

The Evolution of the Roman Week of Seven Days

“It is powerfully urged by the believers in a primitive Sabbath, that 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 [Adam and Eve] of the human race.

Among all early nations the lunar months were the readiest large divisions of time. . . In order to connect the reckoning by weeks with the lunar month, we find that all ancient nations observed some peculiar solemnities to mark the day of the New Moon.

Accordingly, in the Mosaic law the same thing was also enjoined (Numbers 10:10; 28:11, etc.), though it is worthy of remark that, while particular observances are here enjoined, the idea of celebrating the New Moon in some way is alluded to as if already familiar to them. In other parts of the Bible, we find the Sabbaths and New Moons continually spoken of in conjunction; as (Isaiah 1:13, etc.) 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... without having any particular names for the week days.”



“The moon was the beneficent... [herald] of the shepherds in the region and climate where ancient Israel had its ancestral home. Hence the many traces of lunar institutions in even the latest Israelitish cult and its phraseology... The Sabbath, as marking the end of the week, reveals its lunar origin; the phases of the moon having taught the shepherds, whose weal or woe depends so largely upon the benevolence or malevolence of the night season, to divide the period elapsing between two new moons into four equal groups (weeks), the last day of each... Indications are not wanting that at first the New Moon festival was not counted among the seven days of the week (see Week); but after... New Moon days... a new cycle of four weeks began... Later, the week and the Sabbath became fixed [according to the Babylonian/Roman continuous weekly cycle]; and this gradually resulted in taking away from the New Moon festival its popular importance.” Jewish Encyclopedia.com, the unedited full-text of the 1906 Jewish Encyclopedia, “Festivals,” Pastoral Feasts, Emil Hirsch, Vol. 5, p. 376.

“In the time of the earliest prophets, the New Moon stood in the same line with another lunar observance, the Sabbath. Ezekiel, who curiously enough frequently dates his prophecies on the New Moon . . . describes the gate of the inner court of the (new) temple looking eastward as kept shut for the six working days, but opened on the Sabbath and the New Moon.” Scribner’s Dictionary of the Bible, (1898 edit) p. 521.

“...The Hebrew Sabbath (i.e. Creation Sabbath) was originally a Sabbathon...it was celebrated at intervals of seven days, corresponding with the changes in the moon’s phases...” *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, 1899, p. 4180.

“At first the New Moon festival was not counted among the seven days of the week; after 28 days had elapsed [7 days x 4 weeks], one or two days were intercalated as New Moon days, whereupon a new cycle of four weeks began, so that the Sabbath was a movable [lunar] festival.... Later the week and the Sabbath became fixed [to the Roman cycling planetary week]; and this gradually resulted in taking away from the New Moon festival its popular importance...” *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, Pastoral Feast.

“...The week of seven days was connected with the lunar month, of which it is, approximately, a fourth...”

Jewish Encyclopedia.com, unedited full-text of the 1906 Jewish Encyclopedia, “Week,” by Emil G. Hirsch, Vol. 12, p. 481.

“...Shabbat [weekly Sabbath] originally arose from the lunar cycle, containing four weeks ending in Sabbath, plus one or two additional unreckoned days per [lunar] month. *The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia: An Authorative and Popular Presentation of Jews and Judaism Since the Earliest Times. Volume 10 Cohen, Simon (1943 p 482-483).* Week. In Landman, Isaac.

“The [early] Hebrews employed lunar seven-day weeks, which ended with special observances on the seventh day, but none the less were tied to the moon’s course.” *Rest Days, Hutton Webster, p. 254-255*

“The weeks do not continue in a regular cycle regardless of the moon. Each month has four weeks, the beginning with the New Moon. I have no doubt that this was the old Hebrew system.” *Babylonian Menologies and the Semitic Calendars, p. 89.*

The following quote compares Roman time to astro-luni-solar time by giving three pieces of information. First, it gives the Roman date of the month, the day of the Roman cycling week, and the lunar date as it is counted from the New Moon. The Nones of November is the same as November 5, which fell on the day of Venus (Friday). It was the 24th lunar phase that corresponded with this Roman date, making it the Second Day after the third Sabbath of the month.

“In the consulship of Claudius and Paternus, on the Nones of [5th] November, on the day of Venus [Friday], and on the 24th day of the lunar month, Leuces placed [this memorial] to her very dear daughter Severa, and to Thy Holy Spirit. She died [at the age] of 55 years, and 11 months [and] 10 days.” *The date of this inscription is Friday, November 5, 269 A.D. Inscriptions Christianae Urbis Romae, E. Diehl, Vol. 1, Part 1, p. 18., No. 11; Sunday in Roman Paganism, Robert L. Odom, p. 122.*

“The decline of the [Roman Julian] eight-day week coincided with the expansion of Rome... The astrological and Christian [planetary – Sun. – Sat] seven-day weeks that had just been [re] introduced into Rome were also becoming increasingly popular. There is evidence indicating that the Roman eight-day week and those two seven-day cycles were used simultaneously for some time. However, the coexistence of two weekly rhythms that were entirely out of phase with one another obviously could not be sustained for long. One of them clearly had to give way. As we all know, it was the eight-day week that soon disappeared from the pages of history forever [along with the original lunar seven-day week].” Eviatar Zerubavel, The Seven-day Circle, p. 46.

“The connection of the Sabbath with lunar phases, however, was (later) discarded by the Israelites...”*The New Schaff-Herzog Religious Encyclopedia, p. 135-136.*

The *Easter Controversy* is the ostentatious pivotal event for which the Roman planetary Sunday as the first day, was forever tied to the Resurrection of the Messiah, causing Saturday to “appear” to be the seventh day of the planetary week in Scripture.

*“The question relating to the observance of Easter [Passover], which was agitated in the time of Anicetus and Poly carp, and afterwards in that of Victor, was still undecided. It was one of the principal reasons for convoking the council of Nicaea, being the most important subject to be considered after the Arian controversy. **It appears that the churches of Syria and Mesopotamia continued to follow the custom of the Jews, and celebrated Easter on the fourteenth day of the moon, whether falling on Sunday or not.**”* *A Historical View of the Council of Nice [4th century A.D.], p. 22, translated by Isaac Boyle, D.D. New York: Thomas N. Staintford, 637 Broadway, 1856.*

*“There was a considerable discussion raised about this time, in consequence of a difference of opinion respecting the observance of the paschal [Passover] season. **The churches of all Asia, guided by a remoter tradition, supposed that they ought to keep the fourteenth day of the moon for the festival of the Savior’s Passover, in which day the Jews were commanded to kill the paschal lamb; and it was incumbent on them, at all times, to make an end of the fast on this day, on whatever day of the [Roman] week it should happen to fall.**”* *The Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius Pamphilus, Bishop of Caesarea, in Palestine [4th century A.D.], translated by Christian Frederick Cruse, D.D., Tenth Edition, Chapter 23, p. 207. 1850.*

The monumental outcome the **Easter Controversy** had on our modern calendar is how it singly determined to the untrained eye and the ignorant of history’s past, that the Scriptural seventh-day Sabbath is “Saturday.” This was accomplished simply by ensuring that every year Easter occurs on Sunday the first day of the new Roman planetary week cycle, and so by extension, it made


Saturday of the same week cycle, appear to be the seventh day. Yet, it had never been so, according to Scripture.

"The long-term effect was that 'Easter Sunday' entered the Christian paradigm as 'The Day of Christ's Resurrection.' The corollary to this realignment of time calculation was that the day preceding Easter Sunday, Saturday, became forever after 'The True Bible Sabbath.' This is the true significance of Constantine's 'Sunday law' and it laid the foundation for the modern assumption that a continuous weekly cycle has always existed." Calendar Fraud, "Biblical Calendar Outlawed," eLaine Vornholt & Laura Lee Vornholt-Jones.

"[When] dissociated from the moon, the Sabbath developed into a day of rest for the workers and animals on the farm... Traces of the old taboo [forbidden New Moon and lunar calendar model from creation] are, however, found. In Amos 8:5 it is the fear of... consequences [for not abstaining from work on the New Moon Day and Sabbath] that keeps the impatient merchants from plying their wicked trade. The Assyrian [Babylonian/Roman] calendar seems to disclose an effort to get rid of the movable [lunar] Sabbath in favor of the fixed [continuous weekly cycle]." jewishencyclopedia.com, Jewish Encyclopedia 1906, SABBATH, Emil G. Hirsch, Joseph Jacobs, Executive Committee of the Editorial Board, Julius H. Greenstone, Vol. 10, p. 591.

"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..." The Universal Jewish Encyclopaedia, Vol. X, "Week," p. 482.

"For although almost all churches throughout the world celebrate the sacred mysteries on the sabbath of every week, yet the Christians of Alexandria and at Rome, on account of some ancient tradition, have ceased to do this." The Ecclesiastical History of Socrates Scholasticas, Book V Chapter XXII



There was a distinct break between the Old Testament requirements dealing with the Sabbath worship . . . They [Rome] wanted to show that Christianity [her brainchild] was distinct from Judaism. The other thing that we should remember, too, is that our calendar that we follow, including **Seventh-day Adventists**, is not only a calendar that was devised by the Catholic Church, but also it is a calendar that's based upon the **SOLAR** year, not the **LUNAR** year.

The Jewish calendar that was observed in the time of *Christ* [Messiah] follows a lunar [astro-luni-solar] calendar . . . So the great irony is that even the **Seventh-day Adventists**, themselves, are not worshipping on exactly the same Sabbath day as the Jews in the time of *Christ*, because it is several days off . . . *Patrick Madrid, Catholic Apologist, EWTN, Global Catholic Radio Network, Jan. 5, 2006*

"It was only in Alexandria [Egypt] that three distinct practices that had evolved quite independently of the Chaldean [Babylonian] planetary theory – an astronomical practice of arranging the seven planets in a certain invariable order, a mathematical practice of subdividing the daily cycle into twenty-four hours, and an astrological theory known as the doctrine of "Chronocratores" – were nevertheless integrated with it so as to produce the astrological seven-day week in its final form. This cycle is therefore the product of the successful Hellenistic fusion of astronomy, astrology, and mathematics, as well as the great cultural heritage of Egypt, Babylonia, and Greece."

The Seven Day Circle: The History and Meaning of the Week, Eviatar Zerubavel, New York: The Free Press, 1985. p.14.

"Even after Constantine's edict about Sunday, it took another generation or two for the seven-day week to catch on throughout the empire. The 24-hour system took longer, having to wait until the invention of the mechanical clock in the Middle



Ages by monks anxious to observe with precision their canonical hours. Before this, people marked the passage of time during the night by using the stars and during the day either by eyeballing the sun or by listening to public announcements of the time." Calendar, David Ewing Duncan, p. 47, New York, Avon Books, 1998.

*“They [the Protestants] deem it their duty to keep the Sunday holy. Why? Because the Catholic Church tells them to do so. They have no other reason... The observance of Sunday thus comes to be an ecclesiastical law entirely distinct from the divine law of Sabbath observance... **The author of the Sunday law... is the Catholic Church.**”* *The Ecclesiastical Review*, February, 1914.

*“The Babylonians, at a very early period, **divided their months** into seven-day cycles...”* *Ancient History*, Hutton Webster, p. 20.

“The Sabbath depending, in Israel's nomadic period, upon the observation of the phases of the moon, it could not, accordingly be a fixed day [meaning a fixed planetary day of the modern Roman cycling week]. *The Jewish Encyclopedia: A Descriptive Record of the History.* Edited by Isidore Singer, Cyrus Adler, Volume 10, p. 590.

“The present Jewish calendar was fixed [changed to the Roman planetary weekly cycle] in the fourth century.” *Jewish Theological Seminary of America*, Letter by Louis Finkelstein to Dr. L. E. Froom, Feb. 20, 1939.

“It should be noted that the oldest dated Christian inscription to employ a planetary designation [Sunday thru Saturday, unbroken weekly cycles] belongs to the year 269 A.D.” *Inscriptiones Christianae urbis Romae*, ed. De Rossi, 1861, i, No. 1.

“Since the second century A.D. there had been a divergence of opinion about the date for celebrating the paschal [Passover/crucifixion] anniversary of the Lord’s passion (death, burial, and resurrection). Ibid

The most ancient practice appears to have been to observe the fourteenth [Passover date as counted from the new moon], fifteenth, and sixteenth days of the lunar month regardless of the day of the [Julian – planetary cycling] week these dates might fall on from year to year. Ibid

*The bishops of Rome, desirous of enhancing the observance of Sunday as a church festival, ruled that the annual celebration should always be held on the **Friday, Saturday, and Sunday** following the fourteenth day of the lunar month. . . This controversy lasted almost two centuries, until Constantine intervened on behalf of the Roman bishops and outlawed the other group.” R.L. Odom, *Sunday in Roman Paganism*, p. 188.*

The belief that the continuous weekly cycle has come down uninterrupted since Creation is not an assumption shared by modern (recent 1,700 years) Jewish scholars who know their history. Instead, it appears they had a part to play in the change.

“Quasi [lunar] weeks and [continuous] weeks actually represent two fundamentally distinct modes of temporal organization of human life, the former involving partial adaptation to nature [Creation], and the latter stressing total emancipation from it. The invention of the continuous week was therefore one of the most significant breakthroughs in human beings attempts to break away from being prisoners of nature [and from under the Creator’s law] and create a social world of their own.” *The Seven Day Circle: the History and Meaning of the Week*, Eviator Zerubavel, The Free Press, New York, 1985, p. 11.

*“Most theologians and some scholars assume that mainstream Jewish society, at the time of Jesus [the Messiah] . . .was practicing a fixed seven-day week which was the same as the modern fixed [cycling planetary designations] seven-day week. **This is extremely doubtful.** The change, from a lunar to a fixed week, was brought about by the power and influence of Rome. As long as the Nazarenes held power in Jerusalem, all Roman practices and customs, including that of the consecutive week, were held at bay.”* *Shawui Sabbath: Ancient Sabbath Observance*

“In the years following Clement of Alexandria’s time (A.D. 150-215), an ominous change started to take place that was to radically change the Christian concept of the Sabbath. This intimate connection between the week and the month was soon dissolved. It is certain that the week soon followed a development of its own, and it became the custom — without paying any regard to the days of the month (i.e. the luni-solar month) . . . so that the New Moon no longer coincided with the first day of the month. Then, on page 4179 of the same encyclopedia, we read: “The introduction . . . of the custom of celebrating the Sabbath every 7th day, irrespective of the relationship of the day to the moon’s phases, led to a complete separation from the ancient view of the Sabbath...” Encyclopaedia Biblica, 1903 p. 5290.

“The parishes of all Asia, as from an older tradition, held that the fourteenth day of the moon, on which day the Jews were commanded to sacrifice the lamb, should be observed as the feast of the Saviour’s Passover... whatever day of the [Julian – planetary cycling] week it should happen to be. But it was not the custom of the churches in the rest of the world...” Michael I. Roostovtzeff, The Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire, p. 456.

“The Sunday...is purely a creation of the Catholic Church.” *American Catholic Quarterly Review, January, 1883.*

To declare that “Sunday” is purely a creation of the Catholic Church, is no different than saying the entire modern week including “SATURDAY,” within the same continuous weekly cycle is purely a creation of the Catholic Church. Why? Because Sunday and its first-day placement only exist in its perpetual rotation of a seven-day cycling week. So if Sunday is a Roman creation, then so is Saturday, along with its seventh-day placement. ***“And all the world wondered after the Beast!”***

“We shall be taken for Persians [Mithraists], perhaps . . . The reason for this, I suppose, is that it is known that we pray towards the east . . . Likewise, if we devote the day of the Sun to festivity (from a far different reason from Sun worship), we are in a second place from those who devote the day of Saturn, themselves also deviating by way of a Jewish custom of which they are ignorant.”
Tertullian, Apologia.

“But to the seventh-day of the week He [YHUH] 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; the one which takes place in the spring being for the perfection of what is being sown, and the one which falls in autumn being a feast of thanksgiving for the bringing home of all the fruits which the trees have produced.” F.H. Colson’s translation of Philo’s THE DECALOGUE XXX (159)

Referring to the quote above, let’s look carefully at what Philo is saying. “But to the seventh day of the week, He [YHUH, the Most High] has assigned the greatest festivals.” In other words, the greatest (longest) festivals have been assigned to the seventh-day Sabbath.

Then by no coincidence, Leviticus 23:6 identifies that the spring seven day Feast of Unleavened Bread consistently begins on the 15th day counted from the New Moon, which consistently follows the day after Passover the 14th. Did you know that for forty years in a row, the Israelites were fed manna in the wilderness and celebrated Passover on the 14th day? The next day, the 15th was always the seventh-day Sabbath. Then fifteen hundred years later, our Messiah died on the cross/stake for you and me on Passover, the 14th day counted from the New Moon. The very next day, the 15th, he remained in the tomb over the seventh-day Sabbath. So it appears the 15th of the first month is always a seventh-day Sabbath.

Then several verses later Leviticus 23:34 identifies that the autumn seven day Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot) also commences on Sabbath the 15th day counted from the New Moon. Verse 3 tells us the seventh-day Sabbath is always a **holy convocation** (H#4744 מִקְרָא *miqra* = rehearsal assembly event).

Verse 4 identifies that **holy convocations** shall be proclaimed on their **seasons** (H#4150 *mo’ed* = specific lunar appointed dates per Psalms 104:19). As a result, seventh-day Sabbaths are **specific lunar appointed dates** and are always counted from the New Moon. Seventh day Sabbaths are numbered according to the lunar phases, falling on the 8th, 15th, 22nd, and 29th day of each lunar month.

Philo establishes that the weekly Sabbath highlights these **two feasts** on the 15th of their respective months, six months apart, each year. This is evidence that the Sabbaths are counted according to the lunar calendar for the sheer fact that it is impossible for the [modern] continuous weekly cycle with its seven-day rhythm to synchronize these two festivals on the 15th in both the first and seventh month of each year consistently. This only works within the parameters of a lunar month and its count to each of four Sabbaths, and not with the Gregorian calendar with its continuous weekly cycle.

Refer to the article, **Three days and Three Nights**
<https://www.thecreatorscalendar.com/three-days-three-nights/>

Refer to the article, ***Passover to Tabernacles Calendar Challenge.***
<https://www.thecreatorscalendar.com/passover-to-tabernacles-calendar-challenge/>

Refer to the article, **Three Months in a Row – Part 2 - The Manna**
<https://www.thecreatorscalendar.com/three-months-in-a-row-the-manna-part-2/>