

A LUNAR SABBATH?

by Avram Yehoshua

[The Seed of Abraham](#)

Some people today believe that the weekly Sabbath should be tied into the sighting of the New Moon, with the four quarters of the Moon's phases being Sabbath days. This means that the Sabbath would be on the 8th, 15th, 22nd and 29th days of the lunar cycle, counting beginning after the first day of the New Moon sighting. While most Lunar Sabbatarians believed that way, there are some who start on the first day of the New Moon, and so their Sabbaths are on the 7th, 14th, 21st and 28th days of every lunar month. For both groups, this means that their lunar Sabbath falls on any day of the week (i.e. Monday or Tuesday, etc). Some others think that the seven day counting should begin at the conjunction of the New Moon (which is an exact moment in time when the Moon is literally between the Sun and the Earth, and cannot be seen, and which varies in time to the first crescent).

The Lunar Sabbath concept, though, is not biblical for a number of reasons. One reason has to do with the Sabbath of Creation, and another reason has to do with how and when God first gave the Sabbath to Israel. Also to consider is Passover and First Sheaf, which reveal that the teaching of a lunar Sabbath is not possible, as well as Nehemiah and Messiah, etc.. These will show us that a lunar Sabbath is not biblical.

The Sabbath of Creation

The Sabbath appears in Creation week on the *seventh day*. The Moon was created on the fourth day. There's only three days from the creation of the Moon until the creation of the Sabbath, not seven as the lunar concept calls for:

“Then God blessed *the seventh day and sanctified it*, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.” (Genesis 2:3)

Some Lunar Sabbatarians, realizing the problem with Moon being created only three days before the Sabbath, have said, ‘Well, that was Creation, just the beginning, but after that the Sabbath will always be seven days after the New Moon.’ There's no Scripture to warrant that thought, and without any clear, written indication in Scripture they're arguing from silence *and* against Scripture, which clearly states *it's every seventh day*, with no reference to the Moon.

In the Creation account *the seventh day* is specifically mentioned as having been *sanctified* or made holy by God. If the Sabbath was tied into the New Moons after Creation, there should be something written to that effect, either in the Creation account or somewhere else. There isn't anything.

Some Lunar Sabbatarians say that the first light of Creation, on the first day, is the Sun and the Moon so that the seventh day is seven days after the creation of the Moon, but this interpretation is contradicted by Scripture. Genesis 1:14-19 expressly states that the Moon was created on the fourth day. The light of the first day, as a number of ancient Jewish sages correctly understood, was the Light of Messiah—the Living Word of God and the Light of the world.¹ The very first words of God in Hebrew were, ‘Light, be!’ (Gen. 1:3), and Yeshua, the Word and Light of God² came forth, *begotten* (not created) of the Father.³

¹ Gen. 1:3; John 1:1-9; 8:12; 9:5, etc.

² John 1:1-3; 8:12; Rev. 19:13.

³ Ps. 2:2, 6-7; Jn. 1:18; 3:16, 18. For more on how Yeshua became the Light of God, see [Yeshua—God the Son](#).

The Sabbath in Scripture

Nowhere in Scripture does God ever instruct or even hint at keeping the Sabbath day based on the New Moon sighting. If two or three witnesses are needed to establish everything Scripture,⁴ there's nothing for the Lunar Sabbatarians but a few obtuse interpretations they manufacture to support their position. The Pharisees also had their perverse interpretations of Scripture (Mt. 15:1f.). There's not a single passage of Scripture that clearly presents the linking of the Sabbath to the New Moon.

Lunar Sabbatarians get around this by denying Scripture and saying, "It's not written because everyone back then knew it," and so, it wasn't necessary for God to specifically state it, but this kind of reasoning is sheer nonsense, and could be used 'to confirm' just about anything. What is written is that the Sabbath is to be observed *every* seven days. There are no skips or interruptions, as one would think, to wait for the New Moon to appear and then count seven days after that.

On the contrary, there's no mention in either Sabbath passage of the Ten Commandments (Ex. 20:8-11; Dt. 5:12-15) that the 7th day Sabbath is tied to the New Moon. God states that work is to be done for six days and then the Sabbath:

"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. *Six days you shall labor and do all your work*, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of Yahveh your God. 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. *For in six days Yahveh made the Heavens and the Earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day.* Therefore, Yahveh blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy." (Exodus 20:8-11)

"Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, as Yahveh your God commanded you. *Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of Yahveh your God.* In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your ox, nor your donkey, nor any of your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates, that your male servant and your female servant may rest as well as you. And remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and Yahveh your God brought you out from there by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm. Therefore, Yahveh your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day." (Deuteronomy 5:12-15)

Note the simplicity of the Sabbath commandment; six days and then rest on the seventh. The Sabbath is directly tied into the seven days of Creation week in the Exodus account. Because God rested on the 7th day, Israel was to do the same. There's no mention of the Moon. Even if 'everyone knew that it was tied into the Moon, wouldn't we expect to at least see, 'Remember to tie it into the Moon'?

It's written that Israel was to work for six days and then enter into the Sabbath rest, even in times of plowing and harvest (Ex. 34:21), and it was to be strictly enforced with the punishment of the death penalty (Ex. 35:1-2). A lunar Sabbath is not six days and then the Sabbath at the end of its cycle, but eight or nine days. This 'lunar week,' from the Sabbath of the 28th (or 29th day for some) to the next New Moon sighting, and then seven days later to the lunar Sabbath of the 7th or 8th day, would be 8 to 9 days. This 'long week' would come every month after their Sabbath of the 28th/29th day, but no mention is ever made in Scripture about an extended week like this, either specifically in relation to a lunar Sabbath or just as part of a biblical story. Having an 8 or 9 day 'week' every month would also set up a very strange 'order' for things; sort of like a tire with a knot in it that thumps every time it revolves. This kind of 'time keeping' doesn't seem to speak of the God of the Universe and His orderly arrangement of the Universe.

⁴ Dt. 17:6; 19:15; Mt. 18:16; 2nd Cor. 13:1.

The First Sabbath in the Wilderness

In the account of the keeping of the first Sabbath by Israel in the Wilderness (Ex. 16:4-5, 22-23, 26-27, 30), not once is it ever tied into the New Moon. Yet, *this is where God instructs Israel* as to *when* the Sabbath was to be observed. If it was ‘a given’ *when* the Sabbath was to take place, as the Lunar Sabbatarians teach, there would have been no need for God to have told Moses to tell the Sons of Israel *when* the Sabbath was to be kept:

“Then Yahveh said to Moses, ‘Behold! I will rain bread from Heaven for you! And the people shall go out and gather a certain quota every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in My law or not. And it shall be on the sixth day that they shall prepare what they bring in, and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily.’” (Ex. 16:4-5)

“And so it was, on the sixth day, that they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for each one. And all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses. Then he said to them, ‘This is what Yahveh has said: *‘Tomorrow is a Sabbath rest, a holy Sabbath to Yahveh. 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.’*” (Ex. 16:22-23)

“‘Six days you shall gather it, but on the seventh day, the Sabbath, there will be none.’ Now it happened that some of the people went out on the seventh day to gather, but they found none.” (Ex. 16:26-27)

“So the people rested on the seventh day.” (Exodus 16:30)

This gathering of the bread that we know as Manna (Ex. 16:31) happened every six days for 40 years, but there’s not one mention of the seven day week changing or it being a longer week due to the New Moon. Scripture states, ‘the people rested on the seventh day’ (Ex. 16:30) without any reference to the Moon. This ‘seventh day’ obviously speaks of the seventh day of the week from the first day of the week (i.e. Sunday), just as it was in Creation week, with the mention of the sixth day, and other places where the seventh day is used in Ex. 16. This was the normal seven day week for the ancient Hebrews and many pagans (e.g. Babylonians). In other words, we never find a weekly Sabbath on any other day of the biblical week other than the 7th or last day of the week. According to the Lunar Sabbatarians their weekly Sabbath can come on any day of the week, like Wednesday or Thursday, etc., and does! How disconcerting!

There’s no mention of any linking of New Moons to Sabbaths anywhere in Ex. 16 when God first gives and instructs the ancient Hebrews about it. How simple it would have been for the Lord to include dates for a supposed lunar Sabbath (i.e. the 7th, 14th, 21st and 28th of every lunar month, etc.). *He gives dates for the annual Sabbaths* (Lev. 23:5, 6, 24, 27, 32, 34, 39), but lunar Sabbath dates are *never* seen.

The Sabbath and Passover

The 14th day of the first biblical month was the sacrifice of the Passover lamb, but this day is never mentioned as a Sabbath (Ex. 12:1-20; Lev. 23:5-8, etc.). The Lord speaks of the 15th day, the first day of Unleavened Bread, being an annual Sabbath, but never the 14th, the day when the Passover lamb was sacrificed on. This negates a lunar Sabbath for the 7-14-21-28 Lunar Sabbatarians because the 14th of every month should be a lunar *Sabbath* according to them. With Passover on the 14th day of the first month, and the Hebrews leaving the morning of the 15th day (Ex. 12:40; 16:1; Num. 33:3), Exodus 16, the chapter on the Manna, would seem to have come in the last third of the lunar month, with no previous keeping of the Sabbath on the 7th and 14th days of the New Moon. Instruction on when and how to keep the lunar dating of the Sabbath would seem essential, but nothing is said of the Moon.

The Sabbath and the Sacrifices

A chronological list of times when various sacrifices for the Feasts, etc., appears in Numbers 28-29. The sacrifices for the 7th day Sabbath is mentioned *before* the sacrifices for the monthly New Moons. If the Sabbath was tied into the New Moon sighting it would seem reasonable that the Sabbath would have been mentioned *after* the New Moon. Note the chronological progression:

1. sacrifices every day (Num. 28:3).
2. sacrifices every 7th day Sabbath (Num. 28:9).
3. sacrifices every New Moon for the beginning or first day of the month (Num. 28:11).
4. Passover sacrifices once a year. This begins the yearly feasts (Num. 28:16f.).

This chronological progression is seen elsewhere, too (1st Chron. 23:31; 2nd Chron. 2:4; 8:13; 31:3; Ezk 46:3, etc.). If the 7th day Sabbath spun off of the first New Moon crescents, we'd expect to see the New Moons listed first; not the 7th day Sabbath.

The Sabbath and Yeshua

The Sabbath of the Jewish people is currently celebrated every seventh day, *as it was in the days of Yeshua*. When the Pharisees came to Him and spoke of Him or His followers desecrating the Sabbath, by say, plucking grain on it,⁵ or about healings on the Sabbath day,⁶ or when Yeshua healed the man and told him to pick up his pallet and walk on the Sabbath,⁷ Yeshua never once tells the Pharisees that their Sabbath day was *not* God's Sabbath day. He never tells His Apostles, either, that the Jewish reckoning of the Sabbath was wrong.

Yeshua defends His healings on the day the Jewish people kept the 7th day Sabbath, and also, the ability to pick and eat grain on the Sabbath day in a number of different ways, but never once does He say to the Pharisees or to His disciples (or to us in Scripture through the inspired Word of God; 2nd Tim. 3:16-17) that the 'Jewish Sabbath' was on the wrong day, or that they kept it the wrong way by not tying it into the Moon. Lunar Sabbatarians never address this major point.

No Gospel writer nor any New Testament writer *ever* says that the Jewish people kept the wrong day for the Sabbath. In the Book of Acts,⁸ many years *after* the Resurrection,⁹ there is no mention that the way the Jews understood and kept the timing for the seventh day Sabbath was not actually the correct day. There is not a single Scripture that even hints at this, let alone two or three (witnesses) that tell us of a "God's way" to ascertain the weekly Sabbath. If the Jews were wrong, wouldn't Yeshua or the Holy Spirit have alerted believers to this fact somewhere in the New Testament? One cannot use the argument that 'everyone knew it,' here. No one was keeping it that way. Yeshua and the New Testament confirm the Jewish reckoning of keeping the correct Sabbath day by not stating that the Jews were wrong.

It's proven, then, that the Sabbath of the Jewish people in the days of Yeshua was God's seventh day Sabbath and that same Sabbath is kept today by the Jewish people, every seven days. The Jewish Sabbath of today is the biblical Sabbath of ancient times and it's not based on the conjunction or a lunar sighting. To-

⁵ Mt. 12:1-7; Mk. 2:23f; Lk. 6:1f; see Dt. 23:25 where eating grain from the field is specifically allowed.

⁶ Lk. 13:14f; Jn. 9:14f.

⁷ Mk. 3:2f; Jn. 5:9f.

⁸ Acts 13:14, 27, 42, 44; 15:21; 16:13; 18:4.

⁹ Acts, as well as the three Synoptic Gospels were written from 44-67 AD, and the Gospel of John was written about 95 AD.

day, only 2,000 years after Messiah and the Apostles, we know for a historical fact that the Jewish people have not tampered with the Sabbath since the time of Yeshua (from any cursory glance into any history of the Jewish people). For something this massive, the keeping of the Sabbath day among the Jews, if the day had been altered or changed by them since the time of Yeshua, it would surely have raised many alarms and been duly noted and challenged among Jewish historians and rabbis, as well as the Jewish people, but history records nothing of the sort. Therefore, the 7th day Sabbath of today, Friday evening at dark to Saturday at dark, is the *same one* of Yeshua's day, *and the same one* of Moses' day, *and the same one* of Creation Week, which negates the Lunar Sabbath concept.¹⁰

Even if another civilization kept a 'sabbath day' by a lunar calendar¹¹ (or even kept more than a seven day week) we know that Satan worked much of his deception through other civilizations, especially Babylon. There's no reason to think that they might have the 'right way' when Scripture plainly teaches otherwise.

The Sabbath and First Sheaf

God gave the New Moons are for signs and seasons; for days (the beginning of a biblical month) and years (Gen. 1:14; the first New Moon on or after the Vernal Equinox is the first New Moon of the biblical New Year).¹² New Moons also determine all the annual Feast Sabbaths, like the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, *Shavuot* (Pentecost) and the Feast of Trumpets, etc. (Lev. 23), as well as the Sabbatical year and the time of Jubilee (Lev. 25). The dates for the annual feast Sabbaths harken back to the first New Moon of the year, the biblical New Year, the first of *Aviv* (called *Nisan* today; Ex. 12:1-2), from which all the annual feast Sabbaths are calculated.¹³

Another major problem for those who espouse a lunar Sabbath arises with First Sheaf. There are two Jewish interpretations of Lev. 23:11, 15 to determine the time *when* the first sheaf of barley grain would be offered on the bronze Altar by the High Priest. After that begins the counting of 50 days to *Shavuot*. The interpretations center around 'the day after the Sabbath:'

Lev. 23:11: 'And he shall wave the sheaf before Yahveh for you to be accepted. *On the day after the Sabbath* the (High) Priest shall wave it.'

Lev. 23:15: 'And from *the day after the Sabbath*, from the day on which you bring the

¹⁰ See [When Does The Sabbath Begin?](#) to understand that the biblical Sabbath begins at dark on Friday night, not at sunset.

¹¹ Nahum M. Sarna, *The Jewish Publication Society's Torah Commentary: Exodus* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1989; Accordance electronic ed.), p. 112. Sarna states:

"The etymology of (the) Hebrew word *shabbat* has been debated...Semitists have long drawn attention to the similarity of sound to the Akkadian *shabattum* (or *shapattum*), which designated the 15th day of the lunar month, that is, the full Moon. This is described in cuneiform texts as 'the day of the quieting of the heart (of the god)'...It has also been noted that in the Mesopotamian lunar calendar the 7th, 14th, 21st and 28th days of *certain* months, corresponding to the four phases of the Moon, were all regarded as days of baneful character, controlled by evil spirits. Special magical rites had to be performed, and the king, in particular, had to refrain from all sorts of activities. *These days, however, were not called shabattum or shapattum.* Whatever the true etymology of the Hebrew term may be" *the Sabbath "has no connection with any known Mesopotamian observance."*

¹² For more why the New Moon, on or after the Vernal Equinox, determines the biblical New Year, and why the conjunction or dark moon doesn't determine any New Moon, see Herb Solinsky's website at www.biblicalcalendar.org. He has PDF downloads such as a *Concise Biblical Calendar* (in formats of a short summary of 10 pages, or two longer versions of 57 and 335 pages, the last being the *Treatise on the Biblical Calendar*). He also has a PDF on barley in Abib and why it's not the way to determine when the biblical New Moon for the New Year begins. You can also see Herb speak about the Vernal Equinox and the New Moon crescent, in a 20 minute interview, at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yqqeqaU-kzo>.

¹³ Ask for the PDF, *Hebrew Months*, to see what the biblical names of four months, as well as why the current Jewish calendar's months derive from Babylon.

sheaf of the elevation offering,¹⁴ you shall count off seven weeks. They shall be seven complete Sabbaths (or weeks).⁷

The reason why it's not as simple as it seems is because v. 15 (and v. 16, also, 'seven complete Sabbaths') can be interpreted as being seven complete *weeks*, the term *Sabbath* being applied to a full week, whenever that week might start (e.g. Tuesday to Monday). Because of this there are two traditional Jewish interpretations.

The Pharisees in the days of Yeshua believed 'the day after the Sabbath' meant the day after the Sabbath of the first day of Unleavened Bread. The first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread always comes on 15 *Aviv* and is an annual Sabbath, but it can be on a Monday or a Tuesday, etc. This meant that their counting would *always* begin on the next day, 16 *Aviv*. The modern Orthodox Jews follow this rule of interpretation, and so for them, *Shavuot* (Pentecost) is *always* on 6 *Sivan* (the third Jewish month).

The Sadducees, though, interpreted 'the day after the Sabbath' to be the day after the *weekly* seventh day Sabbath that fell during the seven days of Unleavened Bread. In this understanding, one cannot know the date of either First Sheaf, and consequently, *Shavuot*, until the New Moon for the first month of that year is established. Fourteen days later, in ancient times, it would have been the day for the sacrifice of the Passover lamb, with the eating of it in the evening of the 15th, which immediately follows the end of the 14th day at dark. The 15th is the first annual Sabbath day of Unleavened Bread. This day could fall on Monday, Tuesday, or Wednesday, etc., but whenever Sunday came around, that Sunday, the day *after* the weekly 7th day Sabbath, would be the day for offering up the finely crushed barley *and also* the day that the counting of 50 days inclusive would begin for *Shavuot* (the Feast of Weeks; Pentecost in the New Testament) hence, the counting of (or from) the *omer*.¹⁵

That Sunday of the Feast of Unleavened Bread could range in dates anywhere from 16 to 22 *Aviv*. This is why one had to wait every year to find out when the New Moon sighting for the first month was, in order to determine when the Feast of Unleavened Bread and First Sheaf would be, and consequently, when *Shavuot* would be. In the days of Yeshua, this priestly or Sadducean interpretation was followed, as they were the ordained leaders of Israel, not the Rabbis.¹⁶

The Sadducean interpretation is the biblically correct one. The Pharisaic and modern Orthodox interpretation is wrong because First Sheaf and *Shavuot* are the only two annual times when God doesn't give any dates, unlike Passover which is 14 *Aviv*, or the first day of Unleavened Bread, which is 15 *Aviv*, or the Feast of Trumpets, which is the first day of the seventh biblical month, and every other festival time. If the Pharisees were correct God would have given the *date* for the beginning of the counting of the *omer* (First Sheaf), and also, *Shavuot* fifty days later, because it would be the same every year (like Passover, etc.), but God couldn't give the dates because *they change every year*. The first day of Unleavened Bread (15 *Aviv*) can come on *any day* of the week, and therefore, the Sunday date for the week long Feast of Unleavened Bread *changes every year*. In other words, it's not possible to give a date for First Sheaf because the date changes every year, and this is why the Sadducees were right, and the Pharisees/Orthodox are wrong,¹⁷ and also, how we know that a lunar Sabbath is wrong.

Those who espouse a lunar Shabat place themselves in the same conceptual position as the Pharisees. They always have the same date for First Sheaf on whatever 'Sabbath' they choose to count from. That's because their lunar Sabbath would always be either the 14th, which in the first month would also be the day when the Passover lamb would be sacrificed, or it would be the next day for other Lunar Sabbatari-

¹⁴ The 'first sheaf' or *omer* in Hebrew is the amount of finely crushed barley grain given to the High Priest, about two pounds, some of which would be sacrificed; the rest reverting to the High Priest.

¹⁵ Lev. 23:7-21; Num. 28:26; Dt. 16:9.

¹⁶ For more on why the Sadducees determined the dating of the Feasts, and not the Pharisees, as the Talmud and the Rabbis contend, ask for the PDF, *Talmud—is it Trustworthy?*

¹⁷ Contrary to Orthodox Jewish opinion, the Sadducees determined when the New Moons and the Feasts were. The Sadducees were the ones whom God had placed in charge of the Temple, with that right (Num. 10:10).

ans, which would be 15 *Aviv* (the biblical first annual Sabbath of the first day of Unleavened Bread). Whatever day these two different Lunar Sabbatarians interpret ‘the day after the Sabbath’ to be (i.e. either the day after the lunar Sabbath of the 14th, or the day after the lunar Sabbath of the 15th, these two groups would always have a *set-date* for their First Sheaf, and consequently, 50 days later, for their *Shavuot* (because neither of them recognize the weekly 7th day Sabbath).

God, though, did not give dates for either First Sheaf or *Shavuot* because it’s not a set-date like Passover or the Feast of Trumpets, etc., and so we know that those who have set-dates, whether the Orthodox and Messianic Jews, or the Lunar Sabbatarians, are wrong. This destroys the Lunar Sabbath theory.¹⁸

Neither Sabbatarian group has a weekly Sabbath on ‘Saturday,’ with ‘the day after that Sabbath’ being ‘Sunday.’ Every year that Sunday has a different date because Passover can come on a Monday or Tuesday, etc. This means that the Sunday date will change every year. It’s *that* Sunday date that determines when First Sheaf is, and consequently, 50 days later, when the Feast of Weeks is.

The Lunar Sabbath concept completely breaks down here because it has a predictable date for both First Sheaf and *Shavuot* with its *fixed Sabbaths* of 7-14-21-28 (or 8-15-22-29). In other words, whether they interpreted ‘the day after the Sabbath’ to mean the day after their Sabbath of the 14th, or the day after the Sabbath of the 15th, they always have the same date, of either 15 or 16 *Aviv*, for First Sheaf, and 50 days later for *Shavuot*. With God not giving either of those dates it’s certain that there’s no such thing as a lunar Shabat for the weekly Sabbaths.

The Sabbath and Lunar Interpretations

The Lunar Sabbath interpretations of Scripture lack biblical support, and most, if not all of them are just contrived interpretations. For instance, to support their claim that the Jewish people no longer keep ‘the right Sabbath,’ they invoke Lamentations 2:6. It states that God will cause the Jews ‘to forget the Sabbath.’ They interpret this to mean that God will cause the Jews to literally forget the actual day when the Sabbath should be kept, and also, that they used to keep it by the sighting of the New Moon. Looking at the Scripture it’s fairly easy to see that their interpretation is artificial:

‘He has broken down His Booth like a garden. He has destroyed His Tabernacle. Yahveh has caused Zion to forget Festival and Sabbath and in His fierce indignation has spurned king and priest.’

The book of Lamentations was written after the King of Babylon destroyed Jerusalem. There was no city of Jerusalem anymore, no Temple and no Jewish state of Judah. All was destroyed. The proper interpretation for the verse has nothing to do with the Jews forgetting *when* the Sabbath should be or how they calculated it (from an alleged New Moon sighting), but that they wouldn’t be *celebrating* Sabbaths and Feasts in Jerusalem. They were captives in Babylon (the few Jews that didn’t die),¹⁹ far away from the land where they kept the Sabbath and Feast days.

Assuming for a moment, though, that the Lunar Sabbatarian interpretation is correct, wouldn’t Yahveh restore the correct day and way to keep His Sabbath when He brought His Jewish people back to Judah and Jerusalem seventy years later?²⁰ Not once in Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, Zechariah or Malachi, the men and prophets of that restoration, does God speak of them having the wrong day for the Sabbath and correcting them. On the contrary, in Nehemiah, the Sabbath is mentioned thirteen times in nine verses²¹ and not once

¹⁸ For more on why the Pharisees and Orthodox Jews are wrong about ‘the day after the Sabbath’ for First Sheaf or First Fruits as it’s sometimes called, and why God didn’t give a date for First Sheaf and *Shavuot*, see [First Sheaf](#).

¹⁹ The total number of Jewish people who were taken captive to Babylon was 4,600 (Jer. 52:28-30).

²⁰ See Jer. 25:11-12; 29:10; Dan. 9:2; Zech. 7:5.

²¹ Neh. 9:14; 10:31 twice; 13:15 twice, 16, 17, 18, 19 three times, 21, 22.

does God tell him that he had the wrong day for the Sabbath or that their ‘every 7th day Sabbath’ was not correct. Yeshua confirms that Nehemiah kept the right day for the ‘Jewish’ Sabbath, never once reprimanding the Pharisees for keeping the ‘wrong’ Sabbath day.

In Malachi, God’s ‘last word’ to Israel 400 years before John the Baptist would proclaim the coming of the Messiah, God says,

‘Remember the Law of Moses My servant, the statutes and ordinances that I commanded him at Horeb for all Israel!’

It would be very strange, indeed, for the Lord to be telling Israel to remember His Law and not tell them if they were keeping the Sabbath on the wrong day. If the Jews had been keeping the wrong Sabbath in the days after their return from Babylon, it’s more than reasonable to assume that God would have corrected them through one of His Prophets, but this isn’t found anywhere in Scripture. This, too, shatters the concept of a Lunar Sabbath. The Jews were keeping the right day for the Sabbath in the days of Nehemiah, Malachi, Messiah Yeshua and Paul, every seven days irrespective of the Moon.

The Sabbath and Philo

Philo, a prominent Jewish man who was born and raised in Alexandria, Egypt (25 BC to 50 AD), writes of the Sabbath being every seven days. He states that it’s the ‘sacred seventh day after *each recurring interval of six days*.’²² With no mention of a week with ‘extra days’ in it, or of the Sabbath being tied to the New Moon, it’s clear to see that a biblical lunar Sabbath is a fabrication of modern times.

Philo also negates the Lunar Sabbatarian teaching that the New Moon is the conjunction or moon that cannot be seen with the unaided eye. He says that the New Moon is the first of every month (and not the full Moon as some others say), and that,

‘at the time of the new moon, the sun begins to illuminate the moon with a light which is visible to the outward senses and she displays her own beauty to the beholders.’²³

Philo speaks of a New Moon that can be seen (i.e. the visible first crescent). His writings are normative for what Judaism understood in the days of Yeshua and the Apostles concerning when the seventh day Sabbath would come and when the new biblical months began.

~No Lunar Sabbath~

With the creation of the Moon on the fourth day and the Sabbath coming on the seventh day the Lunar understanding of having to wait seven days after the New Moon is sighted is immediately called into question. Also, the Scriptures on the 7th day Sabbath make no mention of a lunar connection. Whenever the Sabbath is mentioned (with or without the designation ‘the seventh day’) nowhere is there any indication that its dating, or when it comes, is tied into the Moon.²⁴ This sets the stage for lack of support that a lunar Sabbath has. When God first gives the Sabbath to Israel in the Wilderness there’s no mention of a New Moon or a special period of waiting after it disappears, in order to understand when the next Sabbath should occur. The Sons of Israel were in the Wilderness for 40 years, and not once after God told them

²² Charles Duke Yonge, translator; Anthony Uyl, editor, *The Works of Philo Judaeus*, Vol. II (Woodstock, Ontario: Devoted Publishing), p. 285.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ For example, in Gen. 2:1-3; Ex. 16:11-29; 20:8-11; 31:12-17; Lev. 23:3; Num. 15:32-36; Deut. 5:12-15; Is. 56:1-8; 58:13-14; Jer. 17:19-27; Neh. 13:15-22; Mt. 12:1-2, 5, 8; Jn. 5:9-10; 7:22; 9:14; Acts 13:14; 15:21; Col. 2:16

which day was the 7th day Sabbath, did He ever speak of tying it into the Moon. With Scripture being our Guideline for God's will, this proves that the Sabbath is every seventh day regardless of the Moon.

Passover, the 14th day of *Aviv* when the Passover lamb was slain, is never mentioned as a Sabbath day, but would have to be according to the Lunar understanding of the 14th day of the lunar month being a Sabbath, and for those who claim an 8-15-22-29 day Sabbaths, no mention is made of 15 *Aviv* being anything but an annual Sabbath. It's not a weekly Sabbath, which it should be for the 8-15, etc. group. Only the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (15 *Aviv*) and seventh day (21 *Aviv*) are mentioned as annual Sabbaths. This negates both Lunar understandings. The offering of the new barley grain (First Sheaf) also destroys the concept of a Lunar Sabbath on either the 7-14-21-28 or the 8-15-22-29 dates because First Sheaf would then be 'dateable,' but God doesn't date it because it's not fixed to a specific date. Even though First Sheaf is always on the Sunday of Passover Week, the date for that Sunday changes every year, due to when the Feast of Unleavened Bread begins.

Adding to all that, the order of the sacrifices in Numbers 28, with their daily, weekly, monthly and yearly sacrifices, point to the Sabbath taking precedence, chronologically, over the New Moon, and not having any connection to it. If the Sabbath sprung off of the New Moon or conjunction, the sacrifices for the New Moons should have been listed before the Sabbath.

Nehemiah and all those who came back from the captivity in Babylon seemed to have observed the right day for the Sabbath. The Prophets in those days never tell him that Israel was keeping the wrong day for Yahveh's Sabbath. Yeshua, too, never once tells the Pharisees that their Sabbath is not God's Sabbath day, and yet that Jewish Sabbath came once every seven days, like clockwork. Yeshua, the Lord of the Sabbath (Mark 2:28) reveals that the day the Pharisees knew as the Sabbath is truly God's Sabbath day. Also, there's no mention in the New Testament that the Sabbath was being kept on the wrong day, something that we would expect to find if the Jewish people were keeping the wrong day for the Sabbath.

Philo records that the Sabbath came every seven days, with no interruptions. From the time of Yeshua and Philo until today the Jewish people have kept the seventh day Sabbath...every seven days.

All these points negate the Lunar Sabbath concept. The Lunar Sabbath teaching is not biblical.²⁵

²⁵ What about the seven day marching around Jericho? Some Lunar Sabbatarians argue that if there is a continual six days of work, and then a seventh day of rest as a pattern, how could the Lord break His own Law by commanding Joshua to do that? The answer to that has to do with God's redemption superseding the law of the Sabbath to rest.

When Yeshua healed Jewish people on the Sabbath, did He break the Sabbath law to not work? No, because His Work was the Work of Redemption, the very Work that God has been doing since Adam and Eve ate from the tree. The Sabbath has at least two major themes. In Ex. 20:8-11 it speaks of resting on the Sabbath day *because* God made Creation in six days and rested, but God *gives another reason* for keeping the Sabbath in the second giving of the Ten Commandments. In Dt. 5:12-15 the *reason* to rest is because God *redeemed* Israel, and so, rest *and* redemption are godly values or themes for the Sabbath. That's why Yeshua could 'work' (heal) on the Sabbath day. He was revealing God's redemption ('why shouldn't this daughter of Abraham be healed or redeemed from Satan, on *this* day?!' i.e. the Sabbath). The Sabbath is the great day of redemption, and Yeshua, as the Redeemer, was revealing Himself as such.

The walls of Jericho most likely came down on the Sabbath (the seventh time around the city). It was alright to fight and go to war on the Sabbath day because it was Yahveh's War, *redeeming* the Land that He had promised to the Fathers. Israel could fight on His Sabbath day because they were redeeming the Land, a Work that was as divine as Yeshua healing that daughter of Abraham.

Revised on 1 February 2018.