

The Count to Shavuot or Pentecost – Another View

Part 1

The count to Shavuot or Pentecost must be one of the most controversial issues among those who study the feasts, or appointed times, of our Heavenly Father. It has apparently been an area of contention between various believers in Yah for millennia, so let us be careful and wise when we share the way we believe the Scriptures show it should be counted.

Among those who are labeled 'lunar Sabbath keepers,' there are several ways of understanding and observing the count to Pentecost. Those who judge that the 'Lunar Sabbath' can't be true because they have heard of one way of counting to Pentecost that doesn't meet their understanding of the Scriptures, may be making a premature judgment when they say that the count to Pentecost proves that the 'Lunar Sabbath' cannot be right. If you are in that position or know someone who is, we would like you to prayerfully consider what we share here as another view of the count to Pentecost.

In [part 2](#) of this study 'The Count to Shavuot or Pentecost – Another View,' we will examine another way of counting to Pentecost that is used among some Lunar Sabbath keepers. It begins on the 16th day of the first month with a count of seven Sabbaths complete, and from the day after that, a count of fifty days. This indicates a straight count of more than 100 days between the Wavesheaf of the barley harvest and the first fruits of the wheat harvest. Some people claim that this way of counting to Pentecost doesn't have a scriptural and historical foundation, and reject what they call 'the Lunar Sabbath' because of it. In the second study, we will review everything the Torah says about Shavuot or Pentecost, and then look at the other claims of the Scriptures and history to see if this understanding of the count to Pentecost has a solid foundation.

Results of Research

The count to Shavuot or Pentecost may seem to be pretty clear to those who have never studied the controversy. Until we look at the various ways of counting, it seems that the only reasonable count to Pentecost is the way those in our particular fellowship observe and teach it. We have recently been considering more of the information available on the internet and the various claims made by those of various persuasions. These conflicting claims may cause any serious student of the Scriptures to wonder why so many differences, when the scriptural commands seem to be so straightforward.

In this presentation, we are not taking 'the Pharisee position' or 'the Sadducee position' on the count to Shavuot or Pentecost. It appears to us that both are right in their emphasis in one area or the other, but both are also overlooking a key piece of Scriptures confirmed with history which could bring them to a

different final conclusion than they now hold. We will review the Scriptures and pertinent aspects of history to help us understand both views, and then consider another view that may help us put this information together.

Shavuot & Shabuwa

We will begin by looking at the Hebrew word Shavuot and certain patterns that are shown in relationship to it in the Scriptures.

The Hebrew word for Shavuot comes from **shabuwa** (or shavua), meaning 'sevens.' This word is translated 'week' in the Scriptures. Shavuot is the plural form of shavua or **shabuwa**, and is used to indicate more than one week.

The Hebrew word **shabuwa**, translated week, generally consists of six work days and the seventh-day Sabbath. There is also a land Sabbath; a cycle of six years and the seventh year Sabbath. The Jubilee year was the fiftieth year after seven sets of seven years, in which the people were to sow their fields for six years and let the land rest on the seventh year. During the Jubilee year, the land was to rest again, and they were not to sow their fields that year (*Leviticus 25*). The count to Shavuot, also called the feast of weeks, reflects the commands for the land Sabbaths and the 50th year Jubilee. It has seven sets of seven days, and the next day is the fiftieth, which is also proclaimed a rest.

The common pattern for a **shabuwa** is six work days and the seventh day of rest; when the people are free from their common work to spend time together as a family and gather for a holy convocation. When we look at the scriptural count to Shavuot or the Feast of Weeks, we will find that after seven sets of seven are counted, it appears that the next day is also a rest day, 'an holy convocation.'

Considering the Scriptural Count

Now let us look at a couple of passages that dovetail to paint a picture of the count to Shavuot.

"Seven weeks shalt thou number unto thee: begin to number the seven weeks from such time as thou beginnest to put the sickle to the corn. And thou shalt keep the feast of weeks unto the LORD thy God with a tribute of a freewill offering of thine hand... And thou shalt rejoice before the LORD thy God... in the place which the LORD thy God hath chosen to place his name there..." Deuteronomy 16:9-11

"Also in the day of the firstfruits, when ye bring the new meat offering unto the LORD, after your weeks be out, ye shall have a holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work." Numbers 28:26

Let us put these passages together. Deuteronomy 16 tells us *'to number seven weeks from such time as you begin to put the sickle to the corn.'* This is most

commonly understood as the barley harvest. [Numbers 28:26](#) tells us that the day of first fruits is ‘*after your weeks be out.*’ With these two passages, we have seven weeks, and after the count of the weeks is finished, the next day is the feast of weeks or Shavuot. These passages support what is called ‘the Pharisee position.’

Let us see what is said about this feast in [Leviticus 23](#).

“And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying: Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then shall ye bring a sheaf of firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest. On the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it...And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete: Even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days...and ye shall proclaim on the selfsame day, that it may be an holy convocation unto you: ye shall do no servile work therein: it shall be a statute for ever in all your dwellings throughout your generations.” Leviticus 23:9-21

Here we have another piece to the puzzle. The weeks of the passage above are related to the Sabbath. You begin your count of seven complete weeks on the day after the Sabbath. Then after the seventh Sabbath, you have the Feast of Weeks. This follows the pattern of the land Sabbaths and the Jubilee. This passage supports what is called ‘the Sadducee position.’

Perplexity & Two Common Conclusions

We have looked at all of the passages above that are in the Torah (the first five books of the Scriptures, also called ‘the law’ or ‘the law of Moses,’) regarding the timing of Shavuot. The count to the Feast of Weeks is anchored in the Feast of Unleavened Bread, on the day after the Sabbath. The Wavesheaf is to be offered on that day.

Now we will look at the difficulty between the two most prevalent ways of counting to Pentecost.

One group – who espouse ‘the Pharisee position’ - begins the count of fifty days from the 16th day of the first month, after the annual Sabbath on the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread [FUB]. They emphasize the passages in Numbers and Deuteronomy, above, and **shabuwa** – 7620 - defined as “*sevened or a week (specifically of years).*” [The Strong’s Concordance] They understand the count to be seven straight weeks or seven sets of seven days plus one day, from the day after the ‘annual Sabbath’ of the 15th, regardless of what day of the modern week it happens to fall upon.

For example, if the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread happens to fall upon a Monday, the seven week count would begin with Tuesday, so that the 49th day of the count is on a Monday, and the 50th day is on a Tuesday. The emphasis here is on the **shabuwa** or week, meaning 'a seven day period of time.' In their minds, the 'Sabbath' of Leviticus begins with the annual Sabbath on the 15th, and the next day begins the count of the weeks of Deuteronomy.

Historians Supporting 'the Pharisee Position'

'The Pharisee position' uses the testimony of Jewish historians who lived before the destruction of Jerusalem to verify their understanding of beginning the count to Pentecost on the 16th day of the month, because that is the day they put the sickle to the corn. Let us review their testimonies here.

"But on **the second day** of unleavened bread, which is **the sixteenth day** of the month, they first partake of the fruits of the earth, for before that day they do not touch them." Josephus – *Antiquities of the Jews* Book 3 chapter 10, section 5. (Josephus was a Pharisee, which might have something to do with why the count to Pentecost beginning on the sixteenth day of the first month is called 'the Pharisee position'.)

XXIX. "There is also a festival on **the day** of the **paschal feast** [during the feast of unleavened bread] **which succeeds the first day**, and this is named the sheaf, from what takes place on it; for the sheaf is brought to the altar as a firstfruit both of the country which the nation has received for its own, and also for the whole land." Philo – *Special Laws* 2:29 (162) [Philo lived between 20 BC and AD 50, and was an adult contemporary of our Messiah.]

We have seen the testimony of two witnesses who lived before the destruction of Jerusalem showing that the 16th day of the first month was understood to begin the count to Pentecost during the time of our Messiah.

Scriptural Support for 'the Sadducee Position'

Another group – who espouse 'the Sadducee position' - begins the count of fifty days after the first Saturday-Sabbath of the modern week that falls within the feast of unleavened bread. They emphasize the passage in [Leviticus 23](#), which we quoted above; because the word translated Sabbath is **shabbath** – 7676 meaning "*intermission* – specifically the *Sabbath*." [The Strong's Concordance] They believe that the count is seven full weeks that end with a Sabbath, so they always wind up with the 50th day, Pentecost, on the first day of the week, or Sunday of the modern week we observe today.

This way of counting seven weeks would seem to have a scriptural precedent, because the seven-day cycle - translated week - is six days of work and a rest day. The seven-year cycle of the land Sabbaths is six planting and harvest

years, and a rest year. Then there is the Jubilee or second year of rest in the 50th year. This pattern would coincide perfectly with the commanded count to Shavuot – seven sets of seven plus one day.

Josephus' Historical Note

Let us look at a historical note by Josephus which indicates that Pentecost was honored on the first day of the week before the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70.

Some people believe the passage below indicates that 'the Pharisee position' on the count to Pentecost, which began on the 16th, was always observed by the Hebrews. They say that during the year mentioned, Pentecost happened to fall on the day after the Saturday-Sabbath. Others believe it indicates that 'the Sadducee position' was upheld before the destruction of Jerusalem, and Josephus is indicating that the Pharisee's way of counting was in place by the time his history was written. Let us look at it with that in mind.

“And truly he did not speak falsely in saying so; for **that festival**, which we call **Pentecost**, did then fall out to be **the next day to the Sabbath**: nor is it lawful for us to journey either on the Sabbath-day or on a festival day.”

Josephus – *Antiquities of the Jews* Book XIII chapter VIII section 4.

This passage is not a strong case supporting one position or the other. There is speculative conjecture regarding whether there was an actual change, and if there was, exactly when and why it was changed. We will not examine those arguments here. We will simply note that the Scriptures and historical documentation written by those who lived before the destruction of Jerusalem appear to support both positions; and that some time after the destruction of Jerusalem, the Jews and the Pharisees may no longer have been observing Pentecost on the day after the seventh Sabbath complete.

The present day groups represented by these two ways of counting to Shavuot or the Feast of Weeks, also referred to as Pentecost, present good reasons why they do it that way and provide historical information indicating that it was done that way. Each position may put forward convincing arguments showing that the weight of the scriptural and historical evidence supports their view of the count to Pentecost.

Considering Both Positions - Review

'The Pharisee position' begins their count of seven weeks on the day after the first annual Sabbath of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and celebrates Pentecost on any day of the modern week. 'The Sadducee position' begins their count after what they understand to be the seventh-day Sabbath during the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and celebrates Pentecost on a Sunday of the modern week.

Occasionally, both groups honor the same day of Pentecost. This is when the 15th day of the first month on the Hebrew lunar-solar calendar falls upon a Saturday of the Gregorian calendar, and the 16th is on a Sunday.

When we take the weight of the evidence, which indicates that the 'weeks' of Shavuot should be counted from the first day of the week through the seventh-day Sabbath, there is a perplexity. Historically, the count began on the 16th day of the first month, which is called 'the Pharisee position' today. However, there is also evidence that the end of the count was on the day 'next to' the Sabbath, most often believed to be Sunday – or the first day of the week - which is called 'the Sadducee position' today. This understanding is carried through by the Karaite movement of our time.

With all that said, we have only read about these ideas regarding the differences between the Pharisees and Sadducees in more recent history. We have found no record in history contemporary to our Messiah that there was any type of controversy between the Pharisees and the Sadducees regarding the count to Pentecost. This omission may be significant when we look at more evidence regarding the understanding of weeks during the time of our Messiah, which we note below.

Putting It All Together – Looking at More Evidence

When we understand ancient timekeeping or calendation, we will see that both groups – those espousing what they call 'the Pharisee position,' and those espousing what they call 'the Sadducee position' - may have a piece of the puzzle. However neither one seems to realize that there is a piece missing in their understanding. This is because they assume, like most of us, that the seven-day week ending with Saturday on our modern calendar is the same as the seventh day of the Hebrew week before the destruction of Jerusalem. We would like to share with you just a bit of evidence that should encourage you to dig deeper, to see if these things are so.

We are going to make a very unusual statement, so bear with us while we show the foundation for it. The 16th day of the first month was always on the first day of the Hebrew week during the time of our Messiah. This is because the seventh day of the Hebrew week was always on the 15th day of the first month. This is not commonly understood, so we will review some evidence of this here.

Philo (20 BC - AD 50) was a Jewish historian that lived during the time of our Messiah. He tells us about moon phases and their relationship to the week. He also verifies what we have stated above, which shows that the 16th day of the first lunar month was always the first day of the Hebrew's week.

Philo, Moon Phases & the Seventh Day

“The moon... perfects... in its own configurations on each seventh day...”
Works of Philo [translated by C.D. Yonge] *Allegorical Interpretation I*, IV (8, 9) / VI (16) pp. 25-26








This looks like a commentary on the moon's shape during the month, and by itself doesn't give us the big picture, so let us look further into Philo's testimony.

Philo Again – Passover & the Moon

“For it is said in the Scripture: On **the tenth day** of this month let each of them take a sheep according to his house; in order that **from the tenth**, there may be consecrated to the tenth, that is to [YHWH], the sacrifices which have been preserved in the soul, which is **illuminated in two portions out of the three**, until it is entirely changed in every part, and becomes a heavenly brilliancy like a full moon, at the height of its increase at the end of the second week”.

On Mating with the Preliminary Studies, XIX (102)... p. 313

Philo shows above that the tenth day of the month is related to the moon's 2/3 portion of illumination, and end of the second week is related to the full moon during the time of Passover in the first month of the Hebrew year. See the diagram below.

The Moon During the Second Week for Passover						
1 st Day 9 th	2 nd Day 10 th	3 rd Day 11 th	4 th Day 12 th	5 th Day 13 th	6 th Day 14 th	Sabbath 15 th
						
Waxing Moon	Two-thirds illuminated	Waxing Gibbous			becomes full moon (height of increase)	7 th Day – Full Moon (height of increase)

Philo tells us about one of the two feasts that begins on the 15th day of the month.

“And this feast is begun **on the fifteenth day of the month**, in the **middle of the month**, on the day on which **the moon is full of light**, in consequence on the providence of [Yah] taking care that there shall be no darkness on that day.”

[Philo's Special Laws II, The Fifth Festival, section XXVIII (155)]

The Scriptures tell us that both of the seven-day feasts (Unleavened Bread and Tabernacles) begin on the 15th day of their respective months. (See [Leviticus 23:5-6 & 34.](#)) Philo gives us a second witness that those in Judea were still being honored on the same dates as Yah commanded during the time of our Messiah. He also gives us another aspect of the week and the 15th day of month.








The Sabbath & Feasts of Unleavened Bread & Tabernacles

“But to the **seventh day of the week** He [YHWH] has assigned the **greatest festivals**, those of the longest duration, at the periods of the equinox both vernal and autumnal in each year; appointing two festivals for these two epochs, **each lasting seven days**; the one which takes place in the spring being for the perfection of what is being sown, and the one which falls in autumn being a feast of thanksgiving for the bringing home of all the fruits which the trees have produced.”

Philo- *The Decalogue XXX (159)*

Philo tells us that Yah assigned the two longest festivals to the seventh day of the week. He also tells us that the seventh day of the week, or the Sabbath, begins the seven-day festivals in the spring and fall of the year. The 15th day of the month begins the spring and autumn feasts – the Feast of Unleavened Bread and the Feast of Tabernacles.

Philo tells us that the moon is full on the fifteenth day of the month, and that the feast is begun on that day. This is what the moon looked like during the seven day feasts:

FEASTS OF UNLEAVENED BREAD & TABERNACLES						
Sabbath 15 th	1 st Day 16 th	2 nd Day 17 th	3 rd Day 18 th	4 th Day 19 th	5 th Day 20 th	6 th Day 21 st
						
1 st Day Full Moon	2 nd Day	3 rd Day	4 th Day waning gibbous	5 th Day	6 th Day	7 th Day

Let us connect the dots and put this together.

The seventh day of the week, which comes at the end of the second week of each month, is a full moon Sabbath according to Philo. It is also the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread and the Feast of Tabernacles.

Do the Scriptures indicate anything like this? [Psalm 81:3-6](#) tells us in context that the full moon was on the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread when the children of Israel came out of Egypt.

“Blow up the trumpet in the new moon, in the time appointed, on our solemn feast day.” KJV

“Blow the trumpet at the new moon, at the full moon, on our feast day.”
ESV

“Blow the ram’s horn at the time of the New Moon, At the full moon, on our festival day.” The Scriptures 1998

Philo’s witness above confirms the Scriptures, the Encyclopedias, and other historical notes that you may examine in our article *‘The Sabbath in History – Taking Up the Sabbath Challenge,’* which is available upon request.

These testimonies of Philo, and the Scriptures, above, mesh together to show us that the Hebrew people during the time of our Messiah were observing a lunar month with the second Sabbath on the 15th day of the month, which was also the full moon day. This indicates that the 16th day of the first month was always after the Sabbath of the 15th during the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

Now that we have seen that the seventh-day Sabbath was tied to the feasts and the moon phases, we will look at Philo’s testimony on the count to Pentecost.

Philo’s Testimony on the Count to Pentecost.

Please note that Philo isn’t explaining ‘the Pharisee position’ or ‘the Sadducee position.’ He is simply explaining how the count to Pentecost was done during his time. He tells us when the nation of Judah offered the wave sheaf and how it was counted.

“There is also a festival **on the day** of the paschal feast, **which succeeds the first day**, and this is named **the sheaf**, from what takes place on it; for the sheaf is brought to the altar as a **first fruit**, both of the country from which the nation has received as its own, and of the whole land...” The Works of Philo Special Laws II, Yonge’s Translation – Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody MA 1993 p. 583

Just for comparison and two witnesses, we will note that Josephus agrees with this view in his own words, and ties in the dates of the lunar month with the dates of the lunar month and the wavesheaf:

“The **feast of unleavened bread succeeds** that of the **Passover**, and falls on **the fifteenth day** of the month, and continues seven days, wherein they feed on unleavened bread...But **on the second of unleavened bread**, which is **the sixteenth day** of the month, they first

partake of the fruits of the earth, for before that, they do not touch them...
Josephus – *Antiquities of the Jews* – Book III chapter 10, sections 5-6

With these two witnesses, one calling the time of the Feast of Unleavened Bread ‘the paschal feast,’ and both telling us that the second day of the feast is related to the first fruits, let us look at the Feast of Unleavened Bread below:

Paschal Feast – also called Feast of Unleavened Bread						
Sabbath 15 th	1 st Day 16 th	2 nd Day 17 th	3 rd Day 18 th	4 th Day 19 th	5 th Day 20 th	6 th Day 21 st
						
1 st Day Full Moon	2 nd Day Wave Sheaf Festival	3 rd Day	4 th Day waning gibbous	5 th Day	6 th Day	7 th Day

This shows that the count to Pentecost began on the day of the wave sheaf, which was after the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

Philo goes on to explain the way the count to Pentecost works.

“The solemn assembly **on the festival of the sheaf**, having such great privileges, is a prelude to another festival of still greater importance; for **from this day, the fiftieth day is reckoned**, making up the sacred number of **seven sevens, with the addition of a unity** as a seal to the whole; and this festival, being of the first fruits of the corn has derived its name from the number fifty (*pentecostos*).” The Works of Philo Special Laws II, Yonge’s Translation – Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody MA 1993 p. 584-585

Please note that we have looked at Philo’s understanding of weeks and that they are related to the moon’s cycles. Therefore, he may have easily been counting seven sets of seven weeks that ended with the Sabbaths. These seven sets of seven weeks included 49 days within them and the next day is the fiftieth day.

Josephus’ Testimony on the Count to Pentecost

Please note that Josephus is writing about the way the count to Pentecost was done during his time. He doesn’t say that this was ‘the Pharisee position.’ In fact, he doesn’t note anything about a controversy for the count to Pentecost between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, even though there are other differences between them noted in his writings.

“The **feast of unleavened bread succeeds** that of **the Passover**, and falls on **the fifteenth day** of the month, and continues seven days,

wherein they feed on unleavened bread...But **on the second of unleavened bread**, which is **the sixteenth day** of the month, they first partake of the fruits of the earth, for before that, they do not touch them... When **a week of weeks** has passed after this sacrifice (**which weeks contain forty and nine days**), on the **fiftieth day**, which is **Pentecost**, but is called by the Hebrews *Asartha*, which signifies Pentecost, they bring to God a loaf..." Josephus – *Antiquities of the Jews* – Book III chapter 10, sections 5-6

Please note here that Josephus uses the same type of language that Philo does in showing seven sevens, plus a unity. Josephus says this in a different way. He says that a week of weeks, or seven weeks, contain 49 days, then the fiftieth day is Pentecost or Asartha. This indicates that Shavuot, or Feast of Weeks, is primarily concerned with counting seven weeks complete, plus one day.

Tying it All Together

Let us consider the background for this curious way of expressing a fifty-day count. If we understand Philo's count to the Feast of Weeks as beginning the day after the seventh-day Sabbath on the 16th, as shown in the section above, and ending after seven Sabbaths complete, as shown by the fiftieth day being a unity or crown of the whole, we may understand why the language of both Philo and Josephus seems a bit curious. Please note that both of them made sure we know that there are 49 days within the seven weeks before the 50th day.

Philo explained that the end or seventh day of the second week on the Hebrew's calendar was on the full moon, on the 15th day of the month, and that both the Feast of Unleavened Bread and the Feast of Tabernacles began on that day.

Josephus made clear that we are counting the forty nine days within the seven weeks, and then counting the fiftieth day. He could have simply stated it the way most people think of it – with a straight fifty day count – if that was what he intended us to understand. That there were forty-nine days included in seven weeks would not have needed to be clarified, if the weeks he was explaining were on an uninterrupted cycle of seven days like our modern weeks are today.

Why the Careful Explanations?

Let us take a bit of time to consider why Philo and Josephus felt they needed to explain the timekeeping for this count to Pentecost.

The nations around the Judeans didn't count their weeks exactly the same way the Hebrews did. There were two other commonly understood ways of timekeeping in the nations around Israel or Judea during their lifetimes. One was the Julian calendar – which was the Roman civil solar-only calendar, which had months that were not related to the moon's phases, and an eight-day market week at that time. Those familiar with this calendar would have needed to

understand that the Hebrew months and weeks were related to the moon's phases, and that the weeks within the months were seven days long.

The other way of understanding weeks was the religious lunar calendar of some of the populace, which had a seven-day week that began on the new moon with Saturn's day and cycled through the month, resetting with Saturn's day on the next new moon. Those honoring the pagan planetary week would have needed to understand that the first day of the Hebrew month was the new moon, not the first day of the week and month; and that the weeks were counted differently. The full moon of the Hebrew month was on the seventh day of the week and the fifteenth day of the month, instead of on Saturn's day – which was the first day of the planetary week during that time. We will compare these two below.

The original pagan lunar calendar, with the planetary week included, would have the same dates tied with the same weekdays for every day of the month. Below is a calendar showing the original planetary week that Dio Cassius explained in his writings. He was a Roman historian who described Saturn's day before Constantine brought the 'Christian planetary week' into the Roman civil calendar in AD 321. Each month would have looked something like this...

The Chaldean Planetary Week & Month

Saturn	Sun	Moon	Mars	Mercury	Jupiter	Venus
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)					

So how does this planetary week/lunar month calendar compare with the original Hebrew seventh-day Sabbath?

The Scriptural Week & Month

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Prep.	*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)

*1 – The New Moon is in the Sabbath column because it is not one of the 6 workdays. Prep= 6th day or preparation day for the Sabbath.

Please note above that the starred days for the planetary week on Saturn's day line up with the New Moon and Sabbath days for the Hebrews in Judea.

The Julian solar-only calendar with an eight-day market week was implemented in 46 BC. It didn't change to the common ways of counting lunar months and weeks for the Hebrews or those that honored the pagan planetary week. The modern seven-day week, called 'the Christian planetary week' begins with Sunday and ends with Saturday. It is not related to the moon, nor did it officially replace the civil eight-day market week until Constantine changed the Julian calendar in AD 321.

For a more complete understanding of the historical records tying in with scriptural timekeeping, we would like to refer you to an article called *["The Sabbath in History – Taking up the Sabbath Challenge."](#)* It gives more historical documentation which, when taken together and connecting the dots, shows that the nation of Judea was honoring the seventh-day Sabbath according to the original lunar month during our Saviour's time.

["The Original Timepiece & the Sabbath Day"](#) shows the way that the ancients read the lights in the heavens to announce His appointed times. We use the same principles to recognize His Sabbaths today.

A Common Mistake

When we assume that the seventh day of the Hebrew week has always been like the modern Saturday on the present Gregorian calendar, and read that idea into the issues between the Pharisees and Sadducees before the destruction of Jerusalem, we overlook the key that ties all the Scriptural passages in the Torah regarding the Feast of Weeks together. We may find ourselves following the claims of one tradition or another, neither of which is solidly based on the whole picture of the Scriptures. We may also overlook the actual day of Shavuot or the Feast of Weeks that our Saviour honored.

The Scriptural Solution

When we count the Feast of Weeks according to the scriptural Sabbaths on the lunar-solar calendar used during our Saviour's time, the seven-week count from the 16th day of the first month, and 'seven Sabbaths complete' that end with the Sabbath may be accounted for, and both come up to the same 50th day!

This understanding of the count to Pentecost appears to be confirmed by both Philo and Josephus, if we understand how they thought of weeks during that time in history. This is why they both clarified that there were 7 weeks – seven sets of seven days – equaling 49 days, and then the 50th day in the count to Pentecost.

The weeks that Philo and Josephus were referring to for the Feast of Weeks, or the count to Pentecost, are shown in the diagrams below.

Month #1 - Abib							
Shabuwa/ Week #	1 st day	2 nd day	3 rd day	4 th day	5 th day	6 th day	New Moon or Sabbath
							1
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
2	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
							(30)

Note above: We begin our count of weeks on the 16th day of the first month. There are two full weeks noted in the first month. Note that the days within the week are counted to come to 2 complete weeks above. There are 14 days included within two weeks.

Month #2							
Shabuwa/ Week #	1 st day	2 nd day	3 rd day	4 th day	5 th day	6 th day	New Moon or Sabbath
							1
3	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
4	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
5	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
6	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
							(30)

Note above: With the two weeks from the first month, Abib, and the 4 weeks from the second month, we have come to six full weeks by the end of the second month.

Month #3							
Shabuwa/ Week #	1 st day	2 nd day	3 rd day	4 th day	5 th day	6 th day	New Moon or Sabbath
							1
7	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)

Note above that the end of seven weeks is on the 8th, the first Sabbath of the third month.

Please note that in the diagrams above (on pg 14) the 30th day and the 1st day of the month are not included within the weeks. The count of the days within the seven weeks is indicated when the passage says 'seven weeks complete.'

If we were to count the days of each week from the 16th day of the first month until the 8th day of the third month, we would count 49 days. This accounts for the curious way that Josephus and Philo made clear that there were seven days in each week, and seven sets of seven days were counted, plus one day making 50 days. However, if we were to count the days not included in the week, we would have a few more than 49 days. Note that there would be at least 51 days, depending on the length of each moon cycle. The Scriptures tell us that the count is of 'seven weeks complete' until the Feast of Weeks.

This view of the Count to Shavuot or Pentecost digs into the Scriptures and history, and takes into account more calendar information contemporary to our Messiah's time than is commonly understood. We encourage you to take the time to prayerfully examine the big picture.

May the Father bless you as you study [The Original Timepiece](#) for yourself; compare scripture with scripture and verify with history, to see if these things are so. The Bereans were commended in Acts for searching the Scriptures to see if the things Paul taught were so, and we have been blessed in our studies. We have learned much through the Scriptures and history about how ancient timekeeping worked and would be pleased to share any of these articles and presentations with you, upon request.

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