



Yahweh's Calendar

an excerpt from the book

REUNITING THE COVENANT

by Rav. David Pollina

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CHAPTER 12

LIVING BY YAHWEH'S CALENDAR

Yahweh has given explicit instructions in the Torah about when to worship Him. Easter Sunday is not one of the days He ordains, neither is December 25th. In a series of Holy Days enumerated in Leviticus 23, He set a plan which is both practical and prophetic, calling these times His MOWED. The first of these MOWED are the Sabbaths. He then enjoins additional specific days throughout the year for worship, sacrifice, and other specific activities - Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, Day of First Fruits, Shavuot (*Day of Pentecost*), Day of Trumpets, Day of Atonement, Feast of Sukkot (*Tabernacles or Booths*), and the Last Great Day. Many excellent books have been written about these days, yet the basis from which to understand them is still lacking in many ways.

A clear mark of any system divergent from His is a changing of these “*appointments*”, as we have seen repeated examples of already. The fact that changing the ‘When’ of worship is a favourite weapon of haSatan necessitates a re-examination of our practices to assure their compliance with the truth; and understanding Yahweh’s calendar, the foundation of His MOWED. His calendar is often discussed in a highly superficial manner relying upon traditional understanding and devoid of proof. Over the next chapters we will attempt to shake off the dust of tradition, returning to the cultural basis from which His Calendar was formed.

Firstly though, the instant question is does Yahweh care? Does He really have a preference if we keep Sunday, Saturday, or any other day of the week, so long as we honour Him on one day each seven; does He care if we celebrate Passover at a different time than He said to, or if we pick and choose which days to observe?

DOES YAHWEH CARE ABOUT SPECIFIC DAYS?

Unfortunately, this question is only asked due to either a lack of foundation in Torah, or a misunderstanding of ‘grace’ vs. ‘law’. As to the latter, we have already clearly established the eternity of Torah and how inseparable it is from the CHESED (*grace*) of Yahweh. We have found that Torah is the instructions of a loving Father which we obey, not to achieve salvation, but because we are saved and wish to please Him.

When Torah is studied, even for a short time, a very clear picture of Yahweh emerges - Yahweh is extremely particular. He wants things done His way, in His time, at His place, by His people, precisely as He

directs. Yes, Yahweh is love, and yes He is rich in grace, but He desires to be worshiped the way He has told us to worship Him. This concept is all too often lost in a cultural understanding of Him that focuses on His grace alone. Yahweh of the 'Old Testament' was the particular one, but Yahweh of the 'New Testament' is now completely gracious and relaxed, as if medicated on Prozac. Yet, both are the same Elohim who doesn't change. He still deserves, and yes, even demands, our obedience. One of these areas is the 'When' of our worship

The first proof of Yahweh's particularity with specific days is His reference to them as MOWED, "*appointments*". These are His days, not ours; specified times for us to meet with Him. How do we treat our appointments with others? It is easy to recognise that if you set an appointment to meet someone for business you're expected to show up at the appointed time; it does matter. If you're unsure, try setting an appointment and then thinking the other person won't mind if you come the following day, or the day before. The very nature of an appointment is time specific; but even deeper, these appointments have also been sanctified, set apart for us to worship Him, specifically the Sabbath.

Genesis 2:3 Elohim blessed the seventh day and **made it holy [QADASH]** because on it he ceased all the work that he had been doing in creation.

Exodus 20:8 Remember the Sabbath day **to sanctify it [QADASH]**. **9** For six days you may labour and do all your work, **10** but the seventh day is a Sabbath to Yahweh your Elohim; on it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, or your male servant, or your female servant, or your cattle, or your resident foreigner who is in your gates. **11** For in six days Yahweh made the heavens and the earth and the sea and all that is in them, and he rested on the seventh day; therefore **Yahweh blessed the Sabbath day and sanctified it [QADASH]**.

Exodus 31:12 Yahweh said to Moses, **13** "Tell the Israelites, 'Surely you must keep **my Sabbaths**, for **it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am Yahweh who sanctifies [QADASH] you.** **14** So you must keep the Sabbath, for it is holy for you. Everyone who defiles it must surely be put to death; indeed, anyone who does any work on it, then that life will be cut off from among his people. **15** Six days work may be done, but on the seventh day is a Sabbath of complete rest, holy [QODESH]to Yahweh; anyone who does work on the seventh day must surely be put to death. **16** And **the Israelites must keep the Sabbath to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant.** **17** It is a

sign between me and the Israelites forever; for in six days Yahweh made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed.”

Isaiah 58:13 You must observe the Sabbath rather than doing anything you want on **my holy [QODESH] day**. You must look forward to the Sabbath and treat Yahweh’s holy day with respect. You must treat it with respect by refraining from your normal activities, and by refraining from your selfish pursuits and from making business deals. **14** Then you will find joy in your relationship to Yahweh, and I will give you great prosperity, and cause crops to grow on the land I gave to your ancestor Jacob.” Know for certain that Yahweh has spoken.

שָׁדָשׁ, ‘QADASH’, (#6942), and its derivative ‘QODESH’, (#6944), are is, in a single concept, the simplified answer to any question about Yahweh’s particularity. It is the way He describes the Sabbath day - *“Sanctified, set-apart, consecrated, holy”*. It is not like any other day; it is sanctified to be special. Yahweh Himself sanctified the day, He declared it to be set-apart, and nowhere in the Bible does He give mankind the authority to change that. He sanctified it, and then commanded us to sanctify it as a reminder that He also sanctifies us. The concept of QADASH, like many others, gets watered down in our modern concept of ‘grace’. It is difficult for many to view Him as being extremely specific and demandingly particular, yet such is repeatedly the case.

The high priest was sanctified for the tasks assigned to him. Would Yahweh have cared if anyone else went to minister in the Holy of Holies? Of course He would, and death would have been the immediate result! Even the high priest had specific times and procedures for his ministry, or he too would die. Yahweh was extremely detail specific about the construction of the tabernacle; utensils, clothing, compositions of oil and incense to be used in His worship. Although there were areas where He appeared to leave room for the *“work of an artistic designer”*, remember that He also supernaturally empowered those artisans with skill and knowledge to create exactly what He wanted.

Only eight days after the tabernacle was put into service, on the very first day of their ministry, Nadab and Abihu, Aaron’s sons, failed to follow Yahweh’s instructions (Leviticus 10) and were struck dead! Moses was twice commanded by Yahweh to obtain water from a rock. The first time (Exodus 17:6) he was told to strike the rock, and when he did, water came out, but the second time, Yahweh specifically told Moses and Aaron to speak to the rock (Numbers 20:8). When Moses again struck the rock, the consequence for him and Aaron was exclusion from entering the promised land. Yes, when Yahweh sanctifies something, sets it apart

from other things, He is very specific. He has declared the Sabbath to be a day set-apart for rest, worship, and reflection as a sign of our Covenant with Him... a perpetual sign. In Exodus 31:13 above, we find the Sabbath is a sign that He has QADASH sanctified us as well! We have been set apart as His people and are to keep His days.

FOUNDATION OF THE CALENDAR

Throughout history, many different calendars have been used, yet the purpose of them all remained the same, to regulate the yearly cycle of the earth and subdivide it into recognisable units. All of these had different methods for breaking the “year” into “months” and “weeks”, determining the number of days in each yearly period, etc. All of these calendars relied upon movements of the heavenly bodies, as does Yahweh’s true, original calendar.

Genesis 1:14 Elohim said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night, and **let them be signs [OWTH] to indicate seasons [MOWED] and days and years, 15** and let them serve as lights in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth.” It was so

Psalms 104:19 He made the moon for [MOWED], and the sun sets according to a regular schedule.

From the very beginning, Yahweh placed the sun and moon to be for אֹרֶה, ‘OWTH’, (#226), “signs”, and for מוֹעֵד, ‘MOWED’, (#4150), “sacred seasons”, and for days and years. The sun and moon are not just there to divide the day from the night, but specifically put in place to declare Yahweh’s calendar! OWTH, “sign, signal, distinguishing mark, omen”, is best understood as a “beacon”. It is something that draws us to or away from something; like a lighthouse marks dangerous rocks, guiding ships away, or the entrance to a harbour, guiding ships safely in. As we have already seen, MOWED are the “appointments” of Yahweh. Thus, the heavenly lights serve as “beacons” to draw us to His “appointments”. Everything about His true calendar must be discernable by examining the “beacons” He has placed in the sky along with the rest of nature; this is the way the patriarchs understood the calendar.

1 Kings 6:38 In the eleventh year, in the month of [YERACH] Bul (the eighth month [CHODESH]) the temple was completed in accordance with all its specifications and blueprints. It took seven years to build.

1 Kings 8:2 All the men of Israel assembled before King Solomon during the festival in the month of [YERACH] Ethanim (the seventh month [CHODESH]).

It is universally accepted that the “month” in Yahweh’s calendar is lunar, beginning with the “new moon”, in fact the Hebrew concepts for “new moon”, and “month” are synonymous. חֹדֶשׁ, ‘CHODESH’, (#2320), “new moon”, and יָרַח, ‘YERACH’, (#3391), “month” are synonymous in 1 Kings. Likewise the phrase חֹדֶשׁ יוֹמֵי מִים, CHODESH YOWM, “a month of days” (*Genesis* 29:14, *Numbers* 11:20, 21) is identically used to יָרַח יוֹמֵי מִים, YERACH YOWM (*Deuteronomy* 21:13 *2 Kings* 15:13), also meaning “a month of days”. There is no scholarly or theological debate about the lunar basis of the biblical month, where limited dispute does exist is over when the month starts. When exactly is the “renewed moon”? The majority consensus is that this refers to the first visible crescent, yet some dissent, believing it refers to “astronomical conjunction”. To understand this requires a bit of astronomical knowledge which was commonplace for the ancients, but often considered archaic today.

Each lunar cycle, as the moon orbits the earth, it moves from a position between the earth and the sun, to one opposite the sun from the earth, and then back again to between the earth and sun. A few days after the moon disappears, it is sighted again, shortly after sunset, as a slender crescent of light. Throughout this cycle, the sun’s reflected light reaching earth changes. When the moon is directly between the earth and the sun, this is called “conjunction”, and the moon is “new” in the astronomical sense. When it is opposite the sun from the earth, we have a “full” moon. In between conjunctions, the moon “waxes” (*old English for increases*) to quarter, then full, then “waned” (*decreases*) to quarter and finally disappears into being “new” again. These are known as the four “phases” of the moon - ‘New’, ‘First Quarter’ (*or half*), ‘Full’, and ‘Last Quarter’ (*or half*). The time between each of these phases is roughly seven days, and is where the concept of the seven day ‘week’ originated.

Despite the dissenting opinions of those who look to the invisible conjunction, all the evidence to date agrees that the “new moon” event in antiquity was the sighting of a first reappearing “crescent” moon. While it is true that the ancients had a much higher level of astronomical knowledge than had been previously thought, and could calculate the moment of conjunction, the historical records clearly show reliance on sighting the crescent in fixing the month’s start.

*“Following the order which we have adopted, we proceed to speak of the third festival, that of the new moon. First of all, because it is the beginning of the month, and the beginning, whether of number or of time, is honourable. Secondly, because at this time there is **nothing in the whole of heaven destitute of light**. Thirdly, because at that period the more powerful and important body **gives a portion of necessary assistance** to the less important and weaker body; for, 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 then she displays her own beauty to the beholders."

- Philo Special Laws II.XXVI, 140-141 (c.100 AD)

The very root of the word CHODESH means "to renew or repair", and there is nothing renewed about conjunction. The moon's light starts re-building at the moment of conjunction, yet none of that light is visible on earth; thus it could not be a "sign or beacon" (OWTH) except to the mathematicians. The plain meaning of the word indicates the new moon is a visible event, and prior to the Hillel II calendar in use by Jews today, the Hebrew month was completely based on personal observation of the "new moon", that slender crescent appearing shortly after sunset. There is an entire tractate in the Mishnah, called the "Rosh Hashanah" (c.200 AD), which discusses questioning witnesses "seeing" the new moon. This tractate is replete with examples of the new moon being a visible event, not a dark moon conjunction.

The Tanakh does not explicitly tell us exactly when the "new moon" is; this knowledge is assumed of the reader. Indeed, part of the problem in trying to understand an ancient culture is the modern lack of ancient assumed knowledge. Every writer assumes that their reader has certain knowledge that needs no re-stating. For example, if I was to say "the day after Monday", you would know I mean "Tuesday", as I assume your knowledge of the modern weekly order. Likewise, interpretation of a word's intrinsic meaning is assumed. From a textual basis, we need to discern any assumptions the writer is making; a difficult process indeed. A good example of this is the one passage which seems to hint at a dark new moon day.

1 Samuel 20:5 David said to Jonathan, "Tomorrow is the new moon, and I am certainly expected to join the king for a meal. You must send me away so I can hide in the field until the third evening from now."

How could David have known that the next day would be the "new moon" before it had been observed? This sole example can be found to support a theory of a dark "new moon". Yet when fully considered, it is far from conclusive. Since the lunar month has either 29 or 30 days, if David spoke on the 30th day of the month, the following day would indeed be the "new moon" by default, whether observed or not. It is also apparent from the entire text that he was expected to be at the King's table on two consecutive nights. In this context, "new moon" could refer to the feast, not the lunar event, similar to the way 'PESACH' can refer to the feast of Passover, or the sacrificial lamb.

Psalms 81:3 Sound the ram's horn on the day of the new moon [CHODESH], and on the day of the full moon [KECE] when our

festival begins. 4 For observing the festival is a requirement for Israel; it is an ordinance given by the Elohim of Jacob. 5 He decreed it as a regulation in Joseph...

The only other support which can be mustered for a dark new moon comes from speculation about כֶּסֶל, 'KECE', (#3677), a rare word whose meaning is completely uncertain. One line of scholarly opinion has KECE related to the root קָסַל, 'KACAH', (#3680), which means "concealed"; thus a dark or hidden moon. It is more plausible though that KECE is related to KISTA in Aramaic and KUSEU in Assyrian which both mean "full moon" (*Brown-Driver-Briggs page 490*) as translated here in the NET. In this context, one of the feasts on the 15th (*full moon*) would be in view. In verses 5 and 6, the psalmist Asaph goes on to speak of this being ordained at the exodus, which we know was on the 15th, on a full moon, so this later theory is certainly more consistent with the text, and any 'evidence' for a dark new moon has 'vanished' (*sic*).

CYCLES OF THE LUNAR MONTH

Yahweh ordained the lights in the sky as beacons to His appointments; we either follow them, or we follow traditions of men. The moon can not be changed by man or by the Adversary; it is set in the very fabric of creation as a "beacon". Yahweh's calendar is a different cycle; dependent upon His creation, not asserting the 'independence' of man.

A lunar month has either 29 or 30 days, never more, never less. On average, there will be 11 days less in a lunar year than the actual time it takes earth to orbit the sun. About every three years, a "leap month" will need to be added to correct for this drift. The Biblical method for this centres on the barley in Israel being 'ABIB', a particular stage of ripeness. At the end of the 12th month, the barley is searched, and if not found to be ABIB as yet, then the thirteenth month is added. The modern Hebrew calendar no longer relies on lunar or crop observation in setting the months; rather it calculates them in advance on a 19 year cycle.

Sometime after the writing of the Mishnah (c.200 AD), which plainly relies upon observation alone, the system of using calculation gained following. In 359 AD, Hillel II published these calculation rules. The Jews were being persecuted by the newly-converted-to-Christianity Byzantine emperor Theodosius I. Hillel took the unprecedented step of publishing the complicated rules then used to set the months for the purpose of continuing the oral traditions he had been taught, making certain they would survive the persecution. He also added additional rules at that time called "postponements" which were designed to prevent conflicts between a Saturday Sabbath and the yearly Holy Days.

It can be stated with certainty that the Hillel calendar, also known as the ‘Babylonian Calculated Calendar’, was not in place until well after 200 AD. In addition to the many rules for observation found in the Mishnah, there are absolutely no postponements. The writings of the Talmud provide several examples of events happening on dates that would not be allowed under the Hillel system. For examples, the 14th of ‘Nisan’ (1st month) could fall on a Thursday (*Pesahim* 7:10), Rosh Hashanah could fall on a Sunday (*Shabbath* 19:5), and the 9th of ‘Av’ (5th month) could fall on a Friday (*Taanith* 2:10). In the coming chapters, you will see why this fact is important, as it will invalidate any interpretation of 1st century events based on the Hillel calendar.

One of the side-effects of Rabbinical Judaism’s adherence to the Talmud is that without a legal Sanhedrin, they are prohibited from correcting the Hillel calendar. Thus, even though Yahweh directs a month to start based upon observation of the moon, most of Judaism fixes their dates independent of, and drifting away from His “beacon”. This of course can affect all of the MOWED, and is an example of what Y’shua said: “*you have nullified the Word of Yahweh for your tradition*”. It is a ‘When’ deception of haSatan upon Judah, and many Messianics blindly follow the Rabbinical system into this error.

NAMES OF THE MONTHS

ABIB is the only month which is ‘named’ in the Torah, but even this is not a ‘naming’ in the proper sense. In antiquity, the months were simply referred to as “*the first month*”, “*the eighth month*”, etc. ‘ABIB’ is a stage of ripeness of the barley, so by saying “*in the month of Abib*”, the Torah is not really calling the month by that name, rather stating “*the month when ABIB occurs*”. Tradition holds that the current names were adopted by Ezra on Judah’s return from Babylonian captivity. The only Tanakh reference to only such a name is in Ezra 6:15. The names of the ‘Jewish’ months today are derived from those in ancient Babylon. Using these names however, can be direct defiance to Torah. Yahweh’s instructions are clear, we are not to invoke the ‘names’ of false gods, and every one of these months names is exactly that; the name of a false god.

Exodus 23:13b “do not make mention of the names of other gods—do not let them be heard on your lips.”

Joshua 23:7b neither make mention of the name of their gods, nor cause to swear [by them], neither serve them, nor bow yourselves unto them. (KJV)

If this is the case, why does the Tanakh repeatedly make use of both the Babylonian names and the month number, “*in the month ____*,”

which is the 7th month”, etc. (1 Kings 6:1, 6:38, 8:2, Esther 2:16, 3:13, 8:8, 8:12, Zechariah 1:7)? It is obvious in each of these instances that a cross-cultural comparison is being made for historical accounting. The writers clarify which Hebrew month number corresponds to the pagan Babylonian month in which the event takes place. So unless we’re speaking of historical association in an educational context, why should we use the current Jewish month names that Yahweh so detests? The Hebrew word in Exodus 23:13 for “make mention” is זָכַר, ‘ZAKAR’, (#2142), in the Hiphil tense it means “to cause to be remembered, to make a memorial”. Every time these names are used, it does just that; causing the name of a false god to be remembered!

Hosea 2:16 “At that time,” declares Yahweh, “you will call, ‘My husband’ [YISHI]; you will never again call me, ‘My master.’ [BA’AL] **17** For I will remove the names of the Baal idols [HABAALIM] from your lips, so that **you will never again utter their names!**”

Zechariah 13:2b “I will remove the names of the idols from the land and they will never again be remembered...”

Fascinating that both of these sections from messianic age prophecies, featuring the return of Judah and Ephraim together under Messiah Y’shua, speak of removing the “names” of false gods. The prophecy in Hosea is a remarkable literary play on Hebrew words, for “BA’AL” can refer both to the false god of that name, and to a husband in the sense of “my master”. The poetic picture here is of a mixing of the Holy and the profane, of a people so repentant on their return that they become sensitive enough not even to vocalise a pagan deity’s name in other common usage!

We can start living in that Kingdom pattern now by doing the same thing and avoiding the use of pagan god names for our months. We can also start our months as Yahweh directs, by looking for the “new moon” on the night of the 29th and/or 30th each month, and timing our MOWED observance accordingly. The start of each month is a joyous occasion for worship and sounding the Shofar (Psalms 81:3); it is, as we will continue to develop, the rock to which all the MOWED anchor. Once put back in the place designated by the Father, the Adversary’s ‘When’ deceptions upon Judah will begin to crumble by the force of The Word.

CHAPTER 13

WHOSE DAY IS IT ANYWAY ?

Much has been written over time about the Sabbath; it is probably one of the most frequent subjects presented for theological discussion. It is a subject that could fill several books, but our examination will be primarily limited to its place within Yahweh's calendar. Of the varying opinions about the Sabbath, traditional thought can be distilled into three general categories. There are those who believe that Sunday worship has become the "*Christian Sabbath*"; others believe such violates the Commandment, and that worship should be on Saturday; and then, there are those who believe Yahweh doesn't care which day we honour Him on, a point already expounded upon and rejected.

Regardless of which view you have taken up to now, the information presented in this chapter will challenge your praxis. We will examine the Sabbath Day from the perspective of a united Israel, looking to the ancient paths of the patriarchs, in the light of a prophesied Messianic reign. Be prepared to put aside your preconceptions and examine all the facts. We want to know Yahweh's heart and have His understanding of the Sabbath. To accomplish this, and obtain a clear picture of His Sabbath as originally ordained, and intended for us to observe, we need to examine evidence both internal and external. As in any area, we must first look to the Tanakh and the instructions the Father has given us there - from a basis of cultural and historical knowledge - to see if our present understanding is accurate.

Is the Sabbath improperly kept by mainstream Christians worshiping on Sunday? Jews and many Messianics would immediately say that Sunday worship is not sanctioned by Yahweh. Is it also possible that these same Jews and Messianics who worship on Saturday are not keeping the Sabbath either? In examining which day is the true Sabbath, there is indeed a third choice, that the Sabbath is neither Sunday nor Saturday; that both groups are incorrect in their conclusions. Our answers must come from the totality of the evidence.

WHEN IS THE SABBATH?

The Sabbath is a MOWED appointment which has been QADASH sanctified as a commemoration of two specific events. It is first mentioned as a memorial of the seventh day of creation, the day Yahweh ceased His work of creation (*Genesis* 2:3, *Exodus* 20:8, 31:12), but Scripture also

tells us it serves to memorialise Yahweh's deliverance of Israel from Egypt.

Deuteronomy 5:12 Be careful to observe the Sabbath day just as Yahweh your Elohim has commanded you. **13** You are to work and do all your tasks in six days, **14** but the seventh day is the Sabbath of Yahweh your Elohim. On that day you must not do any work, you, your son, your daughter, your male slave, your female slave, your ox, your donkey, any other animal, or the foreigner who lives with you, so that your male and female slaves, like yourself, may have rest. **15** **Recall that you were slaves in the land of Egypt and that Yahweh your Elohim brought you out of there by strength and power; therefore, Yahweh your Elohim has commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.**

Psalms 81:4 For observing the festival is a requirement for Israel; it is an ordinance given by the Elohim of Jacob. **5** He decreed it as a regulation in Joseph, when he attacked the land of Egypt. I heard a voice I did not recognize. **6** It said: **"I removed the burden from his shoulder; his hands were released from holding the basket."**

It was on a Sabbath day that Yahweh delivered Israel from Egypt, giving them rest from their affliction. Here the Sabbath reminds us of that deliverance. As we will see in a moment, this little recognised fact is actually very important, for the Sabbath also points us towards the future rest of Messianic rule. First Yahweh rested after creation, then He gave Israel rest from the bondage of Egypt, and finally, He will give us rest in Messiah. When we keep the Sabbath day, Yahweh's Sabbath day, we remember the past, sanctify the present, and look forward to the future; we show that He has sanctified us, set us apart, for His service.

Knowing that He is specific, and wanting to keep His appointment, we must determine exactly which day is His Sabbath. Unfortunately, nowhere do the Scriptures come out and say "*the Sabbath is _____day*" (*Sunday, Monday, etc.*). The Gregorian calendar as we know it, the system of Sunday through Saturday with twelve months, did not exist at creation, or at the exodus. How do we equate the Sabbath as taught to Israel in the desert with our modern calendar? Judaism declares Saturday to be the true Sabbath, and this is followed by most Messianics. Traditional Christians believe Sunday is now the proper day. The correct answer should be founded upon Scripture, and firmly provable - completely independent of any tradition of men.

What may surprise you is that both camps can be correct, albeit only from time to time, and by accident. The Sabbath of Yahweh as instituted and celebrated in ancient history was lunar, and this truth, His

true Sabbath is being restored in our day. To rediscover the ancient paths, as always, we must first learn from within the culture of those times, often quite divergent from what we today consider 'normal'.

For those who love Yahweh, and have tried to keep His Sabbath, believing it to be Saturday on our modern calendar, the mere assertion that this could be incorrect is often taken as the highest blasphemy. If you are among this group, examine the arguments closely, for as His people, we must always be guided by His revealed Word, and be ready to discard even the most favoured of traditions which turn out to not be properly grounded on that Word. Remember that for a Christian to be told that Christmas and Easter are pagan holidays which should be avoided often brings the same consternation. As we have seen, however, such is the case, and true Christians seeking Yahweh will realise this and act accordingly. A Jew or Messianic may not understand the Christian's traditionalist attachment to Christmas and Easter, but if told that the Sabbath is not Saturday, will usually display the very same attachment!

Yet, ask any Saturday-keeper why the Sabbath is Saturday, and the only proof in response will be handed down tradition. The belief is that the Sabbath day has been kept as a tradition from Mt. Sinai, through Y'shua, and into the present day without error. To prove this however, is a very different matter. We can not rely on Rabbinical Judaism as an excuse for not studying. Yahweh has kept portions of His truth alive in both Judaism and Christianity. The former has preserved the Torah, yet we can not assume they have likewise preserved its interpretation and application, for they have not. The later has preserved records of the Messiah, but has also done so with many distortions. Our standard must be the Scriptures alone; peeling back the layers of time, revealing the ancient paths commended to the patriarchs by Yahweh Himself.

Let's critically examine the Tanakh, and listen to what Yahweh says about the Sabbath; He created it for us, and it's His day throughout Scripture. Fortunately, He has not left His people to rely on traditions of men in order to know which day of the week is His Sabbath.

THE MOON FOR MOWED

In the prior chapter, we discussed the lunar foundations of Yahweh's calendar. From both Genesis and Psalms, we know that He ordained the moon as a OTHW "*beacon*" for MOWED "*appointments*". HaSatan, our adversary, desires to rule over the MOWED of Yahweh (*Isaiah 14:13*), and has accomplished this with Christmas and Easter. Do we think the Sabbath is immune to his attacks, or will it not, as a sign of Yahweh's Covenant, indeed be one of the most prime targets?!

Leviticus 23:1 Yahweh spoke to Moses: **2** “Speak to the Israelites and tell them, ‘These are Yahweh’s **appointed times [MOWED]** which you must proclaim as holy assemblies—**my appointed times [MOWED]**: **3** “Six days work may be done, but on the seventh day there must be a Sabbath of complete rest, a holy assembly. You must not do any work; it is a Sabbath to Yahweh in all the places where you live.

Leviticus 23 continues to list all the MOWED of Yahweh, following the very first one on that list - the Sabbath. Each and every other MOWED listed in Leviticus 23 is set on a specific day of the lunar month, so why is the Sabbath any different?

Proponents of a cyclical Sabbath argue that since the moon was ‘created’ on day four in Genesis, and Yahweh rested on day seven; that He therefore rested on the fourth day of the lunar month, meaning the moon has no connection to the Shabbat. This argument is full of logical holes. For one, it is very plausible to state, from the Hebrew, that the moon was ‘re-created’ on the fourth day; for by necessity, our planet itself was created prior to day two, when Yahweh separated the waters, forming dry land. If the earth pre-existed the six days of creation, it is logical to assume that the rest of the universe did as well. There is no statement in Genesis as to the phase of the moon on ‘day four’; it is purely conjecture to claim it was a “*new moon*” day. In all other areas of creation, Yahweh created things in a mature state - a tree, not a seed - an animal, not an embryo. If Adam went out on day eight, cut down a tree in the garden, and counted the rings, he might have assumed that creation was much older than it really was. We can’t therefore argue the state of the moon at creation relative to on which lunar day Yahweh created the Shabbat.

To accept the tradition of the Sabbath as a cycle of repeating seven days, one must accept, without any corroborating evidence, that this cycle has been faithfully kept. The only ‘evidence’ available to prove this is human oral tradition; and herein lays the problem. Relying on human tradition divorces the Sabbath MOWED from the evidence of Yahweh’s “*beacons*”. There is no way to look at the heavens and determine the accuracy of the human tradition. If all we needed was tradition, then there would be no need for Yahweh to ordain the heavens as “*beacons*” in the first place.

In untangling this mystery, we discover a fascinating history both internal and external to the Tanakh. We will examine arguments for and against a lunar based Sabbath and cyclical Sabbath (*cycle of every seven days*). Our desire is to follow the instructions Yahweh has given us for keeping His Sabbath; after all it’s His day to begin with.

SABBATHS IN THE WILDERNESS

Why are we to believe that all MOWED except the Shabbat are based on the moon; is there any evidence in the Tanakh to support this assumption? When Israel came out of Egypt, Yahweh proceeded to teach them the importance of observing His Shabbat. In Exodus 16, He instituted an object lesson which was to last 40 years - manna.

Exodus 16:1 When they journeyed from Elim, the entire company of Israelites came to the Desert of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, **on the fifteenth day of the second month** after their exodus from the land of Egypt. . . **4** Then Yahweh said to Moses, "I am going to rain bread from heaven for you, and the people will go out and gather a certain amount each day, **that I may test them, whether they will walk in my Torah or not.** **5** And on the sixth day they will prepare what they bring in, and it will be twice as much as they gather each day." . . . **13** And in the evening the quail came up and covered the camp; and in the morning a layer of dew was all around the camp. **14** When the layer of dew had evaporated, there were small round things on the surface of the desert, small like the frost on the earth. **15** When the Israelites saw it, they said to one another, "What is it?" because they did not know what it was. And Moses said to them, "It is the bread that Yahweh has given you for food. . . **19** And Moses said to them, "No one is to keep any of it until morning." **20** But they did not listen to Moses, and some kept part of it until morning. It was full of worms and began to stink. And Moses was angry with them. . . **22** And **on the sixth day** they gathered twice as much food, two omers per person; and all the leaders of the community came and told Moses. **23** And he said to them, "This is what Yahweh has said: **'Tomorrow is a time of cessation, a holy Sabbath to Yahweh.** Whatever you want to bake, bake today; and whatever you want to boil, boil today; and whatever is left put aside for yourselves to be kept until morning.'" **24** So they put it aside until the morning, just as Moses had commanded, and it did not stink, nor was there any worm in it. **25** And Moses said, "Eat it today, for today is a Sabbath to Yahweh; today you will not find it in the area. **26** Six days you will gather it, but on the seventh day, the Sabbath, there will not be any." . . . **29** See, because Yahweh has given you the Sabbath, that is why he is giving you food for two days on the sixth day. So each of you stay where he is; let no one go out of his place on the seventh day." **30** So the people rested on the seventh day.

In this object lesson, we again see that Yahweh is very specific about which particular day is His Shabbat. For forty years, this lesson

would continue in the wilderness - five days of manna, the sixth day of gathering double, and then the seventh, the Shabbat, where none would be found. On the surface, this text appears to be, and it is, the strongest evidence for a cyclical Sabbath system. Work six days, rest the seventh; work six days, rest the seventh - simple, right? A never-ending cycle of sevens which has been faithfully kept for the past 3,500 years? This is what most Jews and Messianics believe, yet it rest entirely on what is called in logic an 'argument from absence'.

As we have seen, after the sighting of the crescent moon, the first day of the month starts; a day of rest and worship. If the Sabbaths are lunar in basis, then the new moon day would be followed by 'weeks' of six work days, each followed by Shabbats; thus the Sabbaths would be on the 8th, 15th, 22nd, and 29th of each month. The next month can start, either on what would have been the 30th, or 31st of the prior month, so there is a month-transitioning respite of two or three days each month. This gap is not dealt with anywhere in the manna lesson; we do not see Yahweh providing four days worth of manna, only two, and the lunar-month-end can be three days long, nor do we see a period where manna appeared for more than six days in a row. This absence is the strongest evidence against a lunar based Shabbat; but logically, such arguments are not very strong, and we must look to the entirety of the evidence.

One such piece of evidence is very clearly provided. Yahweh spoke to Moses on the 15th of the second month, gave manna for the next 6 days, and then declared a Shabbat. This Shabbat would have been on the 22nd, so by interpolation the 1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd, and 29th, of at least that month, were Sabbaths. Remember that the exodus occurred on Shabbat - for this reason Shabbat serves to memorialise the exodus - this was the prior month, on the 15th. It is impossible under anything but a lunar system for the 15th to be a Sabbath in two consecutive lunar months; a cyclical Sabbath system can not do this. To further support the 15th of the first month, being a Shabbat, Yahweh set an appointment, a MOWED, to kill the cattle (*Exodus* 9:5) on the 8th of that month. The use of the word on this sole occasion in the plague discourse is either a very unlikely coincidence, or indicative that the 8th was a Shabbat (*like the 15th*).

Making matters even more interesting, Exodus 19 records that they camped at Sinai on the 15th of the 3rd month. Either this was a coincidence also, or it too was a Sabbath and time for a rest from travelling. Given the express evidence in scripture regarding the 15th of first and second months, it becomes probable that this 15th was a Shabbat as well. There are simply too many 'coincidences' through out the narrative to be ignored. Thus there is much more to the story of the manna than initially meets the ear. To believe in a cyclical Sabbath, one must cling to an argument from absence and hold to its occurrence on

the 15th day as coincidence. One must then ignore the Sabbaths on the same day in the months prior and subsequent, and the use of the word MOWED for the 8th of the first month. It makes much more sense to understand Yahweh's Shabbat as being on the 1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd, and 29th of each lunar month, following the "beacon" He set in the sky to proclaim His appointed times. But this is not the only internal proof.

OTHER SABBATH ISSUES IN THE TANAKH

There are quite a number of examples from the Tanakh which, by inference, lead to the conclusion of a lunar Shabbat. Among these is Numbers 29:12-35 which describes the eight day period at Sukkot.

Numbers 29:12 "On the fifteenth day of the seventh month you are to have a sacred assembly; you must do no ordinary work, and you must keep a festival to Yahweh for seven days. **13** You must offer a burnt offering. . . **17** On the second day you must offer. . . **20** On the third day you must offer. . . **23** On the fourth day you must offer. . . **26** On the fifth day you must offer. . . **29** On the sixth day you must offer. . . **32** On the seventh day you must offer. . . **35** On the eighth day you are to have a sacred assembly; you must do no ordinary work on it.

The only two days where work is prohibited and a sacred assembly is held in this period of 8 days is the first and last, the 15th and 22nd of the month. No where does the text allow for a cyclical Sabbath in between. This of course forms another argument from absence, but this time against a cyclical system. However, this is not the only example of such an argument in the Tanakh. This problem of encountering a Sabbath in a given period of days can also be found when Aaron and his sons were sanctified for a period of seven days, without the recorded interruption of a Sabbath. This time, the argument gets stronger for there not being an intervening Shabbat. There is only one way such a sequence could be accomplished; if their consecration started on a new moon day and finished on the 7th, prior to the Shabbat of the 8th. Interestingly enough, this is exactly what did happen. We find in Exodus 40 that the tabernacle was set up on the first of the month. The narrative of this day continues straight through Leviticus 8 where the priests begin their seven days of consecration. In chapter 9, on the 8th day Sabbath they present offerings to Yahweh for themselves and the people.

Yet there is a third, even more conclusive example of exactly this same timeline at Jericho. Everyone is familiar with the story of Jericho's fall; the Israelites marched around the city once per day for six days, then on the seventh day they marched around seven times and sacked the city

when the walls fell. Where was the Sabbath? They marched seven days in a row, so if the Sabbath was cyclical, one of these days must have violated the Shabbat rest, as it was clearly seven consecutive days of work - hard work. Jericho was a huge city, taking a long time to march around, yet no Sabbath is recorded to have fallen on these days, nor an 'exception' mentioned to the command for rest. This time, in addition to the absence of the Sabbath, we have the presence of work every day. If they were keeping a lunar based Sabbath this problem would be avoided, if like Aaron's consecration, the march started on the new moon day. By beginning on the 1st of the month, it would have finished on the 7th of the month, the day before the Shabbat of the 8th. Joshua does not record the specific day, but it is recorded in the Book of Jasher.

Jasher 88:14 And it was in the second month, on the first day of the month, that Yahweh said to Joshua, Rise up, behold I have given Jericho into thy hand with all the people thereof; and all your fighting men shall go round the city, once each day, thus shall you do for six days.

Jasher was considered a reliable source of historical information by the writers of both Joshua and Samuel (*Joshua 10:13*, *2 Samuel 1:18*). There is no reason to doubt the historical accuracy of its account, and it provides very convincing evidence that Israel was keeping a lunar based Shabbat; otherwise one of these seven days would have violated it.

Perhaps the greatest inference of lunar based Sabbaths in the Tanakh is yet another argument from absence - the absence of "*postponements*". If Yahweh had instituted a cyclical Sabbath, such would invariably fall out on days where work was proscribed in preparation for another MOWED, yet nowhere in the Tanakh is man allowed to alter Yahweh's set-times to resolve any conflict between them. Such a conflict would form a paradox of commands; Yahweh says rest on the Sabbath, yet He also directs work for the same day. Thus, in 359 AD, Hillel II added a wide variety of "*postponement*" rules to 'solve' this problem. It never was a problem in the beginning, because the lunar calendar of Yahweh doesn't need them; lunar Shabbats never conflict with any proscribed work activities or other MOWED. From this evidence alone, it is clear that the Sabbath was originally lunar in basis, and not changed in general practice until after the second century.

From the cultural understanding of a lunar based Sabbath, many otherwise unusual and perplexing textual issues can be resolved. The entirety of this inferred evidence for lunar Sabbaths greatly overpowers the singular argument from absence which favours a cyclical Sabbath; but we're far from finished discovering the evidence.

THE SABBATH CONNECTION

Over a dozen times in the Tanakh, the Sabbath and the New Moon are spoken of in the same breath; many of these times, a drawn connection can be assumed. Although the day of the New Moon is no longer celebrated in Judaism as it once was, this does not eliminate the command of Yahweh to do so. The New Moon day was always a feast; a special day, set apart for worship. If so, it was not a work day. It follows, of course, that the 2nd day of the month was the first work day - six work days - then the 8th was the first Sabbath. A pivotal transition in Jewish history has been the cessation of celebrating the new moon; when the New Moon festival was removed, the “week” would lose its anchor. Without the regular, monthly feast of the new moon, the work week could start anytime irrespective of the month.

Numbers 10:10 “Also in the time of your rejoicing, such as in your appointed festivals or **at the beginnings of your months**, you must blow with your trumpets over your burnt offerings, and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings, that they may become a memorial for you before your Elohim: I am Yahweh your Elohim.”

Numbers 28:11 “**On the first day of each month** you must offer as a burnt offering to Yahweh...”

1 Chronicles 23:31 and whenever burnt sacrifices were offered to Yahweh **on the Sabbath and at new moon festivals** and assemblies. A designated number were to serve before Yahweh regularly in accordance with regulations.

Amos 8:5 You say, “When will the **new moon** festival be over, so we can sell grain? When will the **Sabbath** end, so we can open up the grain bins?”

2 Kings 4:23 He said, “Why do you want to go see him today? It is not the **new moon or the Sabbath**.” She said, “Everything’s fine.”

Isaiah 66:23 “From one month {**Heb: New Moon**} to the next and from one Sabbath to the next, all people will come to worship me,” says Yahweh.

Ezekiel 46:1 “This is what the Sovereign Yahweh says: The gate of the inner court that faces east **will be closed six working days; but on the Sabbath day it will be opened and on the day of the new moon it will be opened.** 2 The prince will enter by way of the porch of the gate from the outside, and will stand by the doorpost of the gate. The priests will provide his burnt offering and his peace offerings, and he will bow down at the threshold of the gate and then go out. **But the gate will not be closed until**

evening. **3 The people of the land will bow down at the entrance of that gate before Yahweh on the Sabbaths and on the new moons.”**

These passages all correlate the New Moon and the Sabbath as times of worship and rest from commerce. This picture continues in prophecy into the Messianic Kingdom yet to come, where both will be observed properly. Starting each month with a day of worship, as commanded by Yahweh, by necessity places the Shabbats on the 8th, 15th, 22nd, and 29th. From the anchor of that new moon day, six work days follow, then the Shabbat. How easily man can lose his way when he disregards the Father’s Torah and “*beacons*”.

Y’SHUA AND THE SABBATH

Messiah Y’shua, of anyone who ever walked the earth, would certainly know when the correct Shabbat was. Nowhere is it recorded in the Gospels that He took issue with the Sabbath observance of the Jewish leadership, or that they took issue with His. The Pharisees criticised Him for breaking their rules on the Sabbath, but never for honouring the wrong day. There is no evidence that Y’shua kept a cyclical Sabbath; the only instance used to support this is the passion narrative superimposed on a Hillel calendar system, placing the 17th on a Saturday. But if the 17th was a Sabbath, then so would have been the 10th, the day of the triumphal entry into Jerusalem. That day was busy with commerce, and Y’shua caused a donkey to work by riding it, so it was most assuredly not a Sabbath. Besides, as already established, the Hillel calendar was not in effect in the 1st century, and can not be the basis for fixing its dates.

Assuming the narrative took place in 30 AD, the reasons for which we will discuss later, we can today, with great accuracy, calculate when the new moon would have been visible in Jerusalem at the time, thus starting the month by the observational system that was in place. One of the foremost experts in this science is Dr. Roy Hoffman at Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Computer projection shows only a 13% chance that the evening of 21 March was the first sighting, requiring binoculars or telescopes to see the moon, but a 100% chance of sighting on 22 March. Even with the societal emphasis on sighting at the time, it is extremely unlikely, given what we presently know about predicting visibility, and valid testimony, that the month started after the first evening. Most likely, the day of 23 March, a Saturday on our calendar, was the first day of the month. Since by this time, the barley is assuredly ABIB, we can use this date with very high probability. If Saturday, March 23rd was the first day, and we are speaking of the daylight portion of the “*day*”, then the 14th day, the crucifixion, would have been on Friday, 5

April. According to the Hilel calendar, the 14th was on Wednesday, 3 April, a full two days earlier. Archaeoastronomy has thus proven for a scientific certainty that the Hillel calendar was not in use, as the moon could not have been sighted two days earlier, it was completely dark.

The only day the Gospels call a Sabbath in this time frame is the 15th, the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (*Mark 15:42*, *Luke 23:54-56*, *John 19:31*). In 30 AD, the 15th would have fallen on a Saturday by our modern calendar, thus when the Gospel accounts refer to the resurrection as being “*after the Sabbaths*” there is no separate ‘Saturday Sabbath’ in view, and these passages provide no conclusive support for either position. When we later discuss this timeline in detail, it will become apparent why He could not have risen on Sunday anyway, having just been crucified on Friday. There is, however, another incident which is more enlightening.

John 7:2 Now the Jewish feast of Tabernacles was near. . . **14** When the feast was half over, Y’shua went up to the temple courts and began to teach. . . **37** On the last day of the feast, the greatest day, Y’shua stood up and shouted out, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me, and **38** let the one who believes in me drink. Just as the scripture says, ‘*From within him will flow rivers of living water.*’”. . . **8:2** Early in the morning he came to the temple courts again. All the people came to him, and he sat down and began to teach them. . . **12** Then Y’shua spoke out again, “I am the light of the world. The one who follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”. . . **9:1** Now as Y’shua was passing by, he saw a man who had been blind from birth. . . **14** (Now the day on which Y’shua made the mud and caused him to see was a Sabbath.)

Unravelling this passage is quite interesting. Referring to the “*last great day*” of Sukkot would place the time as the 22nd of the seventh month. On first reading, John 8:2 indicates that the healing of the blind man, and therefore the Sabbath was the next day, the 23rd. Yet this is not the case as it has been well established by numerous scholars that John 7:53 - 8:11, known as the ‘pericope adulterae’, was not part of the original text, but a later addition. When this section is properly removed, and the remaining portion of the story reconnected, it becomes apparent that the Sabbath was the 22nd! This places the Sabbath on the same day as the feast, and as directed in Numbers 29, a rest and worship day.

Like in the passion narratives, the term “*Sabbath*” is often used to refer to a specified MOWED feast day. In fact, it is quite common throughout the Gospel accounts, for the term “*Sabbath*” to be used interchangeably with other MOWED days. The writer of Mark uses

“Sabbath” 9 times, 2 of which are other MOWED; in Luke, of 17 times, 2 on other MOWED; and John uses “Sabbath” 8 times, 7 of which are other MOWED days. In a lunar system, the major feast days fall on the Sabbath. The Gospels agree with this point and at no time show any Sabbaths outside of a lunar system. Thus the internal evidence in the New Testament does not directly support either a lunar system or a cyclical system, but assumes this knowledge. To obtain a cultural understanding of the times we must also examine the external evidence.

EXTERNAL EVIDENCE

To place the Tanakh and New Testament in cultural context, there is a remarkable wealth of historical and archaeological evidence for ‘Sabbath’ keeping among almost every ancient culture. Babylonians, Assyrians, Egyptians, and Chaldeans among others all held religious observances in connection with the phases of the moon. The 7-day “week” originated based on the 7-day-long phases of the moon, only later did the 7 “ruling planets” come to represent each day. As late as Clement of Alexandria (2nd century AD), the “week” was lunar until a cyclical one was imposed by the power of the Roman Empire.

“And if the moon be not visible, they [the Jews] do not hold the Sabbath, which is called the first; nor do they hold the new moon, nor the feast of unleavened bread, nor the feast, nor the great day”
- The Stromata, Book 6, Chapter 5

*“And in periods of seven days the moon undergoes its changes. **In the first week** she becomes half moon; in the second, full moon; and in the third, in her wane, again half moon; and in the fourth she disappears. Further, as Seleucus the mathematician lays down, **she has seven phases.** First, from being invisible she becomes crescent-shaped, then half moon, then gibbous and full; and in her wane again gibbous, and in like manner half moon and crescent-shaped.”*

- The Stromata, Book 6, Chapter 16

Even in the writings of Eusebius’ Praeparatio Evangelica (c.325 AD), can be found references to the ancient lunar basis for the Sabbath:

“Homer also and Hesiod declare, what they have borrowed from our books, that it is a holy day; Hesiod in the following words: ‘The first, the fourth, the seventh a holy day.’”

- Eusebius Praep. Evang. Book 13, Chapter 12

The oldest known evidence of a lunar based Sabbath system comes from the third millennium BC, and the Babylonian “epic of creation”. On the remains of the fifth tablet it tells how the moon was

placed in the sky to make known the days and divide the month with its phases; and that ending this seven day cycle is a Sabbath:

“He set him then as a creature of the night, to make known the days. Monthly unfailing, he provided him with a tiara. At the beginning of the month, then appearing in the land, the horns shine forth to make known the seasons. On the seventh day the tiara perfecting, a Sa {Sabbath} shalt thou then encounter mid-ly {mid-monthly}.”

At Qumran, document fragments written in ancient Paleo Hebrew describe Lunar days 4 through 25. They tell how on the 8th day of the moon you can see it all day (*1st half*) in the sky, and after the sun sets and the 9th day begins it is called the “*1st day of the week*” (*Wise, Abegg, and Cook, the Dead Seas Scrolls, A New Translation, pages 301-303*). Also at Qumran, fragments 4Q320 and 4Q321 describe the priestly courses, and in four surviving places correspond the Sabbath to a phase of the moon. Mentioned are the 29th, 30th, 1st crescent, and full moon, all being Sabbaths in Jerusalem circa 100 BC. This is fully in keeping with 1 Chronicles 24 which details a yearly cycle of 24 courses serving twice each. There were 24 groups each of the priests, Levites, and musicians; everything was done in like divisions. There are 48 lunar weeks in the standard lunar year (12×4), so David’s system would not have worked with anything but lunar ‘weeks’, as cyclical weeks within lunar months will result in an extra 18 days unaccounted for each year.

Scholars are almost unanimous that these practices must have originated in a common Semitic source. In fact, all ancient cultures, without exception, based their monthly periods on the moon, and their ‘weekly’ periods on the phases of the moon. Reference to any major encyclopaedia will confirm this.

“The association of Sabbath rest with the account of creation must have been very ancient among the Hebrews, and it is noteworthy that no other Semitic peoples, even the Babylonians, have any tradition of the creation in six days. It would appear that the primitive Semites had four chief moon days, probably the first, eighth, fifteenth, and twenty-second of each month, called Sabbaths... The Israelites, on the other hand, made the Sabbath the feasts of a living and holy God. The work of man became symbolic of the work of God, and human rest of divine rest, so that the Sabbaths became pre-eminently days of rest.”

- The New Schaff-Herzog Religious Encyclopaedia, pages 135-136.

“we find from time immemorial the knowledge of a week of 7 days among all nations -- Egyptians, Arabians, Indians -- in a word, all the nations of the East, have in all ages made use of this week of 7

days, for which it is difficult to account without admitting that this knowledge was derived from the common ancestors of the human race. Among all early nations the lunar months were the readiest large divisions of time... the division of time by weeks prevailed all over the East, from the earliest periods among the Assyrians, Arabs, & Egyptians. It was found among the tribes in the interior of Africa... The Peruvians counted their months by the moon, their half-months by the increase and decrease of the moon, and the weeks by quarters, without having any particular names for the Week Days."

- The Popular and Critical Bible Encycl. 1904 Vol. 3, page 1497.

All external evidence agrees that well before the time of Moses, both the "week" and the Sabbath were based on the phases of the moon. This evidence supports a reading of the Tanakh from the perspective of a lunar Shabbat. But there is also contemporaneous evidence from Philo, who lived in Alexandria, Egypt, before, during and after Y'shua. One of the most prominent Jews in Alexandria, he headed a delegation to Rome on behalf of his countrymen. Scholars consider his extensive historical writings to be highly reliable. Philo kept a lunar Shabbat.

*"The fourth commandment has reference to the sacred seventh day, that it may be passed in a sacred and holy manner. Now some states keep the holy festival **only once in the month, counting from the new moon, as a day sacred to God; but the nation of the Jews keep every seventh day regularly, after each interval of six days."***

- Decalogue XX (96)

There are two ways to read this. Obviously, he states that some countries keep only the 7th day, counting from the new moon; but is he saying that the Jews keep a cyclical Sabbath every seven days, or every seven days counting from the new moon? The latter makes more textual sense, as there is no "disregarding the moon" qualifier added to the text. Reading this statement by Philo from the basis of an assumed knowledge of lunar "weeks" and "months" is fully comprehensible; yet reading into it a divergence of Hebrew practice from a lunar foundation is difficult. To further clarify, other writings of Philo speak to these assumptions.

*"like a full moon, at the height of its increase **at the end of the second week"***

- On Mating XIX (106)

"But nature delights in the number seven... Again, the periodical changes of the moon, take place according to the number seven, that star having the greatest sympathy with the things on earth. And the changes which the moon works in the air, it perfects

chiefly in accordance with its own configurations on each seventh day.”

- Allegorical Interpretation I.IV (8)

“And the fourth commandment, the one about the seventh day, we must not look upon in any other light than as a summary of all the laws relating to festivals, and of all the purificatory rites enjoined to be observed on each of them... But to the seventh day of the week he has assigned the greatest festivals, those of the longest duration, at the periods of the equinox both vernal and autumnal in each year; appointing two festivals for these two epochs, each lasting seven days.”

- Decalogue XXX (158-161)

“Following the order which we have adopted, we proceed to speak of the third festival, that of the new moon. First of all, because it is the beginning of the month, and the beginning, whether of number or of time, is honourable. Secondly, because at this time there is nothing in the whole of heaven destitute of light. Thirdly, because at that period the more powerful and important body gives a portion of necessary assistance to the less important and weaker body; for, 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 then she displays her own beauty to the beholders... The fourth reason is that of all the bodies in the heaven, the moon traverses the zodiac in the least appointed time: it accomplishes its orbit in a monthly interval. For this reason the law has honored the end of its orbit, the point when the moon has finished at the beginning point from which it began to travel, by having called that day a feast so that it might again teach us an excellent lesson that in the affairs of life we should make the ends harmonious with the beginnings.”

- Special Laws II.XXVI (140-142)

From these statements it becomes apparent that Philo assumes a lunar based month and week. Specifically, in Decalogue XXX he speaks of the two greatest festivals being assigned to the seventh day Shabbat, and both of these commence on the 15th of the lunar month. Philo is very clear that at the time of Y’shua, the Shabbat was lunar. Other ancient writers also confirm this. In Josephus’ Antiquities XIV.IV (3-4) he records how the Romans would not attack on the Sabbaths, but would move into forward positions with the lack of resistance. They then took the city on the 23rd day; thus the 22nd was Shabbat. This could be a coincidence, of course, but we have seen quite a number of them, can they all be coincidences?

Sometime between 135 and 359 AD the rabbinical authorities adopted the Roman cyclical week system and the Sabbath became fixed to Saturday on a cyclical week. Exactly when this happened is still a mystery, but the evidence trail points inextricably to the fact that it did happen. The Tanakh supports a lunar Sabbath, both in the past and prophesied future. The only evidence which supports a cyclical Sabbath is a solitary argument from absence versus several more compelling arguments against such. Every single Sabbath that can be identified in The Tanakh and New Testament falls on a lunar date, including three lunar months in a row at the exodus. Nothing in the New Testament shows that the Messiah kept anything but a lunar Sabbath. Again, any time a Sabbath can be identified, it is in connection with a lunar system date. Finally, voluminous external evidence points to the origins of a lunar Shabbat in pre-recorded history, and its observance well into the 2nd century AD. After that time, the Shabbat was disconnected from Yahweh's "beacon", and the adversary had achieved his goal of ruling over the Shabbat MOWED.

LOGICAL ARGUMENTS

Outside of the internal and external evidence, there are three compelling logical arguments for lunar Sabbaths with which any proponent of a cyclical Sabbath must deal.

- ✦ If a group of Sabbath keepers migrates east, eventually coming around the world, back to the place where they started, and if they keep a cyclical Sabbath, they will be one day off from their compatriots who stayed behind. If their compatriots had migrated west, and both groups met back at the starting point, they would now be two days divergent in 'Sabbath' keeping. Which group is right? They have both kept an accurate count.
- ✦ At the international dateline, set by man, each side is one Gregorian, man-made, "day" apart, and they would celebrate a cyclical Sabbath on separate days. Which one is right?
- ✦ If there was a catastrophe, and you were in a shelter for an unknown time, emerging to find no records of the Gregorian date, how would you re-establish the correct Sabbath day based solely on the heavens?

Consider these scenarios and the logical problems they present for a cyclical Sabbath. They all tie into and illustrate the central issue that a cyclical Sabbath is completely dependant upon man, not Yahweh.

Without man's diligence in record keeping, a cyclical Sabbath can not be proven. Yet so many people accept that this diligence has been maintained without a single scrap of documented evidence to substantiate the claim. There is absolutely no connection to Yahweh's calendar in a cyclical Sabbath. When man tries to do things his way, and ignores the beacons Yahweh has established for HIS MOWED, error will invariably be the result. The Father's calendar is simple, unalterable, and infallible; it is fixed in creation and not dependant upon man. Anyone, anywhere, at any time can look to the heavens and know exactly when Yahweh's Shabbat day is.

THE SABBATH STAR

What happened to following Yahweh's directions? Many claim to do so, yet accept traditions of men as His without question or inquiry. With the Roman planetary week, initially, the first day was that of Saturn. In the early to mid second century AD, with the influence of Mithraism (*sun worship*), and the Zoroastrian revival, the Roman planetary week became enforced upon the empire and the first day of the Roman week was changed to Sunday. The Sabbath became Saturday, the last day of this new weekly system.

Imported Babylonian superstitions eventually led Jewish rabbis to call Saturn "SHABTAY", the "*STAR OF THE SABBATH*", as the Sabbath became divorced from its lunar basis. Although the Hebrew and Roman 'weeks' developed quite separately, they would ultimately become merged in Saturday, the day of Saturn. In ancient Babylonian astrology Saturn was always regarded positively, yet in Greek Hellenistic times it had the role of an unlucky star (*sidus tristissimum, stella iniquissima*). There are Jewish superstitious beliefs about demons and evil spirits that hold full sway on the Sabbath, and an old Jewish legend says the day of Saturn was chosen because it would be an inauspicious day for working. Deo Cassius, a Roman historian (155-230 AD), in the early third century speaks of the Jews having "*dedicated to their god the day called the day of Saturn, on which, among many other most peculiar actions, they undertake no serious occupation*". Honouring of Saturn by the Jewish Sabbath is also assumed by Tacitus, another historian, in *Historiae* V (4).

"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."

- Universal Jewish Encyclopedia (1943), volume 10, page 482.

What of SHABTAY, the “*Star of the Sabbath*”? With all this evidence and history in view, an ancient prophecy in Amos takes on an entirely new and alarming meaning.

Amos 5:26 “You will pick up your images of **Sikkuth, your king, and Kiyyun, your star god, which you made for yourselves, 27** and I will drive you into exile beyond Damascus,” says Yahweh. He is called the Elohim who leads armies!

סִכּוּת, ‘SIKKUTH’, (#5522), is widely believed to refer to Sakkuth, a Mesopotamian star god identified with Ninurta in an Ugaritic god list. כִּיּוּן, ‘KIYYUN’, (#3594), refers to the Mesopotamian god Kayamanu, also known as Saturn. Of the many of false deities Israel followed after from time to time, why specify Saturn? In the Hebrew text, both of these words are vocalised after the pattern of שִׁקּוּץ , ‘SIQQUS’, (#8251), “*detestable thing*”, yet, this is exactly what most Jews unknowingly follow after in modern times, the Sabbath Star, a pagan deity set up by the Adversary in his quest to rule over the MOWED of Yahweh. The prophecy of Amos about the dispersion has indeed come to pass.

KEEPING THE SHABBAT

It is important for us as Messianic believers to prove those things which we believe, first from within Scripture, and also from other reliable sources that do not contradict Scripture. Just as we are ready to discard Christmas and Easter when we learn the truth of their origins, so must we be ready to discard anything of Judah that is not consistent with His ancient paths. Saturday Sabbath instead of Yahweh’s lunar based Sabbath is one such tradition which must change. It profits us nothing to replace one tradition of man with a different one. This trap, set by the adversary, is all too effective. Realising that there is more to relationship with Yahweh than is presented by traditional Christianity is good, but we must not make the assumption that Judaism has any more of the correct answers than Christianity. Both have been used by the Father to preserve certain truths, yet both have their own errors as well. Finding truth and applicability to our lives in Torah is commendable, yet, it does not of necessity follow that the Jews preserving the written Torah have likewise preserved its proper application any more than Christians preserving the records of Y’shua are correct in instituting that knowledge.

The only way our feet can become firmly planted on the correct path is to hold everything up to scrutiny; absolutely everything. The Shabbat story we have uncovered should serve as a very clear lesson that the traditions of either side can be incorrect. There is no easy solution, for the ancient paths require diligent work. We must critically examine

each and every aspect of our theology, proving what is correct, and changing what is not. HaSatan is a clever deceiver - by removing the anchor of the New Moon festival, not only has he been able to deceive many into a 'fixed' calendar, but he has successfully attacked one of the central signs of the Covenant.

But what do we do with this knowledge? Bringing it back into practice can be even more challenging than uncovering it in the first place. We live in a society crafted by the Adversary to resist the things of Yahweh. Keeping His Shabbat means that each month, a different Gregorian day becomes the Sabbath. Simply holding a job can be difficult when you take a different day off each lunar month, especially when many times you don't know very far in advance which day this will fall on! What about the children in school Monday through Friday when Shabbat falls on one of these days, not a convenient 'weekend'?

Yahweh's month begins with a physical sighting of the new moon. He has His own "*international date line*", and the only way to know which side of it we are on is to look for His "*beacon*". Where we live in Malta, we are very close to Israel, and have the benefit of observations there. The general rule is that if any given location sights the moon, every location west of there at that latitude could as well. Usually, our dates here line-up with Israel, yet there are rare occasions where we will see the moon and start the month, yet Israel will be on the other side of the Father's "*date line*". This serves as a constant reminder of our own personal responsibility to follow Yahweh, not man.

Once the month starts, the Shabbat cycle is set, and a routine develops for the next four weeks - work six days, rest and worship on the seventh. Yet, at the end of each month we again must look to the Father to start us anew on His path. The month can be either 29 or 30 days long, so at sunset on the 29th, we look for His "*Beacon*" to start the next month and give us cause to sound the Shofar. If we don't see it, the month will have 30 days, and then the next will start. The computer aids in this task, helping us predict visibility, and charting sighting graphs. Our personal rule agrees with that of the Karaites - if the computer say that there was 100% chance of seeing the moon on the 29th, we start the month even if overcast and not physically sighted; anything less than a scientific certainty reverts to observation. His children are to rely on Him, and this simple act of obedience to Him continually reinforces that lesson. Knowledge of astronomy and computers certainly help us, but they do not take the place of actively living in His creation.

Learning about the Sabbath is more than when we are to keep it, but also how we are to keep it. This one subject can and will enjoin a lifetime of study, prayer, and meditation, in an ever deepening

relationship with our Father. Rest is of course commanded. Yet staying in bed all day is not what the Sabbath is for. Not to say that, from time to time, this would not be an appropriate thing to do, since Yahweh has our rejuvenation at heart here without a doubt. It is much more than physical rest, though, encompassing spiritual and emotional resuscitation as well. The Tanakh paints a picture of our active participation in the Shabbat. We are to “ZAKAR” (*Exodus* 20:8), “SHAMAR” (*Exodus* 31:14, 16, *Deuteronomy* 5:12, *Isaiah* 56:2, 6), “ASAH” (*Deuteronomy* 5:15), and “QADASH” (*Exodus* 20:8, *Deuteronomy* 5:12, *Nehemiah* 13:22, *Jeremiah* 17:22, 24, 27) the Sabbath.

זָכַר, ‘ZAKAR’, (#2142), “to remember, recall, call to mind”.

שָׁמַר, ‘SHAMAR’, (#8104), “to keep within bounds, be on guard”.

עָשָׂה, ‘ASAH’, (#6213), “to do, fashion, accomplish, make”.

קָדַשׁ, ‘QADASH’, (#6942), “to set apart, honour as sacred”.

The Sabbath is much more than rest and refrain. We are to keep it in our minds and thoughts, staying within its bounds by refraining from our own pursuits, while actively participating in creating an environment honouring to Yahweh - accomplishing all of this on a single day. In a word, Sabbath is about focus; Yahweh should be the focus of the day - the focus of our minds, and the things we think about, and the focus of our actions, both what we refrain from and what we participate in. It’s His day.

Following Yahweh’s Shabbat will not be easy; the employer might not understand, schools and governments might not understand. It is a test, truly a sign of His Covenant with us that we submit to His ways even when they are not convenient. Yahweh’s truths which have been hidden for so long are in this spirit revealed to those willing to seek Him, His ways, and His Day!

CHAPTER 14

WALK IN THE DAY

Yahweh's months are proclaimed by His faithful "beacon", the new moon; the 'week' ending in the Shabbat, and all His MOWED appointments are likewise declared. But what of the simplest component of the calendar, the day, what are the borders which define its coming and going? Initially, this may appear to be an academic question, yet its answer is imperative to properly follow the MOWED, and as we will see, much confusion has arisen because of its definition.

The word "day" has several meanings. Aside from the allegorical interpretation of an "age, season, or time", it is first and foremost the period of "daylight", and this is readily understood. In the other sense, the "day" refers to a period of 24 hours, one rotation of the earth about its axis. This later meaning is what we will seek to understand from a Scriptural perspective. The potential duality of the term extends beyond English, and exists within Hebrew as well, requiring a discernment of each text in context to ascertain which form is in use. In defining this 24 hour period, a dividing line must be drawn, separating one "day" from the next. Modern society places that line at midnight, and although it would be theoretically possible to place the divisor anywhere, there are basically four potential candidates - midnight, noon, sunrise, or sunset. From a Messianic perspective, many follow Jewish reckoning of sunset to sunset being a 'Biblical' day; the proofs for this in Scripture, however, are extremely weak, and the custom rests on tradition and interpretation forced from that tradition.

There are four basic words which recur regularly in the Tanakh to describe the 24-hour cycle. A foundational understanding of their meaning, and applying that understanding consistently, is the first step to discerning what scripture refers to as the 24-hour "day".

יוֹם, 'YOWM', (#3117), "daylight, 24 hour day, a working day", comes from a root meaning "to be hot". As mentioned, this can refer either to daylight or to a 24-hour period called the "day".

לַיִל, 'LAYIL', (#3915), "night as opposed to day", comes from a root meaning "to fold back". This is the period of darkness.

עֶרֶב, 'EREB', (#6153), "even, eventide, evening, mingling", comes from 'ARAB', (#6150), "to grow dark, covering with a texture".

בֹּקֶר, 'BOQER', (#1242), "morning, break of day, end of night", comes from 'BAQAR'. (#1239), "to seek, look".

In a simple, ancient understanding of the natural order, the 'day', YOWM, was hot, and the 'night', LAYIL, appeared to have a covering pulled over the sky. The YOWM is ruled by the sun, and the LAYIL is ruled by the moon (*Genesis 1:16*). Between these sections come two periods of transition; where YOWM fades into LAYIL, and where LAYIL gives way to YOWM. These transitions are called EREB and BOQER. The evening transition, EREB, carries the word picture of "*covering with a texture*", for when the sun sets, the sky appears to be gradually 'covered', turning into night. There has been significant attempt to re-define EREB to mean the declining of the sun from noon, however there is absolutely no internal support for this hypothesis, and it clearly does not match the image being portrayed by the word - in the afternoon there is no 'covering'. EREB is properly the time after sunset and before darkness. BOQER, the morning transition, is the time between first light and sunrise. The word picture is one of seeking and looking for the 'covering' to be lifted. The 24 hour cycle is viewed in this manner.

Also, in the ancient world, the focus was heavily on the daylight portion of any given 24 hours, for only in the daylight could work or commerce be done, or journeys undertaken. The night was for sleeping, and is often ignored as if only the daylight hours count. Yet placement of a dividing line for the 24-hour "*day*" remains an important question, as it will determine which date on the calendar any particular time period belongs to, and is thus imperative for the MOWED. Of the four potential daily dividers, two, EREB and BOQER, each have several possibilities within them. For example, if the day starts at EREB, does that mean sunset, darkness, or the entire period of EREB between? For the sake of our discussion, we will call this position 'sunset'. Likewise, any transition occurring during BOQER will be referred to as 'sunrise' even though it can mean anything from first light to actual sunrise. The other two opposing potential dividers are our modern one, midnight, and its mirror, noon.

Clarity of terms in this study is critical. One of the major reasons for confusion with the 'Biblical day' is the shifting of definitions for Hebrew terms to fit particular ideologies. EREB means the same thing every place it's used; it is a specific term referring to the period between sunset and darkness. In a short while, we will encounter the curious phrase "*between the evenings*", and see how much confusion has arisen due to simply not applying clear definitions.

THE EVENING AND THE MORNING

Genesis 1:1 In the beginning Elohim created the heavens and the earth. **2** Now the earth was without shape and empty, and darkness was over the surface of the watery deep, but the Ruach

of Elohim was moving over the surface of the water. **3** Elohim said, “Let there be light.” And there was light! **4** Elohim saw that the light was good, so Elohim separated the light from the darkness. **5** Elohim called the light “day” and the darkness “night.” There was evening, and there was morning, marking the first day.

Traditionally, the ending of this passage is translated “*and the evening and the morning were the first day*”, in the KJV, and it is the backbone proof for a sunset to sunset reckoning of the day. Right there in the opening of the Torah, Yahweh declares that each evening and morning makes one “day”. Or, does He? When the KJV was translated in the early seventeenth century, it was well known that the Jews regarded the day as sunset to sunset. This presupposition is evident in the translation of the text, assuming that sunset days are meant, even though it really says something completely different.

In Hebrew: וַיְהִי עֶרֶב וַיְהִי בֹקֶר יוֹם אֶחָד W'YEHEYE EREB W'YEHEYE BOQER YOWM ECHAD”. YOWM ECHAD is literally “*day one*” - the first day. The W'YEHEYE prefaced to EREB and BOQER literally it means “*and there was*”, but in Hebrew the “*and*” can also carry a temporal component that would be better rendered “*and then*”, meaning the next thing in a sequence of events. The text is stating that after the creation, recognition, and division of light came an evening and then a morning which completed the first day. This would mean the 24-hour “*day*” is really from sunrise to sunrise. To take the Jewish interpretation here requires viewing this sentence as a summary of the preceding events, as opposed to a continuation of the sequence.

The sunset view forces meaning into the words which they do not inherently contain. If the day started with evening and ended with morning, then the first day of creation started in darkness, and ended in the creation of light. Except that BOQER is not the same as YOWM, it is only the transition from LAYIL to YOWM. Since Yahweh called the daylight YOWM; the first day of creation obviously extended beyond the period of BOQER. The text does not state that the ‘night’ and the ‘day’ were the first day; but the ‘dusk’ and the ‘dawn’, so to view this as a recap of the previous activity is textually unsustainable. It is much more likely to indicate a progression of events - creation of light, followed by dusk (*then night*) and dawn. Under this view, the day begins at sunrise.

This is a straight forward reading of the text. הָיָה, ‘HAYAH’, (#1961), is the simple verb “*to be*”, or “*was*” in the past tense. Remember we saw this in Yahweh’s name, the “*I AM*”. With the prefix וַ, meaning “*and then*”, the phrase וַיְהִי clearly becomes “*and then there was*”. Dozens of passages in the Tanakh can be cited to support this translation, all of

which are properly translated “*and there was*” or “*then there was*”. The “*and*” is almost always temporally sequential.

2 Samuel 21:1 Then there was a famine (KJV) וַיְהִי רָעָב.

Genesis 1:3 and there was light (KJV) וַיְהִי אֹרֶךְ {next, after Elohim said “*let there be light*”, the temporal “*and then there was light*”}.

Genesis 35:16 and there was but a little way to come (KJV) וַיְהִי יָעוֹד {sequential narrative indicating the next event}.

Exodus 10:22 And Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven; and there was a thick darkness (KJV) וַיְהִי {again sequential to stretching forth his hand, “*and then there was a thick darkness*”}.

This predicate is actually quite common, usually indicating the next thing in a sequential narrative, the “*and*” being implicitly understood as “*and then*” even if not explicitly translated so. Yet the KJV translates “*and the evening and the morning were the ___ day*” through out the creation account where the Hebrew text clearly says “*and then there was evening and then there was morning, the ___ day*”; a case of assumptions being reflected in translation.

The Father often uses His calendar to teach lessons and as prophetic pictures. HaSatan as well, who would rule over the MOWED of Yahweh, wishes to make his rebellious points through corruption of the Father’s design. As we further explore the issue, consider this - throughout Scripture, “*light*” symbolises Yahweh (*for Elohim is ‘light’*), and likewise darkness symbolises the devil. Does the “*day*” start with ‘evil’, followed by ‘good’, only to have the ‘good’ fade at dusk? Or could this be yet another clever way the Adversary rules over the MOWED, rather than starting each “*day*” in the light, and ending it with the “*dawn*” of light, a perfect representation of creation, the fall, and redemption. An interesting point to ponder.

FROM EVEN TO EVEN

Leviticus 23:27 “The tenth day [YOWM] of this seventh month is the Day of Atonement. It is to be a holy assembly for you, and **you must humble yourselves** and present a gift to Yahweh. **28** You must not do any work on this particular day, because it is a day of atonement to make atonement for yourselves before Yahweh your Elohim. **29** Indeed, any person who does not behave with humility **on this particular day** will be cut off from his people. **30** As for any person who does any work on this particular day, I will exterminate that person from the midst of his people! **31** You must not do any work. This is a perpetual statute throughout your

generations in all the places where you live. **32** It is a Sabbath of complete rest for you, and **you must humble yourselves on the ninth day [YOWM] of the month in the evening [EREB], from evening [EREB] until evening [EREB] you must observe your Sabbath.**”

The second proof text for ‘sunset’ days focuses on the last verse in this passage - “*from EREB to EREB*”, but not only does the ‘sunset day’ interpretation not fit the context of the passage, it assumes to apply this reckoning beyond the referenced day of atonement. Just because this particular High Sabbath is to be observed from EREB to EREB, it does not necessarily follow that every Sabbath, much less every day, will be in such a pattern. Assuming ‘sunset’ days, causes the context of the passage loses its cohesiveness. Clearly the one day being spoken of is the 10th, but if days begin at sunset, then the EREB of the 9th is in the beginning of the 9th, since EREB is the time after sunset, before darkness. Verse 32 says to observe EREB to EREB, so the fasting (*humbling*) would be all day on the 9th, yet this disagrees with the rest of the text. Though the reinventing of EREB to mean “*late afternoon*” results in most of the fast being on the 10th, it also ends the observance early on the 10th afternoon.

On the other hand, with days beginning at sunrise, the EREB of the 9th comes after the YOWM, and the instruction paraphrased reads “*fast from sunset on the 9th, overnight, through the daylight of the 10th, up until sunset on the 10th*”. This is totally in agreement with the rest of the passage as it makes sense to start abstaining from food on the night of the 9th, thus entering into the daytime of the 10th on an empty stomach, and remaining so through to sunset; a complete fasting on the 10th. Nowhere in the Tanakh does it say that every Sabbath, or every day is to be observed in like manner. This is a special instruction for one special day and can not be properly taken out of that context. The passage actually provides strong proof for the sunrise model - why would this one day have specific ‘even to even’ instructions if such were to be the normal practice? To the contrary, the inclusion of these ‘special instructions’ speaks against a normative sunset day, as this day is an exception.

BACK TO THE WILDERNESS

If any place in the Torah would teach us about the timing of the day, it should be the lesson of the manna. Here is where Yahweh taught Israel to keep the Sabbath day, and here indeed He does tell us what He considers to be that “*day*”. Let’s go back to that lesson.

Exodus 16:6 And Moses and Aaron said to all the Israelites, “In the evening [EREB] you will know that Yahweh has brought you

out of the land of Egypt. **7** And in the morning [BOQER] you will see the glory of Yahweh. . . **13** And in the evening [EREB] the quail came up and covered the camp; and in the morning [BOQER] a layer of dew was all around the camp. **14** When the layer of dew had evaporated, there were small round things on the surface of the desert, small like the frost on the earth. . . **19** And Moses said to them, “No one is to keep any of it until morning [BOQER].” **20** But they did not listen to Moses, and some kept part of it until morning [BOQER]. It was full of worms and began to stink And Moses was angry with them. **21** So they gathered it each morning [BOQER], each person according to what he could eat; and when the sun got hot, it melted. **22** And on the sixth day [YOWM] they gathered twice as much food, two omers per person; and all the leaders of the community came and told Moses. **23** And he said to them, “This is what Yahweh has said: ‘Tomorrow [MACHAR] is a time of cessation, a holy Sabbath to Yahweh. . . ’” **24** So they put it aside until the morning [BOQER], just as Moses had commanded, and it did not stink, nor was there any worm in it. **25** And Moses said, “Eat it today [YOWM], for today [YOWM] is a Sabbath to Yahweh; today [YOWM] you will not find it in the area. **26** Six days [YOWM] you will gather it, but on the seventh day [YOWM], the Sabbath, there will not be any.”

We already know that the beginning of this lesson was on the day (YOWM) portion of a Shabbat; then, at sunset (EREB) Yahweh sent the quail. It seems obvious that the Shabbat was over, and a new ‘day’ had begun, right? To draw such a conclusion, we must look at the entire passage, and in doing so, will discover a fascinating lesson tied back into the creation account. The manna appeared with the dew of the ground, at BOQER, first light, before sunrise. The Israelites had been promised they would “see” the glory of Yahweh at BOQER. Verse 14 however, tells us the manna was not seen until the dew evaporated, leaving it behind. Verse 21 tells us that when the sun got “hot” the manna melted away, and that they gathered it each BOQER. The word used for “hot” usually denotes merely “warm”, not “the heat of the day”, and this agrees with the early period prior to sunrise in the desert, when it is warming very rapidly, and the dew quickly evaporates. From these clues, we can deduce that manna was a rather volatile substance, lasting slightly longer than the dew, but not much beyond sunrise. It also had a consistent expiration time - the next BOQER; except preceding the Sabbath, manna lasted one dawn-to-dawn “day”.

The BOQER is included in the same “day” as the YOWM. Verse 22 uses YOWM in the sense of a daily period, in saying that they gathered twice as much on the sixth day (YOWM). Since we know that by the

YOWM, in the daylight usage (*heat of the day*), the manna had melted away, and that they gathered manna each BOQER, it becomes clear that the BOQER is considered part of the YOWM in the daily period sense. Is this at all in conflict with the creation account “*and then there was EREB, and then there was BOQER, the ___ day*”? Not at all, rather it clarifies for us. At daybreak, BOQER, each creation daily period ended. But BOQER is not a single point in time; it is a period of time where night (*LAYIL*) gives way to day (*YOWM*). In Genesis, the ending of night ended the “*day*”, and here we find that the beginning of “*daylight*” starts the next day.

We also see a new word, מָחָר, ‘MACHAR’, #4279, “*tomorrow*”, and it literally means tomorrow as in “*the next day from today*”. When the sixth day’s manna was collected, it was twice as much as usual, and Moses announced that MACHAR, “*tomorrow*”, would be the Sabbath Day. When was this “*day*” to start? In verse 24, Moses tells them to keep the leftovers until BOQER, and then in verse 25, after the next BOQER, he declares that this YOWM is the Sabbath. Curious that Moses never said that the next EREB started the Shabbat! What a prime opportunity to clarify the boundaries of the Sabbath “*day*”. What is recorded supports a beginning of the Sabbath at BOQER, the only starting point which is consistent with the entire text. To accept a ‘sunset’ start of the “*day*” requires splitting each provisioning of manna over two separate “*days*”.

Taking this lesson back into the account of creation, something else unusual can be noticed - Yahweh never created at night. Every day of creation records that day’s handiwork, followed by EREB, then BOQER, then the next day’s creation activities. So when we look at Shabbat as meaning “*to cease*”, and on the Sabbath we “*Shabbat*” just as Yahweh did after six days of creation, we must remember that He also ceased creating every LAYIL during the creation week. From this, it can be convincingly argued that the Sabbath is daylight only, as is any other “*day*”. The concept of daylight hours being the only ones which mattered has an easily understood foundation, for unlike our modern society, in ancient times, it was not practical, or even possible, to work at night. Without significant light, who could sow or reap their field, or conduct commerce? Thus the only portion of the 24-hour “*day*” which mattered for life was the YOWM, the daylight. We will encounter this repeatedly, and it is a plausible interpretation, although not conclusive.

THE NEXT DAY

Exodus 32:5 When Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it, and Aaron made a proclamation and said, “Tomorrow [MACHAR] will be a feast to Yahweh.” **6** So they got up early [SHAKAM] on the next day [MOCHORATH] and offered up burnt offerings. . .

Here we see MACHAR, “tomorrow”, followed by מֹחֳרָת, ‘MOCHORATH’, #4283, “the next day”, a derivative of the same word, and for all purposes the same meaning. The TIME at which the Israelites ate and played, is called שָׁכָם, ‘SHAKAM’, (#7925), “early”. 35 times in the Tanakh, this word is associated with BOQER, meaning “early in the morning”; six times it is associated with either MACHAR or MOCHORATH, as it is here, meaning “early the next day”. If the “day” started at sunset, BOQER would be the middle of the “day”, not early in it.

Genesis 19:34 Then in the morning [MOCHORATH] the older daughter said to the younger, “Since I had sexual relations with my father last night [EMESH], let’s make him drunk again tonight [LAYIL]. Then you go and have sexual relations with him so we can preserve our family line through our father.”

In the story of Lot’s daughters, it is recounted that on the MOCHORATH, the “next day”, one had had relations with him EMESH, “the night before”, and the other one was going to do so that night (LAYIL). אֵמֶשׁ, ‘EMESH’, (#570), “yesterday, last night”, literally means “the night portion belonging to the previous day”. A word used only 5 times in the entire Tanakh, it can also carry the general meaning of “yesterday”.

2 Kings 9:26 “Know for sure that I saw the shed blood of Naboth and his sons yesterday [EMESH],” says Yahweh.

Genesis 19:34 then becomes a very clear descriptor both of the night just past as belonging to the prior “day”, and the night coming as belonging to this “day”. It is impossible to obtain a sunset to sunset reckoning in this narrative. In fact, trying to find a sunset pattern anywhere in scripture is very difficult at best, when the natural reading most often leads the other way.

1 Samuel 17:16 Meanwhile for forty days [YOWM] the Philistine approached every morning [SHAKAM] and evening [ARAB] and took his position.

SHAKAM, again meaning “early”, and עָרַב, ‘ARAB’, (#6150) which is the root of EREB and identical in meaning to it, “to grow dark, covering with a texture”, are each in one “day”. It is impossible in a plain reading of this to bifurcate the “day” at sunset. Throughout the Tanakh, not a single passage can be read to indicate a nightly portion as belonging to the ‘next day’. To the contrary, every change of the “day” through usage of MOCHORATH or MACHAR, always comes after LAYIL.

1 Samuel 19:11 Saul sent messengers to David’s house to guard it and to kill him in the morning [BOQER]. Then David’s wife Michal told him, “If you do not save yourself tonight [LAYIL], tomorrow [MACHAR] you will be dead!”

1 Samuel 28:8 So Saul disguised himself and put on other clothing and left, accompanied by two of his men. They came to the woman at night [LAYIL]. . . **19** Yahweh will hand you and Israel over to the Philistines. Tomorrow [MACHAR] both you and your sons will be with me. . . **25b** Then they arose and left that same night [LAYIL].

‘Tomorrow’ is the next BOQER after the current LAYIL; the next dawn after this night. It could be argued that the meaning of MOCHORATH and MACHAR is simply the next ‘daylight’ period, not the next 24-hour “day”, yet to assume this does nothing to logically support a sunset start to the day, rather it again supports an ignoring of the night time altogether. The greatest problem with this view, linguistically, is that quite a few times MOCHORATH or MACHAR are used directly with YOWM, to specify the “daylight” portion of tomorrow or the next day.

Numbers 11:32 And the people stayed up all that day [YOWM], all that night [LAYIL], and all the next day [MOCHORATH YOWM], and gathered the quail.

1 Chronicles 29:21 The next day [MOCHORATH YOWM] they made sacrifices and offered burnt sacrifices to Yahweh.

Genesis 30:33 My integrity will testify for me later on *{Heb: “on the next day”, “tomorrow-day”}* [YOWM MACHAR]. When you come to verify that I’ve taken only the wages we agreed on, if I have in my possession any goat that is not speckled or spotted or any sheep that is not dark-colored, it will be considered stolen.

In each of the above passages, the joining of YOWM with either MACHAR or MOCHORATH refers to the daylight portion of the next day, thus we can not assume that in the majority of texts, without this specificity, MOCHORATH or MACHAR refers only to the daylight. This is further supported, by over a dozen times where YOWM is contrasted against MOCHORATH or MACHAR, indicating separate days (see *Exodus 19:10*, *2 Kings 6:26*, *2 Samuel 11:12*, *Esther 9:13*, *Isaiah 56:12*, etc.).

UNCLEAN UNTIL EREB

There are numerous provisions in Torah related to ritual cleanliness in which a person is instructed to bathe, change their clothes, and is considered unclean until EREB (*Leviticus 11:24-25*, *22:5-6*, *Deuteronomy 23:11*, etc.). Is this an indication that the “day” starts anew at sunset, thus cleansing the impurity? To assume so relies upon the presupposition that days start at sunset, there being nothing in the texts which equate EREB with a day-transition; in every case, EREB being simply the time of day which the impurity ends. Again, only an emphasis upon the daylight

hours can be deduced. Yet there are other time specific regulations in the Torah which do indicate a day-transition.

Leviticus 7:15 “The meat of his thanksgiving peace offering must be eaten on the day [YOWM] of his offering; he must not set any of it aside until morning [BOQER]. **16** If his offering is a votive or freewill sacrifice, it may be eaten on the day [YOWM] he presents his sacrifice, and also the leftovers from it may be eaten on the next day [MOCHORATH].”

Leviticus 22:30 “On that very day [YOWM] it must be eaten; you must not leave any part of it over until morning [BOQER]. I am Yahweh.”

In both of these instructions, the night is considered to be a part of the same “day” as the YOWM which preceded it. If a sacrifice was to be consumed prior to BOQER, than it obviously could have been eaten during LAYIL, and doing so would have been accounted in the same “day” as the daylight hours previous. The most specific of these examples, Leviticus 7:15-16, equates BOQER as being the time of MOCHORATH.

Deuteronomy 21:22 If a person commits a sin punishable by death and is executed, and you hang the corpse on a tree, **23** his body must not remain all night [LUWN] on the tree; instead you must make certain you bury him that same day [YOWM], for the one who is left exposed on a tree is cursed by Elohim.

לון, ‘LUWN’, (#3885), “to lodge or stay in place *all night long*”, is not the same as EREB. It does not mean sunset, and in every usage throughout the Tanakh, refers to the entire nightly period, similar to LAYIL. It differs from LAYIL in that it involves the picture of staying in one place all night, thus it is most frequently used in describing overnight stays or lodgings. In this solitary instruction, the Israelites were told not to leave a corpse exposed on a tree “*all night long*”, but to bury it the same YOWM. Like the sacrifice regulations above, if the corpse was disposed of in the middle of the night, such would satisfy the requirement, thus linking the night time as belonging to the same 24-hour “day” as the previous daylight period, not the next one.

There are three examples of this being carried out in the Bible. In the crucifixion of Y’shua, His body was removed from the cross and buried, under traditional thought, prior to sunset. At that time, some Jews were already using a sunset-based reckoning, which can be historically traced back to the Babylonian captivity. It is well established from ancient documents that the Babylonians did in fact use the sunset-to-sunset “day”. This however is clearly not the admonition in Deuteronomy 21:32, as shown by the other examples recorded in Joshua.

Joshua 8:29 He hung the king of Ai on a tree, leaving him exposed until evening [ETH EREB]. At sunset [SHEMESH BOW] Joshua ordered that his corpse be taken down from the tree. They threw it down at the entrance of the city gate and erected over it a large pile of stones (it remains to this very day).

Joshua 10:26 Then Joshua executed them and hung them on five trees. They were left hanging on the trees until evening [EREB]. **27** At sunset [ETH BOW SHEMESH] Joshua ordered his men to take them down from the trees. They threw them into the cave where they had hidden and piled large stones over the mouth of the cave. (They remain to this very day.)

ETH EREB, meaning “*the time or occurrence of EREB*”, is first equated with SHEMESH, the sun, and BOW, meaning “*to go*”. Thus, “*when the sun was gone*” (*after sunset*), Joshua issued the order for the king of Ai to be taken down. In the second occurrence, EREB is equated with ETH SHEMESH BOW, the “*time of the sun’s setting*”. What is interesting about both incidents is that when the sun set, the order was given to remove the malefactors from the tree, but it probably took a while for those orders to be carried out. The body of the king of AI was moved to the city gate, and a “*large*” (Hebrew “*great, very large*”) heap of stones was piled on top of it; the five Amorite kings were placed in a cave, and some very large stones used to cover the entrance. In both cases, all of this certainly did not occur within the short time of EREB alone, but took well into the night time. It is apparent that Joshua, who was personally there with Moses at the giving of the instruction, considered this to be in compliance, and all in the same “*day*” as when the kings were killed. In neither passage do we see a rush to get the job done before sunset, unless we imagine one from the presupposition of a ‘sunset’ day.

SUNSET ASSUMPTIONS

As we’ve already seen in several passages, like those of ritual purity, if the text is approached with the belief that “*days*” begin at sunset, then this will be seen where it does not really exist.

2 Samuel 3:35 Then all the people came and encouraged David to eat food while it was still day. But David took an oath saying, “Elohim will punish me severely if I taste bread or anything whatsoever before the sun sets!”

Judges 14:18 On the seventh day, before the sun set, the men of the city said to him...

When David was mourning for Abner, he swore an oath not to eat before sunset. This passage does not say he wouldn’t eat before the next

day which would begin at sunset. The extent of the narrative related to timing is in no way connected to a change in the 24-hour “day”, rather the ending of “daylight”. It is logically flawed to read any other ‘proof’ into the text. Samson’s riddle presents the same issue in a more difficult way. Sampson required an answer to the riddle before the ending of a seven day feast, and on the seventh day, before sunset, they told him the answer. From this we can not logically conclude that the day would change at sunset anymore than if the answer had been given at noon we would assume it transitioned the “day”. It is, however, interesting in view of the importance placed on the daylight hours only.

Nehemiah 13:19 When the evening shadows began to fall [TSALAL] on the gates of Jerusalem before the Sabbath, I ordered the doors to be closed. I further directed that they were not to be opened until after the Sabbath. I positioned some of my young men at the gates so that no load could enter on the Sabbath day.

The most difficult assumption issue however, remains Nehemiah’s closing the city gates before the Sabbath. From this story, it can be very easy to assume that the Sabbath was starting at the time the gates were closed, yet the text only says the gates were closed ‘before’ the Sabbath, not necessarily immediately before. The problem Nehemiah encountered was merchants who would sell on the Sabbath. Clearly, this happened during the YOWM, as did all ancient commerce, so why shut the gates the night before? One answer to this can be found within the cultural of the middle-east, where traders set up their booths very early, and begin selling at first light. They often would come in the night before to ‘squat’ the most advantageous locations at the market, as they still do to this day. To keep these people at bay required shutting the gates the night before, otherwise the merchants would already be in place at sunrise.

When viewed from an assumed sunset start to the day, Nehemiah’s actions can appear to support that assumption. But it can be argued that the story actually provides evidence to the contrary, that the gates were shut before the Sabbath, but after sunset, showing that sunset does not start the “day”. צלל, ‘TSALAL’, (#6751), “to become or grow dark”, through the idea of “to sink or be submerged”, pictures a sinking into darkness, which happens after sunset. Under this view of the word, which appears only twice in the Tanakh, the actions took place after sunset, and the translation would be “as the gates of Jerusalem grew dark”. However, in the other place it is used, Ezekiel 31:3, the context suggests the meaning of a ‘shadowing’ or ‘covering’. A derivative of צלל TSALAL is indeed צלל, ‘TSELEL’, (#6752) which does mean “shadow”.

Jeremiah 6:4b The day is almost over and the shadows [TSELEL] of evening are getting long.

In this sense, the translation of Nehemiah would be “*as long evening shadows fell on the gates of Jerusalem*”, and would indicate a time before sunset. Although far from certain, this could indeed provide a brief glimpse into the adoption of sunset-based “*days*”. In the time of this story, Judah had just returned from captivity in Babylon, and it has been well established that Babylon reckoned days from sunset to sunset. Based on the context and a solid reason to close the gates early, and absent a direct link to the start of the Sabbath, such is only conjecture.

THE “DAYS” OF Y’SHUA

The New Testament does not provide any support for the validity of a sunset based day, although it is most probable that the practice was in wide use at the time. The plain meaning of the writing shows that “*tomorrow*” comes after the evening (see Acts 20:7-12), and again, an unbiased reading only supports emphasis on the ‘daytime’.

John 9:4 “We must perform the deeds of the one who sent me as long as it is daytime. **Night is coming when no one can work.** 5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”

John 11:9 Y’shua replied, “**Are there not twelve hours in a day?** If anyone walks around in the daytime, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. 10 But if anyone walks around at night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him.”

In the same thought pattern, all of the New Testament passages which reflect a change in the “*day*”, through the use of **αυριον**, AURION, (#839), “*tomorrow*”, can be interpreted as referring to the daylight portion of the next day, not necessarily the next calendar day. Of course, the plain meaning of “*tomorrow*” does imply a change in the “*date*”.

οψιας, OPSIOS, (#3798/3796), “*even, evening*”, is the most common Greek word used to express the “*evening*” concept. A great deal of confusion has surrounded its interpretation. Thayer’s concludes that by the modern time system it can mean either 3-6 p.m. or 6 p.m. to the beginning of night. There are 18 occurrences of either form, and reading this duality of meaning is impossible from the internal evidence alone. It is arrived at, again, by presupposing ‘sunset’ days, for without that assumption it would traditionally present a number of challenges. On the internal evidence, the only places where it is tied into a time-specific event form a thought identical to EREB; after sunset, before darkness.

Matthew 16:2 He said, “When evening [**OPSIOS**] comes you say, ‘It will be fair weather, because **the sky is red,**’ 3 and in the morning [**PROI**], ‘It will be stormy today, because the sky is red and darkening.’”

Mark 1:32 When it was evening [OPSIOS], **after sunset**, they brought to him all who were sick and demon-possessed.

Matthew 20:8 When it was evening [OPSIOS] the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, ‘Call the workers and give the pay starting with the last hired until the first.’ **9** When those hired **about five o’clock** {*Greek: 11th Hour*} came, each received a full day’s pay. **10** And when those hired first came, they thought they would receive more. But each one also received the standard wage. **11** When they received it, they began to complain against the landowner, **12** saying, ‘**These last fellows worked one hour**, and you have made them equal to us who bore the hardship and burning heat of the day.’

Matthew 26:20 When it was evening [OPSIOS], he took his place at the table with the twelve. (see also *Mark 14:17*)

John 6:16 Now when evening [OPSIOS] came, his disciples went down to the lake, **17** got into a boat, and started to cross the lake to Capernaum. (It had already become dark, and Y’shua had not yet come to them.)

Mark 1:32 clearly defines OPSIOS for us as “*after sunset*”. Y’shua tells of OPSIOS as being when the “*sky is red*”, something which also happens after sunset. OPSIOS is when Y’shua and the disciples sat down to eat the Passover, an event occurring after sunset. John equates OPSIOS with becoming dark. Finally, in the parable, Y’shua tells how the workers received their pay at OPSIOS, and that some hired at the 11th hour had worked one hour to the 12th hour - which ends in sunset, again placing OPSIOS after sunset. This reflects the principal found in Leviticus 19:13 that the hired man’s wages are not to LUWN with the employer until BOQER, that is that they are to be “*paid before morning*”, another Tanakh passage connecting the night time to the previous day.

Mark 13:35 Stay alert, then, because you do not know when the owner of the house will return—whether during evening [OPSE], at midnight, when the rooster crows, or at dawn [PROI].

To establish a chronology into which OPSIOS fits, Y’shua paints a word picture starting at OPSE, “*dusk*”, ending at PROI, “*dawn*”. These two concepts are also found in James 5:7, the “*early and latter rain*”, derived from the same roots. Seven of eighteen uses of OPSIOS explicitly define it as after sunset, before dark; of the remainder, eight provide no proof of timing, but are not inconsistent with this meaning (*Matthew 8:16, 14:15, 14:23, Mark 4:35, 6:47, 11:11, 11:19, John 20:19*). Luke uses the more polished **ἑσπερα**, ‘HESPERA’, (#2073), the term used in the LXX for EREB. In Luke 24:29, it clearly relates to the very ending of the daylight hours.

Judith 13:1 When evening [OPSIOS] came, his slaves quickly withdrew, and Bagoas closed the tent from outside and shut out the attendants from his master's presence; and they went to bed, for **they all were weary because the banquet had lasted long.**

Mark 4:35 On that day, when evening [OPSIOS] came, Y'shua said to his disciples, "Let's go across to the other side of the lake."

John 20:19 On the evening [OPSIOS] of that day...

Acts 4:3 So they seized them and put them in jail **until the next day (for it was already evening [HESPERA]).**

Even in apocryphal use (*Judith*), OPSIOS expressly means the time after sunset, and whenever a day-transition is mentioned proximate to OPSIOS, the text can not support a 'sunset' model. This is, of course, from the internal basis of interpretation as "*after sunset*". To argue that, as Thayer's purports, OPSIOS can mean the "*late afternoon*" is difficult at best, given the complete lack of textual evidence for such. The only reason for reaching this conclusion, as we are about to see, is the cultural assumption that Y'shua was taken from the cross prior to sunset as the Jews were about to start the Sabbath at sunset like they do today.

THE "DAYS" OF THE PASSION

Matthew 27:57 Now **when it was evening** [OPSIOS], there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who was also a disciple of Y'shua. **58 He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Y'shua. . . 62 The next day** (which is after the day of preparation) the chief priests and the Pharisees assembled..

Mark 15:42 Now when **evening** [OPSIOS] **had already come**, since **it was the day of preparation** (that is, the **day before the Sabbath**), **43** Joseph of Arimathea. . . **44** Pilate was surprised that he was already dead. He called the centurion and asked him **if he had been dead for some time.**

Luke 23:54 It was the day of preparation and the Sabbath was **beginning.**

The writers of both Matthew and Mark agree that it was already OPSIOS when Joseph asked for Y'shua's body. From all internal usage of OPSIOS, it appears that His body was not removed until after sunset. If the "*next day*" was the Sabbath, and we 'know' that days begin at sunset, then we will ignore the linguistics and add an alternate meaning; and so it has been done. It is unsustainable to use this as a 'proof' for sunset "*days*", when it is such a forced definition, ignoring the vast weight of scripture. If, on the other hand, the gospel writers, and the majority of

Jews, still started their days at sunrise, such would agree with the natural meaning of OPSIOS, and all the rest of scripture. It would also mean that the passages above again connect the evening to the “day” prior.

But then we arrive at Luke, and find out that the Sabbath was “beginning”, and this appears to support the traditional view that the “day” started at sunset. The word translated here “beginning” is **ΕΠΙΦΩΣΚΩ**, ‘EPIPHOSKO’, (2020), “to grow light, to dawn”. It is used in only two places in the New Testament, and to interpret it “beginning” is to use it in a purely allegorical sense, not in its plain meaning. The roots of the word are completely related to ‘light’, as in sunrise, yet in most translations it is rendered “drew on, approaching, about to begin”. Luke could be telling us that Y’shua was buried prior to sunrise on the same “day” of His crucifixion; that the Sabbath would begin at “first light”. The Latin Vulgate uses INLUCESEBAT, “to grow light, begin to shine, dawn”, and the only other place we find EPIPHOSKO, it is indeed translated “dawn”. To arrive at this conclusion requires no more than a basic exegesis of the written text, yet it is so against tradition that it is assumed wrong. It is more logical to deduce that the tradition is wrong, and the text presents a very compelling case for just that. The only other use of EPIPHOSKO is in the resurrection accounting in Matthew.

Matthew 28:1 Now after the Sabbath, at dawn [EPIPHOSKO] on the first day of the week {Greek: “one to the Sabbaths”}, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb.

In the next chapter, we will fully explore this verse, and discover that there really is no such thing as “the first day of the week”. The challenge presented by the Greek here is that it literally reads “ending the Sabbaths, ‘dawning’ on ‘one to the Sabbaths’”, and from a ‘sunset’ basis this is utterly confusing. How can you have the end of one ‘sunset’ day, and “dawn” at the same time? One of these words must be taken metaphorically, not literally. The traditional Christian interpretation of this timing is at “dawn”; that the ‘ending’ of the Sabbath is figurative, and the resurrection occurred on ‘Sunday’ morning. The Messianic perspective would be to take “dawn” as a metaphor for ‘beginning’, thus placing the resurrection on ‘Saturday’ evening. Given what we’ve learned about Yahweh’s calendar, both views are wrong. Y’shua did indeed rise before “dawn”, and the Sabbaths referred to were also ending at “dawn”, like every other day did and still does. As we will explore next though, it was not ‘Sunday’, but ‘Monday’ morning by our calendar, at the earliest.

There is more to learn by the application of these lessons to understanding the suffering and triumph of our Messiah. ‘Sunset-to-sunset’ days fail to have valid support in scripture which to the contrary teaches that “days” begin with “Let There Be LIGHT”.

CHAPTER 15

THE PASSION REVISITED

Just when you think you've got it all figured out, the Father enlightens you to a new truth which causes you to re-think what you thought you knew. The past few chapters have been such discoveries; ones which not only impact our lives today, but how we view history. Now, we will merge these lessons from Yahweh's calendar and theorise how they might affect our views on the last hours of Y'shua's earthly life from the perspective of the culture He lived in. Our comprehension is based solely on the information we have in hand, and like detectives, we piece together clues and formulate theories which agree with those clues. Then the clues change and the theories must change as well. So has been the record of scholarly debate over the most famous hours in history.

Traditionally, Christians have held that Y'shua was crucified on a Friday and rose from the dead on Sunday morning. There are fatal flaws with this theory, but it has been used to justify replacement of a 'Saturday Sabbath' with Sunday. Messianic and Sabbatarian views vary as to the weekday of His death, but most agree on a Saturday evening resurrection, rather than Sunday morning. Again, the lack of accurate cultural foundations for this theory will prove fatal. It is not to say that the view presented here is a proven fact - it is a theory; based soundly on the truths previously examined, and open to revision, as the Father reveals any additional clues. At present, it represents the most logical conclusions from those in hand.

THE YEAR OF THE PASSION

Unlike many other historical facts, the exact year of the passion is not known. Arguments have been made for every year from 29 to 34 AD. Without almost any exception, every one of these theories has rested upon the foundation of the Hillel calendar. Two years have been the strong favourites - 30 AD on the protestant side, and 33 AD on the catholic side. From the historical sources, we have striking evidence of exactly what year it really was, if we look in unusual places. The Talmud, (c.200 AD), contains many historical comments, and among them, found in both the Jerusalem and Babylonian Talmud is an amazing entry:

"Forty years before the destruction of the Temple the western light went out, the crimson thread remained crimson, and the lot for the Lord always came up in the left hand. They would close the gates

of the Temple by night and get up in the morning and find them wide open. Said Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai to the Temple, 'O Temple, why do you frighten us? We know that you will end up destroyed. For it has been said 'Open your doors, O Lebanon, that the fire may devour your cedars'"

- Jerusalem Talmud Sotah 6:3

"Our rabbis taught: During the last forty years before the destruction of the Temple, the lot did not come up in the right hand; nor did the crimson-coloured strap become white; nor did the western most light shine; and the doors of the Hekel would open by themselves, until Yohanan ben Zakkai rebuked them, saying: Hekel, Hekel, why wilt thou be the alarmer thyself? I know about thee that thou wilt be destroyed, for Zechariah ben Ido has already prophesied concerning thee: Open thy doors, O Lebanon, that the fire may devour thy cedars"

- Babylonian (Soncino) Yoma 39b

Both of these texts refer to ominous signs in the Temple for 40 years before the destruction of Jerusalem. Judaism considers these to be signs relating to the Temple, but what if they signified that something terribly wrong had been done 40 years previous - the Messiah had been crucified? We know that the Temple was destroyed at the end of August, 70 AD on the Gregorian calendar. The 'Lots', were done on the Day of Atonement (*Yom Kippur*), which is the 10th day of the 7th month (*also called Tishri*). In 70 AD, Yom Kippur (*Hebrew year 3831*) would fall about 1 October, a month or more after the destruction of the Temple, thus the last lots these records can refer to would have been in the year 3830. Deduct 40 years, and we find the first appearance of the lot sign on Yom Kippur, 3791. The seventh month is in the fall, and also starts the Jewish 'civil year'. With Passover in the spring, the 'year' between the two has changed; thus the Passover prior to the first lot sign would have been in the year 3790. This converts to early April, 30 AD.

For 40 years, the lot came up black, referring to the random lots used to choose which animal was sacrificed and which was set free on the Day of Atonement. As a random black or white event, over time it should be 50-50, and the odds against it being black for 40 straight years are almost 5-1/2 billion to one! One Talmud indicates that the huge Temple gates would open by themselves, the other that it was the Hekel doors. The massive Temple gates normally required the combined strength of 20 men to open, and the Hekel doors, on the other account, were those directly behind the veil that tore in two. The western light could not be kept lit; every night it would go out by itself, no matter how hard they tried to keep it burning. The strip of cloth on Atonement, a sign that started with Rabbi Simon the Righteous, never turned white for these 40

years. In Jewish custom, these events were ominous indeed. The Talmud also records another interesting historical note for us:

“Forty years before the destruction of Jerusalem, the Sanhedrin was banished and sat in the Trading Station.”

- Shabbath 15a

Could they have been moved from the Chamber of Hewn Stones in the Temple due to earthquake damage? This again could point to the year of the crucifixion when there was a violent earthquake and the Temple veil was rent in two from top to bottom. The last trial in that hall was that of the Messiah. As believers in Messiah Y’shua, we can see that these signs pointed neither to the destruction of the Temple, nor to the unjust murder of Messiah. They showed that the final sacrifice had already been made; that animal sacrifices were no longer acceptable. Yahweh had truly left the Temple.

Y’shua was 30 years old when He began a ministry which would last three to three and a half years. Traditionally, His birth is placed in 4 BC to reconcile with the historical accounts of Herod’s death, yet modern research is beginning to shed new light on the time of Herod, and his death is now considered by many scholars to have been as late as 3-2 BC. Work is also being done in archaeoastronomy to identify the *“star of Bethlehem”* and other heavenly signs at the time of His birth. These generally also support the date of His passion as occurring in 30 AD.

TIMELINE OF THE LAST SUPPER AND CRUCIFIXION

All four Gospels record the specific day on which Y’shua and His disciples ate the Last Supper. It was after this meal, in the night, that Y’shua was arrested.

Matthew 26:17 Now on **the first day** of the feast of Unleavened Bread. . .

Mark 14:12 Now on **the first day** of the feast of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover lamb is sacrificed. . .

Luke 22:7 Then **the day for the feast of Unleavened Bread came**, on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed.

John 13:1 Just **before the Passover** feast,

What would be referred to as the *“when the Passover lamb is sacrificed”* would clearly be speaking of the 14th of the first month, the day ordained in the Torah to do just that. The confusion has always been between the Synoptics and John apparently indicating two different days in their narratives. The synoptics appear to indicate that Y’shua and His

disciples ate the Passover, and John appears to state He died before the Passover. In actuality, they say the same thing.

ημερα, 'HEMERA', (#2250), "*day*" is not actually written in Matthew; it is inferred, appearing in the versions of both Mark and Luke. HEMERA usually denotes "*the period between sunrise and sunset*". Matthew and Mark say **τη δε πρωτος**, 'DE PROTOS', "*now the first*", (#1161-4413), used by itself, without any word for "*on*" ("*now on the first*") which is inserted for apparent clarity. Unfortunately, this skews the meaning of the original. The text does not say "*on the first day*", rather "*before the first day*", due to a variance in the Greek grammar. PROTOS by itself can mean "*foremost, before, first*", but when preceded by the definite article **τη** it necessarily means "*prior*" (see *Thayer's*). The Pharisees did kill the lambs on the "*day*" of the 14th. The disciples were asking this question on the 13th - the day before.

In Luke, the NET above renders the words out of sequence for style. The KJV reads "*Then came the day of unleavened bread*". However, the verb **ερχομαι**, 'ERCHOMAI', (#2064), is best translated "*to come*". This is strange to us in English because we expect a verb to be clearly past, present or future. In Greek this word is in '2nd Aorist' tense, where it is taken in its full form regardless of past-present-future. Normally, these kinds of verbs are simply translated in the past tense, as we see above "*came*", but here such is in error. Problem is that the word before it is **δε** (#1161 above) which acts in opposition to the verb (*particle adversative, distinctive, disjunctive*). This word shows up 2870 times, and in the KJV, 1237 of them are translated "*but*"; 934 "*and*"; 132 "*then*". In either case, it opposes the verb - "*to come*" becomes "*but to come*". Read it "*and to come*", or "*then to come*", and you get the same opposition.

When we realise that the verb here clearly does not fall into the typical past tense pattern because of the opposition, the verse is understood. Luke is saying that the day of the sacrifice was coming next; this conversation took place on the 13th. Thus all four Gospels agree that the Last Supper was eaten the evening between the 13th and 14th, and this being the case, Y'Shua was arrested later that evening, and eventually crucified in the daylight of the 14th. The Gospels record that He died at the 9th hour - about 3:00 p.m.; the exact time that the Pharisees would have been killing their lambs. Josephus (*Wars 6-9-3*) records that it was customary to kill the lambs from the 9th to 11th hours.

From this we believe Y'shua died at the 9th hour on the 14th day of the 1st month in the Hebrew year 3790. According to the Hillel calendar, this is 'Wednesday' on our modern one, and it is the core of Sabbatarian arguments for a 'Saturday' resurrection. Yet, as we have already seen, it can be conclusively stated that the Hillel calendar was not in effect at the

time. We know scientifically that the new moon would have been sighted, at the earliest, the night of Friday, 22 March, 30 AD, and if that night had been cloudy, it would still have been the new moon by default, since it was most probably the 30th day of the last lunar month anyway. We confirm this in that adding an extra day results in a 66% chance of a moon sighting on the next 28th day rather than the 29th. Thus with extremely high probability, the month started on 23 March, 30 AD (*day*) by our Gregorian calendar, and thus the 14th would have been 5 April, a 'Friday'. We have now scientifically disproved even the possibility of a Wednesday crucifixion in 30 AD, since the 14th could only have occurred on our 'Friday' that year. As we will see next, we have at the same time disproved both a 'Saturday' and a 'Sunday' resurrection in that year.

Y'shua most probably died at the 9th hour, 14th day, 1st month, 3790th year. Approximately at 3:00 p.m. on Friday, 5th April, 30 AD.

TIMELINE OF THE RESURRECTION

Given what we know about the date, let's examine the timing from crucifixion to resurrection. When Y'shua spoke of His resurrection, three different phrases are used in the Bible prophesying when He would rise:

"on the third day" is by far the most frequent (Matthew 17:23, 16:21, 20:19, Mark 9:31, 10:34, Luke 9:22, 18:33, Acts 10:40).

"after three days", found only twice (Mark 8:31, Matthew 27:63).

"in three days", appears only once (John 2:19).

In English, these phrases mean different things - He couldn't rise *"on"* the third day and *"after"* it at the same time. In the Greek though, the differences disappear. *"on the third day"*, literally reads *"the third day to rise"*. **τη τρίτον ημερα**, '(th) TRITON HEMERA', (#5154-2250). TRITOS is *"third"*, and HEMERA is *"day as opposed to night, daylight"* or *"a 24-hour period"*. Either Y'shua would rise in the third daylight period, or in the third 24-hour period after His death/burial. Next, the *"after"* in *"after three days"* is expressly supplied in both Matthew and Mark, the writers of which did not think it conflicted with TRITOS HEMERA used elsewhere in their own Gospels. **μετα τρεις ημερας**, 'META TREIS HEMERAS', (#3326-5140-2250), is literally *"with (after)"*, again meaning the same thing. Likewise, when Y'shua said *"in three days"*, **εν τρισιν ημεραις**, 'EN TREISN HEMERAIIS', He added the preposition **'εν'**, 'EN', (#1722), most often meaning *"in"*, but that can also denote *"with"*. All three of these phrases, in Greek, thus mean the same thing, either three daylight periods or three periods of 24-hours. Finally, and most important to bring everything together, Y'shua was asked for a sign that He was the Messiah, and He gave but one.

Matthew 12:39 But he answered them, “An evil and adulterous generation asks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. **40** For **just as Jonah was in the belly of the huge fish for three days and three nights, so the Son of Man will be in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights.**

The sign that He was truly the Messiah was not His miracles, not His wisdom and teaching, not even His unusual birth. The sign was to be His resurrection after being in the “*heart of the earth three days and three nights*”. Many people errantly claim that this could refer to any part of three 24 hour “*days*”, thus, they claim Y’shua died on Friday and rose Sunday morning. Under this theory, the day of His death was one, Saturday was two, and Sunday was three; it matters not how much of each ‘day’ is included. We must look to Jonah to see if this holds up.

לילות, שלשה ימים ושלשה לילות, ‘SHALOWSH YOWM W’SHALOWSH LAYILWT’, “*three days and three nights*”, Jonah 1:17 uses very specifically contrasting Hebrew words. SHALOWSH (#7969) is simply the number “*three*”, but notice the phrase is not “*three days and nights*”, but “*three days and three nights*”. We already know the distinction between YOWM and LAYIL, separate segments in each 24-hour “*day*”. Jonah was in the fish for three periods of lightness and three periods of darkness. There is absolutely no way this can be construed to be “*any portion of three ‘24-hour’ days*”; it is explicitly specific. Accordingly, we can add to our criterion of either three 24-hour periods or 3 periods of daylight, that there must be 3 periods of daylight and 3 periods of night. This can not sustain another popular interpretation; that the resurrection must have been after exactly 72 hours. The outer two segments can be partial, i.e. part of one light period and part of one dark period with 2 full periods each of light and dark in between. 72 hours would certainly be within the definition, but is not textually necessary.

The phrase “*in the heart of the earth*” is also interesting. It can obviously refer to physical burial, but in Hebraic culture also pictures death and migration of the soul into the afterlife (see *Jonah* 2:2, *Psalms* 63:9). Here, the only interpretation which makes any sense with the timeline is the latter. As we have already seen, the exact time of His burial is not certain, but appears to have been well after sunset, almost into the sunrise, so determining which periods of dark and light to count, based on burial, would be difficult at best. The most testable theory will come by starting the count when His ruach left His body, and we know this was at the 9th hour - in a daylight period. And so we count - 14th day 1, night 1 - 15th day 2, night 2 - 16th day 3, night 3. Thus the resurrection would have to occur before the daylight of the 17th. 72 hours is finally ruled-out as it would have included four periods of light.

Matthew 28:1 Now after the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week

Mark 16:2 And very early on the first day of the week, at sunrise

Luke 24:1 Now on the first day of the week, at early dawn

John 20:1 Now very early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark

When the women came to the tomb, they found Him already risen - on a very specific day - MIA SABBATON. **μία**, 'MIA', (#3391), does not mean "first", it means "one". The word appears 79 times in the Bible, and the KJV translates it "one", "a", or "a certain" 69 of these times. It is translated "first" only 8 times, 5 of them relative to the resurrection of Messiah, and the other 3 fully understandable with the meaning of "one". The Greek word for "first" is PROTOS, not MIA. **σαββατον**, 'SABBATON', (#4521), is a Hebrew word transliterated into the Greek. The origin of this word is stated by Thayer's to be **שבת**, 'SHABBATH', (#7676), but it most likely comes directly from **שבתון**, 'SHABBATHOWN', (#7677). Of 68 occurrences, 59 of them are correctly translated in the KJV as "Sabbath". 9 times, the translation "week" is used, 8 of these in proximity to MIA. SABBATON can not ever mean "week" when the Hebrew root is understood. SHABBATH is the weekly Sabbath, "week", is **שבוע**, 'SHABUWA', (#7620), "week, or period of days", as found in Daniel's prophecy of 70 "weeks". The concept of a weekly time period is never used in the New Testament Greek. In fact, SHABUWA does not mean "week" per se, but just "period of seven".

This forced translation of MIA SABBATON is due primarily to the pre-conceived theory of a 'Sunday' resurrection, assuming that 'Sunday' is the "first day of the week". However, as we have already seen above, neither Saturday nor Sunday would have been possible since there is not enough time for either to include 3 periods of light and 3 periods of dark after a Friday death. MIA SABBATON does not mean "first of the week", it can not ever mean this. Further, the Roman concept of the "week" initially had "Saturday" as the first day until well after the first century, when the first day became "Sunday" due to a new emphasis on sun worship, so to assume that the writers mean "first day of the week (Sunday)" is historically implausible for the first century.

SHABBATHOWN is a special Sabbath, used specifically in Torah relating to the Holy Days. Two SHABBATHOWN are the first and last days of Unleavened Bread (15th/21st). Starting from the 15th, the next seven SHABBATH are also SHABBATHOWN - the "counting the Omer" to Pentecost. The 16th is also a SHABBATHOWN, when the Firstfruits wave offering was presented in the Temple (Numbers 28:26).

The combined phrase, MIA SABBATON, only shows up 8 times, and 6 of them relate to this timing of the resurrection. The other two also mean plainly *“one to the Sabbaths”*. In fact, it appears that this phrase correlates directly with the counting of the Omer. In light of it’s true meaning, let’s examine the four Gospel accounts in greater detail. All four speak of the Women coming to the tomb on *“one to the Sabbaths”*, but He was already gone. One tells us exactly when He rose.

Matthew 28:1 Now after the Sabbath, at dawn on [Mia Sabbaton].

Here is the interlinear with KJV English:

οψε δε (OPSE DE 3796-1161) *“in the end”*
σαββατων (SABBATON 4521) *“of the Sabbath”*
τη επιφωσκονση (EPIPHOSKO 2020) *“as it began to dawn”*
εις (EIS 1519) *“toward”*
μια (MIA 3391) *“the first”*
σαββατων (SABBATON 4521) *“[day] of the week”*.

One of the first things that should be noted, is that SABBATON in both uses is a plural word, *“Sabbaths”*. It clearly points to more than one special ‘Sabbath’ ending. Based on the Hillel calendar, this is often used to support a ‘Saturday’ Sabbath on the 17th, thus Y’shua was crucified on the 14th (*Sabbatarian view*) or 16th (*Christian view*), the women rested on the weekly ‘Saturday’ Sabbath, and came on ‘Sunday’ morning the 18th. However, the entire premise upon which this rests we have demonstrated to be scientifically false. The writer must be referring to something else.

Two Sabbaths are indeed referred to in the Bible. Luke 23:56 says the women prepared the burial spices then rested on the Sabbath. Mark 16:1 says that after the Sabbath they bought burial spices. **διαγινομαι**, ‘DIAGINOMAI’, (#1230), translated *“after”* is a rarely used word that can also mean *“between”*. Thus it can be read that they bought spices *“between the Sabbaths”*. The accounting in Luke is very clear that the women followed the burial, returned home and prepared spices. This was obviously before the first SABBATON, the 15th, but it does not exclude the possibility that they purchased additional spices the night after that Sabbath, for the 16th was also a SABBATON.

From a reading of MIA SABBATON as being the first day of the Omer count, the 17th, the text makes perfect sense. What the writer of Matthew is saying is that the Shabbats of Passover and First Fruits were ending and it was about to be ‘one to the Shabbats’, the first day counting towards Pentecost - the 17th. *“In the end”*, would better be *“but ending”*, remembering the opposition of DE, and *“as it began to dawn”* with the definite article ‘TH’, should be *“about to dawn”*. We avoid the forced choice between **επιφωσκονση**, ‘EPIPHOSKO’, (#2020), and OPSE as to literalism by recognising the uniqueness of OPSE in this passage. The

usual meaning of OPSE, “*sunset, twilight*” is challenged by the fact that the writer uses the form OPSIOS 7 times elsewhere in this Gospel to refer to dusk, but on this sole occasion chooses the form OPSE. It is very plausible that the writer is being selective in use here for meaning in the root sense of “*late*” – “*but late on the Sabbaths*”.

EPIPHOSKO, from all the linguistic evidence, should be taken literally both here, and in Luke 23:54. Being already sunset when Joseph had asked for the body, the removal and burial process could well have taken until just before sunrise, as EPIPHOSKO would suggest in the literal sense. This of course would be strong proof for “*days*” beginning at sunrise, or at least an emphasis on the daylight, as is it’s used here in the context of a “*day*”-transition. It is explicit that the text here refers to a change in the 24-hour “*day*”; one was ending, the other about to begin. Many Messianics, accepting the Jewish ‘sunset’ tradition, assume this must be such a transition, yet the use of EPIPHOSKO contradicts this view. Conclusive proof, however, is found in the remaining three Gospels which give accounts of the timing; of what was happening when the women came to the tomb.

Mark 16:2 And very early on the first day of the week, at sunrise

Luke 24:1 Now on the first day of the week, at early dawn

John 20:1 Now very early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark

In Mark, **λιαν πρωι**, ‘LIAN PROI’, (#3029-4404), “*exceedingly early in the fourth watch of the night (3-6:00 a.m.)*”. The use of the translation “*at sunrise*” is wanting as it conflicts within the same passage, and should probably be rendered “*just before sunrise*”. In Luke, **ορθρος βαθυς**, ‘ORTHROS BATHUS’, (#3722-901), “*very early before daybreak*”. In John, PROI, “*fourth watch*”, is used again, “*while it was still dark*”, **σκοτια**, ‘SKOTIA’, (#4653), “*dark for lack of light*”, again indicates before sunrise. In all three of these other accounts, the women are heading to the tomb before sunrise. When they arrive, they find the stone already rolled away. Based on all of this evidence, we can not take the interpretation of Matthew 28 that most Sabbatarians do (*that I used to as well*), as occurring in the evening. The theory of a large ‘gap’ in Matthew; that the women started out at sunset, but didn’t reach the tomb until sunrise as the other accounts say, is an unsustainable stretch.

Most importantly, all four accounts of the resurrection corroborate the theory first postulated, and thus agree with the sign of Jonah. Y’shua rose at the end of the night time period, prior to the dawn which would begin the 17th day of the first month, having died in the daytime of the 14th day, and being “*in the heart of the earth*” for three

days and three nights as all the prophecies had said. These conclusions can only be reached after the traditions of man have been peeled off Yahweh's calendar. The narrative fully supports the understandings presented. The historical record strongly suggests the year was 30 AD, and we can scientifically ascertain the correct date conversion, proving the Hillel calendar inapplicable. The voluminous support for lunar-based Shabbats, including their use at the time, is not contradicted by this. Finally, the linguistic proofs for reckoning of the 24-hour "day", further dovetail into the narrative; clearing-up many historical questions.

The single biggest reason given for abrogation of Yahweh's forever-ordained Sabbaths is that somehow doing so honours the resurrection of Messiah. As we have clearly seen from the text itself, this is a false belief, for He arose at the end of the Shabbats, not on Sun-Day. In fact, we can scientifically assert that it was a 'Monday' on our calendar - the end of the 16th day of the 1st month, ending at sunrise, as all days do.

Dawn of the 17th day of the 1st month in the year 3790 (*Monday, 8th April, 30 AD*), rose with a new light - **The Light Of The World!**

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