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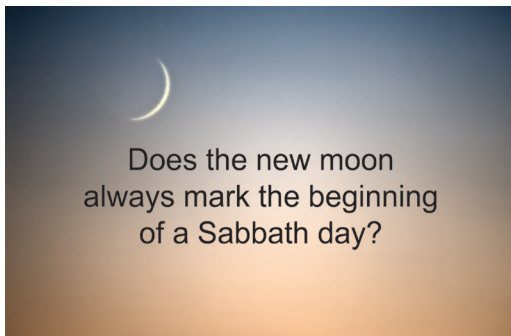
YAIY **Beacon**

Volume 6 Number 1



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by Elder David Brett

Our Mission and purpose is to reach people around the world with the message of the revealed personal Names of Yahweh and His Son Yahshua the Messiah, as well as teaching the salvation truths that have been neglected for centuries.

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Does the new moon
always mark the beginning
of a Sabbath day?

The Lunar Sabbath Doctrine

As we see the end of the age approach, we understand as the symbolic wheat grows, there will also be weeds growing up, sown by Satan, which will try to choke out the true teachings and doctrines of Yahweh's Word. One such doctrine, which is a reintroduction to an ancient Babylonian teaching of counting weeks from the new moon cyclical pattern, is one which attacks various areas of correct teachings in Scripture.

The initial premise of counting numbers appears to be sound, but as one investigates and learns how it does damage to other areas of Scriptural truth, it becomes all too clear how wrong and dangerous it is.

One of the first things pointed out to people are the dates of the 8th, 15th, 22nd, and 29th. Those promoting this wandering weekly Sabbath boldly say, "Show us another day in Scripture, other than these dates we give for the weekly Sabbath!"

The first thing that comes to mind is the seventh day, as in, "Keep the seventh day holy."

First, we need to go back to the beginning and take a look at the creation week. After all, if the weekly Sabbath is determined by each new moon, then the evidence for such a doctrine should be clear from the creation week in which the 7th day Sabbath was set apart from the other days of the week.

Back to the Beginning

In the beginning Elohim created the heavens and the earth. The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of Elohim was moving over the surface of the waters. Then Elohim said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. Elohim saw that the light was good; and Elohim separated the light from the darkness. Elohim called the light day, and the darkness He called night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day, Genesis 1:1-5. (NASB used throughout, unless otherwise noted).

Light molecules, photons, are said by some scien-

tists to be the first active molecules in creation. What has also been recently promoted is the idea of dark matter, something that can't be seen, but has been proven to make up a large portion of the universe.

We see that Elohim separated the light from the darkness, which can be related in a figurative sense as well in describing good and evil.

At the very end of verse 5 we read, "*And there was evening and there was morning, one day.*" Here, the word for day, in context, literally means a 24-hour period. And before the sun and moon were created, this was to be the pattern of a day, evening (night) and morning, i.e., daylight, as we see in a 12 hour period.

Greater Light and Lesser Light

Then Elohim said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night, and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years; and let them be for lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth"; and it was so. Elohim made the two great lights, the greater light to govern the day, and the lesser light to govern the night; He made the stars also. Elohim placed them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth, and to govern the day and the night, and to separate the light from the darkness; and Elohim saw that it was good. There was evening and there was morning, a fourth day, Genesis 1:14-19.

The words for day and night are 12 hour periods, even though there is one plural word for days, which means 24-hour days, and also the 4th day is mentioned, which is a 24-hour day.

There is the sun and moon, but it should be noted the moon only shows its light from the sun.

Thus says Yahweh, Who gives the sun for light by day and the fixed order of the moon and the stars for light by night, Who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar; Yahweh of hosts is His name, Jeremiah 31:35. Again, we see, in describing a day, we have two 12-hour periods making one day, and that it is the sun

and the moon that identify a regular 24-hour day for us today. This sun and moon, however, did not exist on day one or even on day two, but rather was created on day 4, as we are told by the Creator of the Universe.

The reason for bringing this up is because there is a belief among the Lunar Sabbath advocates that the new moon established the weekly pattern. But, as we've seen, it is Yahweh that has established the weekly seven day pattern from creation.

Scripture Says, The 7th Day

By the seventh day Elohim completed His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then Elohim blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which Elohim had created and made, Genesis 2:2-3.

On what day did He say He created the sun and moon?

An agnostic man interviewed for his book on biblical law keeping, who trained himself to keep the instructions, says he still keeps the 7th day Sabbath. He found it very beneficial.

Science also shows that a 7th day Sabbath is helpful for man and is a natural cycle for our bodies to rest every 7th day. This means working 6 days and resting on the 7th. Does this mean it includes the moon?

Now Yahweh said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, "This month shall be the beginning of months for you; it is to be the first month of the year to you," Exodus 12:1-2.

Months beget months. Notice it doesn't say months beget weeks. The new moons give us the months, but the sun tells us the days as the sunset identifies when a day ends and starts. Weeks are based on days and not months. The pattern

we've been shown from creation has been unbroken.

The history books show both Sephardic and Ashkenazi Jews today keep the same (unchanged) weekly Sabbath from the time of Messiah. Yahshua never had a problem with them keeping the 7th Day as the Sabbath. He only had problems with the many rules they heaped upon it.

The other thing that is missing is an uprising or a great debate among Jews, or anyone else for that matter, showing the idea that the weekly Sabbath as is kept in Israel today was anything other than the weekly pattern kept from the Messiah's time.

Another main point which the Lunar Sabbath Doctrine advocates promote is all the times the new moon is mentioned as a Sabbath. But when we look at these Scriptures in context, there is not one promoting the idea that the new moon is a Sabbath. Nor do we see anything saying, let alone Yahweh saying, "One shall keep the weekly count from each new moon."

Physical Sacrifices

What was important in ancient Israel was that the physical sacrifices were done on the new moon days.

Then at the beginning of each of your months you shall present a burnt offering to Yahweh: two bulls and one ram, seven male lambs one year old without defect, Numbers 28:11.

Besides the burnt offering of the new moon and its grain offering, and the continual burnt offering and its grain offering, and their drink offerings, according to their ordinance, for a soothing aroma, an offering by fire to Yahweh, Numbers 29:6.

Sacrifices, not days of rest, we are told. But, what about the Scriptures where the new moons and Sabbaths are both listed? There is always an "and" or another con-

nective word, in between. Notice:

Thus says Yahweh ELOHIM, "The gate of the inner court facing east shall be shut the six working days; but it shall be opened on the sabbath day and opened on the day of the new moon. The prince shall enter by way of the porch of the gate from outside and stand by the post of the gate. Then the priests shall provide his burnt offering and his peace offerings, and he shall worship at the threshold of the gate and then go out; but the gate shall not be shut until the evening. The people of the land shall also worship at the doorway of that gate before Yahweh on the sabbaths and on the new moons," Ezekiel 46:1-3.

Any time you offer sacrifices to Yahweh, you are essentially worshipping Him, giving praise and respect. This is a prophecy for the coming Kingdom in which the physical people will give sacrifices and pay their respects to Yahweh and praise Him for their very lives. We do believe these are the ones who were saved out of the tribulation, and they will have much to be thankful for, having come out of that terrible time alive.

In times past, the people were not always thankful.

When will the new moon be over, so that we may sell grain, and the sabbath, that we may open the wheat market, to make the bushel smaller and the shekel bigger, and to cheat with dishonest scales, Amos 8:5.

Sacrifices were commanded on new moons, no question about it. But that doesn't make new moons Sabbaths.

Also in the day of your gladness and in your appointed feasts, and on the first days of your months, you shall blow the trumpets over your burnt offerings, and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings; and they shall be as a reminder of you before your Elohim. I am Yahweh your Elohim, Numbers 10:10.

The Day of Trumpets mentioned elsewhere in Scripture would be the only Sabbath (High Sabbath) new moon that Scripture indicates. And, it is a day in which the trumpet is blown, and it was also blown over the other sacrifices, as is mentioned here in the Scripture above.

Work on New Moon Day

One of the questions that comes to mind when thinking about the Lunar Sabbath Doctrine is: Would Yahweh command work to be done, such as a census, on a Sabbath day?

Then Yahweh spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the tent of meeting, on the first of the second month, in the second year after they had come out of the land of Egypt, saying, "Take a census of all the congregation of the sons of Israel, by their families, by their fathers' households, according to the number of names, every male, head by head. From twenty years old and upward, whoever is able to go out to war in Israel, you and Aaron shall number them by their armies. With you, moreover, there shall be a man of each tribe, each one head of his father's household," Numbers 1:1-4.

And they assembled all the congregation together on the first of the second month. Then they registered by ancestry in their families, by their fathers' households, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and upward, head by head, Numbers 1:18.

In this, it could be argued that they had to come to offer sacrifices anyway. However, the numbers are somewhat staggering and would have not been any kind of rest for the people to have done it.

Here are the numbers broken down by each Israelite tribe: Reuben, 46,500; Simeon, 59,300; Gad, 45,650; Judah, 74,600; Issachar, 54,400; Zebulun, 57,400; Ephraim, 40,500; Manasseh, 32,200; Benja-

min, 35,400; Dan, 62,700; Asher, 41,500; and Naphtali, 53,400.

So all the numbered men of the sons of Israel by their fathers' households, from twenty years old and upward, whoever was able to go out to war in Israel, even all the numbered men were 603,550, Numbers 1:45-46.

This number also agrees with the Exodus account stating that 600,000 men, along with their families and numerous livestock, went forth from Egypt.

Would Ezra be moved to make travel plans on the Sabbath day?

For on the first of the first month he began to go up from Babylon; and on the first of the fifth month he came to Jerusalem, because the good hand of his Elohim was upon him. For Ezra had set his heart to study the law of Yahweh and to practice it, and to teach His statutes and ordinances in Israel, Ezra 7:9-10.

It doesn't make any sense that Ezra, whose character NEVER comes into question in Scripture and who studied to know the law of Yahweh, would then make plans not to rest on the Sabbath days.

The new moon is not a Sabbath, weekly or otherwise.

In the second year of Darius the king, on the first day of the sixth month, the word of Yahweh came by the prophet Haggai to Zerubabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, saying... Go up to the mountains, bring wood and rebuild the camp, Haggai 1:1, 8 .

Scripture tells us Yahweh doesn't change and we know that He isn't going to condemn someone gathering wood on a Sabbath and then turn around and tell one of His servants to gather wood on a Sabbath. Nor is Yahweh going to have something laborious such as putting up the tabernacle in the wilderness. It was a major undertaking.

Then Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, "On the first day of the first month you shall set up the tabernacle of the tent of meeting," Exodus 40:1-2.

After this, there is a lengthy list of items to work on:

1. You shall place the ark of the testimony there;

2. You shall screen the ark with the veil;

3. You shall bring in the table and arrange what belongs on it;

4. You shall bring in the lampstand and mount its lamps;

5. You shall set the golden altar of incense before the ark of the testimony, set up the veil for the doorway to the tabernacle;

6. You shall set the altar of burnt offering in front of the doorway of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting;

7. You shall set the laver between the tent of meeting and the altar and put water in it;

8. You shall set up the court all around and hang up the veil for the gateway of the court;

9. You shall take the anointing oil and anoint the tabernacle and all that is in it, and you shall consecrate it and all its furnishings;

10. You shall anoint the altar of burnt offering and all its utensils;

11. You shall anoint the laver and its stand, and consecrate it; and

12. You shall bring Aaron and his sons to the doorway of the tent of meeting and wash them with water.

What do we find in the account after all this work was to be done?

Thus Moses did; according to all that Yahweh had commanded him, so he did. Now in the first month of the second year, on the first day of the month, the tabernacle was erected. Moses erected the tabernacle and laid its sockets, and set up its boards, and inserted its bars and erected its pillars. He spread the tent over the tabernacle

and put the covering of the tent on top of it, just as Yahweh had commanded Moses, Exodus 40:16–19.

Now, the argument that Lunar Sabbatarians might bring up is that the Word says “on the first day of the month,” which is not really the first day but rather the first working day, they might say, and do say, when speaking of the new moon not being counted.

We have to understand that the command for the 7th day Sabbath is a singular command of the weekly pattern which repeats itself over and over again, unending. When Scripture says 7 and man says 8 because we are told that we are not to count the new moon, what you have is a major problem, and men basically saying, “Yahweh cannot count.”

Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath of Yahweh your Elohim; in it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you. For in six days Yahweh made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore Yahweh blessed the sabbath day and made it holy, Exodus 20:8–11.

With all the emphasis and minute details on the 7th day Sabbath provided, would Yahweh neglect such an important point of clarifying the new moon as a designated Sabbath or the start of the weekly pattern, if it were true? As we've already seen, Yahweh tells us months beget months, not weeks.

The following are dates in Scripture, in which these Lunar or Wandering Sabbath Keepers point out and proclaim as proof for their new moon Sabbath. They are the 8th, 15th, 22nd, and 29th. We see that 12 months x 29 days = 348. An actual lunar year, based on the

29 ½ -30 lunar calendar, is 354 and longer depending on if Yahweh allows a month to be added to keep the seasons in their proper order of the initial spring or new year growth.

A Closer Look

“This unit of time, consisting of seven days, accords approximately with the moon’s orbit. But as the week does not necessarily begin on the day of the new moon, it is not affected by inconsistencies in relation to the positions of the moon during the month. In contrast to this the Babylonian and Assyrian week began on the first day of the month. The week of seven days

OCTOBER 2011						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sabbath
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

was thus completely independent of the month...” --The Archaeological Encyclopedia of the Holy Land (3rd ed.).

Look at this year’s (2011) calendar for the month of October. The weeks fall out according to what the Lunar Sabbath keepers follow - the 8th, 15th, 22nd, and 29th Sabbath pattern they’ve come up with, which we have already seen goes back to Babylonian times.

It’s the same thing we see with some today who use the Vernal Equinox, which also goes back

OCTOBER 2011						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sabbath
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

to pagan reckoning of time out of Babylon. The problem with this type of reckoning, however, is it doesn’t work.

A problem always occurs when the new moon shows on the 30th day, rather than on the 29th. Even with other Lunar Sabbatarians, who use a different count, the weeks within a lunar month won’t equal out exactly. It’s the same kind of confusion we see within ancient pagan societies.

“...in Mesopotamia the 7th, 14th, 19th, 21st and 28th days of each month were regarded by some as unlucky. It seems likely that the Israelite Sabbath was introduced as a deliberate counterblast to this lunar-regulated cycle. The Sabbath was quite independent of the phases of the moon, and far from being unlucky, was blessed and sanctified by the Creator.” -- Word Biblical Commentary, Vol. 1, (page 35).

MAY 2011						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sabbath
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

The counting seems to make more sense than the so-called 8th, 15th, 22nd, and 29th Sabbath pattern, but neither works.

Doesn’t the May 2011 calendar

MAY 2011						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sabbath
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

month look cleaner than October’s? The first four weeks fall exactly as they should, until you take a look at the end with the three ex-

tra days.

If the new moon is not counted, or even if it were, you would still not be able to work out this system mathematically. The moon was to be observed, but the week was to be counted 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7, just as we have already seen with the creation account.

The mathematics of trying to divide a 29 (or 30) day month evenly by 7 is like trying to stick a square peg into a round hole. It just doesn't work. These calendars show that the weekly pattern is broken when trying to mathematically fix the weekly Sabbath using a lunar count.

"The binding of Israel's observance to a mathematical calculation, every seventh day, rather than to observance of lunar phases helped to exclude worship of heavenly bodies as deities...In Babylonia every seventh day was regarded as an inauspicious day, but Israel's Sabbath was not so regarded; rather, it was a day of rest and religious assembly." -- The Eerdmans Bible Dictionary (page 897).

As pointed out in previous articles, not even the manipulation of man with the calendar mathematical calculations going from the Julian to the Gregorian calendars has changed the weekly pattern. And in just about all languages, the 7th day is worded as the Sabbath on

JULIAN CALENDAR CORRECTED BY POPE GREGORY XIII							October 1582						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	15	16							
17	18	19	20	21	22	23							
24	25	26	27	28	29	30							
31	A 21 DAY MONTH												

their calendars. Even if the name of the days are changed, the 7th day is called Saturn's day, or what we call Saturday and the pattern remains unchanged.

A few years back there was a

nice couple who came to the Feast of Tabernacles and requested a special meeting with the elders and deacons. They then proclaimed that they were there because they felt closer in line with us than with any other assembly, and agreed with all that we were teaching.

We welcomed them and they were there for at least a day, but then it became known that they were adherents to the Lunar Sabbath Doctrine.

The whole thing is suspicious now, because of the following eight areas, interestingly enough, of disagreement in Scripture that we have with the Lunar Sabbath Keepers.

1. Three days & three nights=72 hours;
2. Blowing of Trumpets;
3. Daniel: prophecy of changing times, days, etc.;
4. 14th vs. 15th;
5. Night to be much observed;
6. First visible light of the new moon;
7. Hebrew/Aramaic origins of the N.T.; and
8. Pentecost count of 50.

1. Three days & three nights=72 hours

They believe that the Messiah was killed the day before the weekly Sabbath and claim that two Sabbaths were not involved in close proximity. Why? Because they don't want to show another date other than the 8th, 15th, 22, or 29th for a Sabbath. But, the fact is, Sabbaths are shown on other days and sometimes Feast days (High Days, seven in total) are close to the weekly Sabbath. A correct dating of the weekly Sabbath in the book of John, in at least a couple of different areas, but one in particular, needs to be looked at closely as it shows clearly the weekly Sabbath falls in the midst of the Days of Unleavened Bread.

Yahshua, therefore, six days before the Passover, came to Beth-

any where Lazarus was, whom Yahshua had raised from the dead. So they made Him a supper there, and Martha was serving; but Lazarus was one of those reclining at the table with Him, John 12:1-2.

There are two key things to look at here. One is that it says there were "six days before the Passover," and the other is it says, "they made Him a supper there."

Yahshua, therefore, six days before the Passover, came to Bethany where Lazarus was, whom Yahshua had raised from the dead. 2 So they made Him a supper there, and Martha was serving; but Lazarus was one of those reclining at the table with Him, John 12:1-2.

The wording is saying "dinner," which a person would have in "the evening," Strong's #1173.

Let's look at the following Gregorian calendar month, the month of June 2011. It happens to be in line with the Passover month of March or April of Messiah's time, depending on when Abib was.

Here we're assuming it was a 30 day month. We've also moved the new moon back a couple of days because we need to have it positioned according to where the count would have started. While the weekly Sabbath is an Appointed Time, it is not one of the Annual Appointed Times. There is a difference.

Notice that right down the middle of the calendar is the 8th, 15th, 22, and 29th, days. But Passover is on the 14th, not the 15th.

Now, while the 15th is a High Day Sabbath, if you count either 36-hours as some understand the resurrection timing or more prop-

June 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sabbath
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

erly a 72-hour period, you get out of synch with the rest of Scripture.

June 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sabbath
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8 John 12:1 (6 days before Passover)	9	10	11
12	13	14	15 1	16 2	17 3	18 4
19	20 Passover	21 Preparation day	22 NIGHT 1	23 NIGHT 2	24 1st day of the week?	25
26	27	28	29	30		

The following is figuring a 72-hour (three days and three nights) pattern.

What happens when we figure a 36 hour period?

How does one explain the 1st day of the week was the 17th at the Messiah's time, if indeed the 15th is a weekly Sabbath? The only way is to say Yahshua was in the tomb for 24 hours. We have never heard anyone proclaiming Yahshua was only in the tomb for one day, 24

June 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sabbath
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8 John 12:1 (6 days before Passover)	9	10	11
12	13	14	15 1	16 2	17 3	18 4
19	20 Passover	21 Preparation day	22 NIGHT 1	23 NIGHT 2	24 NIGHT 3	25 SABBATH
26	27	28	29	30		

hours. Have you?

Let's look at the 72 hour period again to see where the 1st day of the week is.

Here we have the first day of the week falling properly, according to the biblical way of reckoning a 24-hour day, from sunset to sunset. The first day of the week is what we would call Sunday, right after sunset on the 7th day.

There is a lot more that could be shown, but, at this point, we'll recommend the following mini-studies and booklet for further review: "He Arose, But When?", "When Does a Day Begin?", and "Why Passover is NOT a High Day."

2. Blowing of Trumpets

As we've looked at in past articles, the Day of Trumpets in the Hebrew is Yom Teruah, which literally means, Day of Blowing or Shouting. We've seen that it was a day to remember; it was a day to remember battles in which Yahweh gave victory, such as the battle of Jericho:

So the people shouted, and priests blew the trumpets; and when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, the people shouted with a great shout and the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight ahead, and they took the city, Joshua 6:20.

They blew the trumpet, they shouted, and Yahweh gave them victory.

They had marched around the city for 7 days; that's all it says. We are not told that the day after was the weekly 7th day Sabbath, or 8th day Sabbath as the Lunar Sabbath doctrine keepers would have us think. This area of Scripture is not proof, but conjecture, for the lunar Sabbath doctrine. The weekly Sabbath here could have been any of the 7 days mentioned. The New Testament remembers the account and states plainly in Hebrews 11:30, "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been encircled for seven days." Nothing more and nothing less.

We've made the point in the past that the Day of Trumpets is a day of remembrance of all the things Yahweh has done and will do for us, like the time when His Son is coming with a trumpet shout. So we see prophetic significance in the Day of Trumpets, as well.

Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, "In the seventh month on the first of the month you shall have a rest, a reminder by blowing of trumpets, a holy convocation," Leviticus 23:24.

What has been proposed is this day of blowing would specifi-

cally be for the remembrance of the new moon, as a day of worship, and that the 7th day is actually the 8th day event. The book of Job is pointed to:

Where wast thou when I founded earth? Declare, if thou hast known understanding. Who placed its measures—if thou knowest? Or who hath stretched out upon it a line? On what have its sockets been sunk? Or who hath cast its corner-stone? In the singing together of stars of morning, and all sons of Elohim shout for joy, Job 38:4–7 (YLT).

While the word for shout is there, very little else is given to conclude that the new moon is what the Day of Trumpets is in remembrance of.

In all fairness, we can thank Yahweh and remember what He has done for us even at the beginning of creation. After all, we ourselves are part of the creation that was done at that time.

3. Daniel: prophecy of changing times, days, etc.

They claim that the 7th day weekly pattern that we have today is pagan and was prophesied to have happened years ago through Daniel:

He will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time, Daniel 7:25

We've pointed out in the past that "he will intend" does not mean it will happen. It means the man of sin will attempt to make changes and alterations in times and law. The wording, "he will intend," literally has the meaning of, "he will try" or, "he will plan." But, as we know, plans don't always work out.

Another important point is that this is speaking of the time of tribulation. Scriptures do oftentimes point to specific times.

The following, for example, is another verse used to try to prove the point that Saturday (or Saturn's day) is fulfillment of Scripture, when in reality it is just a pagan name given to the scriptural 7th day of the week.

And He has violently treated His tabernacle like a garden booth; He has destroyed His appointed meeting place. Yahweh has caused to be forgotten the appointed feast and sabbath in Zion, and He has despised king and priest In the indignation of His anger, Lamentations 2:6.

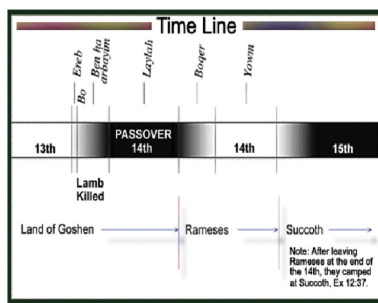
Well, there you have it. We've forgotten the Sabbaths and Appointed Feasts. Why then does it say Zion, which is another word pointing to Jerusalem?

Lamentations is most likely written by Jeremiah, who is the one who prophesied about Babylon coming in and taking Judah captive for 70 years. It was the timing of the number of land Sabbaths (or Sabbaticals) Judah failed to obey.

The point, however, is that this took place (past tense). This is not a Scripture we find prophetic duality in. Weekly Sabbaths and observance of Feasts in Jerusalem did cease to occur because the Temple was desecrated. Yahweh caused it to happen and both the Bible and archeology stand as witnesses to this fact. It is not proof for the New Moon Sabbath Doctrine.

4. 14th vs. 15th

Speaking about the timing for Passover, they teach that "*Ben Ha Arbayim*" means 3pm in the afternoon. Many scholars and translators disagree, as the following translations show: dusk (JSP,1917); twilight (TNK 1985, NAU, ESV 2001, NJB, NIB, NIV, NKJ, Berkley); between the evenings (YLT 1862/1898, Ferrar Fenton); between the two evenings (Darby's) sunset and dark (Moffatt). The wording *ben ha arbayim* literally means, in Hebrew, "son of



the evenings."

It does help to know what the Hebrew words are for the timing throughout a 24-hour day. The following chart may help give clarification.

In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread, until the twenty-first day of the month at evening, Exodus 12:18.

April 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sabbath
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18 Preparation Day	19	20	21	22	23
24	25 (7 days)	26	27	28	29	30

Knowing the timing of Passover and when the 15th starts, that is at the end of the 14th, we see the following calendar month of April 2011 showing the days properly laid out.

Those promoting the New Moon Sabbath Doctrine admit that the 21st is a High Sabbath, but they point to the following Scripture for evidence that the seventh day spoken of here is actually the 22nd day from the New Moon:

For seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there shall be a feast to Yahweh. Unleavened bread shall be eaten throughout the seven days; and nothing leavened shall be seen among you, nor shall any leaven be seen among you in all your borders, Exodus 13:6-7.

How can that be? They actually just point out verse 6, but verse 7 is included here. In context, does

it say what they say it says? Or, rather, do we see Yahweh explaining that the 7th day of the Feast is a High Day when we compare it to other Scripture? (See Exodus 12:16, verse 14-20 speak of the seven Days of Unleavened Bread

April 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sabbath
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

only. Passover is the day before, the 14th, at the beginning.)

The following is the same calendar month of April, showing in red the seven Days of Unleavened Bread, but with their count from the new moon.

Again, is Yahweh saying the 22nd is the 7th day? It's twisting the Scriptures to say such a thing. Whether you count the first day of the new moon or not, it doesn't work.

According to the Lunar Sabbath advocates, the weekly Sabbath can fall on Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, or any other day of the week.

The weekly pattern, however, does not change and is not somehow connected with the month. The only days connected with the month are the High Sabbaths and there are 7 of those throughout the year.

If the revolution of the moon about the earth came out even every 22 or 28 days, it would be much less of a stretch to come up with the New Moon Sabbath Doctrine. But we would still have to change a lot of teachings from Yahweh's Word to make their teaching fit.

5. Night to be much observed

They don't want the 14th em-

phasized as it takes away from the idea that the 15th is a constant and “unchanging” weekly Sabbath, and therefore the 8th is too, as well as the 22nd, and the 29th.

Now the time that the sons of Israel lived in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years. And at the end of four hundred and thirty years, to the very day, all the hosts of Yahweh went out from the land of Egypt, Exodus 12:40–41.

"To the very day." What day was that? We've looked at this before in past messages and articles: Covenant cut on the 14th; Israelites released on the 14th; Yahshua killed on the 14th.

Messiah fulfills the sacrifice for the New Covenant; He also is the Passover sacrifice for us individually. It is also symbolic of being released from Egyptian bondage during the Passover time. It all fits, but on the 14th, not on the 15th.

One might think this would give credence for the 14th Lunar Sabbath Keeping doctrine to keep the count of 7, 14, 21, and 28 from each new moon. However, it doesn't work because Passover is a sacrifice and a memorial type service. It is not one of the seven annual High Sabbaths. We have a mini-study on this called, *Why the Passover is NOT a High Day*. It also covers the subject of the Night to Be Much Observed. The only night to be observed was Passover and we keep it today as a memorial, once a year, with the emblems instituted in the New Covenant and not a physical sacrifice. Yahshua is our Sacrifice.

6. First visible light of the new moon

While considering the New Moon Sabbath teachings, it is baffling why they seem to try to count two new moon days in the book of 1st Samuel. Can there be two new moons? If one considers the astronomical moon, as a new moon, then possibly.

An astronomical new moon is a dark moon with no visible moon crescent at all. There can be as many as three nights when the moon is in a conjunction state when no visible light shows.

It turns out, though, that they are trying to cover for the extra days, since the month is not evenly divided into 7 day weeks, but rather follows a 29 to 30 day visible pattern.

There needs to be an explanation by the Lunar Sabbath keepers as to what to do with extra days of the month. They try to explain the example of David not eating with the king for two nights. Let's take a look to see what is happening:

So David said to Jonathan, "Behold, tomorrow is the new moon, and I ought to sit down to eat with the king. But let me go, that I may hide myself in the field until the third evening, 1 Samuel 20:5.

David knew that he had to stay away for at least two days, due to being expected the 2nd day, if he had missed the first. This was all to prove to Jonathon that Saul was out to kill David, even though Saul had not told Jonathon:

The king sat on his seat as usual, the seat by the wall; then Jonathan rose up and Abner sat down by Saul's side, but David's place was empty. Nevertheless Saul did not speak anything that day, for he thought, "It is an accident, he is not clean, surely he is not clean." It came about the next day, the second day of the new moon, that David's place was empty; so Saul said to Jonathan his son, "Why has the son of Jesse not come to the meal, either yesterday or today?" Jonathan then answered Saul, "David earnestly asked leave of me to go to Bethlehem, for he said, 'Please let me go, since our family has a sacrifice in the city, and my brother has commanded me to attend. And now, if I have found favor in your sight, please let me get away that I

may see my brothers.' For this reason he has not come to the king's table," 1 Samuel 20:25–29.

The attempt is sometimes made to equate two days here as two new moons, which could only be connected to the astronomical new moon theory. But, that is a wrong theory. The word for new moon in the Hebrew is derived from the root meaning of "light" or "white." There is no light seen on the moon in the conjunctive state.

We have to understand that the 2nd day of the month was not a new moon nor was it just an extra worship day. So, what is it then?

Could it rather be an extension to allow one who is unclean to then eat of some of the sacrifices made, after offering the needed sacrifices? We know back at this time, with the Temple standing, one could be made ceremonially unclean for a number of reasons. One reason is found in Leviticus 15:16,

Now if a man has a seminal emission, he shall bathe all his body in water and be unclean until evening.

There are evidently some who would claim this section of Scripture shows the 30th day and the 1st day of the month being kept to work out the extra two days each 30th day month would end up with. But the verses themselves say 1st and 2nd day of the month, not the 29th and 30th or the 30th and the 1st day.

Both New Moon Conjunction believers and Lunar Sabbath keepers fail to understand this passage of Scripture. In keeping with a proper understanding, there was an extra day allowed for those that were ceremonially unclean.

The other thing we see here is the eating of sacrificial meat, just as the Passover was eaten by those offering the sacrifice. There were sacrificial meats which were eaten by those sacrificing, as long as they were ceremonially clean to

be able to do so. Sacrifices were not always made by priests alone. (See the following: Gen. 4:4, 8:20, 22:13; Ex. 12:6, 24:5, Lev. 1:2, 3:12, etc.)

Again, notice the passage and what Saul thought the reason for David being absent the 1st night: *"It is an accident, he is not clean, surely he is not clean."*

There were sacrifices done on new moon days, and clearly there had to be a second day allowed for those who were unclean the first night.

The king sat on his seat as usual, the seat by the wall; then Jonathan rose up and Abner sat down by Saul's side, but David's place was empty. Nevertheless Saul did not speak anything that day, for he thought, "It is an accident, he is not clean, surely he is not clean." It came about the next day, the second day of the new moon, that David's place was empty; so Saul said to Jonathan his son, "Why has the son of Jesse not come to the meal, either yesterday or today?" (1 Samuel 20:25–27)

7. Hebrew/Aramaic origins of the New Testament

Adherents to the Lunar Sabbath Doctrine point to the Greek Septuagint as evidence for a 15th observance for the Wave Sheaf offering found in Leviticus 23:11. This has ramifications going into the New Testament, which many claim to be originally Greek, but as we have written about and spoken about before, they were most likely of Semitic Hebrew or Aramaic origin. Josephus, a 1st Century Jewish Scholar, wrote:

"For those of my own nation freely acknowledge that I far exceed them in the learning belonging to the Jews. I have also taken a great deal of pains to obtain the learning of the Greeks, and understand the elements of the Greek language, although I have so long accustomed myself to speak our own tongue, that I cannot pro-

nounce Greek with sufficient exactness: for our nation does not encourage those that learn the languages of many nations..."

The message of the evangel went to the Jews first and then to the Greeks. It is reasonable that translations occurred, but that doesn't negate the fact that the original had to have been in Semitic form written by mostly uneducated Jews.

It even seemed like a strange idea to the Jews that Yahshua, Whom Scripture testifies did speak both Hebrew and Aramaic, might go and teach the Greeks.

The Jews then said to one another, "Where does this man intend to go that we will not find Him? He is not intending to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks, and teach the Greeks, is He?" (John 7:35)

For further evidence, there are, in fact, a number of texts which are clarified by going back to the Semitic language and checking against the Greek. Let's look at just a couple of examples:

Again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of Yahweh, Matthew 19:24.

In the Aramaic New Testament, called the Peshita, the word translated for camel is *"gamla"* (gimel-mem-lamad-aleph). The word *gamala* means "heavy rope." It appears that the translator didn't



understand the definition of the word *gamala*.

Here we have two words that look the same, but have opposite

meanings, which could certainly throw off a translator: The first word is Reshyana, meaning, "righteous." The second word is Rasheya, meaning "wicked."

Here is a verse that needs correcting by going back to the Semitic language:

For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die, Romans 5:7.

Essentially, better renderings are gathered by looking back to that which is more original and therefore more accurate.

Again I say to you, it is easier for a heavy rope to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of Yahweh, Matthew 19:24.

For one will hardly die for a wicked man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die, Romans 5:7.

Let's now consider the following verse in the Greek: Leviticus 23:11, *"and he shall lift up the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted for you. On the morrow of the first day the priest shall lift it up."* – The Septuagint Version of the Old Testament Translated into English, by L.C. L. Brenton.

Problem number one is they cover up the Father's Name with a title of *Kyrios* which has been translated here as "the Lord." Problem number two is they've eliminated the word *Shabbat*, that is, Sabbath, altogether.

Here is a translation from the oldest Semitic texts which predate the Greek Septuagint by hundreds of years. The Dead Sea Scrolls even go back a 1000 years earlier than the oldest Hebrew did, and they are letter for letter and word for word correct, including Yahweh's Name being there unaltered:

And he shall wave the sheaf before YHWH, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath the cohen shall wave it, Leviticus 23:11 – The Hebraic-Roots Version Scriptures, by James Scott

Trim.

יהוה • ל • רצון • אתם
Yahweh for • acceptance • you (all)

מן • מחרה
from • the next day of

ה • שבת
the • sabbath

– The Lexham Hebrew-English Interlinear Bible, by C. Van Der Merwe.

Notice that Yahweh’s Name is not covered up and is completely clear in the Hebrew without vowel pointing which was used centuries after to cover it up. This was done because of the doctrine of Ineffability of the Name which is a man-made doctrine.

The argument by the adherents to the Lunar Sabbath Doctrine basically say the translators understood what they were doing and purposely removed the word *Shabbat* from the Greek so it would be made clear the day being spoken of was the day after the 15th, that is, the 1st day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (the 1st annual High Day).

The day after the 15th, according to the adherents of the Lunar Sabbath Doctrine, would be the 1st day of the working 6, leading to the 22nd day, which would be, in their understanding, the 7th day. This type of reasoning is not good exegetically, nor is it a good hermeneutical study. It is, however, Babylonian confusion.

This leads us into Pentecost and a more profound error of the Lunar Sabbath keepers trying to justify this strange and completely erroneous doctrine.

8. Pentecost count of 50

Pentecost is correctly understood to be counted from the day after the weekly Sabbath within the Days of Unleavened Bread. It is the word *Shabbat* (Strong’s #7676), and in context is not to be confused with *Shabathown* (Strong #7677),

which points to High Sabbaths when used alone. Day of Trumpets, for example, is specifically referred to as a *Shabathown*.

In Leviticus 23:11, #7676 *Shabbat* is there and correctly understood as the weekly Sabbath.

You shall also count for yourselves from the day after the sabbath, from the day when you brought in the sheaf of the wave offering; there shall be seven complete sabbaths. You shall count fifty days to the day after the seventh sabbath; then you shall present a new grain offering to Yahweh, Leviticus 23:15-16.

It should be pointed out that all the Sabbath words here are in fact Shabbats, referring to the weekly Sabbaths.

Saying “seven complete Sabbaths” is saying seven complete

weeks, 7 x 7, which we know is 49 days. It doesn’t say “seven rests completed.” It also adds we are to count to the fiftieth day by going to the day after the weekly Sabbath. This gives the count as 50. Pentecost always falls on the 1st day of the week.

Land Sabbaticals are similar to weekly Sabbaths, the evidence for when they are stays in a set cyclical pattern of 7. There are not some Sabbatical dates that are 3 or 5 years in duration. They are always in 7 year increments, just like the weekly Sabbath is.

You shall count seven weeks for yourself; you shall begin to count seven weeks from the time you begin to put the sickle to the standing grain, Deuteronomy 16:9.

While this doesn’t say “complete,” as in 7 days, it does refer to weeks. Pentecost, which does mean count 50 in the Greek, is also called Feast of Weeks. It’s called the Feast of Weeks because it is made up of seven complete weeks.

It has been promoted by Lunar Sabbath Doctrine advocates that you count seven Sabbath rests and then count 50 days. Sorry, no matter what kind of spin you put on it, Scripture does not teach such a duplicate count. Scripture equates the 50 with the seven complete weeks plus one day, not separate from it, nor in addition to it.

Further Study of Scripture

The idea has been presented, that, since the Israelites set up camp and rested on the 15th, this without question proves the Lunar Sabbath Doctrine.

However, if you look up Exodus 10:11-12, 33 it shows a 3 day journey bypassing the 22nd day. They did not stop on it to either camp nor rest. So why stop on

<see Lunar page 21>

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Mini Study



New Moons and Jerusalem Time

Isaiah tells us the entire world will be honoring the New Moons and the Sabbaths as they worship Yahweh in the coming Kingdom. As students of Yahweh’s word, we should be observing them now, becoming knowledgeable about New Moons as well as the Sabbaths that we might be able to help others along the way. Both New Moons and Sabbaths are to be observed in the Kingdom as we note in the following:

And it shall come to pass, that from one moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith Yahweh. (Isaiah 66:23 AV)

Likewise the people of the land shall worship at the door of this gate before Yahweh in the Sabbaths and in the new moons. (Ezekiel 46:3 AV)

The time may come that we will be isolated from the body of Messiah, but we are still obligated to keep His set times as an act of obedience. We are also told in the New Testament they are prophetic (Col. 2:16-17), that is, they foreshadow future events. The greater our understanding the greater is our responsibility to walk in His ways.

ANCIENT NEW MOON OBSERVANCES

In anticipation of the New Moon, Jewish moon watchers anciently were stationed on high prominences around Israel. When the moon was sighted, they would light a bright fire signaling to waiting Temple priesthood the New Moon had been seen and the new month has started. However, both the Samaritans and Botheans began lighting fires on other days to confuse the Jews. Runners were then

Without Love There'd Be No Justice

YAHWEH is merciful, abounding in love, compassionate, and faithful. He is slow to anger and ready to pardon, but never-the-less, He will judge all the earth righteously and govern people justly, forever.

All judgment has been given to Yahshua the Messiah Who, on the day appointed, will establish the kingdom of heaven on this earth and, as King of kings, rule over the kingdoms of the world forever.

Yahweh does not change. His will has not changed either! Yahshua does only His Father's will and He said,

For whosoever shall do the will of My Father which is in heaven, the same is My brother, and sister, and mother, Matt. 12:50.

What does Scripture say about those whom Yahshua accepts as brethren?

Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life, John 5:24.

And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Yahshua, and for the word of Yahweh, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Messiah a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of Yahweh and of Messiah, and shall reign with Him a thousand years, Rev. 20:4-6.

Yes, John 5:24 and Revelation 20:4-6 tell us that people Yahshua accepts as brethren do not come into judgment and will rule with Him for 1,000 years.

What is Yahweh's will? Yahweh has not allowed the false pen of the scribe to hide it from us. Paul says we can know Yahweh's will and even prove it by not being conformed to the ways of this world.

For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace, Rom. 8:5-6.

Romans 8:5-6 explains Yahweh's will as no

longer living according to our sinful natures with our minds set on worldly desires. This is amplified by the statement that the mind of a sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace.

John said that Yahweh so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Because John's statement does not countermand Paul's, the person who desires to receive eternal life must do two things:

- Believe on the Son.
- Allow Yahweh's Spirit to control the mind.

Nothing is impossible with Yahweh. So, why didn't He just will that we shall all live forever? Yahweh says the soul that sins shall die, but He made it possible to atone for sin and live by providing sacrifice for sin. Hence, Yahweh has willed that the choice of eternal life or death be left for each individual to make. If He had willed otherwise, we would have no choice!

New Covenant Prohibits Sin

Laws for sacrifice to atone for unwitting sins were included in the Old Covenant,

And if any soul sin through ignorance, then he shall bring a she goat of the first year for a sin offering. And the priest shall make an atonement for the soul that sinneth ignorantly, when he sinneth by ignorance before Yahweh, to make an atonement for him; and it shall be forgiven him. Ye shall have one law for him that sinneth through ignorance, both for him that is born among the children of Israel, and for the stranger that sojourneth among them, Num. 15:27-29.

The choice of life or death, however, was still contingent upon obedience or disobedience, Deuteronomy 30:10-30. Would it be righteous justice (fair to all) to rescind the requirement of obedience to law in the New Covenant because His Son made the atoning sacrifice?

Old Covenant Israelites surely had faith in the efficacy of the sacrifice for sin that Yahweh commanded in His law. Why is the New Covenant believer, who accepts Yahshua's sacrifice for sin, urged not to continue in sin if the requirement of obedience to law has been removed?

As Paul says, justification is not given because of observing the law, but because of faith in Yahshua

the Messiah,

Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Yahshua Messiah, even we have believed in Yahshua Messiah, that we might be justified by the faith of Messiah, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified, Galatians 2:16.

Put this statement with Ephesians 5:2 (*“And walk in love, as Messiah also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to Yahweh for a sweet smelling savour.”*) and it is evident that Paul means faith in the atoning efficacy of Yahshua's sacrifice for sin redeems the sinner.

We are all sinners, whether Jew or Gentile. We all need the loving compassion and mercy of the Judge Who has provided atonement for sin and shown us that perfect obedience is not required to be judged worthy to receive His gift of eternal life. He demands willing efforts to obey Him and even gives us His Holy Spirit to help in our efforts.

Our love for Yahweh is proven by obedience. But without His Spirit controlling our minds, our obedience tends to become merely an outward appearance of righteousness that masks an inward hypocrisy and wickedness.

To be counted worthy not to come into judgment, the Spirit must be allowed to control the mind and followed regardless of the cost in worldly pleasures and wealth.

A major obstacle to understanding how Yahweh can be both merciful and just has long been the difficulty in comprehending how the Bible can say,

No harm befalls the righteous, but the wicked have their fill of trouble, Proverbs 12:21.

Another Scripture that is equally true, says,

But it happened because of the sins of her prophets and the iniquities of her priests, who shed

within her the blood of the righteous, Lamentations 4:13.

"Her" in this verse refers to the nation of Judah. As for the nation, both the righteous and the unrighteous suffered the consequences of national sins by being taken into the Babylonian captivity.

In Matthew 13, Yahshua says Yahweh allows the wheat and the tares (righteous and unrighteous) to grow in the same field.

But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also, Matt. 13:25-26.

In Matthew 5:45 He tells us that Yahweh sends His rain (blessings) on both the righteous and unrighteous,

That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for

He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust, Matt. 5:45.

Is it an injustice for Yahweh to allow both the righteous and the unrighteous to suffer the consequences (curses) of national sins when He, metaphorically speaking, shuts up the sky so that it doesn't rain on the field?

What does Yahweh mean in Ezekiel 14:13-14 by *"...if a country sins against Me by being unfaithful and I stretch out My hand against it. ...even if these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they could save only themselves by their righteousness"*? Such questions cannot be correctly answered without first understanding what compassion, mercy, and justice are.

Compassion, Mercy, Justice


Compassion is a deep feeling of sympathy and sorrow for another's suffering and calamity, accompanied by a desire to alleviate the pain and remove its cause. It is because of His compassion for us that Yahweh has alleviated the cause of death.

He made death easier to avoid by giving His Son as a totally satisfying atonement for sins and by giving His Holy Spirit to help overcome the weakness of the flesh and resist continuing in sin.

Mercy is the discretionary power of a judge to pardon or mitigate punishment. Even in the New Covenant the punishment for sin is death. The One to Whom all judgment has been given says there is only one sin He cannot forgive and that is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.

For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the

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Mini Study 

The New Covenant

WHAT IS IT?

A covenant is often described as "An agreement between two or more parties outlining mutual rights and responsibilities." The Old Testament lists several covenants between individuals such as David and Jonathan; King David and Abner; King Solomon and Shemei, one of his subjects, but our interest is in the Covenant with Yahweh. The common word for covenant in Hebrew is berith; in Greek it is diatheke, meaning "last will and testament," both are understood as covenants.

It is Yahweh Who initiates His covenants; first with Noah, (Gen. 9:8-17), then Abram (Gen. 15 and 17), and later with Abraham's descendants, the Israelites of Exodus (19-24). It is this covenant which holds our interest, for it is the same covenant Yahweh made years ago with ancient Israel which the present-day Jews give lip-service, but do not fully keep. Yahweh emphasizes He will make a new Covenant with the house of Israel (10 tribes) and the house of Judah, (2 tribes). Note that in giving the house of Israel the law at Sinai, Yahweh considered Himself Israel's husband (Ezek. 16:8).

THE NEW COVENANT

The book of Hebrews has the most to say about the New Covenant:

"For if that first covenant had been faultless, then would no place have been sought for a second. For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith Yahweh, when I will make a New Covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith Yahweh." (Heb. 8:7-9 AV)

Comprehending Israel's failure at Mt. Sinai is the key to knowing what the New Covenant was to correct. History provides a record of Israel's failure in keeping the Old Covenant. Within 40 days Israel broke the Covenant they had

adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses. Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden underfoot the Son of Yahweh, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? (Heb. 10:26-29).

Any reader of Hebrews 10:26-29 should understand that blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is resisting the Spirit's lead by deliberately (knowingly or defiantly) continuing in sin.

Justice is the administration of fair and proper reward or punishment for obedience or disobedience to standards of right and wrong stated in terms of laws, rules, and agreements that apply to persons who could be wronged or unduly favored by malfeasance. Wouldn't Old Covenant Israelites be wronged and New Covenant Israelites unduly favored by removing from the New Covenant the requirement to obey Yahweh's laws? Doesn't the change in the sacrifice and the opening of the covenant to the Gentiles correct an injustice?

Were the Gentiles wronged by being excluded from the Old Covenant? Were the Israelites unduly favored by being chosen?

When all that has happened to Israelis considered, one can't help wondering, where is the justice in being chosen? How could a loving, compassionate, just, and omnipotent Elohim even allow—let alone claim responsibility for—the terrible sufferings and calamities Israel has undergone throughout history?

Now that the covenant has been changed and Gentiles can also become chosen people, the judge says they must take up their burden and follow Him. This doesn't sound too bad until it is tied in with other Scriptures.

Peter tells us not to be surprised by the painful trials we will

have to suffer as Yahshua's followers. Paul says the persecutions and trials we will have to endure will be evidence that Yahweh's judgment is right and we will be counted worthy to enter the kingdom. Paul also says Yahweh will pay back trouble to those who cause us trouble.

Puzzling statements, paradoxes, and seeming contradictions in Yahweh's Word make us wonder whether Yahweh's administration of justice is really beyond our ability to understand it, even in part.

Harmony of Love, Obedience

Efforts to understand must not proceed from the assumption that Yahshua and the apostles were teaching something new and different from what the prophets taught. The emphasis has merely been

shifted! In the Old Covenant it was JUSTICE and LOVE. In the New it is LOVE and JUSTICE.

Old Covenant Israel stressed obedience to law, but without love that obedience degenerated into an outward, even hypocritical, show. Yahshua taught that it is the inward attitude of love that motivates obedience pleasing to Yahweh. If this weren't true, Paul could not say,

Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law, Romans 13:10.

Without love, justice becomes perverted, even if laws are obeyed to the letter. Loveless performance of sacraments, even if founded upon Yahweh's law, would be displeasing for the same reason.

The *agape* (love) taught by Yahshua is definitely not a sentimental effusiveness that is un-mindful of self-interest. This idea may seem unbelievable to many people because they ascribe all the bad things mentioned in 2 Timothy 3:2-4 to self-interest.

For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of Yahweh, 2 Tim. 3:2-4.

Not many people even think about, let alone understand, the different shades of meaning the Greek words translated "love" in these verses have. Paul is not referring to a corruption of *agape*. He is referring to a corruption of "*phildelphia*" (Strong's No. 5360), which is defined as brotherly love and is so translated in Hebrews 13:1:

Let brotherly love continue.

Agape is not a type of love that ignores self-interest. What does Yahshua mean by "*greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends,*" John 15:13?

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Mini Study



Why Grace Leads to Obedience

"Guilty" was the jury's verdict. The judge's sentence: death by lethal injection. For Wey Ward, a convicted murderer, the nightmare of that December day seven years ago had played endlessly through his mind.

In a jealous rage he had taken a man's life. He realized that he deserved the death penalty for what he had done. No amount of agonizing could change that.

Regardless of how many times he pleaded for forgiveness from the victim's family, no matter how much he wished he could relive events, one persistent fact remained. Ward deserved to die. The law was the law. He was guilty of a capital crime and he had to pay the price for his sin.

With nowhere else to turn, he begged mercy from the governor.

"You Have Been Pardoned"

Just 10 minutes before his scheduled execution, Wey Ward heard the most unbelievably wonderful words ever spoken to a condemned man:

"By the grace of the governor of this state, you have been pardoned."

"I can't believe it," he said to himself. "He forgave me!"

Humbly thankful for the gracious pardon, Ward vowed from that point on that he would be a model citizen. And he never was in trouble with the law again.

Although fictitious, the foregoing illustrates the concept of scriptural grace and how it works in the

Why would laying down one's life for friends be a greater expression of *agape* than other acts inspired by love and mercy? The implication is that the life was deliberately laid down in spite of the strongest instinct in human nature—self-preservation! Could such an act be called greater than others if all self-interest were completely ruled out?

Philadelphia Is Not Agape

Agape requires deliberate and sustained self-discipline and self-control to always act humbly with justice and mercy even toward enemies. Yahweh is spirit and *agape*! Without His Spirit controlling us, the natural mind is hostile, sinful, and incapable of knowing anything other than *philadelphia*.

The Greek word translated "love" in Titus 2:4 ("*That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children,*") is *philandros* (No. 5362). *Philandros* is a form of *philadelphia*, but *philandros* implies a much greater selfless affection for family and kinfolk than affection for friends and neighbors.

The use of both *philadelphia* and *agape* in I Peter 1:22 ("*Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently,*") implies that a sincere brotherly love for brethren will become *agape* in a mind controlled by Yahweh's Holy Spirit.

The Greek words translated "love" in 2 Timothy 3:2-4 are *philautos* and *philedonos* (Nos. 5367 and 5369). Paul's use of these words indicates he is referring to a corruption of *philadelphia*. The reference is to people who have allowed the self-interest in brotherly love to degenerate into self-centeredness.

If Yahweh were interested in a creation filled with spiritual beings who worshiped Him because they had no choice, He could have cre-

ated it. But He isn't interested in a creation filled with robots.

He created human beings with freedom to willingly choose to worship and serve Him or to choose to serve their own interests in this world. Yahweh warns that those who choose to serve Him will experience the consequences of their choice, but their names will be written into the Book of Life.

Those who choose not to serve Him will experience the consequences of their choice and eternal death at the judgment. Can the fact that Yahweh will not accept mechanical or unwilling worship or permit the willingly unrighteous to enter His heavenly Kingdom be due to anything other than man's self-interest?

We are created in Yahweh's own image and the choice He has set before us is an appeal to a ba-

sic self-interest in our natures—the wish for eternal life. If Yahweh doesn't have self-interest, why do we? Yahweh is perfect in righteousness and holiness. If we are in His image, how come we aren't righteous and holy?

Yahweh's love is perfect! Our image of His love is made imperfect by sin. Sin is disobedience to His will which He has set before us in His law.

Love Doesn't Cancel Justice

Now understand! The fair and proper administration of reward for obedience and punishment for disobedience proceeds in this order: love, justice, compassion, and mercy. Justice is subordinate to and not canceled by love. The fact that there will be a judgment at the end of the age connotes that neither does compassion and mercy overrule justice.

It should also be understood that there are two levels of love. They are:

- *agape*, which is a spiritual love that comes from above, and
- *philadelphia*, which is human and earthly.

The prophets also wrote about these two types of love in the Old Testament.

On the spiritual level, justice will be administered perfectly with *agape*. On the human level, justice is administered with *philadelphia*. Only when Yahweh's Spirit can inject *agape* into people's minds will human beings be able to administer justice equitably.

Without *agape* even the best intentioned administration of justice will be faulty. With anything less than the highest ethical standards, human administration of justice is often inequitable and many times even perverted into outright injustice.

Yahshua said,
If anyone would come after Me, he must deny himself and take

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Mini Study

Love

How it Fulfills the Law

Are the Ten Commandments replaced by love? Did the Messiah come to teach that we no longer have to obey the Ten Commandments, but merely show love in our life? Did He do away with the Ten Commandments? What does the New Testament teach on this pivotal subject?

The visitor seemed amused that we should be teaching anything about the Ten Commandments. "Don't you know the laws were done away at the cross?" he asked incredulously. "They were only for the Jews anyway, and we are under grace."

Then he added, "If you believe in the New Testament, then you must preach love, for the Savior did away with the law and said we are to love the Father and our neighbor and on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets," he beamed.

Perhaps you have been told this same thing by well-meaning people who feel enlightened, not obligated to obey anything in the Old Testament, sincerely believing that they are not burdened by any law. Their interest is in the New Testament only and they emphasize the grace and love of our Savior.

The Meaning of Love

The source of love is from our Heavenly Father Yahweh who "so loved the world, that he gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16)

John declares that Yahweh is the source of all love, and also writes: "He that loves not knows not Yahweh; for Yahweh is love." (1 John 4:8)

Two distinct words for love appear in the Bible. The Greek word *phileo* means "to have ardent affection

up his stake and follow Me, Matthew 16:24.

He also said,

Honor your father and mother, and love your neighbor as yourself, Matthew 19:19.

Why did Yahshua not say love your neighbor and deny yourself? How can you deny yourself and love yourself? At first glance it appears that Yahshua is contradicting Himself and He would be if love, whether divine or human, were completely devoid of self-interest.

"If" in Matthew 16:24 denotes freewill. Those who willingly follow Yahshua must deny themselves selfish gratification of desires that do wrong to others.

Willingly following Yahshua's example of obedience will mean accepting the burden of trouble, persecution, and self-denial that nonconformity to the ways of this world will bring upon the disciples.

The psalmist wrote the following two Scriptures:

Your love O Yahweh reaches to the heavens, Your faithfulness to the skies, Psalm 36:5.

Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne, love and faithfulness go before You, Psalm 89:14.

"Love" in these two verses is translated from *checed* (Strong's Hebrew No. 2617). *Checed* is translated "mercy" in the KJV of the Bible, but neither translation is incorrect because *checed* has several meanings. One meaning is love or lovingkindness and the other is mercy when used in reference to those in misfortune.

"Throne" indicates government. Psalm 89:14 reveals that Yahweh's government will be administered with righteous justice. Yahweh's throne is presently in heaven, but the kingdom of heaven will be upon this earth and His faithful, lovingkindness, and mercy will encompass both heaven and earth. It will be a government in which Yahweh's purpose will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

That government hasn't been established yet, but it will be when Yahshua returns.

We can be assured that just punishment will be meted out at the beginning of Yahweh's government on earth (Matt. 7:21-23; 25:41-46, 2 Pet. 2:4-12). Peter leaves no doubt about who will be punished ("*But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities,*" 2 Peter 2:10). It will be those who follow the corrupt desires of their sinful nature rather than Yahshua's example of obedience. These despise Yahweh's authority and will not allow His Spirit to control their minds.

A person free to choose between alternatives will act in ways that reflect the thoughts, desires, wishes, impulses, and emotions in

his mind. For this reason, people in a position to exercise free will are responsible for their actions.

It would not be righteous judgment to punish a person for acts compelled by irresistible external causes. Neither would it be right justice to withhold reward for acts that are fruits of choices that please Yahweh.

Shortly after Moses set Yahweh's law before Israel, it was prophesied that most people would not choose life and obey the laws. Yahshua prophesied judgment upon His return for disobedience. Shortly after Yahshua's resurrection, the apostles were predicting that most people would become selfish, lawless, and so depraved they would be swayed by all kinds of evil desires.

People know in their hearts that many of their actions are transgressions of Yahweh's laws. (More than 8 percent of all ordinary everyday shoppers steal by shoplifting from merchants.)

They act as if they believe a loving, merciful, and righteous Judge really will not punish them for doing things He knew from the beginning they would do. They seem to believe that because He gave His Son as a sacrifice for sin that they can continue to transgress Yahweh's laws and be forgiven because they profess to believe in His Son.

Many people who profess to believe the Bible not only believe this misunderstanding, but also believe the law has been taken away in the New Covenant. Some profess to believe in Yahshua, but believe the Bible is the product of man's thinking and that laws, especially moral laws, are relative to the culture and social situation of the time.

Still others who profess to be religious believe that prophecies of judgment were written into the Bible by fanatics. These fanatics couldn't stand seeing happiness and prosperity among those they

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Mini Study



A Matter of Death and Life

Do we really die when we pass away or does our soul live on in heavenly bliss while our loved ones mourn us down here on earth?

Most of my early life I had been bothered by a nagging question. If when we die our souls wait off to a joyful eternity in heaven, then why so much mourning at funerals?

If the popular teaching and belief is that man has an immortal soul, then why do ministers talk about "death" when administering last rites?

And if our soul lives on after we die, what's the point of a resurrection of the "dead," which the Bible speaks of?

We hear people say that good ol' Uncle Ben has died. Is Ben really dead? Or do we go to his funeral just to mourn his lifeless body, while our uncle lives on, rolling around heaven, playing his harp and testing the aerodynamics of his wings?

There he is, lounging serenely, propped up by one arm as he peeks over a cloud's edge and smiles down at those glumly carrying his corpse in a casket. Or at least that's what so many think. They want to believe that the dead aren't actually gone, we just can't see them anymore.

Let's face it. Most people don't like to talk about this subject. They're too into the present: too busy trying to get ahead, raising a family, getting a promotion, working for retirement — going for the gusto of life. The seriousness of the subject weighs heavily on the conscience, and we'd rather not be reminded of our own mortality.

The philosophy is, why worry about it? Just live a decent life, be an honest citizen, do your share, and it will all work out in the end. You'll get to heaven, they believe. But is that true?

considered wicked, so they consoled themselves with the belief that the wicked would be punished by judgment at the end of the age.

Man Wants Gratification

Yahweh knows that people's minds are hostile to Him and His laws and that they will lust for the sensual pleasures of this life. He knows most people will choose what seems real and pleasurable now, rather than deny themselves in hopes of an afterlife that may or may not be real.

This is what demands faith! It takes faith to believe Yahweh exists, even though we cannot see Him. It takes faith to believe that Yahshua's death was really a sacrifice for sin and that there actually is life after death. Without such faith people will merely pay lip service to Him.

If they profess to believe, they will perform perfunctory religious services in the hope that there really is life after death and, if there is judgment of the dead, the Judge will be merciful to them for some good things they have done in deference to Him.

Even though they profess to believe, their actions show Yahweh that, deep down in their hearts, they do not really believe or have the faith it takes to bear the burden real commitment would bring upon them.

Yes, Yahweh knows human nature and can foretell what people will do, but He doesn't want to see anyone die. Even though He has placed people in a position of moral responsibility to choose whether they will follow His Son and live or follow their sinful natures and die, He has told them the consequences of the choice they make.

Because He leaves people free to choose for themselves, it would be unjust to withhold reward for choosing what pleases Yahweh and punishment for a choice that displeases Him. Withholding reward or punishment would be an

injustice that wrongs those who chose to go His way and unduly favor those who chose to go their own way.

Philadelphia Love's Short-falls

It cannot be denied, however, that the actions and religious life of many people demonstrate belief in a Mighty One and a Savior, even though they do not know His Name or His Son's Name or understand the need to call upon these names if they do know them. It is evident these people would worship in spirit and truth if they weren't so deceived by false doctrines that warp their understanding of Scriptures.

The existence of many less blessed people in this life would be a more miserable experience than it is if it were not for the charities and helping hand these would-be

True Worshipers hold out to them. All their good works, however, are motivated by brotherly love (*philadelphia*).

Without spiritual love (*agape*), their brotherly love promotes charities and many compassionate actions on the one hand, but propagates a misunderstanding of mercy on the other that has wrought havoc with man's administration of justice. Is it compassionate, merciful, and just to humiliate and wrong an innocent victim of crime by ignoring the victim's right to justice and unduly favoring the rights of an accused lawbreaker under the law?

The rights of the victim and those of the accused lawbreaker are obviously different. In a sense the victim is above the law, but the accused, if judged guilty after trial, is subject to receiving just punishment under the law.

Grace Principle Perverted


Misguided do-gooders will quickly point to Romans 6:14 (*"For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace."*) and remind us Paul said we are not under the law, but under grace. True, but they do not understand how grace is precisely what puts Yahshua's followers in the same relationship to Yahweh's law as the innocent victim is to man's law.

It is the holy influence of Yahweh's Spirit (grace, from *charis*, Strong's Greek No. 5485) controlling the mind that enables Yahshua's followers to obey the law and avoid becoming subject to judgment under Yahweh's law.

Paul wrote, *"For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more,"* Hebrews 8:12. John concurred, *"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness,"* 1 John 1:9.

Misunderstanding of such Scriptures as these has spawned

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Mini Study 

Civic Responsibility

In a world out of step with the Bible, how far should a True Worshiper go—or not go—in becoming involved in the "system"?

WE LIVE UNDER the influence of an increasingly evil and satanic world. We as followers of the Bible dislike much of what goes on around us.

The government is pledged to aid the weakest or smallest elements of society to ensure that democratic principles and individual rights are upheld. These rights and principles then become the standard imposed upon the rest, who must learn to adjust.

Here are some examples: prayer or references to the Bible in public schools are prohibited; work on the Sabbath is often mandated, and by gaining governmental acceptance of immoral lifestyles, certain groups are gradually forcing the public into condoning behavior the Bible soundly condemns.

Activities of anti-religious groups are carefully guarded by the courts, which uphold their freedom and rights.

What Is the Believer's Role?

At times we may sympathize and even empathize with many who are demonstrating for the homeless or women's rights or against abortions, against wage cut-backs, crime, unfairness, and a host of causes. Yet, should a believer in the Bible get involved in social causes?

We in the United States and other democracies have a right to protest. So, should we spend our time attempting to change the downward plunge of our society? Is it our job to change the world? What does Scripture say?

The question is not whether abortion is wrong. It is wrong. The question is not whether alcohol

the belief that all a believer need do is confess sins committed after baptism to have them forgiven and forgotten. If this is true, what do the following Scriptures mean?

But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken, Matthew 12:36.

So then, each of us will give an account of himself to Yahweh. Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother's way, Romans 14:12-13.

Advocates of the mistaken belief teach that people who love as Yahweh loves and are as merciful as Yahweh is will forgive and forget sins of others just as Yahweh does. The teaching not only sounds good, but it is also spiritually sound doctrine. But the belief that Yahweh will forgive and forget willful and deliberate sins is not sound doctrine.

The belief does not distinguish between willful and unwitting sin. It isn't hard to understand that nonbelievers and those outside the covenant will have to account for even careless words, but if the sins of believers in the covenant are forgotten when forgiven, why do they have to give an account of themselves?

John 5:24 tells us Yahshua's brethren don't even come into judgment. How do they give an account of themselves?

Another misconception fostered by the wrong belief is thinking those who insist upon adherence to high standards of morality are putting stumbling blocks before weaker brethren and passing judgment upon them when explaining to them the error of their ways.

Past Sins Forgiven

A little meditation will reveal how erroneous thinking twists Scriptures to give an appearance of Biblical support for false doctrines.

For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith Yahweh; I will put My laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them Elohim, and they shall be to Me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know Yahweh: for all shall know Me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more, Heb. 8:10-12.

Hebrews 8:12 is referring to the establishment of a New Covenant. Do verses 10-11 tell us Yahweh will put His laws in the minds and hearts of people who will not enter into the covenant?

It follows then that the sins that will be forgiven and forgotten are sins that people committed prior to entering the covenant. John wrote to people already in the covenant. The past sins of these people were forgiven and forgotten and they were declared righteous before Yahweh at baptism.

Would John be telling these New Covenant people they will have to confess past sins to be declared righteous again? No! He is telling them that if they confess the sins they commit after they are in the covenant, Yahweh will forgive their sins and will cleanse them of all unrighteousness. That is, He will correct their thinking and show them the error of their ways.

Now, note this fact: John does not say that sins committed by people in the covenant will be forgotten. Such sins will be forgiven upon confession, but why doesn't John say they will also be forgotten? Could it be because Yahweh will not forget them until the resurrection?

If Yahweh doesn't remember our every word and deed while in the covenant, how could we possibly account for ourselves and be counted worthy to enter into His Kingdom without coming into judg-

ment?

If the New Covenant believer resists the control of Yahweh's Spirit and willfully refuses to accept correction and bring forth the fruits worthy of repentance, the believer will not be counted worthy to take part in the first resurrection, but will come into judgment.

How could Yahweh tell whether a person's fruits are worthy or unworthy unless He remembers the person's words and deeds after baptism? It is simply not valid thinking to assume John means Yahweh will forgive and forget our sins because Hebrews 8:12 says, "*He will remember their sins no more.*"

It is on just such invalid assumptions that most false doctrine is based.

People have latched onto the idea of forgiving and forgetting and use it to justify continuing in sin, but have overlooked or ignored the implication of the phrase, "and purify us from all unrighteousness."

This phrase is really indicative of Yahweh's mercy! If the confessed sinner will yield to the control of His Spirit, Yahweh will, because of His mercy, turn the person's mind to right thinking.

He will spiritually strengthen the person to resist evil desires and temptations to sin that would result in falling from grace.

There is a hymn that says "trust and obey for there is no other way. ..but to trust and obey."

Yahweh leaves us free to choose what we will believe and obey, but we must allow the Holy Spirit He gives us at baptism to influence and control our thinking and actions if we are to choose right and obey in ways that please Him.

Without Yahweh's spiritual influence (grace) our sinful, natural minds will lead us to meeting Yahshua at His judgment throne rather than in the sky.

Elder Ralph Henrie (deceased)



The Legends Of Valentine's Day

Few people who send cards or heart-shaped boxes of chocolates on February 14 realize that Valentine's Day can be traced to ancient heathen customs. Concerning St. Valentine's Day, the *Encyclopedia Americana* says it is a "Christian festival commemorating the martyrdom of a priest named Valentine by Emperor Claudius II on Feb. 14, 270 C.E. The acceptance of St. Valentine as a patron saint of lovers appears to have been accidentally associated with the notion that lads and lasses should choose lovers and exchange gifts according to the medieval European belief that birds began to mate on Feb 14."

The Roman Legends

There were two Valentines, one a priest and the other a bishop. They died on the same day, Feb 14, and in the same way, but three years apart. There is no way of knowing for which man the day received its name.

A few legends are associated with Valentine, as Frank Staff relates in his book, *The Valentine and Its Origin*: "Emperor Claudius issued a decree forbidding people to marry because marriage kept men at home and the emperor wanted all men to be soldiers and to fight for Rome. Valentine ignored this decree and invited young lovers to come to him in secret to be united. These secret marriages were discovered and the emperor commanded Valentine to be thrown in prison and later executed."

Another legend in the same book is a continuation of this story. After his imprisonment Valentine attempted to restore the sight of the keeper's daughter, whom he had befriended. A close friendship ensued and on the morning of his execution Valentine sent written assurances of affection to the keeper's daughter and signed them with the words, "Your Val-

entine."

Whether these legends contain any truth is not known.

Once a Sacrificial Rite

The historical explanation of the Valentine's Day celebration is given in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, by showing a "connection with the Roman fertility festival of Lupercalia (on Feb. 15). In this festival the priest would sacrifice a goat and a dog and would cut thongs from their skins. Men dressed only in goatskins would run among the women, slapping them with the thong. The belief was that a slap from the thong would cure sterility and ease the pain of childbirth."

In his *Antiquities of Rome*, Basil Kennett elaborates on the *Britannica's* account. "The most ancient order of priests were the Luperci, sacred to Pan, with Lupercalia as a feast of purification and the day of celebration was anciently called Februarca. A goat was sacrificed because the deity was supposed to have goat's feet. The dog was sacrificed because they were used to protect the flocks from wolves."

Both words, Lupercalia and Luperci, derive from the same Latin word, Lupercus, meaning wolf.

It appears that as Christianity spread, and to gain followers, the church gave names to these pagan festivals.

The Date Changes

By the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, "In 494 Pope Gelasius I changed the name of Lupercalia to the Feast of the Purification of the Blessed Mary and changed the day of celebration to Feb. 14 to coincide with the martyrdom of Valentine."

This source says that before the Feast of Purification was changed to February 14, it had been

celebrated on February 2. By Luke 2:22-34 and Leviticus 12:2-4, 40 days indicated the end of a mother's days of purification after giving birth to a male child. Counting back 40 days from February 2 one ends at December 25. Whose birthday is celebrated on December 25?

On page 92 of the book, *The Two Babylons*, Alexander Hislop says, "It is admitted by the most learned and candid writers of all parties that the day of the Messiah's birth cannot be determined. Long before the fourth century, and long before the Christian era itself, a festival was celebrated among the heathen, called Saturnalia, in honor of the birth of the son of the queen of the heaven."

Hislop, on page 141 of his book, says that Semiramis was called the queen of heaven and her husband's name was Nimrod. Nimrod is called the son of his wife (Hislop, p. 305). Hence, Nimrod is the son of the queen Semiramis and his birth is actually the one celebrated on December 25, not the Messiah's.

Nimrod and Cupid—Alter Egos

Semiramis was worshipped by the name of Venus and, by Roman mythology, Cupid is the son of Venus (*The Two Babylons*, p. 304).

Of Cupid, the *Encyclopedia Americana* says, "In Roman art and literature, Cupid is a naked and winged infant, armed with a bow and arrows, which he shoots, sometimes indiscriminantly, to inspire love."

The Nimrod of the Scriptures (Gen. 10:8-10) was a mighty hunter who defied Yahweh. Nimrod comes from the Hebrew "*marad*," meaning to rebel, and the weapons of a hunter at this time were bows and arrows.

In Egyptian mythology Nimrod was worshiped under the name Osiris. *The Two Babylons*, on page

188, confirms that the heart was one of the sacred symbols of Osiris when he was born again as the infant divinity.

The Chaldean word for heart is "bel" and Hislop explains (p. 190) that the worship of the "Sacred Heart" was the worship of the "Sacred Bel," the mighty one of Babylon, who died a martyr for idolatry. Hislop also associates Bel with Moloch (Molech), p. 103.

Jeremiah 32:35 and related Scriptures tell us that the worship of Molech is an abomination to Yahweh. Thus, with Cupid as the mighty one of the heart, one can see why the shape of the heart plays such an important role in Valentine's Day.

Come Out of Babylon

Even though the celebrat-

ing of Valentine's Day may seem innocent, by indulging in it one is conforming to practices of a pagan idolatry that originated in Babylon. Such worship Yahweh abhors.

Both 1 Corinthians 10:20-21 and Deuteronomy 32:17 say in strong language that such practices are the same as worshiping demons and we are not to have fellowship with demons or partake of their practices. Yahweh tells His people in Revelation 18:4, "*Come out of her, My people, that you be not partakers of her sins, and that you receive not of her plagues.*"

Accept this call which Yahweh makes. Eliminate from your life those practices tainted with the pagan worship of ancient Babylon. Follow Yahweh so that you may partake of the promises given to those who abide in Yahweh's truth.

Elder Roger G. Meyer

<from **Lunar** page 12>

the 15th to set up camp at other times?

One of the main reasons for setting up camp on the 15th would be that there would enough light to see at night with a fully illuminated moon. It would be as a large flashlight pointing down to the earth, to give light.

It was not proof of a Sabbath day on the 15th, three months in a row, which is so often pointed to. By the way, Joshua 4:19 says they also camped on the 10th day of the month.

Going back to David eating with the king shortly after in 1 Samuel 21:4-6, David and his men ate the showbread. He left on day 3 and went to Nob, which was less than 5 miles away and could have been there within hours. The showbread was sanctified on the Sabbath according to Leviticus 24:8-9. The showbread had just been replaced we're told, placing the

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Mini - Study



To the Heart of Valentine's Day

Every February 14 we see an "angelic" infant with a bow and arrow aiming for the heart of his "valentine." Cupids are everywhere with bows and arrows, heart shapes, paper lace, birds and flowers. All these are associated with St.Valentine's Day. But just where did these symbols and the celebration of the 14th of February come from? Most of all, should we be celebrating this seemingly innocent day on which so many remember sweethearts and lovers?

A Priest with a Heart

The origin of this day is not clear, as there seems to be more than one explanation. The most accepted legend is that a Roman priest named Valentine had a special feeling for young people. When the Roman Empire needed soldiers, Emperor Claudius II decreed that no one could marry or become engaged. Claudius believed that marriage made men want to stay home instead of fighting wars. The kindly Valentine defied the Emperor's decree and secretly performed weddings for a number of young couples. He was arrested, imprisoned, and put to death. Another legend holds that Valentine was aiding persecuted Christians and was imprisoned. A jailer and his family were so impressed by his sincerity that they became Christians themselves. Valentine was fond of the jailer's blind daughter and by a miracle restored her sight. On the morning of his execution he sent her a farewell message signed "From your Valentine." St. Valentine was beheaded on February 14. When he was buried, the story goes, a pink almond tree near his grave burst into bloom as a symbol of lasting love.

February 14 Fertility Festival

February 14, when Valentine is supposed to have died, was also the eve of an important Roman festival, the Lupercalia. On this evening, Roman youths drew names of girls who would be their partners during this spring

weekly Sabbath on the 4th or 5th day of the month.

There is also Paul. Paul related a trip which took the day after the last day of Unleavened Bread in Acts 20:6-7. The math is simple in this one. The question to ask is, "Do the days suggest a Lunar Sabbath count?" One will find they don't.

In the Book of Numbers we find specific Sabbath sacrifices offered. Does Numbers 28:17-23, which shows the 15th, demand a Sabbath offering? This will take a bit more research, but the chapter is pretty much all one needs to answer the question.

Weekly 7th Day Sabbath Established

The weekly Sabbath dates do not fall on the 8th, 15th, 22nd, nor the 29th. This would include the other Lunar Sabbath doctrine dates of the 7th, 14th, 21st, or the 28th, which is based on a similar platform of counting from the new moon to establish weeks.

One final thought brought to

our attention which we do find interesting. Back in early 1900s, this doctrine, though it goes all the way back to Babylon, had a bit of a following according the Anchor Bible Dictionary. And it evidently influenced some other resources, such as the Universal Jewish Encyclopedia and the Jewish Encyclopedia, which are quoted to try to prove the Lunar Sabbath position. What is missing in history, though, is any major or even minor debates. In the Tosefta, Talmud, Mishna writings perhaps? There has been nothing we've ever seen nor heard of, just silence on the matter.

Philo, a first century historian, is quoted to have divided up the moon in sections of seven and, therefore, he must have kept the Lunar Sabbath count, it is said. Philo, it turns out, liked the number 7 and related it in various ways to a number of things, even taking the human body and dividing it 7 ways. And while some of the Lunar Sabbath advocates emphasize that the moon was created before creation week, Philo says, Yahweh made the whole universe in one week.

He himself mentions honoring the 7th day as the command states and refers to the set creation week. He kept the weekly Sabbath, but not according to a lunar count which would make the 7th day a wandering Sabbath.

Finally

If you thought there was trouble with an employer for keeping the set weekly Sabbath, try telling an employer you're going to have to give them a new set of dates each month. Yahweh is not trying to destroy us or make it so difficult that we can't make a living.

He does, however, expect us to study and know His Word, and to live by it. This would include honoring and keeping the 7 annual High Sabbaths in addition to the weekly 7th day Sabbath. It would not include determining the weekly count by the month, as the Babylonians did.

Elder David Brett

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