

# THE “LUNAR SABBATH” OR SATURDAY SABBATH? WILL THE REAL SABBATH PLEASE STAND UP?

## HAS THE WEEKLY CYCLE BEEN ALTERED SINCE THE TIME OF YESHUA?

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Many have come to realize that if there is one thing in life that is certain it is that nothing is certain. The few things in life that seem to be unchangeable and rock-solid we tend to cling to tenaciously, for they give us a sense of permanency and stability—and we need that as we find ourselves being heaved and pitched to and fro on the oceans of change with ever increasing rapidity and frequency.

For many people, the weekly Shabbat (Sabbath) has been one of those Rock of Gibraltar foundational aspects of their lives to which they could anchor their spiritual ships—a harbor in which many have found safe refuge each week, week in and week out, month after month and year after year—with total faith and confidence that indeed the Shabbat was one thing that had never changed and would never change. Indeed, the enduring legacy of the Jewish people, nationless and often homeless for nearly two millennia, yet remaining a distinct people-group, can be attributed to the prominent place the weekly Sabbath holds within their community.

But the validity and immutability of the Shabbat is only as viable as the unchangeableness of the weekly cycle upon which the Shabbat is dependant. If the weekly cycle has ever changed then the correct day for observing the seventh-day Shabbat must immediately be called into question.

And while most Sabbatarians never even think to question the seeming inviolate nature of the weekly cycle, but unquestioningly assume that it has never changed, there is, nonetheless, a very small, fringe group of Sabbatarians who believe that the weekly cycle has indeed changed. These individuals are vocal beyond their size and some can be extremely aggressive, divisive and downright mean-spirited in their zeal to convert the world to their opinion. Some of these individuals are very biblically learned and have swept some who are subpar to them in learning and scholarship into the belief that the weekly cycle has been changed and that the seventh day today is not the seventh day of creation, or of the early Hebrews, nor yet even of Yeshua or the Apostolic Fathers. These individuals claim, with little or no supporting evidence, that the weekly cycle was changed after the first century and before the middle of the fourth century A.D.

On the other hand there is a group of secular scholars who are part historian and part astronomer whose profession it is to study matters such as chronology, calendars and the weekly cycle. These scholars are employed by governments to keep time and to insure that records are correct. If our timing is off, then how can we fire a missile and hit a target? Or fire a rocket and hit the moon? These individuals are called chronologists and they have definite opinions about the weekly cycle. The “lunar Sabbath” proponents do not quote these scientists, and for good reason. But we will, for we are not afraid of the truth, and the truth needs no defense.

The belief of the “lunar Sabbath” advocates runs something like this. Since the weekly cycle was changed (at some point in the distant past of dim antiquity) there is no way we can know on which day of the week the Sabbath falls: “Lunar Sabbath” proponents maintain that YHWH in establishing the weekly cycle at creation keyed the weekly Sabbath to the four monthly phases of the moon; namely, the first Sabbath of the month falls at the appearance of the first quarter of the new moon (some “lunar Sabbath” advocates claim this occurs on day seven of the month while others say day eight), the second Sabbath occurs at the full moon (or day 14 or 15, depending on your point view, for they do not even agree among themselves on this point), the third Sabbath falls on the third quarter of

the moon's phase (day 21 or 22) and the final Sabbath of the month falls on the final (dark) phase of the moon (day 28 or 29). Therefore, the weekly Sabbath can fall on any day of the traditional week.

Upon reading the written explanations and apologies of the "lunar Sabbath" advocates one could be easily swayed to their position by their admittedly in-depth biblical understanding and often-times scholarly approach, and sometime clever polemic. But upon careful analysis, the holes in their line of reasoning become readily apparent. It is not the scope of this work to address all the issues they throw up. Those of us who keep the Shabbat on Saturday don't have to, for the burden of proof is on the other side to prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that the weekly cycle has been altered since the time of Yeshua the Messiah. If they cannot prove this, then no amount of clever reasoning either from secular or Scriptural sources matters, for it is all irrelevant to the issue.

How can I aver this so forcefully? It is rather quite simple logic. No one doubts that Yeshua kept the Shabbat on the correct day. Had he not, he would have violated the Torah making him a sinner (1 Jn. 3:4) and not the perfect sacrificial lamb slain for the redemption of sinful man. If he kept a "lunar Shabbat", as the "lunar Sabbath" advocates maintain, then the burden of proof is upon them to prove that the weekly cycle was changed after the time of Yeshua. If it can be proved that the weekly cycle indeed did not change from the time of Yeshua until now, then the "lunar Sabbath" advocates of lost the argument and everything else they say or write, no matter how persuasive or scholarly it may be, is moot and irrelevant.

So what proof do the "lunar Sabbath" advocates offer to show that the weekly cycle was changed? This author has examined every treatise on the subject of the "lunar Sabbath" on the worldwide web which claims that the weekly cycle was disrupted sometime early in the A.D. period. Yet I have found none, except one, that can give definitive scholarly proof that the Jews ever kept a lunar Sabbath. That one quote is from the *Universal Jewish Encyclopedia* a multi-volumed set that was published in this country in the early 1940s by members of the rabbinical Jewish community. In an article entitled, "Holidays" (p. 410, volume unknown) we find the following quotation:

"The New Moon is still, and the Sabbath originally was, dependent upon the lunar cycle. Both date back to the nomadic period of Israel. Originally the New Moon was celebrated in the same way in the same way as the Sabbath; gradually became less important, while the Sabbath became more and more a day of religion and humanity, or religious meditation and instruction, of peace and delight of the soul, and produced powerful and beneficent effects outside of Judaism." (A photo of the page where this quote is to be found may be viewed on the internet at <http://www.lunarsabbath.com/uje410.htm>.)

The *Universal Jewish Encyclopedia* also contains the following quote:

"The idea of the week, as a subdivision of the month, seems to have arisen 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 [an obvious corruption of God's meaning for the day]. This method of reckoning time spread westward through Syria and Palestine, and was adopted by the Israelites, probably after they settled in Palestine. 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..." (Vol. 10, Article entitled "Week," p.482).

It is not apparent who the author of this article was, but it would have been helpful had he given supporting Scriptural or secular historical evidence to justify his bold assertion, for this is not the majority view in the standard reference works (which we will soon see) on the subject both Jewish and non-Jewish.

Let us now review a number of other scholarly sources with regard to the weekly cycle and see what they have to say.

## THE ORIGINS OF THE WEEKLY CYCLE

Of the origin of the (traditional) weekly cycle and the pagan origins of the lunar the *Jewish Encyclopedia* states (in contradistinction to the above quoted *Universal Jewish Encyclopedia*) in an article entitled "Chronology":

"The week, with the attribution of each day to one of the seven planets, is one of the most ancient institu-

tions of the Babylonians. This nation commenced the hebdomadal period with the sun, followed by the moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus, and Saturn. Every planet in succession presided over twenty-four hours, but not in the order assumed for their spheres, which was as follows: the sun, Venus, Mercury, the moon, Saturn, Jupiter, Mars. The initial hour of the first day was consecrated to the sun; the twenty-fifth, or the initial hour of the second day, to the moon; the forty-ninth to Mars; the seventy-third to Mercury; the ninety-seventh to Jupiter; the one hundred and twenty-first to Venus; and the one hundred and forty-fifth to Saturn.

“It has been claimed that this arrangement is of more modern invention; but indications of its existence are found in the earliest texts. The Mosaic accounts of Creation, of course, ignore the assignment of the weekdays to divers stars; but, **independently of all astral influence, the seventh day was instituted as a sacred day, quite distinct in character from the seventh day of the lunar synodic month, which was regarded as a holy day by the Chaldeans.**”

“From the Mosaic times down the synodical month in the Jewish calendar was calculated, as in the Babylonian, from one new moon to the next. This is proved by the well-known passage in Ex. xii. 2. Here no Egyptian influence may be assumed. But the system of thirty-day months, also, seems to have been recognized by the Jewish calendar” (emphasis added).

In another article, entitled, “The Week — Connection with Lunar Phases” the *Jewish Encyclopedia* has the following, seemingly contradictory statement to the previously quoted article about the origins the weekly cycle:

“A division of time comprising seven days, thus explaining the Hebrew name. There are indications of the use of another system of reckoning time, in which the month was divided into three parts of ten days each, the decade being designated in Hebrew by the term " 'asor" (Gen. xxiv. 55; comp. the commentaries of Dillmann and Holzinger ad loc.; Ex. xii. 3; Lev. xvi. 29, xxiii. 27, xxv. 9). This apparently represented one-third of the solar month, while the week of seven days was connected with the lunar month, of which it is, approximately, a fourth. The quadripartite division of the month was evidently in use among the Hebrews and other ancient peoples; but it is not clear whether it originated among the former. It is unnecessary to assume, however, that it was derived from the Babylonians, for it is equally possible that observations of the four phases of the moon led the Hebrew nomads spontaneously and independently to devise the system of dividing the interval between the successive new moons into four groups of seven days each. **There is ground, on the other hand, for the assumption that both among the Babylonians and among the Hebrews the first day of the first week of the month was always reckoned as coincident with the first day of the month.** The emphasis laid on the requirement (Lev. xxiii. 15) that the weeks of Pentecost should be "complete" ("temimot") suggests that weeks might be reckoned in such a way as to violate this injunction. This was the case as long as the first day of the first week of the month was made to coincide with the new moon. At the end of four weeks an interval of one or two days might intervene before the new week could begin. **At an early date, however, this intimate connection between the week and the moon must have been dissolved, the chief cause of the fixed week of seven days being, in all probability, the predominance of the seventh day as the Sabbath** (but see Meinhold, "Sabbat und Woche im O. T." Göttingen, 1905, according to whom Sabbath, originally only the full-moon day and the week are independent of each other). The week thus became a useful standard in the measurement of intervals of time (one week, Gen. xxix. 27 et seq.; two weeks, Lev. xii. 5; three weeks, Dan. x. 2; seven weeks, Deut. xvi. 9; Lev. xxiii. 15)” (emphasis added).

Again, on the origins of the weekly cycle the *Encyclopedia Britannica (Fifteenth Edition)* has the following to say :

“Among primitive peoples, it was common to count moons (months) rather than days, but later a period shorter than the month was thought more convenient, and an interval between market days was adopted. In West Africa some tribes used a four-day interval; in central Asia five days was customary; the Assyrians adopted five days and the Egyptians, 10 days, whereas the Babylonians attached significance to the days of the lunation that were multiples of seven. In ancient Rome, markets were held at eight-day intervals; because of the Roman method of inclusive numeration, the market was denoted *nundinae* (“ninth-day”) and the eight day week an *inter nundium*.” Continuing in the same article, “The seven-day week may [purely speculative] owe its origin partly to the four (approximately) seven-day phases of the

Moon and partly to the Babylonian belief in the sacredness of the number seven, which was **probably** related to the seven planets. Moreover, **by the 1st century BC the Jewish seven-day week seems to have been adopted throughout the Roman world, and this influenced Christendom**" (Vol. 15, article entitled "Calendar") (emphasis added).

The *Encyclopedia Britannica (Eleventh Edition)* states the following on the origins of the weekly cycle:

"The week is a period of seven days, having no reference whatever to the celestial motions, —a circumstance to which it owes its unalterable uniformity. Although it did not enter into the calendar of the Greeks, and was not introduced at Rome till after the reign of Theodosius [the fourth century AD], it has been employed from time immemorial in almost all eastern countries; and as it forms neither an aliquot [fractional] part of the year nor of the lunar month, those who reject the Mosaic recital will be at a loss, as Delambre remarks, to assign it to an origin having much semblance of probability. It **might have been** suggested [purely speculative!] by the phases of the moon, or by the number of the planets known in ancient times, an origin which is rendered more probable from the names universally given to the different days of which it is composed" (Vol. 4, p. 988).

In regards to the origin of the week and its connection to the ancient Babylonians, James Hastings in his *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, says:

"The Babylonians appear to have observed a Sabbath on every seventh day of the lunar month, and it is probable that this usage was originally connected with the four quarters of the moon. **Among the Jews the seven days' week was reckoned independently of the moon**, and we already find traces in the 1st cent. BC of its connexion at Rome with the sun, moon, and five planets, which have given their names to the seven days of the week" (Hastings, article entitled, "Calendar," Vol 3, p. 63) (emphasis added).

*The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* says of the origin of the week and its connection to the Hebrew people:

"The week in its proper sense is now in general use among Christian peoples, but in antiquity was found only among the Hebrews, and about the Christian era among the astrologers of the East. **The Hebrew week was based upon the Sabbath of Yahweh** (see SABBATH); the astrological week depended upon the conception that each day in turn was controlled by the " seven planets," the sun, moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus, Saturn. In the first Christian centuries these two conceptions were combined in such a way that Saturn's day coincided with the Sabbath. **The seven-day week was not found among other ancient peoples than the Hebrews...** Yet even the Babylonians did not have a seven-day week, though the seventh, fourteenth, twenty-first, and twenty-eighth days were " evil days," when fresh bread, fresh roasted meats, fresh clothing, and the like were unlawful for 'the shepherd of the great people' (the king?). **But of a week proper there was no knowledge, as is shown by the incommensurability of the week and the month...**"

"**While, then, a regularly ordered week of seven days was in antiquity limited to the Hebrews**, the employment of seven-day periods was much wider, owing to the setting of special mystical value upon the number seven. Thus the continuation of festivities in Babylonia for seven days is an instance; and such a period is of frequent mention in the Old Testament for the Hebrews (e.g., Gen. vii. 4, 1. 10; Ex. vii. 25; Josh. vi. 4, 15, etc.). Among the Persians and in ancient India the seven-day duration was common for celebrations; the same is true of the ancient Germans, where it was very usual, while seven-day and seven-year periods were known to the early Greeks. But the Hebrew week does not range itself with these. It is not probable that the seven-day period of Babylonia is to be traced to a quartering of the month first, and then to a relationship with seven. A favorite method of explaining the seven-day period is by referring it to the seven planets; but the reckoning of just seven planets is less common than the high estimation placed upon the number seven. In Babylonia the reckoning of seven planets can not be proved for a high antiquity; and **a connection of the Hebrew week with the planets is untenable**. Nor can the holiness of the number seven be connected with the Pleiades. Yet that the valuation of this number was heightened by the number of planets known and of the Pleiades is clear... With the planetary week the Hebrew week had originally no connection; indeed, an early age for the relation of the week to the number of planets is not yet proved and does not appear in the cuneiform tablets, certainly not in the

order now followed of sun, moon, Mare, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus, Saturn" (Vol. 12; article entitled, "Week" p. 282-284) (emphasis added).

**"It is equally difficult to be assured that the week was derived from the month by division of the latter into four parts** (see WEEK). There is general agreement that the seven-day period was derived from Babylonia, where it was employed in pre-Semitic times—this is confirmed by the fact that not only were the seventh, fourteenth, twenty-first, and twenty-eighth days of the month observed, but that the nineteenth was also a special day, the reason being apparently that thirty plus nineteen are forty-nine, this number making up a week of weeks. The union of the planetary bodies with the names of the days of the week seems to have been a very late phase, probably not completed till the Greek period" (Article entitled "Moon"; vol. 7, p. 49) (emphasis added).

The following are the exact quotations of two letters, copies of which this author possesses in his files, first from the U.S. Naval Observatory and finally from the office of the Royal Astronomer of England regarding the origins of the weekly cycle:

**A letter from the office of the Superintendent of the U.S. Naval Observatory, Washington D.C., dated 12 March 1932 (signed, James Robertson, Director American Ephemeris)**— in response to a letter asking them about the continuity of the weekly cycle the following response was received:

"I can only state that in connection with the proposed simplification of the calendar, we have had occasion to investigate the results of the works of specialists in chronology and **we have never found one of them that has ever had the slightest doubt about the continuity of the weekly cycle since long before the Christian era**" (emphasis added).

**A letter from the Royal Astronomer of the Royal Observatory, Greenwich, England dated 4 March 1932 from F.W. Dyson, Astronomer Royal** in response to a letter asking the Royal Observatory about the continuity of the weekly cycle the following response was received:

"As far as I know, in the various changes of the Calendar **there has been no change in the seven day rota of the week, which has come down from very early times.**

"In the 'Nautical Almanac' for 1931, p. 740, in the last paragraph, a very learned chronologist, Dr. Fotheringham, states, 'When we come upon clear evidence, the period of seven days was reckoned independently of the month and in fact of all astronomical periods. From the Jewish Church it passed into the Christian Church.'

**"You will see from this statement that no astronomical evidence connected with the seven day period can be given"** (emphasis added).

### WHAT SEVERAL OTHER ENCYCLOPEDIAS SAY ABOUT THE ORIGIN AND HISTORY OF THE WEEKLY CYCLE

What we have listed below are several additional scholarly sources which discuss the origins of the seven-day week and the present-day weekly cycle. Although there is divergence of opinion as to the genesis of the seven-day week, most of the quoted sources give credit to the Hebrews and the Bible as the source of the weekly cycle as we know it. It is interesting to note that not a single source questions the validity of the present-day weekly cycle. All the sources recognize that the number of the days of the week varied in ancient cultures, but that eventually the seven-day week of the Hebrews influenced the Christians which then influenced the Romans which officially accepted it in the fourth century (although it had already been popular throughout the empire since the first century B.C.) when Christianity became the state religion of the Roman Empire.

- eLibrary at *Encyclopedia.com* (<http://www.encyclopedia.com/html/w1/week.asp>) in an article entitled: "week" gives a history of the weekly cycle with no mention of its being changed. It says that the Christian week most likely derived from the Hebrews, and again, there is no mention of the Hebrews having changed the weekly cycle.
- The 1908 Catholic Encyclopedia (<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/>) says of the origins of the weekly

cycle in its article entitled "Sunday": "During the first and second century the week of seven days was introduced into Rome from Egypt, and the Roman names of the planets were given to each successive day. The Teutonic nations seem to have adopted the week as a division of time from the Romans..." (<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14335a.htm>). In its article entitled, "The Jewish Calendar" it discusses the seven-day week within the context of Judaism, and again no mention of the weekly cycle being changed is alluded to.

- The *Columbia Encyclopedia, Sixth Edition* (<http://www.bartleby.com/65/we/week.html>) in its article entitled "week" states with respect to the origin of the weekly cycle:

"The seven-day week is said to have originated in ancient times in W Asia, probably in Mesopotamia. This is thought to have been a planetary week predicated on the astrological concept of the influence of the planets, which were long erroneously believed to be seven celestial bodies revolving around the earth; these were the sun and moon and five of the bodies recognized today as planets—Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus, and Saturn. The Hebrew week is based chiefly on the religious observance of the Sabbath, which comes every seventh day and is usually associated with the seventh day of creation, when the Lord rested from his labors.

**The Christian week and the Muslim week were probably derived chiefly from the Hebrew week**, although the weekly holy days are different (Hebrew, Sabbath, seventh day; Christian, Sunday, first day; Muslim, Friday, sixth day). **The influence of the weeks of Chaldaeans, Christians, and Jews slowly made itself felt in the Roman Empire**, and elements of the systems were probably merged. The planetary week was at first preeminent, and the use of planetary names, based on names of pagan deities, continued even after Constantine (c.321) made the Christian week, beginning on Sunday, official in the civil calendar" (emphasis added).

Again we find no mention of the weekly cycle that currently exists having been disrupted by the Jews before or after the time of Yeshua the Messiah in the first century A.D.

- The *Greenheart.com* (<http://www.greenheart.com/billh/index.html>) website, a site that specializes in calendrical related subjects, in its article on the Jewish calendar (<http://www.greenheart.com/billh/hebrew.html>) we find no mention made of the weekly cycle being changed. Elsewhere we find a scholarly discussion on the Hebrew calendar, but again there is no mention of the weekly cycle being changed or any discrepancy between the weekly cycle of the pre-Messianic (B.C.) and the post-Messianic (A.D.) eras (<http://www.geocities.com/Athens/1584/#08>).
- *The World Book Encyclopedia* (1969 edition) in its article entitled "week" credits the Hebrews with being among the first to use the seven-day weekly cycle with the ancient Egyptians being the originators of the names of the week from the planets. Again, there is no mention of the weekly cycle as derived from the Hebrews being disrupted at any point in time .

We have referenced the above works for the purpose of posing the following question: If the weekly cycle has been changed sometime in the early part of the common era, as the "lunar Sabbath" advocates claim, then where is the secular historical evidence of this? Surely some historian, scholar, theologian, chronologist or astronomer somewhere would have written about it. If someone has then why have not the "lunar Sabbath" advocates quoted them? With the entire premise of their argument riding on this one point — that the weekly cycle was changed shortly after the time of Yeshua — would it not be to their advantage to produce scholarly evidence to substantiate their claim? But so far they have not. Why? Perhaps it is because such evidence does not exist.

Again, we say emphatically that the burden of proof is on the "lunar Sabbath" proponents to prove that the weekly cycle was changed, not on the rest of us to prove that it has not been changed, although we can prove this point and have proven it.

The old adages of "Put up or shut up!" or "Where is the beef?" or "Put your money where your mouth is" are applicable here. There is yet another popular adage which seems fitting: "If you can't convince them with the facts, then baffle them with b--- sh--!" Perhaps this is a bit coarse and too blunt for some, yet those who claim that the Sabbath we are now keeping *is not* the true Sabbath "because the weekly cycle was changed by someone somewhere way back when, but we don't know who, where or when, but just take our word for it, anyway, and since we

can't prove it, let's skip over this fact and look at reams of human reasonings elsewhere which seem to validate our point" are destabilizing and confusing many innocent and well-meaning truth-seeking Believers. The Sabbath is one of the great cornerstone commandments of Scripture and YHWH said that it would be a sign between him and his people (Ex. 31:13). Tampering with the truth of the Sabbath day and on what day it occurs is not a matter to be taken lightly!

### SUMMATION OF FINDINGS REGARDING THE ORIGIN OF THE WEEK

It is evident from the scholarly sources quoted above that there is some question as to the origin of the weekly cycle. Was it of Babylonian, Hebraic or some other origin? Was it originally tied to the lunations of the moon or was it originally independent and has remained so to this day? Most of the sources quoted above are disinclined to believe that the Hebrew week was influenced by the lunations of the moon.

To affirm dogmatically that the weekly cycle was originally tied to the lunations of the moon, as the "lunar Sabbath" advocates claim, is something that cannot be done in light of the scholarly evidence presented here. Likewise, in light of the same evidence, it is impossible to state that the weekly cycle has always been independent of the cycles of the moon. The bottom line is: We simply do not know how the weekly cycle originated, though some scholars, such as Schaff and Herzog, seem certain that it originated with the Hebrews (who Holy Scripture would teach, on account of the Sabbath commands, received if by divine revelation).

What can be stated with absolute certainty is that there is no question that the weekly cycle, as we know it, has not been tampered with since before the birth of Yeshua the Messiah. There is no scholarly evidence, that this author has found, to suggest that it has been changed, and quite to the contrary, there is evidence in the same scholarly circles that it has not changed for more than 2000 years. True, the calendar has changed several times and though admittedly the Gregorian calendar of today is of pagan origination, the historicity of the weekly cycle stands independent of and outside of the Gregorian calendar. In other words, it is a well known fact that this calendar was instituted without disrupting the weekly cycle. To refuse the weekly cycle on account of a pagan calendar could be labeled as scholarly naivete, or worse yet, outright dishonesty.

If there is objective and impartial evidence from scholars who are quite ambivalent about the Shabbat, and thus who are impartial in this regard, then why do the "lunar Sabbath" proponents not find and publish the expert testimony of these scholars? Could it simply be because such testimony is nonexistent? And to make our case that the Sabbath of today is the same Sabbath that Yeshua kept we do not need to prove the origin of the weekly cycle one way or the other. All we have to prove is that our weekly cycle and that of Yeshua's day match. Again, since Yeshua was without sin, he most assuredly had to have kept the Shabbat on the correct day as prescribed by the Torah-law of YHWH Elohim as revealed in the Hebrew Scriptures.

### THE PAGAN (BABYLONIAN) NON-HEBRAIC ORIGINS OF THE "LUNAR SHABBAT"

In regards to the origin of the week and its connection to the ancient Babylonians, Hastings says,

"In the hemerologies of the library of Ashurbanipal, however, in which apparently every month consisted of 30 days, we find entries from a Chaldaean calendar with months of 30 and 29 days, according to which the new moon fell on the 1st day of their 1st month and of alternate months thereafter, while a penitential day... was observed on the 7th, 14th, 21st, and 28th days of the 1st month, and on the [5th, 12th, and] 19th of the 2nd month, and so on throughout the year; here, therefore, we have quite plainly a week of 7 days" (Hastings, article entitled, "Calendar," Vol 3, p. 63).

The same article goes on to say that the division of the week was not based so much on the worship of the moon as of various deities ascribed to various days of the lunar month. A list of these deities is then given along with their dates and religious festivals associated with them. The article continues,

"That the majority of these festivals were of astral origin appears from their manifest connexion with the courses of the moon; from the fact that most of the sacrifices had to be offered in the evening or by night; and finally, from the explicit mention of the worship of the 'star of the waggon' on the 10th and 25th of the month" (Hastings, Vol 3, p. 76).

“Under “*The Babylonian Sabbath and the seven-day week* [subheading].—**This is the week with which we are well-acquainted, and which Christians have adopted from the Hebrews, merely changing the day of rest from the seventh to the first day.** Here, however, *sa-bat* and *sapattu*, its derivative, were not applied to the seventh day by the Babylonians, but another word was used which they evidently considered more appropriate, namely *u-hul-gallum*, from the Sumerian *u-hul-gala*, which they translated by *umu limnu*, ‘evil day.’ This was the 7th, 14th, 21st, and 28th days of every month, so that as the Babylonian months has 29 or 30 days each, every month consisted of three weeks of seven days each, and one of nine or ten days, according to the length of the month. Two reasons may be suggested for the adoption of this seven-day period: (1) the seven (divine) planetary bodies, and (2) the fact that the period of a lunation may be divided, roughly, into four sections of seven days each. The following is a paragraph given by the hemerologies for the observance of the seventh day of the month as a sabbath: ‘The 7th day is a holy day... of Merodach and Zer-panitum—an acceptable day, an evil day.’ ...The fourteenth was dedicated to Nin-la and Nergal, to whom the king brought offerings and sacrifices at night time; the 21st was the day of votive offering to Sin (the moon-god) and Samas (the sun-god)...” and likewise on the 21st and 28th days of the month” (Hastings, Vol. 10. p. 890; article entitled *Sabbath [Babylonian]*)” (emphasis added).

“It may be further questioned whether there ever was among the early Hebrews any attempt to adapt the week of 7 days to the lunation. There is some ground for such a supposition, in the fact that in the most ancient Babylonian calendar every 7th day of the moon—the 7th, 14th, 21st, and 28th —was a *dies nefastus*, on which no public or official work could be done... It would seem that the old Babylonian month was practically a period of 4 weeks, with one or two intercalary days added at the end to make it agree with the lunation. As to whether this system was ever adopted by the Hebrews we have no direct evidence; but, were it so, its obvious inconvenience must sooner or later, as with the Babylonians, have caused the substitution of the regularly occurring conventional week of 7 days” (Hastings, Vol. 3, p. 108; *Calendar [Hebrew]*)” (emphasis added).

Of the origin of the (traditional) weekly cycle and the pagan origins of the lunar the renowned *Jewish Encyclopedia* states in an article entitled “Chronology” :

“The week, with the attribution of each day to one of the seven planets, is one of the most ancient institutions of the Babylonians. This nation commenced the hebdomadal period with the sun, followed by the moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus, and Saturn. Every planet in succession presided over twenty-four hours, but not in the order assumed for their spheres, which was as follows: the sun, Venus, Mercury, the moon, Saturn, Jupiter, Mars. The initial hour of the first day was consecrated to the sun; the twenty-fifth, or the initial hour of the second day, to the moon; the forty-ninth to Mars; the seventy-third to “Mercury; the ninety-seventh to Jupiter; the one hundred and twenty-first to Venus; and the one hundred and forty-fifth to Saturn.

“It has been claimed that this arrangement is of more modern invention; but indications of its existence are found in the earliest texts. **The Mosaic accounts of Creation, of course, ignore the assignment of the weekdays to divers stars; but, independently of all astral influence, the seventh day was instituted as a sacred day, quite distinct in character from the seventh day of the lunar synodic month, which was regarded as a holy day by the Chaldeans.**

“From the Mosaic times down the synodical month in the Jewish calendar was calculated, as in the Babylonian, from one new moon to the next. This is proved by the well-known passage in Ex. xii. 2. Here no Egyptian influence may be assumed. But the system of thirty-day months, also, seems to have been recognized by the Jewish calendar” (emphasis added).

## A BRIEF SUMMARY OF CONTRA “LUNAR SABBATH” ARGUMENTS FROM SCRIPTURE

While it is not the scope of this present work to address every point the pro-“lunar Sabbath” advocates tender to substantiate their viewpoint, the author believes it would be helpful to the reader to present here several clear truths from the Word of Elohim which delegitimize pro-“lunar Sabbath” arguments.



- (1) Perhaps, the most obvious problem facing "lunar Sabbath" proponents is that the weekly cycle does not fit evenly into the monthly cycle. If the monthly cycle were exactly 28 days in duration, the "lunar Sabbath" might make more sense logically. However, the moon's cycle is 29.5 days, and since half days are impossible this means that the month sometimes is 29 days and sometimes 30 days in length. Therefore, in the "lunar Sabbath" model the last week of the month will have from eight to nine days in it. Yes, you read it correctly, a week of eight or nine days. This is what the "lunar Sabbath" side believes and teaches. Yet Scripture is clear, in the Ten Statements ("Commandments") of Exodus 20 that YHWH expects man to work six days and rest on the seventh (Sabbath). No mention is made anywhere in Scripture of resting for two or three days (a prolonged Sabbath rest) while awaiting the new moon's appearance so that day one of the month (and the week) can occur.
- (2) YHWH instructed the Israelites to gather manna for six days and rest on the seventh day (Ex. 16:22-23,26-27). If the Israelites were keeping a "lunar Sabbath" then where is the mention of gathering enough manna once each month at the end of the month to last not just for one day, but for up to three days while awaiting the arrival of the new moon and hence the first day of the week?
- (3) The creation account in Genesis chapter one does not take the "lunar Sabbath" into account. The heavenly bodies, including the moon, were created on the fourth day of creation while YHWH rested three days later on the seventh day. Did YHWH create the moon as a new moon on day three, or a full moon, or what? "Lunar Sabbath" proponents argue that while YHWH created the moon on day four of creation, it was actually on the fourth day of its lunar cycle so that the first Sabbath would fall on the first quarter of the new moon. In the science of biblical interpretation (hermeneutics) there is a technical term for this kind of Scriptural interpretation: *eisegesis* or reading one's own meaning or interpretation into Scripture. Wouldn't it stand to reason that on the fourth day the moon was shining as a full moon to be the night light that YHWH intended it to be? He declared his creation to be good and he made everything whole and complete. Nevertheless, Scripture does not say this and so we cannot build a doctrine on it, but neither does it say that moon was created in the fourth day phase of its lunar cycle.
- (4) Scripture reveals that between the feast day of Unleavened Bread and Shavuot (Pentecost) seven complete weeks of 49 days are to be counted with Shavuot occurring on the fiftieth day (Lev. 23:15-16; Deut. 16:9) — hence the name *Pentecost* (in the Apostolic Writings) meaning *fiftieth* or *count fifty*. This counting of 49 days or seven weeks of seven days each **does not** take into account a "lunar Sabbath" week of which the last week of each month would have eight to nine days. Again we see the fallacy of the "lunar Sabbath" concept here.
- (5) Hebrew is the mother of all languages. We know this for several reasons. First, all languages on earth can trace their etymological roots back to Hebrew. Linguistic scholars are beginning to recognize this (For example, see the book entitled *The Word — The Dictionary That Reveals the Hebrew Source of English*, by Isaac E. Mozeson at [www.homestead.com/edenics](http://www.homestead.com/edenics)). This would point to Hebrew as the original pre-Tower of Babel universal language. Furthermore, the Torah or Pentateuch (the first five books of the Bible) was a word-for-word transcription by Moses from YHWH Elohim. It stands to reason that YHWH, having any language at his disposal by which to reveal his sacred written instructions to mankind, by choosing the Hebrew language was validating it as a language of divine origination and the original language of the Garden of Eden. Therefore, perhaps this language will give us some clues into the Sabbath concept. To wit, the Hebrew word for Sabbath (*Strong's Hebrew Dictionary* 7673) is Shabbat and is related etymologically to the Hebrew word *shuvua* (*weeks*, *Strong's* #7620) which in turn is related to the Hebrew word *sheba* (*Strong's* #7651) which means *seven*. The meaning of the word *Sabbath*, as related to *seven* makes no sense if the week is not always seven days, as Scripture clearly indicates from the Genesis one creation account and from the Sabbath command of Exodus chapter 20. Since the lunar month of 29 to 30 days is not divisible by seven how can the week and Sabbath, by biblical and linguistic definition, be related to the lunar cycle? Since YHWH instituted the Sabbath and the week of seven days at Creation, the "lunar Sabbath" must have originated subsequently and have been of non-Hebraic (biblical) origination. Indeed, we give credible evidence in this paper that the quarters of the moon's lunation (corresponding to the "lunar Sabbath") were indeed observed by the ancient Babylonians as part of their (pagan) religious rituals while very little if any credible historical evidence points to the Hebrews being involved in such a practice.

- (6) Scripture indicates that the New Moon and Sabbath celebrations are two separate events (Isa. 66:23; Ezek 46:1; Col 2:16) and not on the same day.
- (7) In Ezekiel 46 Scripture again makes a distinction between the Sabbath and New Moon events as it lists the offerings made on each day. Verses one through five discuss the offerings and events pertaining thereto accompanying the Sabbath-day celebration while verses six through nine discuss the day of the new moon. Then starting in verse nine continuing to the end of the chapter we find listed the offerings made on the solemn feast days. Scripture treats these three events as separate and distinct from one another. There is no correlation made between the Sabbath and any lunar events — new moon or otherwise. Again in Numbers 28:9-10 we find listed the offerings and sacrifices made on the Sabbath while in verses 11 to 15 are listed those made in the beginning of the month (at the new moon) followed by those made during the solemn feast days. As in the Ezekiel account, the Torah treats these events as separate and distinct. Nowhere does Scripture link the Sabbath and new moon events with regard to the offerings and sacrifices made on those respective day.

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