstrates that some of Yahweh's "moedim" do not involve the moon at all.

It is true that Yahweh did appoint the moon for "moedim," but obviously not ALL of Yahweh's "moedim" as Lunar Sabbath keepers indicate. Therefore, their assertion that ALL of Yahweh's "moedim" must involve the moon (and thus the Sabbath must also involve the moon) is simply not true.

To prove this point even further, consider the context of Psalm 104:19:

Psalm 104:18-19 The high hills *are* for the wild goats; The cliffs are a refuge for the rock badgers. ¹⁹ He appointed the moon for seasons; The sun knows its going down.

If we choose to follow the belief of Lunar Sabbath keepers, it becomes evident that they are adding to Yahweh's inspired word when they say Yahweh "appointed the moon for ALL 'moedim and ALL 'moedim' must involve use the moon."

[Comment: The moon cannot be used to determine ANY of the "moedim", the Feast Days, apart from the Sun, the "greater light", that is, after the flood. In the beginning the moon, the lesser light, was for a second witness, not a primary sign or witness of the moedim].

To prove this notion wrong, we need only check the context of Psalm 104:19. Take a moment and notice closely the previous verse, which uses a similar kind of sentence structure. It says, "the high hills are for the wild goats." For a Lunar Sabbath keeper to be consistent in his belief, consider the problem here:

IF: Yahweh "appointed the moon for ALL 'moedim and ALL 'moedim' must involve use the moon."

THEN (by the same logic): Yahweh has also made "the high hills for ALL wild goats and ALL wild goats must use high hills"

Of course, this is ridiculous but it demonstrates the fallacy of being so dogmatic that ALL 'moedim' involve use the moon.

What we're looking at here in Psalm 104 is Hebrew poetry, not dogmatic, legalistic statements. Otherwise, you could even go on to verse 20 and find that

ALL the beasts of the forest need to wake up and creep about at least once every night.

In summary, the assertion that all of Yahweh's "moedim" must use the moon is simply not true. The meaning of the word "Moedim" in Hebrew is broader than Lunar Sabbath keepers make it out to be, and when you examine their very rigid interpretation of Psalm 104:19 more closely, it defies the basics of common sense.

We do need to be careful about things like this. Anyone can pull a scripture out of context here or there and it might appear to fit their theology. But in order to fully understand the meanings of Hebrew words, we need to consistently examine the meaning and context of various scriptures. When we do this, the true meanings come to light.

So for me, all of this begs the question, "If these scriptures are the 'strongest points for the Sabbath by the moon,' and the interpretation given is obviously quite groundless, what does that say about their weaker points?"

In the absence of any scriptures telling us that the moon must be involved in the weekly Sabbath, there is no real scriptural basis for Lunar Sabbath keeping.

Pinpointed Sabbaths proving Lunar Sabbaths?

The second of the "strongest points for Sabbaths by the moon" are the places in scripture that speak of Yahweh's Sabbath occurring on days of the month that Lunar Sabbatharians consider to be the Sabbath. I don't see why it would even be a strong point to begin with. Since this there is a one in seven chance of it happening with the weeks being independent of the moon cycle, it can happen almost twice a year on average. The fact that one of them would be mentioned in scripture proves absolutely nothing.

For a Lunar Sabbath doctrine to be established, one would need to prove that the Sabbath was on particular day of the lunar month for two or more months in a row. This would be impossible with the recurring weekly cycle. But, in spite of valiant efforts by Lunar Sabbatharians, they have yet to prove such a thing.

[Furthermore, since the moon does NOT 'mark' the daily cycle of a calendar day, which does the sun (sunset ends one calendar day and begins the next calendar day), then how can you keep a day, let alone a sabbath day, by the use of the moon? And, neither do the moon phases mark the end of one day and the beginning of the next day since the moon phase can come in at anytime of the day or night. The moon does not demarcate end of any day or the beginning of any

night, except on the day of the full moon, where it rises at the end of the day(light) and beginning of the night, just when the sun goes down. This is true since the moon rises 45 minutes later each day, or night].

In my own examination of their claims, there are only one or two places in scripture that one might be able to prove Yahweh's Sabbath fell on a particular day of the month.

The first one appears when you examine Exodus 16:1 which places the completion of Israel's journey to the Wilderness of Sin on the 15th day of the 2nd month:

Exodus 16:1 And they journeyed from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came to the Wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after they departed from the land of Egypt.

On the following day (16th day of the month), Yahweh began to send His manna from heaven and told them to gather twice as much on the sixth day which would be the 21st day of the month:

Exodus 16:22-23 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. ²³ Then he said to them, "This *is what* Yahweh has said: 'Tomorrow *is* a Sabbath rest, a holy Sabbath to Yahweh. 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.' "

Assuming that there weren't any days in Exodus 16 that scripture doesn't mention anything about, this would place the seventh day Sabbath on the 22nd day of the month. Of course, the fact that we can find a scripture where the Sabbath happens to fall on the 22nd day of the month does not prove that we should accept the Lunar Sabbath doctrine. As I previously mentioned, this can take place about twice a year on average.

In reality, these passages do more damage to the Lunar Sabbath doctrine than help. Yahweh gave Manna for six days but withheld Manna on the Sabbath:

Exodus 16:24-30 So they laid it up till morning, as Moses commanded; and it did not stink, nor were there any worms in it. ²⁵ Then Moses said, "Eat that today, for today *is* a Sabbath to Yahweh; today you will not find it in the field. ²⁶ "Six days you shall gather it, but on the seventh day, *which is* the Sabbath, there will be none." ²⁷ Now it happened *that some* of the people went out on the seventh day to gather, but they found none. ²⁸ And Yahweh said to Moses, "How long do you refuse to keep My commandments and My laws? ²⁹ "See! For Yahweh 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." ³⁰ So the people rested on the seventh day.

Notice that it says, "**How long do you refuse to keep My commandments and My laws? See! For Yahweh has given you the Sabbath; therefore He gives you on the sixth day bread for two days.**" Yahweh was trying to teach them which day the Sabbath was by giving them bread for two days. They were sent Manna for the 6th and 7th days of the week so they would not need to gather any on the Sabbath.

With the Lunar Sabbath, such a principle falls into trouble at the end of the month. Did Yahweh give triple or quadruple the amount of Manna so that Israel could keep the 29th, 30th and 1st day of the following month? Or, did He rain the double portion of Manna on the 28th day of the month and allow them to collect Manna again on the 30th day and 1st day of the following month (new moon days)?

Either way would conflict with the principle that Yahweh was teaching in Exodus 16. Either Yahweh would have to send a quadruple portion on the 28th day to cover the 28th, 29th, 30th and 1st day (they might be up to their knees in Manna!), or He sends Manna for the 7-8 days following the 29th day of the Lunar month (which conflicts with the principle "**Six days you shall gather it.**")

The second place in scripture where it might be demonstrated that there was a Sabbath on one of the Lunar Sabbath days is during the week that Yahushua died on the tree. The day after His death was clearly some kind of Sabbath:

John 19:30-31 So when Yahushua had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit. ³¹ Therefore, because it was the Preparation *Day*, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and *that* they might be taken away.

We know that Yahushua was killed on the day of Passover, which would be the 14th day of the 1st month. If we believe the above Sabbath to be a weekly Sabbath, that would indeed place the 15th day of the 1st month on a Sabbath. However:

Matthew 12:40 "For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

If Yahushua was speaking here of His time in the grave, and we take the expression "three days and three nights" literally rather than understanding it as an idiomatic expression, it would mean Yahushua died on the 4th day of the week.

We know that the women visited the tomb on the 1st day of the week and Yahushua had just risen. Tracing back three days and three nights in the tomb, we come to the 4th day of the week, commonly called "Wednesday." This would mean the Sabbath mentioned in John 19:31 was a feast day Sabbath (15th day of the feast month, Feast of Unleavened Bread) rather than a weekly Sabbath. This would clearly contradict the Lunar Sabbath doctrine.

But even if the "three days and three nights" was an idiomatic expression and Yahushua died on the 6th day of the week as claimed by most of Christianity, the presence of Yahweh's Sabbath on the 15th day of the month in scripture does not prove it was always on the 15th day of the month. Still, Lunar Sabbath keepers regard these "pinpointed Sabbaths" and the dogmatic "Sabbath is a Moed" we discussed earlier to be, as one person puts it, the two "strongest points for Sabbath by the moon."

All I can say is that such a threshold for establishing the truth of a doctrine is way too low, especially for something as important as keeping the fourth commandment! The basis upon which we make statements as if they are "fact" is very important. If someone is making a factual statement, they better have proof to support it. Even in their two "strongest points," there really isn't much strength to them at all.

Scriptures which declare the real Sabbath

A real problem with the Lunar Sabbath doctrine is a lack of a clear explanation anywhere in scripture. It would be different if there were two scriptures that seemed to contradict one another and we were trying to figure out why that seemed to be. But there is nothing in the weekly Sabbath pattern that contradicts the scriptures.

I don't believe anyone reading the Sabbath commandment in Leviticus 23, or Exodus 20 alongside the creation account is going to come up with a "Lunar Sabbath" doctrine. There is no commandment anywhere in the scriptures which says:

"On the day following the new moon of each month, six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of Yahweh your Elohim. You shall do this for four weeks. Then, depending on whether the new month has started, you shall not engage in commerce or paid work for 1 or 2 days. Then you shall reset your week into the 'Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest' pattern."

Obviously, Yahweh never said any such thing, but this is the commandment that most Lunar Sabbath keepers follow. This is nothing more than a commandment of men because it is not found in the scriptures anywhere.

Let's remember that Yahweh said:

Deuteronomy 12:32 "Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it.

The lack of such a command is, in my mind, quite damaging to the Lunar Sabbath doctrine. It basically means we need to assume that Yahweh thought people knew these things already, and always would, so He didn't need to explain it.

But...

If Yahweh was expecting man to work six days and keep the Sabbath on the seventh day on an uninteruptible recurring pattern, it would be easy to see that all He needed to do was command us to do our work for six days and rest on the seventh -- no further explanation needed.

And that's exactly what He did:

Exodus 20:9-10 "Six days you shall labor and do all your work, ¹⁰ but the seventh day *is* the Sabbath of Yahweh your Elohim."

Exodus 23:12a "Six days you shall do your work, and on the seventh day you shall rest."

Exodus 31:15 "Work shall be done for six days, but the seventh *is* the Sabbath of rest, holy to Yahweh."

Exodus 31:17 "It *is* a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever; for *in* six days Yahweh made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed.' "

Exodus 34:21 "Six days you shall work, but on the seventh day you shall rest;"

Exodus 35:2 "Work shall be done for six days, but the seventh day shall be a holy day for you, a Sabbath of rest to Yahweh"

Deuteronomy 5:13-14 Six days you shall labor and do all your work, ¹⁴ but the seventh day *is* the Sabbath of Yahweh your Elohim.

If we start without any fanciful ideas, and just take the scriptures for what they say, not adding anything to it, we could only arrive at understanding that Yahweh's Sabbath falls on an uninteruptible seven day (weekly) rotation. There really isn't room for any other possible interpretations. Six days you labor, and you rest on the seventh.

To further illustrate that a recurring pattern was intended, let's go back to the beginning of creation and find the Sabbath that Yahweh Himself established.

As we know, Genesis 1 details six days that Yahweh used to create the heavens and the earth. Each of those days consisted of an "evening and morning." Yahweh said that each of the "evenings and mornings" were specific days of a week.

When the seventh day came in Genesis 2, Yahweh said that He rested from his work, then blessed and sanctified that day:

Genesis 2:1-3 Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished. ² And on the seventh day Elohim ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. ³ Then Elohim **blessed the seventh day and sanctified it**, because in it He rested from all His work which Elohim had created and made.

Later, when giving the Ten Commandments, Yahweh said:

Exodus 20:8-11 Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. ⁹ Six days you shall labor and do all your work, ¹⁰ but the seventh day is the Sabbath of Yahweh your Elohim. *In it* you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who *is* within your gates. ¹¹ For *in* six days Yahweh made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that *is* in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore Yahweh blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.

Now, please pay close attention to what Yahweh has said. He blessed and sanctified one day. Twice He called it "the Sabbath day" and twice He called it "the seventh day."

Meditate on this a moment:

The fact that Yahweh blessed and sanctified one specific day... clearly demonstrates that a cyclic pattern is to follow. If that cyclic (recurring) pattern is ever interrupted by extra days, the one specific day (the 7th day) disappears!

If Yahweh wanted to sanctify and bless the 8th, 15th, 22nd and 29th days of the month, He would need to say that He blessed and sanctified specific days of the month. In other words, the blessing and sanctifying would have been in the context multiple days of a lunar month, not one specific day of a 7 day week.

Thus, the fact that there is one day called the Sabbath demonstrates that you can't interrupt the week.

To further illustrate this, let's go back to the beginning and look at things from Adam's perspective.

Yahweh had just created the heavens and the earth in six days. The Sabbath was sanctified and just passed. All was beautiful and perfect.

Now what?

The following day is obviously going to be a day for fulfilling Yahweh's command to work in the garden. If we were Adam, what would we do if six "evenings and mornings" go by?

Obviously, we keep holy the seventh day, the one specific day that Yahweh commanded be kept holy.

Then what? We have additional evenings and mornings coming so what do we do? The obvious choice is that we work six more and rest on the seventh day. The recurring seven day week cycle is born from the moment Yahweh rested on the seventh day and told man to do the same. It is very obvious and not difficult to understand at all.

Now suppose Yahweh instituted the Lunar Sabbath at creation. After 3 weeks of following a recurring 7 day week with observing the one specific day that Yahweh called the Sabbath, six more "evenings and mornings" go by and what do we do? We rest again on one specific day, the seventh day.

Then what? This is where even Lunar Sabbatarians differ from one another. Some say, if we were Adam we would rest on the eighth day, and then rest the ninth day also if the moon isn't in new yet. But for what reason? This doesn't fit any pattern that Yahweh set forth in creation.

We would no longer be keeping "the Sabbath that one specific day, the seventh day. To allow that pattern to be interrupted is to walk away from keeping the Sabbath on the one specific day that Yahweh made holy, the seventh day!

Other Lunar Sabbatarians would say that Adam would have only needed to refrain from commerce and/or working for money on the eighth and ninth days. But in Adam's day, there wasn't anyone around to buy or sell to, and there certainly wasn't anyone to pay Adam for any work. In fact, with this understanding Adam could have resumed his tending of the garden of Eden on the day after the Sabbath and would continued his work in the garden for a total of 7 or 8 days, then rested on the ninth day. The fact that he could continue working in the garden for 7 or 8 days violates the pattern that Yahweh set forth in Genesis. The seventh day passes by and is ignored with this understanding of Sabbath keeping.

The truth is, Yahweh didn't rest two days and He didn't rest for three days. He didn't say to do a half-rest for one day or two days following the 4th Sabbath of the month. This is a commandment of men. Yahweh made one specific day holy and one day only. He worked for six days and rested on the seventh day. It is His pattern that we are supposed to be following when it comes to keeping the holy Sabbath, as He said here:

Exodus 20:11 For *in* six days Yahweh made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that *is* in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore Yahweh blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.

It says "**Yahweh blessed the seventh day and hallowed it.**" Notice it does not say "Elohim blessed the seventh day, and sometimes the eighth and ninth days are blessed and sanctified too, depending on whether or not the new moon has shown up yet."

There is only one day out of the week that Yahweh sanctified, and that is the seventh day of the week. There is no such thing as an eight day week or a nine day week. If there were, the pattern established at creation is thrown into confusion. A Sabbath could last not one day, but one, two or possibly three days--thereby causing the one day sanctification pattern to disappear. If one chooses to work for 7 or 8 days rather than rest on the extra days, it causes the seventh day sanctification pattern to disappear.

In acknowledgement of this contradiction, some Lunar Sabbath observers have started referring to the leftover days at the end of the month as "non-days." In other words, those days at the end of the month aren't really days at all. They're just nothing.

Of course, this is all they really can say.

But we know from Genesis 1 that a day consists of an evening and a morning. The days at the end of Yahweh's months are days with an evening and a morning, no matter how hard you try to ignore it. Two or three "evenings and mornings" go on by, so they are indeed "days." We can't just hide our heads in the sand and pretend they don't exist so that we can continue to believe what we want to believe.

The truth is, the concept of a week extending to 8 or 9 days is foreign to scripture. In fact, it is a direct contradiction of scripture. In Hebrew, the number seven and the word translated "week" are both rooted in the same Hebrew root verb which simply means "seven."

The Strong's Lexicon defines "week" (#7620) as:

7620 shabuwa` shaw-boo'-ah or shabuan {shaw-boo'-ah}; also (feminine) shbu.ah {sheb-oo-aw'}; properly, passive participle of [7650](#) as a denominative of [7651](#); literal, sevens, i.e. a week (specifically, of years):--seven, week.

And the Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament states:

Shabua - period of seven, a week, the Feast of Weeks. This term occurs twenty times in the OT, always indicating a period of seven. Indeed, the word obviously comes to us from sheba (q.v.) and could literally be translated always as "seven-period."

Notice that this reference says "Shabua" is derived from "Sheba." The word translated "Seven" all throughout the scriptures is "sheba."

7651 sheba` sheh'-bah or (masculine) shibrah {shib-aw'}; from [7650](#); a primitive cardinal number; seven (as the sacred full one); also (adverbially) seven times; by implication, a week; by

extension, an indefinite number:--(+ by) seven(-fold),-s, (-teen, -teenth), -th, times).
Compare [7658](#).

"Shabua" is just another form of the same word. "Sheba" is translated "seven" over 350 times in the scriptures.

Clearly the word "week" cannot be separated from the number seven. The entire reason a "week" is called a "shabua" is because it always contains seven days. This being the case, a week cannot be 8 or 9 days.

As we read in the Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, the very word translated "week" literally means "seven-period." It would be a contradiction to say in Hebrew "an eight day week" because you would to say "an eight day seven-period." Just like a "dozen" always means twelve in our language, a "week" always means seven in Hebrew.

Thus, an 8 or 9 day week is totally foreign to the scriptures. To create one is to add to Yahweh's word. Of course, their solution is to not count those days, and call them "non-days" because that's all they can really say. Their pat answer is "those days aren't included in the count." How convenient!

But scripture says that the opposite. Scripture says that an "Evening and morning" are one day. And one of the days they refer to as being a "non-day" is called a "day" in this verse:

Haggai 1:1-2 In the second year of King Darius, in the sixth month, on the first day <3117, "yom"> of the month, the word of Yahweh came by Haggai the prophet to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, saying, ² "Thus speaks Yahweh of hosts, saying: "This people says, "The time has not come, the time that Yahweh's house should be built." "

With such logic, there are 1-2 days in a month where you aren't even living within the context of a week. On the 30th day of the month and the 1st day of the month, the week ceases to exist! The days are coming and going, but you need to pretend like they aren't there.

The truth is, if a week is interrupted by extra days, we are no longer keeping the Sabbath on "the seventh day." If we change the pattern that Yahweh set forth in creation, we are departing from Yahweh's example and keeping the Sabbath on some other day. The Sabbath would no longer be on "the seventh day."

Lunar Sabbath keepers wait on the day after the new moon to restart the week every month. But if weeks are determined by moon phases, this would mean that Yahweh would have needed to create the earth, create the moon, put it in orbit and maybe even wait for a day after the new moon before starting the first week!

But the moon wasn't even made and given its place in the heavens until the 4th day:

Genesis 1:16-19 Then Elohim made two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. *He made* the stars also. ¹⁷ Elohim set them in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth, ¹⁸ and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness. And Elohim saw that *it was* good. ¹⁹ So the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

So there was no sun to even give light on the earth, and no moon to reflect that light on the earth (thereby creating the moon phases) until the 4th day of the week. If we were to believe that each week is determined by the moon phases, this would be yet another direct contradiction.

If Yahweh wanted to set a pattern of Lunar Sabbath keeping for us, and the pattern is to be found in His creation of the world, why would He not create the world in one lunar month, not resting every seventh day but resting on certain days of the month so that we have an accurate pattern of Sabbath keeping to go by?

Of course, Yahweh could have created the heavens and the earth in an instant, but instead He set in motion the concept of a "week" so that we would follow His example in working six days and resting on the seventh. The Lunar Sabbath violates this pattern at the end of every month by doing physical labor six days and resting on the 7th, 8th and possibly 9th days -OR- doing physical labor 7 to 8 days and resting on the 9th day.

Leviticus 23:3 'Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day *is* a Sabbath of solemn rest, a holy convocation. You shall do no work *on it*; *it is* the Sabbath of Yahweh in all your dwellings.

The most logical and clear choice here is to do just what Yahweh said. Work six days and rest on the seventh. This is the pattern given for us in the scriptures.

Yahweh never specified certain days of the month for His regular Sabbath, but a specific day of the month is given for each of His feast day Sabbaths. Does this not speak volumes?

Leviticus 23:4 'Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day *is* a Sabbath of solemn rest, a holy convocation. You shall do no work *on it*; *it is* the Sabbath of Yahweh in all your dwellings. ⁴ These *are* the feasts of Yahweh, holy convocations which you shall proclaim at their appointed times. ⁵ 'On the fourteenth *day* of the first month at twilight *is* Yahweh's Passover. ⁶ 'And on the fifteenth day of the same month *is* the Feast of Unleavened Bread to Yahweh; seven days you must eat unleavened bread. ⁷ 'On the first day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall do no customary work on it.

Notice also that Yahweh needed to inform us that the first day of the feast of Unleavened Bread, being the 15th day of the first month, is a day that "no customary work" is to be done. If indeed the 15th day of each month is already a regular Sabbath, why would He even need to inform us that it's a day of rest to begin with?

The regular Sabbath is a memorial of the seven days of creation. The holy days scattered throughout the year are observed on certain days of the year as a memorial to other acts of Yahweh such as the anniversary of when the children of Israel went out of Egypt, etc.

But the Sabbath is given for us to remember the creation of the world and rest as Yahweh did. We need to do what He did and do all our work on six days, but rest on one specific day, the seventh day. The day that Yahweh made holy and commanded that we "Remember" is one specific day, the seventh day, and we are to "keep it holy."

Three Days Journey

The Lunar Sabbath doctrine always has the Sabbath falling on the 8th, 15th, 22nd and 29th days of a lunar month. If the Sabbath were on the 22nd day of the month, the children of Israel would have been traveling on the Sabbath:

Num 10:11-12 - Now it came to pass on the twentieth day of the second month, in the second year, that the cloud was taken up from above the tabernacle of the Testimony.
¹² And the children of Israel set out from the Wilderness of Sinai on their journeys; then the cloud settled down in the Wilderness of Paran.

....

³³ - So they departed from the mountain of Yahweh on a journey of three days; and the ark of the covenant of Yahweh went before them for the three days' journey, to search out a resting place for them.

Since they began their journey on the 20th, they would have journeyed on the 20th, 21st and 22nd days...seeking a resting place. No rest was found until the 23rd day of the lunar month. Therefore, these verses easily disprove the Lunar Sabbath doctrine. While some have suggested that the "journey of three days" is simply a measurement of distance, the context has to do with with how many days they traveled, not the distance from one place to another.

Count to Pentecost

One pretty obvious problem with the Lunar Sabbath is how it contradicts how the Feast of Weeks is commanded to be observed. We are told to count 7 Sabbaths from the Sabbath

that occurs during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. This would consist of 49 days. Then it says that we would arrive at 50 days if we count to the day after the seventh Sabbath:

Leviticus 23:15-16 And you shall count for yourselves from the day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering: seven Sabbaths shall be completed.

¹⁶ 'Count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath; then you shall offer a new grain offering to Yahweh.

Let's now look and see if this fits as a possibility for a Lunar Sabbath keeper. The small numbers will indicate the counting of 50 days from the day after the Sabbath during the Feast of Unleavened Bread:

Abib (First Month)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
	9	10	11	12	13	14	<u>15</u>	<- 1st day of feast
	16 ₁	17 ₂	18 ₃	19 ₄	20 ₅	21 ₆	22 ₇	
	23 ₈	24 ₉	25 ₁₀	26 ₁₁	27 ₁₂	28 ₁₃	29 ₁₄	30 ₁₅
1 ₁₆	2 ₁₇	3 ₁₈	4 ₁₉	5 ₂₀	6 ₂₁	7 ₂₂	8 ₂₃	
	9 ₂₄	10 ₂₅	11 ₂₆	12 ₂₇	13 ₂₈	14 ₂₉	15 ₃₀	
	16 ₃₁	17 ₃₂	18 ₃₃	19 ₃₄	20 ₃₅	21 ₃₆	22 ₃₇	
	23 ₃₈	24 ₃₉	25 ₄₀	26 ₄₁	27 ₄₂	28 ₄₃	29 ₄₄	
1 ₄₅	2 ₄₆	3 ₄₇	4 ₄₈	5 ₄₉	6 ₅₀	7	8	

As you can see in the above calendar, the Feast of Weeks does not fit at all into the Lunar Sabbath model. In scripture, Yahweh said that when we count 50 days, we will count "**to the day after the seventh Sabbath.**" In the above Lunar Sabbath calendar, it is impossible for the 50th day to be "**the day after the seventh Sabbath.**" In fact, Pentecost/Shavuot can never be "**the day after the seventh Sabbath**" if we keep Lunar Sabbaths. Thus, Lunar Sabbath keeping contradicts the scriptures.

Historical Data

Historical information can be helpful if we are trying to discern the truth of something that doesn't seem very clear to us from scripture. Although I believe

the scriptures speak clearly about the seventh day Sabbath always occurring every seventh day, referencing historical works may be helpful for some who are not yet convinced.

Lunar Sabbath keepers love to quote from a few Encyclopedic references which say that the week was originally tied to the lunar cycle. If we rely on such Encyclopedias to tell us about historical data, we might indeed wonder if the moon had something to do with setting the weeks.

[This reference to an encyclopedia refers to the Jewish Encyclopedia, which has no reference to the weekly Sabbath, using the moon. The Jews or Israelites never used the moon as a weekly cycle reference. It is a reference to the Jewish Rabbinic calendar, the monthly calendar].

But the truth is, most of those references are very old and are relying theories that have their basis in the idea that the bible was not authored and inspired by Yahweh.

Rather, such articles are usually written by people who have the same historical data we do, but they generally don't even believe in the scriptures, and view Yahweh to be just another one of those "tribal war gods." Because they don't believe in the scriptures, they make statements like the Sabbath was originally tied to the moon. This is due to an assumption that the children of Israel picked up Sabbath keeping from being in Babylon, or some other pagan culture that may have used the moon in setting monthly observances.

When researching this topic historically, we don't need to go any further in history than the time period that Yahushua the Messiah was born into. We do know that He kept the Sabbath day and we know that He kept it on the same day as the rest of the Jews in His day. For example:

Luke 4:16 So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read.

The first century disciples also did the same:

Acts 17:2 Then Paul, as his custom was, went in to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures,

So, for me the question is whether or not there are any first century eyewitnesses that may enlighten us as to whether the Jews of that time kept the Sabbath by the moon, or by a recurring seven day week.

Can we find a clear answer to this question? Absolutely.

To find a clear answer to this question, we will examine the Talmud, the Dead Sea Scrolls, Josephus and various Roman Historians and writers of that period.

1. The Talmud

First of all, please understand that I do not believe in following the Talmud or looking at it as being authoritative for doctrine

I'm not going to be using it for the purposes of telling me how or when to keep the Sabbath, except that I know the Messiah was in agreement with the weekly Sabbath of 1st century Judaism. Therefore, we will only use the Talmud to help us understand what views of 1st and 2nd century Judaism actually were.

The Talmud is a pretty good source because although it was compiled about 130 years after the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem, parts of it act as a historical reference for things that were going on when the temple was still standing.

The Talmud is composed of three parts. There is the Mishnah, which is the central focal point of the whole Talmud. There is the Gemara, which is a commentary on the Mishnah. Then there is Rashi's commentary on both.

The Mishnah simply records the beliefs of 1st century Judaism. It speaks often about the views of two Jewish scholars called Shammai and Hillel. They were leaders of two (often opposing) schools of thought, called "houses." Hillel and Shammai lived from c. 50 BCE to 50 CE so they were alive during Yahushua's ministry on the earth.

The Talmud records some 300+ differences of opinion between both houses. In Judaism, the views of the house of Hillel ([Beth Hillel](#)) usually prevailed over the views of the house of Shammai ([Beth Shammai](#)).

As you will see, the Talmud is pretty clear that the Lunar Sabbath was not observed by Beth Hillel, Beth Shammai, or any Jewish man living in the first century.

In our first example, we will examine a difference of opinion between Hillel and Shammai on what blessing needed to be recited if the "new moon falls on a Sabbath."

"R. Zera replied: The New Moon is different from a festival - Since its mention is included in the benediction on the sanctity of the day in the morning and evening prayers it is also included in that of the additional prayer. But do Beth Shammai uphold the view that the mention of the New

Moon is to be included? Was it not in fact taught: **If a New Moon falls on a Sabbath, Beth Shammai** ruled: One recites in his additional prayer eight benedictions and **Beth Hillel** ruled: Seven? This is indeed a difficulty." *Talmud* - Mas. Eiruvin 40b

Of course, if they were keeping the Lunar Sabbath, the New Moon can never fall on a Sabbath because the Lunar Sabbath is never on the first day of the month. This difference of opinion wouldn't have been recorded if they kept the Lunar Sabbath.

Next, we will see that the Mishnah records what the first century temple priests did with the non-meat portions of the Passover Lamb:

"**Mishnah**. The bones, and the sinews, and the nothar of the paschal lamb are to be burnt on the sixteenth. **If the sixteenth falls on the Sabbath**, they are to be burnt on the seventeenth, because they do not override either the Sabbath or the festival." *Talmud* - Pesachim 83a

With the Lunar Sabbath, there is no such thing as the sixteenth day of the month falling on the Sabbath. These are not men who are trying to figure out how to fit a weekly Sabbath into Babylonian life, it is a reference to the acts of first century priests who certainly did not keep the Lunar Sabbath. These are the practices observed during the temple era when Yahushua and His disciples lived.

The Mishnah also recorded the following rule regarding the meal offerings:

"**Mishnah**. A man may offer a meal-offering consisting of sixty tenths and bring them in one vessel if a man said, I take upon myself to offer sixty tenths, he may bring them in one vessel. But if he said, I take upon myself to offer sixty-one tenths, he must bring sixty in one vessel and the one in another vessel; for since the congregation bring **on the first day of the feast of tabernacles when it falls on a Sabbath** sixty-one tenths as a meal-offering, it is enough for an individual that his meal-offering be less by one tenth than that of the congregation." *Talmud* - Menachoth 103b

Obviously, this is a record of what went on while the temple was still standing because after that time, there would be no place to take it. With a Lunar Sabbath, there is never a time when the first day of the feast of Tabernacles falls on any day other than the Sabbath (15th day of the seventh month).

Obviously, the recorded practices of first century Judaism while the temple still stood indicate that they did not keep a Lunar Sabbath. They kept the Sabbath on a recurring, seven day week just as it is given in Genesis chapter 1, independent of the moon cycle. Therefore, since Yahushua kept the Sabbath along with the rest of the Jews of that period, He did not participate in a Lunar Sabbath, a doctrine that doesn't appear to exist in Judaism at that time.

I should also mention that if you ever read the Talmud in depth, you will come away with one clear impression: They debated about almost everything. Something as major as a change in when the Sabbath is observed ought to have been at least debated somewhere. After all, they debated every little fine point of the law! The lack of such a debate speaks volumes.

2. The Dead Sea Scrolls and Josephus

The Dead Sea Scrolls are considered by scholars to be authored by the Essenes, a sect in first century Judaism. In the Dead Sea Scrolls, there are a number of extra-biblical scrolls which appear to shed light on what this sect believed and practiced. Understanding what they believed can be helpful in determining whether or not the Lunar Sabbath was being observed by mainstream Judaism of that time.

It is generally undisputed (even by Lunar Sabbatarians) that the authors of these scrolls did not keep a Lunar Sabbath. Rather, the Calendrical scroll shows that they observed a recurring seven day weekly cycle, independent of the moon phases. I know of no one who disputes this. The *Calendrical Scroll* and the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* confirms this.

Of course, Lunar Sabbatarians generally will teach that this Jewish sect was wrong about the Sabbath.

But in the book of Josephus, he speaks much about the Essenes. Josephus was a first century Jewish historian who wrote much about life in Judea during the first century. He goes into great detail as to how practices of the Essenes were different than others. He mentions everything from how the Essenes don't carry anything with them when they travel, to how they regard oil to be defilement. In *Wars of the Jews* 2:119-161, Josephus speaks of them in no less than 2000 words, describing over 100 characteristics of their way of life.

So did Josephus mention that they kept the Sabbath on a day that was different than the rest of Judaism?

Wars of the Jews 2:147 ... Moreover, they are stricter than any other of the Jews in resting from their labors on the seventh day; for they not only get their food ready the day before, that they may not be obliged to kindle a fire on that day, but they will not move any vessel out of its place, nor go to stool thereon.

In this, Josephus even goes so far as to say that the Essenes are "**stricter than any other of the Jews in resting from their labors on the seventh day.**" Does it sound like there was any disagreement as to when the Sabbath was? Wouldn't it seem

strange that Josephus would mention that the Essenes were stricter in *their* resting from labors on the Sabbath but not bother to mention that the Essenes held the Sabbath on a totally different day than the other Jews of that period?

The fact is, if the Essenes were keeping a different day than the rest of Judaism, Josephus wouldn't have been able to say that they were even resting on the seventh day to begin with. He would have to say they were typically resting on some other day.

There is no record in the Dead Sea Scrolls of the Essenes disagreeing with other groups as to when the Sabbath was. In fact, there is no historical record of any Jewish sects disagreeing with each other on when the Sabbath was.

In another interesting note, Josephus speaks of one of the large towers that were built in Jerusalem:

Wars of the Jews 4:582 and the last was erected above the top of the Pastophoria, where one of the priests stood of course, and gave a signal beforehand with a trumpet, at the beginning of every seventh day, in the evening twilight, as also at the evening when that day was finished, as giving notice to the people when they were to stop work, and when they were to go to work again.

So his report is that a trumpet was blown at the beginning of every seventh day, to mark when the people should stop working, and begin working. As an interesting side note, archaeological finds concur with Josephus' comments about the place of trumpeting:

"When we excavated the beautifully paved Herodian street adjacent to the southern wall and near the southwestern corner of the Enclosure Wall, we found a particularly large ashlar block. On the inside was a niche where a man might stand, especially if the ashlar were joined to another which would enlarge the niche.

On the outside was a carefully and elegantly incised Hebrew inscription: LBYT HTKY 'H LHH [RYZ]; "To the place of Trumpeting to (declare)." If the restoration of the word "declare" is correct, the rest of the missing part of the inscription probably went on to tell us more about the declaring of the beginning and the end of the Sabbath.

The stone had been toppled during the Roman destruction of the Temple onto the street below where it had lain for nearly two thousand years until we uncovered it. It must have originally come from the pinnacle of the southwestern corner of the Temple Mount. From a spot on top of the Temple chambers a priest would blow a trumpet on Sabbath Eve, to announce the arrival of the Sabbath and the cessation of

all labour, and to announce, on the following evening, the departure of the Sabbath and the resumption of all labor.

The entire city was visible from this spot on the southwest corner of the Temple Mount; the clarion call of the trumpet would reach the farthest markets of the city. Such a scene is recounted by Josephus in his work, *The Jewish War*. (IV, 582)." Editor, H. S. 2004; 2004. *BAR* 06:04 (July/Aug 1980). Biblical Archaeology Society

Josephus also records that Agatharchides, a 2nd century BCE Greek Historian, wrote something quite interesting about Ptolemy's defeat of Jerusalem:

Against Apion 1:208 "When Agatharchides had premised this story, and had jested upon Stratonice for her superstition, he gives a like example of what was reported concerning us, and writes thus:--

²⁰⁹ "There are a people called Jews, and dwell in a city the strongest of all other cities, which the inhabitants call Jerusalem, and are accustomed to rest on every seventh day; on which times they make no use of their arms, nor meddle with husbandry, nor take care of any affairs of life, but spread out their hands in their holy places, and pray till the evening.

²¹⁰ Now it came to pass, that when Ptolemy, the son of Lagus, came into this city with his army, that these men, in observing this mad custom of theirs, instead of guarding the city, suffered their country to submit itself to a bitter lord; and their law was openly proven to have commanded a foolish practice"

Ptolemy was the General of Alexander the Great, who took over Jerusalem in 332 BCE. We see that the Jews would not defend themselves or take up arms on the Sabbath, which was "every seventh day."

If I were to describe the Sabbath keeping practices of Lunar Sabbatarians, I certainly wouldn't describe their Sabbath keeping as something they did "every seventh day." Rather, I would mention that they only keep a Sabbath on certain days of the month. Therefore, it's quite evident that Josephus was describing the practice laid out for us "in the beginning" when Elohim created the first week and that is to rest every seventh day, without moon interruptions.

3. Roman Historians and Writers

There seems to be a trend among Lunar Sabbath keepers to refer to people like me who keep a recurring weekly Sabbath as "Satyr-day keepers" -- as if we are following the a pagan Roman week rather than the week that they believe to be in the scriptures.

The truth is that Jews didn't want the holy Sabbath to be associated with "Saturn," an idol that had nothing to do with Judaism. The name "Saturday/Day of Saturn" originated with the pagans, not with the Jews. The

Jews repeatedly and unequivocally refer to the seventh day of the week as "the Sabbath."

However, when it comes to determining whether or not the Jews of the first century kept the Sabbath using the Lunar Sabbath or, as I believe, a recurring weekly Sabbath, examining the records of Roman historians and other writers can be helpful. By the admission of Lunar Sabbath keepers, and clear historical record, the Romans did not follow the moon phases when determining the weeks, or even the months for that matter.

For this reason, we can look into the writings of Roman historians and other writers to see if the Romans associated the Jewish Sabbath with their "Saturday/Day of Saturn." If they did associate the Sabbath with their Day of Saturn in the first century or before, this would be undeniable evidence that the Jewish week and the Roman week were both kept on the same recurring weekly cycle.

As we will see in this section, there is no doubt that Roman historians and other writers explicitly and repeatedly consider the timing of Jewish Sabbath keeping to be linked with the seventh day of the Roman week, which was a repeating seven day cycle, independent of the moon phases.

70 - 84 CE (AD)

Frontinus, a Roman Soldier who lived from c. 40 CE to 103 CE, wrote book on military strategy called *Strategematicon* in [84 A.D.](#) In it, he writes:

"The deified Augustus Vespasian attacked the Jews on the day of Saturn, a day on which it is sinful for them to do any business." Frontinus *Stratagem* 2.1.17.

The original Latin version of this book has "Saturnis" for Saturn, confirming that the Romans associated the Sabbath day with their "day of Saturn" which is on the seventh day of the week.

Since this book was written a mere 14 years after Vespasian's (Titus') destruction of Jerusalem, this is this is obviously very strong historical evidence directly from a first century eyewitness, tying in the Sabbath with the recurring seven day cycle of the Romans.

63 BCE - 229 CE

Cassius Dio, a Roman Historian who lived from ca. 155 to 229 CE, using the historical annals of the Roman empire, wrote about 3 battles which the Roman empire had with the Jews.

The first battle was during a time when the Hyrcanus II and Aristobulus II, two brothers who were the offspring of the Maccabees, were engaged in a dispute over who would rule. The Romans, through the actions of Pompey, came in and settled the dispute, siding with Hyrcanus. While speaking of Pompey's battle, the Sabbath is mentioned.

The setting is 63 BCE:

"Most of the city, to be sure, he took without any trouble, as he was received by the party of Hyrcanus; but the temple itself, which the other party had occupied, he captured only with difficulty.

For it was on high ground and was fortified by a wall of its own, and if they had continued defending it on all days alike, he could not have got possession of it.

As it was, they made an excavation of what are called the **days of Saturn, and by doing no work at all on those days** afforded the Romans an opportunity in this interval to batter down the wall.

The latter, on learning of this superstitious awe of theirs, made no serious attempts the rest of the time, but on those days, when they came round in succession, assaulted most vigorously.

Thus the defenders were captured on the day of Saturn, without making any defense, and all the wealth was plundered.

The kingdom was given to Hyrcanus, and Aristobulus was carried away." Cassius Dio *Roman History* [37.16.1-4](#)

So the Romans took advantage of the fact that the Jews would not work on the Sabbath. When was the Sabbath? Again, the weekly Sabbath coincides with the Roman "days of Saturn."

The second battle listed by Cassius Dio occurred in 36 BCE, is the one that resulted in the very first King Herod coming to power:

"The Jews, indeed, had done much injury to the Romans, but they suffered far more themselves.

The first of them to be captured were those who were fighting for the precinct of their god, and then the rest on the day even then called the day of Saturn.

And so excessive were they in their devotion to religion that the first set of prisoners, those who had been captured along with the temple, obtained leave from Sosius, when the day of Saturn came round again, and went up into the temple and there performed all the customary rites, together with the rest of the people.

These people Antony entrusted to a certain Herod to govern; but Antigonus he bound to a cross and flogged,— a punishment no other king had suffered at the hands of the Romans,— and afterwards slew him." Cassius Dio *Roman History* [49.22.4-6](#)

Note that Cassius Dio reports the Jews as keeping "customary rites" at the temple on "the day even then called Day of Saturn." This indicates that the

Sabbath wasn't only called the "Day of Saturn" during his lifetime, but it was called the "Day of Saturn" back in 36 BCE, well before Yahushua was born in Bethlehem.

Next, he records that the 70 CE Jerusalem destruction was on the Sabbath, which he once again calls the "day of Saturn:"

70 - 229 CE

Thus was Jerusalem destroyed on the very day of Saturn, the day which even now the Jews reverence most.

From that time forth it was ordered that the Jews who continued to observe their ancestral customs should pay an annual tribute of two denarii to Jupiter Capitoline. In consequence of this success both generals received the title of imperator, but neither got that of Judaicus, although all the other honours that were fitting on the occasion of so magnificent a victory, including triumphal arches, were voted to them. Cassius Dio *Roman History* [65.7.2](#)

So his report is that the Jews kept the Sabbath on the "day of Saturn" from 63 BCE up until his day, no later than 229 CE. His report also agrees with Frontinus' account of the 70 CE battle.

c. 100 CE

The Historian Cornelius Tacitus (ca. 56CE – ca. 117CE), after suggesting that Jews kept the Sabbath out of laziness, also associated the Sabbath with the Roman idol, Saturn:

They are said to have devoted the seventh day to rest, because that day brought an end to their troubles. Later, finding idleness alluring, they gave up the seventh year as well to sloth.

Others maintain that they do this in honor of Saturn; either because their religious principles are derived from the Idaei, who are supposed to have been driven out with Saturn and become the ancestors of the Jewish people; or else because, of the seven constellations which govern the lives of men, the star of Saturn moves in the topmost orbit and exercises peculiar influence, and also because most of the heavenly bodies move round their courses in multiples of seven. *From The Histories, [Book V](#)*

Again, the fact that a pagan associated Sabbath keeping with Saturn demonstrates that the Roman week's day of Saturn (Satur-day) was concurrent with what Yahweh calls the Sabbath day. Tacitus is an eyewitness from the first

century who has no "axe to grind" in regards to when the Sabbath should be observed. He wrote this a mere 30 years after the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem.

28 BCE to 1 BCE

Tibullus, a Latin Poet who lived from 54 BCE - 19 BCE, references the Sabbath in one of his Elegies. The Poet is quoted by J. Hugh Michael in his paper entitled "*The Jewish Sabbath in the Latin Classical Writers.*" In this Journal article, he says:

"Tibullus, again, gives us a glimpse of the influence of the Sabbath on the Romans. The Poet, sick in a foreign land, complains of his loneliness; neither mother nor sister has he there to nurse him; nor is Delia with him--she who had inquired of all the gods before permitting him to leave the city. Says Tibullus:

All promised a return; yet did nothing stay her from looking back in tears and terror on my journey. Yea, even I her comforter, after I had given my parting charge, sought still in my disquiet for reasons to linger and delay. Either birds or words of evil omen were my pretexts, or there was the holy day of Saturn to detain me. (Book I, Eleg. iii 13-18 in Postgate's translation in the Loeb Classics.)

The day of which the poet speaks is of course the Saturday, or, as Postgate puts it, "the Jewish Sabbath, on which no work was to be undertaken," and the implication is clear that unwillingness to set off on a journey on the Sabbath day was no unusual thing among the inhabitants of Rome, for Tibullus is enumerating the common reasons for the postponement of journeys of which he was only too ready to avail himself." The Jewish Sabbath in the Latin Classical Writers. J. Hugh Michael Victoria College, Toronto, Canada. *The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures*, Vol. 40, No. 2. (Jan., 1924), pp. 117-124.

It is interesting that Roman's would have any concern at all about traveling on the Sabbath. J. Hugh Michael references another writing by the Poet Ovid, who lived from 43 BCE to 17 CE:

Still more impressive is the witness of Ovid. In the *Ars Amatoria* he instructs the young Roman who is desirous of finding an object for his affections how he should set about his search.

The quest need not take him far a field: there is no lack of suitable damsels in Rome. The poet even specifies the parts of Rome where the quest of the amorous youth is most likely to be crowned with success: he should not neglect '(Adonis lamented of Venus, or the seventh day observed as holy by the Syrian Jew.'"

The first part of this direction can only mean that the youth should visit the Temple of Venus when her grief for Adonis was commemorated on the anniversary of his death. Similarly the second part must mean that he should attend the Sabbath services held in the Jewish synagogues.

Is it possible to attach any other meaning to the advice that the youth should not avoid the seventh day observed by the Syrian Jew?

And what meaning is there in the counsel unless Roman maidens were wont to attend those services?

It is not easy to think that it was the poet's intention that the young Roman should become enamored of a Jewess! The Jewish Sabbath in the Latin Classical Writers. J. Hugh Michael Victoria College, Toronto, Canada. *The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures*, Vol. 40, No. 2. (Jan., 1924), pp. 117-124

The work that J. Hugh Michael references, *Ars Amatoria*, was written in approximately 1 BCE. Thus, it is evident that even the Romans were associating the seventh day of their Roman week with the Sabbath. But was Sabbath keeping really this tied into their culture?

119 CE

The Sabbath does appear to be closely entwined to the weekly cycle of the first century Romans. This is evidenced by the writings of Suetonius. Suetonius (ca. 69CE - 130CE) was a Roman historian who wrote "Lives of twelve Caesars" in 119 CE. While describing the life of Tiberius Caesar (14 - 37 CE), he wrote::

"The grammarian Diogenes, who used to lecture every Sabbath at Rhodes, would not admit Tiberius when he came to hear him on a different day, but sent a message by a common slave of his, putting him off to the seventh day. When this man waited before the Emperor's door at Rome to pay his respects, Tiberius took no further revenge than to bid him return seven years later." Suetonius *The Life of Tiberius* [32.2](#)

Rhodes was a major schooling center for Roman families. It's interesting that the seventh day is referred to as the "Sabbath" (*Latin: sabbatis*) in Roman literature, especially when it is written by a pagan historian who was even the Roman Emperor's secretary for a time ([Wikipedia entry on Suetonius](#)).

It appears that J. Hugh Michael's references to the Roman poets, as well as this reference from Suetonius, is a strong indication that the seventh day Sabbath had become more tied into Roman society than most people realize. Possibly this is one of the reasons Josephus said:

"The masses have long since shown a keen desire to adopt our religious observances; and there is not one city, Greek or barbarian, nor a single nation, to which our custom of abstaining from work on the seventh day has not spread and where our fasts and the lighting of lamps and many of our prohibitions in the matter of food are not observed. Apion 2:282-283

In consideration of these things, it appears to me that the Romans picked up the recurring seven day week from the Jews, not the other way around. For 5

centuries or longer the Romans had kept an 8 day week with the days being named by the letters of the alphabet A through H. They did not keep a seven day week until they came into more contact with Sabbath keeping Jews in the early centuries BCE.

The fact that they named the days of the week after various planetary idols doesn't prove that they originated the recurring 7 day week. The naming of the days after planetary idols appears to have originated with either the Babylonians or the Hindu civilization, not the Romans.

So if you are a Lunar Sabbath keeper, the obvious question for you is, "If the Jews in the first century kept the Lunar Sabbath, and only later adopted what you call the 'Roman week,' why do the first century Romans keep saying the Jewish Sabbath is on their "day of Saturn (Saturday)?" The obvious answer to the obvious question is that the first century Jews, including Yahushua the Messiah and His disciples, kept the same recurring seven day week as the Romans. It is historical fact that the same week and day sequence exists to this day and has not changed. Yahweh has preserved His holy Sabbath!

Conclusion

Historically, Lunar Sabbath keepers believe that the Lunar Sabbath was observed by 1st century Judaism, but was lost some time after the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem. But even if one rejects all the evidence to the contrary, it would seem quite impossible for every Sabbath keeper scattered all throughout the world to simultaneously drop a supposed "Lunar Sabbath," all without a trace of evidence of such a dramatic change. The clear historical record is that the Jews of the first century kept the Sabbath just as we do, on a recurring seven day week.

Scripturally, you can look from Genesis to Revelation, but you will not find a single commandment to keep the "Lunar Sabbath." Just as Yahweh has ensured that His inspired word was not lost in antiquity, He also protected His holy Sabbath. Adam kept it, Noah kept it, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob kept it. Joshua kept it, the righteous judges and kings kept it. The prophets of Yahweh kept it, the returning exiles who were very meticulous about the Sabbath kept it, and we know that Yahushua and His disciples kept it, proving that Yahweh preserved His Sabbath up until the 1st century CE. The same is true today. Yahweh has preserved His word, His Name, and His Sabbath for us today. Let's forsake any teachings that would draw anyone away from the example He set in Genesis chapter 1 and 2.

Questions and Answers about the Lunar Sabbath

1) Please explain Ezekiel 46:1 - how can the gate be opened and closed at the same time?

This is grounded in the premise that there must always be six consecutive working days without interruption. But whether you keep the Lunar Sabbath or weekly recurring Sabbath, the six working days will be interrupted by the feasts like the last day of Unleavened Bread, which falls on the 21st day of the 1st month and the Day of Atonement, which falls on the 10th day of the 7th month.

The point was that the gates would be open when people gathered for worship. The Sabbath and New Moon are the regular exceptions to the gate being closed, but there are other exceptions regardless of whether or not you believe in a recurring weekly Sabbath. Thus, Ezek. 46 proves nothing either way.

2) How does the prophecy in Lam. 2:6 apply to the Sabbath and Feasts of the Yahudim?

They were forgotten in "Tsion" because they were carried away into captivity, the very thing that Lamentations is mourning about.

3) Why couldn't they wait for the Sabbath and New Moons to be over in Amos 8:5 if we are free to buy and sell on the new moons?

Amos would have been referring to the new moon of the 7th new moon of the year, which is the Feast of Trumpets. This is the only new moon in scripture where work is expressly forbidden so Amos would be referring to that.

4) Explain the offerings for daily, Sabbaths, new moons; Num. 28:4-15; why are there no provisions for new moon offerings that fall on the Sabbath or Sabbath offerings that fall on a new moon?

There didn't need to be. One would just perform whatever offerings were required for the kind of day it was.

5) Psalm 81:3 - please explain. In comparison with Genesis and they are for signs. Moedim. Is the full moon on the festival day and if it is how do you get to the full moon in 15 days starting with the crescent moon?

The full moon will occur during the 15th day of the month if we understand the crescent to be the new moon.

Go to <http://www.eliyah.com/moon.html> and for Ava, Missouri look at the moon phase for the night of 1/19/07 which gives us a new moon for 1/20/07. Now do the same for 2/2/07. That night the moon is at 100% illumination. I have noticed this a number of times during my own keeping of the feasts.

Now go and look at the Astronomical new moon for 3/18/07. Notice that it's at 9:44pm so that puts the conjunction keeper's new moon day on 3/19/07. Now look up the data for 4/1/07 to see what the moon will look like on the night which begins 4/2/07, the conjunction keeper's 15th day of the month (and Feast of Unleavened Bread actually). Notice it's at 96% illumination, not quite a full moon yet.

6) Please explain Amos 5:25-27 - who is Sikkuth and Kiyyun and what exactly is this astral mighty one (star g*d) and does it correlate to satyr-day?

Kiyyun was a Babylonian idol. Didn't they keep a Lunar week? In my mind, this is not relevant to anything. The Romans happened to call the seventh day of the week the "Day of Saturn," but the Jews always called it "Shabbat."

7) When Yahweh commanded them to march around the walls of Jericho for seven days, wouldn't that have been violating the Sabbath?

No. The thing to remember about ancient cities in the land of Israel is that they generally covered a relatively small piece of land. Ancient Davidic Jerusalem was only about 12 acres in size and had a population of about 2000. That increased to about 32 acres in size under Solomon's rule with a population of about 5000. Archaeological finds do indicate that Jericho was fairly small in size:

"Archaeological digs indicate the walls of ancient Jericho enclosed an area about 5 to 6 acres in size." (John Garstang, "The Walls of Jericho. The Marston-Melchett Expedition of 1931," *PEFQS* 1931, p. 186).

In light of this, a person walking around the walls of Jericho would need to walk about 700 yards max. The traditional "Sabbath day's journey" mentioned in Acts 1:12 is about 1000-1200 yards.

Questions? Call toll free 1-866-435-4924 or 417-683-3575

