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Sabbath of the Lord
Lord of the Sabbath
Every Seventh Day

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The Bible Sabbath

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. Genesis 1:1. God created all things by Jesus Christ, Ephesians 3:9, the Son of God. Mark 1:1. Each day God and His Son created something new, “and God saw that it was good...” until He came to the sixth day, formed man from the dust of the ground and said, “It is not good—that man should be alone.” So, from the side of Adam God formed Eve, the perfect match for the very first man. And at the end of that sixth day, now God could say, “It is very good.” Genesis 1:31.

Then it was the seventh day. The heavens and the earth were finished. Genesis 2:1. And on the seventh day God ended his work. The Father and Son rested on the seventh day, blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it. Genesis 2:2,3. Adam and Eve were given the perfect wedding gift, a honeymoon in the garden of Eden.

Cycles of Sevens

The seven days of creation, the very first week, remained in the lives and practice of men for 2000 years. The memory of creation was renewed at the end of every week when it was time to remind us that the Creator had made the world in six days and rested the seventh.

“On the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed” Exodus 31:17.

“O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker” Psalm 95:6.

The parallel lines of Adam’s descendants both featured a maturity of good and evil at the seventh generation. Enoch, the seventh from Adam through the line of Shem, walked with God right into heaven; Lamech, the seventh from Adam through the line of Cain, was the first polygamist and the second murderer boasting that he would be avenged 77 times while Cain was to be avenged only 7.

The seven-day week occurs throughout scripture prior to the giving of the ten commandments at Sinai.

- four times it is mentioned in the flood narrative (Gen 7:4,10; 8:10,12)
- as the duration of Jacob’s nuptial festivities (Gen 29:27)
- the duration of mourning at his death (Gen 50:10)
- Job’s friends’ period of condolence (Job 2:13)
- A week of years occurs twice in Jacob’s dowries: seven years for Leah and seven years for Rachel.
- Joseph interpreted Pharaoh’s dream: seven years of plenty and seven years of famine, paralleling the fertile Leah and the barren Rachel.

Noah's flood chronology demonstrates in great detail nine events that occurred at weekly seven day intervals over the course of one year when plotted on a calendar based on alternating 29 and 30 day months which average closely the 29.5 day lunar cycle.

Gen 7:4	Door of the ark shut	10 th day	2 nd month
Gen 7:11	Rain begins to fall	17 th day	2 nd month
Gen 8:4	Ark rests on Ararat	17 th day	7 th month (21 st week in the ark)
Gen 8:6	Raven sent out	11 th day	11 th month
Gen 8:8	Dove sent out	18 th day	11 th month (1 week later)
Gen 8:10	Dove sent again	25 th day	11 th month
Gen 8:12	Dove sent again	2 nd day	12 th month (didn't return)
Gen 8:13	Covering removed	1 st day	1 st month (601 st year of Noah)
Gen 8:14	Exit the ark	27 th day	2 nd month (52 nd week in ark)

Interestingly, Noah's name means "rest."

When Jacob pronounced his death bed blessings on his twelve sons, he said that Issachar, his 7th son, "saw that *rest* was good, and the land that it was pleasant." Gen 49:14,15. After his death, Joseph carried his father's body back to Canaan for burial and mourned there for seven days. Gen 50:10. All of these accounts establish the division of time in the cycle of seven as known and practiced from the earliest times.

The *Book of Jasher* records some additional details concerning Moses and a request he made to Pharaoh while he was still a prince in Egypt.

"And the day arrived when Moses went to Goshen to see his brethren that he saw the children of Israel in their burdens and hard labour, and Moses was grieved on their account." So Moses went to Pharaoh and requested that the children of Israel be given "one day to rest therein from their labour." Pharaoh ordered a proclamation, "To you, all the children of Israel, thus says the king, for **six days you shall do your work and labour, but on the seventh day you shall rest, and shall not perform any work:**" *Jasher* 70:41-48.

Forty years later, Moses returned to lead Israel out of Egypt and again reinstitute Sabbath-keeping to the slave nation. The new Pharaoh was not happy: "You make them rest from their burdens." Exodus 5:5.

When they finally leave Egypt, they reach Elim on the seventh day of their journey where they rest for several weeks around its twelve wells and under 70 palm trees. When they later complain of hunger, God gives them manna every morning for six days, a double portion on the 6th day, and none on the seventh which, they are told, is the Sabbath of the Lord when they are to rest and do no work, not even food preparation.

When some go out looking for mana on the seventh day, the Lord asks, “How long refuse you to keep my commandments and my laws?” Exodus 16:28. The suggestion is that the Sabbath restrictions had been instituted for some time before this first no-manna Sabbath. It was just one more test of their obedience which Abraham had demonstrated 500 years earlier “because that Abraham obeyed My voice, and kept My charge, My commandments, My Statutes, and My laws.” Gen 26:5.

Then the law was formally given to Israel, spoken by the Word of God from mount Sinai amid fire, smoke, thunder, and the sound of a loud trumpet. Buried in its heart was the day of worship.

“Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. **Six days** shalt thou labor and do all thy work: but the **seventh day** is the sabbath of the Lord thy God. In it thou shalt not do any work...for in **six days** the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the **seventh day**: wherefore the Lord blessed the **seventh day**, and hallowed it.” Exodus 20:8-11

Later, Moses was given detailed examples of how the Ten Commandments were to be applied in practical daily living. Leviticus 23 expanded the sabbath principle to include:

1. **The Sabbath of the Lord, a holy convocation** after six days of labor in which there was to be no work of any kind performed, and
2. “besides the sabbaths of the Lord” (verse 32), **other holy convocations, feasts** that were to be kept “in their season” at specified days in the first and seventh month.

This second list of holy convocations were feasts to be observed on specific days of the month:

14 th day of the 1 st month	Passover (not a holy convocation)
15 th day of the 1 st month	First day of Unleavened Bread
21 st day of the 1 st month	Last day of Unleavened Bread
1 st day of the 7 th month	Feast of Trumpets
10 th day of the 7 th month	Day of Atonement (a sabbath of no work)
15 th day of the 7 th month	First day of Tabernacles
22 nd day of the 7 th month	Last great day of Tabernacles

These were distinguished from the weekly Sabbaths by being days in which no servile work is performed—except for the day of atonement, the most solemn day of the year which is also kept by performing no work at all, like a seventh day Sabbath.

The first month feast lasted one week (seven days) which began and ended with a holy convocation on the 15th and 21st days, and was *preceded* by a special day, the Passover sacrifice on the 14th.

The seventh month feast lasted one week (seven days) only the first day of which was a holy convocation, and was *followed* by a special day, the “Last Great Day” which *was* a holy convocation on the 22nd.

Passover 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
SPRING FEAST

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Great-Day
FALL FEAST

A third festival season occurred in the summer between these two week-long feasts which became known as Pentecost because it occurred 50 days after the Sabbath that came during the week long Spring Feast.

Millennia of debate has raged over the interpretation of how these 50 days should be numbered. The wording is significant:

“When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest: And he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted for you: **on the morrow after the sabbath** the priest shall wave it. ... And ye shall eat neither bread, nor parched corn, nor green ears, until the selfsame day that ye have brought an offering unto your God: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations in all your dwellings. And ye shall count unto you from **the morrow after the sabbath**, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; **seven sabbaths** shall be complete: Even unto the morrow after **the seventh sabbath** shall ye number fifty days; Leviticus 23:10,11,14-16

Two opinions have prevailed:

1. The sabbath is the no-servile work day of one of the two in the week of unleavened bread, i.e., the 15th or the 21st of the month.
2. The sabbath is the seventh day Sabbath which would occur during the week of unleavened bread and would vary year to year.

Evidence for wave-sheaf always being on the first day of unleavened bread is that during the year that Christ was crucified, the 15th day was “a high sabbath” (both an annual holy convocation no-servile work day and a weekly seventh day Sabbath) and the morrow after it, Sunday, was the wave-sheaf offering and fulfilled in the resurrection of Jesus, “the firstfruit of them that sleep” 1Corinthians 15:20.

The problem with this option is that Leviticus 23 should have specified the wave-sheaf be performed on the 16th day of the first month, and the count should begin on that specific day. But the wording in Leviticus 23 doesn't use this logical and simple numeric reference. The wording is that the count begins relative to "the sabbath", not "a sabbath" nor "a holy convocation." "The sabbath" must refer to "the sabbath of the Lord" in Leviticus 23:3. This is the only occurrence of a definite article "the" preceding the Hebrew word *shabat* in this chapter.

Likewise, if the wave-sheaf was to always occur on the same day of the month (i.e. the 16th), then 50 days later, Pentecost would always fall on the same day of the third month, the 6th of Sivan. There would be no need to count seven weeks (49 days) and then declare the 50th day as Pentecost. However, because the date for Pentecost is computed each year relative to "the Sabbath" it requires a different method of determining its date and cannot be simply described as an ordinal number in the lunar month as are all the other annual feast dates.

Furthermore, the wave-sheaf signals the beginning of the harvest, a work day, and a fixed lunar month date would make it occasionally possible for the wave-sheaf day to fall on a seventh-day weekly Sabbath. This problem is avoided by recognizing "the sabbath" as the seventh-day Sabbath and thus insuring that the wave-sheaf would always be the following day, the first day of the week, a work day. This also makes the "seven sabbaths" and "seventh sabbath" requirement more plain, obvious, and simple to understand.

In recent years, an alternative solution to the wave-sheaf-Sabbath conflict has emerged: the lunar sabbath. This concept alleges that the "seventh-day" is always counted relative to the new moon start to each lunar month. Thus the 8th, 15th, 22st, and 29th of every month is always a "seventh-day Sabbath" and wave sheaf would *always* be both the 16th of the first month *and* the "morrow after the Sabbath." Problem solved!

Except that every month the first Sabbath would not *really* be seven days after the previous "Sabbath." Each month the pattern is broken.

Let's see why this happens in a lunar calendar arranged as alternating months of 29 and 30 days which produces an average month of 29.5 days to match the lunar orbital period. Each month begins as the dark moon in front of the sun emerges with the first observable sliver crescent. This is identified as New Moon day, the first day of the month.

Here's what it looks like:

N Since New Moon is the first day of the month,
 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 seven days later makes day 8 a sabbath day.
 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 Every *seventh* day is a sabbath.
 16 17 18 19 20 21 22
 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 So far, so good. But lunar cycles are not exactly
 28 days long, they are 29.5 days. So we have to
 wait until the next new moon to start again.
 30 N 2 3 4 5 6 Now, however, there are 8 days to “labor and do
 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 all thy work” and then the *ninth* day starts a new
 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 sequence of sabbaths.
 21 22 23 24 25 26 27
 28 29 N 2 3 4 5 Even following a 29 day month, the work week is
 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 still 7 days of “labor” and the *eighth* day is the
 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 new sabbath.

This kind of a calendar has been promoted as “the Creator’s Calendar.”
 But every month one of the “memorials of creation” is flawed by
 injecting one or two extra work days in order to keep pace with the
 moon, rather than “Remember the Sabbath day” every *seventh* day
 “for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth.”

If you respect the writings of Ellen White as inspired by the Spirit of
 prophecy, the testimony of Jesus (Rev 19:10), then the following
 statement is an important one.

“...the first week, in which God performed the work of creation in six
 days and rested on the seventh day, was just like every other week.
 The great God, in his days of creation and day of rest, measured off
 the first cycle as **a sample for successive weeks till the close of
 time...The weekly cycle of seven literal days, six for labor and the
 seventh for rest, which has been preserved and brought down
 through bible history**, originated in the great facts of the first seven
 days.” *Spirit of Prophecy Volume 1*, p. 85.

The same uninterrupted pattern is also seen in the sabbatical years and
 jubilees. Six years consist of sowing and reaping then the land rests the
 seventh year. After seven land sabbaths (49 years) the first year of the
 next seven year cycle is the jubilee, another land rest. Jubilees thus occur
 every 49 years. The 70 week prophecy of Daniel 9 spanned from 457 BC
 to 34 AD, 70 seven-year periods, 490 years, or 10 jubilees. There was no
 irregularity, no interruption—always six years and then the seventh year
 of sabbatical land rest.

Exactly 36 jubilees later another important prophetic time period ended, the 1260 year, 42 month, 3½ times in 1798. $AD\ 34 + 36 \times 49 = 1798$. That's $7 \times 7 \times 36$ which is 1764 and added to 34 is 1798. Combined with the 70 week, 10 jubilee period beginning in 457 BC this represents a continuous prophetic sequence of 2254 years composed of 106 consecutive "weeks" of seven years without gaps or pauses.

The same holds for the seven weeks marked by seven sabbaths that extend from the feast of unleavened bread to the feast of Pentecost, a total of 49 days to the 50th day, the day following the seventh Sabbath. In each of these series of sevens, whether they be days, or weeks, or years, the sequence is always the same: six and then the seventh.

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The week and the Sabbath were both born at the creation of this world. "And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years. . . And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also." Genesis 1:14,16

The sun, the greater light, and the moon, the lesser light, and the stars, also lights in the firmament were created by God to serve as the great clocks of heaven, marking off days, and seasons, and years.

Days cycle with the daily setting of the sun.

Seasons are marked by rise and fall of the sun's arc across the sky and may be approximately counted by the number of moon "settings" which are technically called conjunctions and first visible crescents.

Years begin and end on a season, and a month, and a day.

The week is intermediate between a day and a month.

Weeks have no astronomical equivalence but are always seven days.

For the moon to determine the beginning of weeks makes the lesser light usurping the dominance of the greater light. For this and all the other reasons listed above, we see no light in adopting the lesser light to rule the Sabbath which was made for man that we might remember now our Creator. Ecclesiastes 12:1