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Historical Festival of Weeks



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Festival of 7 Weeks

The harvest (as described by authors who flourished under the 2nd Temple) is shown to have been tracked and celebrated in specific stages, or in time segments, of 50 days each. To be more specific, the priestly presentation of the firstfruits of grain, and wine (grapes), and oil (olives) is described to have always been offered in pace with a cycle of 50-days.

Throughout the annual harvest of grain, wine, and oil, the 50th day (a day of the 'new' offerings) was a specially celebrated day. This special day, as a Sabbath, was celebrated apart or out from a cycle of 7 sets of 7 days (or a count of 49 days). The celebration of a Sabbath (on day 50) was described by an early Christian bishop--as follows:

> "The children of the Hebrews do honor to the number Seven . . . this honor which they pay to it is not confined to days alone, but also extends to years . . . that belonging to years is shewn by the seventh year, the year of Release; and it consists not only of Hebdomads ['Sevens'], but of Hebdomads of Hebdomads [7 times 7 days or 49 days], alike in days and years. The Hebdomads of days give birth to Pentecost [a Greek term which literally means ' a count of 50'], **a day called holy** among them; and those of years to what they call the Jubilee, which also has a release of land, and a manumission of slaves, and a release of possessions bought. For this nation consecrates to God, not only the firstfruits of offspring, or of firstborn, but also those of days and years. Thus the veneration paid to the number Seven gave rise also to the veneration of Pentecost. For seven being multiplied by seven generates fifty all but one day, which we borrow from the world to come, at once the Eighth and the first, or rather ONE and indestructible. For the present sabbatism of our souls can find its cessation there, that a portion [of Sabbath time] may be given to seven and also to eight..." (Oration XLI: On Pentecost, II by Nazianzen--my paraphrase).]

Because the 50th day was accounted for right after a hebdomad count of 7 times 7 days (or 7 weeks, or 49 days) then--throughout historical texts--the festival of the 50th day (or Pentecost) is often referred to as 'the feast of weeks'.

Historical records, including biblical, tend to indicate that certain priest-astronomers who flourished in an era well prior to the 1st century would have been familiar with the cited time track and celebration of the 50th day. Somewhat puzzling here is that the feast of weeks is NOT clearly shown to have had a Jewish origin. The festival is instead described to have been celebrated by patriarchs who flourished in an era centuries BEFORE the time of Moses.

Then when might the celebration of this feast have began (and why was a 50th day celebrated anyway)? Of possible significance here is that a cycle of 50 days can be recognized to have been tracked in certain regions of the Middle East (perhaps from as far distant as the 21st century BC, and by cultures other than Israelite). The track

of a pentecontad time cycle in the Old Assyrian Period is manifest from certain cuneiform writings that have detail of the 'h.' or the 'hamushtum' [More information about the 'hamushtum' is shown in a 20th century publication: 'Origin of the Week and the Oldest Asiatic Calendar', by H. and J. Levvy.]

It appears from the context of the cuneiform writings that the 'h.' or the 'hamushtum' [= probably a period of 50 days] could have been used in association with the agricultural cycle--perhaps as follows:

1. A time for swinging the sickle [= 7 weeks for New Grain?]
2. A period for gathering grapes [= 7 weeks for New Wine?].
3. Season for harvesting figs [= 7 weeks for New Oil?].

Some scholars have then explored the possibility that a harvest calendar (comprised of week-of-weeks segments) was once celebrated in regions of the Middle East.

> According to Levvy, and also to Morgenstern's research article on the 'Sabbath' appearing in the 'The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible', ed. George A Buttrick, New York: Abingdon Press, 1962, 4: 135-136) each year of the pentecontad calendar contained 7 pentecontads, while each 50th day throughout the year cycle was celebrated as 'atsrah'.

Of related interest here is that Hebrew texts of the 1st century do also clearly reflect a much earlier tradition of conducting the annual harvest in 7-week sequences. In example, according to 'The Book of Jubilees', the patriarchs: Noah, Abram, Isaac, and Jacob all observed the feast of weeks. This book does further state that Enoch (a patriarch who flourished prior to the Deluge) was the first among all of mankind to have "recounted the weeks of the jubilees . . . and set in order the months . . . ".

The Hebrew record does then show that the father of the nations--or Noah--was observant of the feast of weeks (possibly as a tenet of a covenant that was handed down from his ancestor Enoch). The nature of this covenant is described in passages from 'The Book of Jubilees'--as follows:

> [Chapter 6] "And on the new moon of the 3rd month he [= Noah] went forth from the ark, and built an altar on that mountain. And he made atonement for the earth . . . for everything that had been on it had been destroyed, save those that were in the ark with Noah. And he . . . placed a burnt sacrifice on the altar, and poured thereon an offering mingled with oil, and sprinkled wine and strewed frankincense over everything, and caused a goodly savour to arise, acceptable before the Lord. And the Lord smelt the goodly savour, and He made a covenant with him . . . And Noah and his sons swore that they would not eat any blood that was in any flesh, and he made a covenant before the Lord God for ever throughout all the generations of the earth in this month [= renewal]. On this account He spake to thee that thou shouldst make a covenant with the children of Israel in this month [= renewal] upon the mountain with an oath, and that thou shouldst sprinkle blood upon them because of all the words of the covenant, which the Lord made with them for ever. And this testimony is written concerning you that you should observe it continually, so that you should not eat on any [renewal] day any blood

> of beasts or birds or cattle [= red meat] during all the days of the earth . . . And for this law there is no limit of days, for it is for ever. They shall observe it throughout their generations . . . for this reason it is ordain and written on the heavenly tablets, that they should celebrate the feast of weeks . . . TO RENEW THE COVENANT . . . For it is the feast of weeks and the feast of first fruits: this feast is twofold and of a double nature: according to what is written and engraven concerning it, celebrate it. For I have written in the book of the first law, in that which I have written for thee, that thou shouldst celebrate it . . . and I explained to thee its sacrifices that the children of Israel should remember and should celebrate it throughout their generations . . . And all the children of Israel will forget and will not find the path of the years, and will forget the new moons, and seasons, and sabbaths and they will go wrong as to all the order of the years . . . they will go wrong as to the new moons and seasons and sabbaths and festivals, and they will eat all kinds of blood with all kinds of flesh" (Charles version, my paraphrase).

The story of a post-Deluge hero performing atonement for the Earth can also be recited from some of the early cuneiform writings--as follows:

> "The complete story [= of the Deluge] is found in the Gilgamesh epic (Tablet xi) discovered by G. Smith among the ruins of the library of Assurbanipal in 1872. Another version is given by Berosus. In the Gilgamesh poem the hero of the story is Ut-napishtim (or Sit-napishti, as some read it). surnamed Atra-basis "the very clever"; in two of the fragments he is simply styled Atra-basis, which name is also found in Berosus under the Greek form Xisuthros. The story in brief is as follows: A council of the gods having decreed to destroy men by a flood, the god Ea warns Ut-napishtim, and bids him build a ship in which to save himself and the seed of all kinds of life. Ut-napishtim builds the ship (of which, according to one version, Ea traces the plan on the ground), and places in it his family, his dependents, artisans, and domestic as well as wild animals, after which he shuts the door. The storm lasts six days; on the seventh the flood begins to subside. The ship steered by the helmsman Puzur-Bel lands on Mt. Nisir. After seven days Ut-napishtim sends forth a dove and a swallow, which, finding no resting-place for their feet return to the ark, and then a raven, which feeds on dead bodies and does not return. On leaving the ship, Ut-napistim offers a sacrifice to the gods, who smell the goodly odor and gather like flies over the sacrificer. He and his wife are then admitted among the gods. The story as given by Berosus comes somewhat nearer to the Biblical narrative . . . " ('The Original Catholic Encyclopedia').

In the cited cuneiform record, Ut-napishtim was warned of impending destruction by a god named Ea. Upon escaping death, Ut-napishtim [= the Chaldean Noah] is shown to have sacrificed to the gods--as follows:

> "I sent forth to the four winds,
> I poured out a libation
> I made an offering on the peak of the mountain:
> SEVEN AND SEVEN I set incense-vases there,
> Into their depths I poured cane, cedar, scented wood.
> The gods smelled a savour,
> The gods smelled a sweet savour,
> The gods gathered like flies over the sacrificer."
> ('The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria', Pinches)

Thus, priests who flourished throughout the ancient Middle East left description of a most sigificant atonement ceremony. The Hebrew record has that the oldest of all

religious ceremonies was performed by the Bible patriarch Noah--whose name means rest. In the Babylonian record the sacrificial ceremony was carried out by Ut-napishtim--whose name means life.

The Bablonian reference to "SEVEN AND SEVEN" would almost surely have been understood by an ancient reader to pertain to a renewal ceremony that was performed 'at 7 times 7, or on the renewal of a week of weeks. This is clearly manifested in the previously cited book of Jubilees--as follows:

> "And for this law there is no limit of days, for it is for ever. They shall observe it throughout their generations . . . for this reason it is ordain and written on the heavenly tablets, that THEY SHOULD CELEBRATE THE FEAST OF WEEKS . . . TO RENEW THE COVENANT [= Noah's covenant]".

In summary to the above, it was on the renewal of the weeks (on day 50) that an atonement ceremony was performed by ancient priests, and it was on this day that the terms of a Divine covenant made with Noah were rehearsed. Of yet further significance is that the Chaldean record of an atonement ceremony closely parallels what is detailed in the Hebrew record:

> "For it is the FEAST OF WEEKS and the FEAST OF FIRST FRUITS: this feast is twofold and of a double nature: according to what is written and engraven concerning it, celebrate it." (Charles version, 6, my paraphrase).

But then, why was it that primal priests kept track of a peculiar weeks count (of 7 times 7 days plus a renewal day)? A reason for the odd 50 day count can seemingly be recognized from a study of astronomy--as further shown in the subsequently presented section

Significance of astronomy

In exploring an origin for the feast of weeks, ancient texts and cuineform writings indicate that this festival may herald from the very dawn of recorded history (as cited above). This observance of hebdomads seems strange, but even stranger is the indicated count of the pentecontad (a cycle of 50 days). So, why was this time unit (50 days) counted?

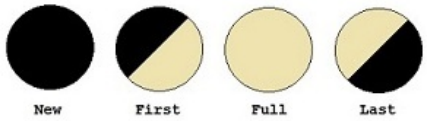
At first glance, a track of 50 days does not seem to relate in anyway to the spin and orbital configuration of the Earth-Moon-Sun system. However, a longer look at the Moon can see a clear connection.

What is significant about the period of the Moon is that each quarter phase envelopes a span of time about equal to 7 days. So, each quarter phase of the Moon does

inherently revolve in pace with a time unit about equivalent in length to a regular week (of 7 days).

> Note: There are 4 distinct quarter phases of the visible Moon: 1.New phase; 2. First-quarter phase; 3. Full phase; and 4. Third-quarter phase. The quarter phases are easy to recognize on the basis of observation. At the new phase the Moon is dark and appears to be completely invisible; at full phase, the Moon is fully-illuminated and is round-shaped; and at the first quarter and at the third quarter, the Moon is half illuminated and is distinctly divided into half-parts (half-light and half-dark, or the reverse).

1. Beginning Phase (Moon is Dark).
2. First Quarter (Half Moon).
3. Full Moon Phase (Whole Moon).
4. Last Quarter (Half Moon).



For the purposes of presenting a clear analysis, the lunar quarter (which completes in 7.38 days) will hereafter be referred to as a 'lunar week'.

The phases that are defined by the visible Moon, when counted in 7 quarter units (or in 7 lunar-week units) can ultimately be recognized to interface with both solar days and solar years.

> For information that exposes a remarkable '7 set' interface (a tight cross-reference between 7 lunar weeks and 7 tropcial years) refer to the following online publication:

A Case for Created Time?

Please take note here that 7 lunar quarters, or 7 lunar weeks, is a time unit that is fully essential for arriving at an interpretation of interrelated Earth-Moon design.

The lunar week also appears to have a considerable amount of historical significance in that the priests appear to have tracked or accounted for this unit in multiples of seven (or by sevens). Essentially, a tally or count of 7 lunar weeks (a pentecontad cycle) was perceived to be succeeded by a subsequent cycle of 7 lunar weeks (the next pentecontad cycle). This unique cyclical count (7 lunar weeks) appears to have been endlessly performed. The cited cycle of 7 lunar weeks was probably tracked by primal astronomers for religious purposes and also to properly regulate the annual harvest. For pertinent information about the ancient track of 7 lunar weeks, refer to the following online publications:

The Lunar Week | The Jubilee Cycle

Portals or Annual Gates

> In reference to the content of the online publications (listed above) a jubilee calendar measured and metered out in lunar-week units is feasible in the regard that this type of lunisolar calendar averages out to be 365.244 days per year. Consequently, a calendar of lunar weeks can very closely pace the duration of the solar year (which is 365.242 days).

The possibility that primal priests tracked time in lunar week cycles is made even more certain from some phrases embedded within passages of the Enoch literature. Of significance here is that some of the Ethiopian texts have fuzzy detail of a station (or a day) of the Sun and a station (or a day of the Moon):.

> [Chapter 71:] "The book of the revolutions of the luminaries of heaven, according to . . . their respective periods . . . and their respective months . . . [Skipping to Chapter 73:] . . . I beheld their stations . . . according to the fixed order of the months the Sun rises and sets . . . thirty days belonging to the Sun . . . The Moon brings on all the years exactly, that their stations may come neither too forwards nor too backwards a single day; but that the years may be changed with correct precision . . . The year then becomes truly complete according to the station of the Moon . . . " 'The Ethiopean Enoch' by Laurence.

Enoch's statement--that "the Moon brings on all the years exactly" is demonstrably correct within the context of counting a station (or a day) of the Sun. To be more specific, it seems that as long as 1 day in a cycle of 30 days (a station of the Sun) is forever reckoned apart from other days and as long as 1 day in a cycle of 7 lunar weeks (a station of the Moon) is forever reckoned apart from other days then each passing year can be correlated to a fixed count of all the other days.

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        ENOCH'S LUNISOLAR SYSTEM *
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DAYS OR TIME STATIONS TRACKED AS RENEWALS:

  1. A renewal day every 30 days.
     [= a time station of the Sun]

  2. A renewal day every 7 lunar weeks.
     [= a time station of the Moon]

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DAYS NOT TRACKED AS RENEWALS:

  3. 346 of non-renewal days are counted
      to perfectly pace the revolution of
             each year.

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* - Renewal days are not counted the same
    as are the other days.
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To more fully illustrate how the solar year can perfectly be measured and metered out by simply counting day cycles, the following diagram is presented to show that a time span equal to 365.242 days can be achieved through a simple accounting of Sun and Moon stations:

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    EARTH'S ROTATION CAN BE CORRELATED
          TO THE ANNUAL QUARTERS

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 Annual           Corresponding
Division            Day Counts
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  Quarter 1     1 + 28  +  29  +  28
  Quarter 2     1 + 29  +  28  +  29
  Quarter 3     1 + 28  +  29  +  28
  Quarter 4     1 + 29  +  28  +  29

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The  cited calendar count of 346 days does
inherently pace the return of each passing
year  as long as specific additional  days
are routinely intercalated--as follows:

   1. Every 30 days (+ 1 day).
   2. Every 7 lunar weeks (+ 1 day).

A scribe of  346 days  paces 365.242  days
per year when Sun-Moon stations are leaped
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It should be clear that 346 days (as a fixed annual count of days) with the addition of Sun and Moon stations (a rate equal to 19.242 more days per year on average) is equal to a time unit that is perfectly equal to the rate of the solar year (which is also 365.242 days).

Rates expressed in the above diagram show that each year cycle CAN accurately be tracked using a fixed count of days; and this, to within the remarkable limits of 11 seconds per annum. More remarkable is that--because Earth's spin is slowing down by a tiny amount of between 1 and 3 miliseconds per century--it can be predicted that Enoch's rule for measuring the year would have been perfectly accurate at about 3 Millennia ago.

For more information about the accuracy inherent in tracking stations of the Sun and Moon, refer to the following online publication:

Functional Time Design

An early held regard for Enoch's perfectly positioned stations [= 1 in 30 days as a day or a time station of the Sun, and 1 in 7 lunar weeks as a day or a time station of the Moon] could then be the very reason for why the ancients tracked and celebrated a renewal day every 7 weeks.

> It here seems pertinent to note that the version of the Enoch writings that we now read shows a number of 364 world stations (rather than a correct number of 346 world stations). The version we now read thus has '3' in the correct hundreds position. However, the '4' and the '6' are in reversed positions (or are incorrectly reversed in the tens and digits positions). As is further shown below, a most major reason for the incorrectly shown number of world stations is probably that a calendar count of 364 days became popular among various Jewish sects who flourished in the era of the Second-Temple. The incorrect number of world stations that is shown in the Enoch texts we now read thus points to a primal version of the astronomical book in which 346 stations were shown. The original version was then probably modified--or possibly recompiled with other information--by intervening scribes. So, based upon a proven axiom; that the rate of the solar year of 365.24 days can perfectly be measured and metered out through a combined time track of a station or day of the Sun and a station or day of the Moon; certain portions of Enoch's astronomical book seem to warrant substituting the proven number of world stations (346 world stations) for the impossible to prove number (364 world stations).

In addition to measuring the traverse of the solar year (of 365.24219 days), it is probable that early priest astronomers kept track of Sun and Moon stations for the purpose of also "day counting" the lunar period (as shown below).

Of significance here is that a scribe of 50 days (in a cycle) can be used to effectively measure and meter the essential cycle of 7 lunar quarters. The required lunar-week

track is functional as long as each of the cited days or stations of the Sun are scribed outside (or apart from) the 50 day scribe.

The following diagram is presented to more clearly illustrate just how a pentecontad count can keep pace with a cycle of 7 lunar weeks. [Note this equivalence becomes valid through an exclusive count of each station or day of the Sun (1 day in a cycle of 30 days)]:

A COUNT OF SEVEN LUNAR WEEKS *
(50 days each pentecontad)

Lunar Weeks	Number of Week Days	Corresponding Pentecontad Days
1	7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
2	7	8 9 10 11 12 13 14
3	7	15 16 17 18 19 20 21
4	7	22 23 24 25 26 27 28
5	7	29 30 31 32 33 34 35
6	7	36 37 38 39 40 41 42
7	7	42 44 45 46 47 48 49

A 50th day is counted each 7th week

* - Requires the intercalation of a day of the Sun [= 1 in a 30 day cycle].

Astronomy then seems to point to the very reason for why the ancients did scribe 50 days. It seems that--in the context of exclusively counting stations of the Sun and Moon--the pace of the Earth-Moon orbits can effectively be measured and metered . . . and by simply tracking fixed cycles of days.

For yet more information about the accuracy inherent in scribing jubilee days (or 50th days) refer to the following online publication:

Moon's 50-Day Cycle

First fruits celebration

As is shown in previously presented section, astronomy tends to prove that the ancients did probably celebrate the feast of weeks (on the 50th day) and within the context of a lunar weeks schedule. Of interest here is that first century literature does

likewise point to a possibility that priests under the late 2nd Temple did then also celebrate the 50th day or Pentecost--and at least in partial pace with an accounting of the lunar week.

A lunar based count to the festival of Pentecost is manifested amid writings produced by Flavius Josephus (a Jewish historian of the 1st century). His publications show that Temple priests of that time period did track a 7-week cycle. When describing a harvest schedule that was then followed, Josephus made mention of a 50-day count--as follows:

> " . . . when the Sun is in Aries . . . on the 16th day of the [lunar] month . . . they offer the first fruits of their barley . . . When a week of weeks has passed over after this sacrifice . . . on the 50th day, which is Pentecost . . . they bring to God [sacrifices] nor is there anyone of the [subsequent] festivals, but in it [= the 50th] they offer . . . " (Based upon Whiston's translation of 'Antiquities of the Jews', Book 3, Chapter 10, 5-7).

The Josephus' record shows that the priests reckoned a week of weeks AFTER a barley offering was presented (on the 16th day of a specific lunar month). The cited 50-day count did therefore begin on a day that came after a full phase of the Moon.

One of the conclusions that can be arrived at from the detail provided by Josephus is that the end of the 50-day count would inherently have coincided with the time of a quarter phase of the Moon. Furthermore, each of the intervening weeks of the 50-day count can be recognized to have passed approximately in line with a lunar quarter. In essence, the priests can be recognized to have tracked a full cycle of 7 [lunar] weeks between the first fruits presentation and a feast of Pentecost.

Note that because each lunar quarter spans a unit of time that is a bit longer than an ordinary week of 7 days then a number of 50 days can ALWAYS be counted between the end of the 1st day of any given lunar quarter and the ending of the 7th lunar week. In essence, 7 lunar quarters is inherently LONGER, or FULLER, when compared with a day count of 50 days.

LEVITICAL HARVEST COUNT
(from the record of Josephus)

A sheaf was waved after 1st full Moon
1st week counted
2nd week counted
3rd week counted
4th week counted
5th week counted
6th week counted
7th week counted
New grain celebrated at quarter Moon

The indicated priestly adherence to a harvest schedule that paced a sequence of the lunar quarters can further be recited from a treatise penned by another 1st-century Jewish writer:

> "Don't the fruits of cultivated crops and trees grow and come to maturity through the orbits of the Moon . . . ?" ('The Special Laws, Part 2', Philo Judaeus, based upon Yonge's translation).

Here, the annual harvest is again shown to have been conducted in coincidence with a span of time that was uniquely tracked. This passage of early-written text does minimally indicate that the annual harvest was NOT scheduled in the context of an ordinary week cycle (of 7 running days).

Other passages from Jewish literature written in the era of the late Temple do likewise show that contemporary priests did then conduct the annual harvest around a lunar-quarter schedule. In example, a passage from 'The Special Laws, Part 1' indicates that members of the priesthood would have been familiar with a harvest itinerary that was predicated upon the phases of the Moon:

> "[The Moon] receives the perfect shapes in periods of 7 days--the half-Moon in the first 7 day period after its conjunction with the Sun, full Moon in the second; and when it makes its return again [= after the full Moon], the first is to half-Moon, then it ceases at its conjunction with the Sun . . . the finest grain flour mixed with oil . . . and wine in stipulated amounts [are periodically offered] . . . The reason is that even these are brought to maturity by the orbits of the Moon in the annual seasons, especially as the Moon helps to ripen fruits; grain and wine and oil . . . " (authored by the Jewish writer: Philo Judaeus at about the turn of the Common Era, translation based upon Yonge).

The quoted text from 'The Special Laws' reflects that the author understood the Moon to have some kind of a role in the production of grain, wine, and oil.

It here seems of related significance that quite a number of passages in the Bible do indicate that the beginning of the harvest was specially commemorated; and that the harvest was subsequently commemorated in weekly stages.

> "[God] . . . giveth rain, both the former and the latter, in his season: he reserveth unto us the appointed weeks of the harvest". (AV text of Jeremiah Chapter 5:24).

As is further shown below, the weeks that were appointed for the harvest (or harvests) were understood to encompass not just a single cycle of 50 days--but multiple cycles. To be more specific, the first cycle of 50 days was apparently reserved for the production of grain. A subsequent cycle of 50 days is additionally indicated from the historical record. (This respective cycle was allocated for the production of wine). Yet a third cycle of 50 days is manifested from the ancient texts. (This time span was

reserved for the production of oil). Thus, certain of the texts that were produced (and reproduced) in the era of the Temple do show that first fruits of grain, wine, and oil were sequentially processed right in line with a time cycle of 50 days.

Perhaps the best example of this cyclical count of 50 days can be recited from a portion of 11QTemple Scroll. The following passage is very clear in showing how that the priests would have supervised the production of first fruits (grain, wine, and oil) in concert with multiple cycles of 50 days:

> "You must count . . . 7 COMPLETE Sabbaths from the day of presenting the sheaf . . . to the morrow of the 7th Sabbath . . . count [50] days . . . [Then] bring a new grain-offering . . . it is the feast of Weeks and the feast of Firstfruits, an everlasting memorial . . . From the day when you bring the new grain-offering . . . 7 FULL Sabbaths . . . count 50 days to the morrow of the 7th Sabbath. [Then present] new wine for a drink-offering . . . Count from that day . . . 7 FULL Sabbaths; until the morrow of the 7th Sabbath count 50 days . . . then offer new oil . . . " (my paraphrase).

The content of the 11QTemple Scroll can be stated to be rare or unique in comparison with most other Hebrew documents (even among those that have been rediscovered). Nonetheless, some rather detailed instructions are given for conducting the first fruits harvest. According to the author (or authors) of this scroll, the processing of new grain, new wine, and new oil required adherence to always a COMPLETE or a FULL count of 7 Sabbaths. For each one of the three harvests, a special 50th day was invariably celebrated right on "the morrow of the 7th Sabbath".

SCHEDULING OF FIRST FRUITS

1. 7 Sabbaths for New Grain
2. 7 Sabbaths for New Wine
3. 7 Sabbaths for New Oil

An offering of grain, then wine, and then oil was presented in the predawn hours on each one of the 7th Sabbaths

When the content of the 11QTemple Scroll is compared with the content of the Bible, it becomes manifest that the production of grain, wine and oil is also listed in that same order in a number of the Bible passages. The order of grain, wine, and oil can be recited from the following Bible verses: Deuteronomy 7:13; 11:14; 12:17; 14:23; 18:4; 28:51; 1 Chronicles 9:29; 2 Chronicles 2:15; 31:5; 32:28; Ezra 6:9; Nehemiah 10:37; 10:39; 13:5; 13:12; Jeremiah 31:12; Hosea 2:8; 2:22; and there are other verses.

As far as the scribe of 7 weeks (of harvest), a detailed description can be recited from passages of Leviticus--where in Chapter 23 of the Hebrew version, a 7-weeks count was described to begin or to commence with 'mochorath h+shabbath' (which is presumed to mean the morrow of the Sabbath):

> "Your scribe or number ('caphar') must extend from the morrow ('mochorath') to the Sabbath (h+shabbath) . . . " (Leviticus 23:15).

From this beginning or origin, it was essential that a number count encompass a time span equal to 7 whole Sabbaths:

> " . . . 7 Sabbaths shall be whole or entire . . . ". (Note here that the Hebrew Bible includes the word 'tamiym' to designate a Sabbath that is wholly or fully counted).

A 'new' offering was ultimately presented on the next 'mochorath' after 50 numbered days. (Only after a full or a complete count had been accomplished was a special renewal day celebrated).

> Note here that the cited offering was commanded to be 'new'. The word that is translated from the original Hebrew text as 'new' comes from only 3 Hebrew consonants (pronounced something like 'ch' 'd' 'sh') in that vowels do not appear in the original Hebrew Bible. Vowels were eventually added/inserted into the original Hebrew text by Jewish scribes who flourished in the first centuries of the Common Era. Consequently, throughout the more modern Masoretic texts the original 3 consonents were revised to become 'chadesh' or 'chodesh'. This word is used throughout the Hebrew Bible in reference to a time cycle or the renewal of a time cycle.

The presentation of tithes and harvest offerings in pace with jubilee days or 50th days can be recited from the writings of Epiphanius of Salamis--as follows:

> [The Pharisees] "paid tithes, gave the firstfruits--those of the 30th and those of the 50th days--and rendered the sacrifices and prayers without fail." (Panarion, Against Pharisees, refer to Volume 1, 1:16 by Williams).

In another written passage, Epiphanius left further description of harvest offerings that likewise were presented in pace with a cycle of 50 days:

> "The children of Israel . . . on their departure from Egypt were given God's Law at the hands of Moses himself. The Law God gave them . . . Its teachings were: circumcision; Sabbath observance; tithing . . . ; the presentation of firstfruits both on the 50th and on the 30th days; and to know God alone and serve him." (The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis, Judiasm, refer to Williams).

The 11QTemple Scroll provides additional significant detail surrounding the annual presentation of tithes and firstfruits. This respective manuscript mirrors that (among ancient Israelites) tithe was set aside and was kept in store (from the harvest each year). However, the tithe from a previous year was not allowed to be consumed (once a current year's harvest season had begun):

> "On the day of the firstfruits (of grain, and of wine, and of oil) . . . the tithe may be eaten. However, it is forbidden to save any of it over to the next year . . . 1. Grain may be eaten from the day of the firstfruits until the next year (on the day of the firstfruits of grain); 2. Wine may be consumed from the day of the festival (of wine) until the next year (on the day of the festival of the wine); and 3. Oil may be used from its festival, until the next year (on the day of the new offering of oil on the Altar). Any that is left after a respective festival shall then be made holy with fire. After this, it must not be eaten for it is holy" (my paraphrase).

Of significance here is that 3 tithes of the first fruits appear to have been set aside: one tithe was set aside for New Grain, one tithe was set aside for New Wine, and one tithe was set aside for New Oil.

This definition of 3 separate tithes does not mean that an amount totaling 30 percent was set aside each year but rather that 10 percent of only the first fruits was vowed to be holy.

Because the first fruits were defined/delimited across rather small time segments (of 7 weeks each) then the first fruits tithe would have totaled only a little over 4 percent of a farmers' annual income.

The cited tithe that was reserved from the first fruits of grain, wine, and oil was set aside to cover the costs of attending annual festivals at Jerusalem. The remainder of the annual tithe (other than the first fruits) was set aside for the poor.

A good example of the setting aside of the first fruits tithes (or 3 separate tithes) is mirrored in a passage from 'The Book of Jubilees'--as follows:

> "[One of the ancient patriarchs] Levi dreamed that they had ordained and made him the priest of the Most High God . . . And Jacob rose EARLY in the morning, on the 14th of this month, and he gave a tithe of all . . . and his father clothed him in the garments of the priesthood and filled his hands. And on the 15th of this month, he brought to the altar . . . his offering, in consequence of the vow which he had vowed that he would give a tenth, with their fruit-offerings and their drink-offerings . . . And Levi discharged the priestly office at Bethel before Jacob his father . . . and he was a priest there . . . [Jacob] tithed again the [second] tithe to the Lord and SANCTIFIED it, and it became holy unto Him. And for this reason it is ordained on the heavenly tablets as a law for the TITHING AGAIN . . . and to this law there is no limit of days for ever. This ordinance is written that it may be fulfilled FROM YEAR TO YEAR . . . and nothing shall remain over from it from this year to the year following. For in its year shall the [wheat] seed be eaten UNTIL THE DAYS OF THE HARVEST OF THE SEED OF THE YEAR, and the wine UNTIL THE DAYS OF THE WINE, and the oil UNTIL THE DAYS OF ITS SEASON. And all that is left thereof and becomes old, let it be regarded as polluted . . . And thus . . . let them not suffer it to become old . . . " (refer to Chapter 7, by Charles).

In a passage of text from 'Questions and Answers on Genesis, Part 3', Philo Judaeus (a writer who flourished at the turn of the Common Era) described the first fruit tithes on New Grain, New Wine, and New Oil--as follows:

> ". . . after a tenth of the [first] fruits of the earth, of grain, or wine, or oil, has been taken then another tenth is also taken from the remainder . . . "

This passage is significant in that the total annual tithe is shown in two separate portions: 1. A first fruits portion; and 2. A remaining portion.

So, the first portion of the yearly tithe is shown to have been paid in association with the time of growing first fruits (of grain, and wine, and oil). After the first fruits, a second portion of the annual tithe is shown to have been paid.

Of significance about the annual tithe then is that the LATTER PORTION of the annual tithe would have been paid only AFTER the first 3 tithes of the year had been set aside.

The remainder of the yearly tithe was given to the poor. However, unlike the second portion of the tithe, or the portion that was given to the local poor, the first tithe was saved to cover the costs associated with attending festivals:

> [First Portion:] "Thou shalt truly tithe all the increase of thy seed, that the field bringeth forth year by year. And thou shalt eat before the LORD thy God, in the place which he shall choose to place his name there, the tithe of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil, and the firstlings of thy herds and of thy flocks; that thou mayest learn to fear the LORD thy God always" (KJV text of Deuteronomy 14:22-23).
>
> [Second Portion:] "When thou hast made an end of tithing all the tithes of thine increase [after] the third [in the] year . . . [give the remainder of the tithe] unto the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, that they may eat within thy gates, and be filled" (my paraphrase of Deuteronomy 26:12)."

Early-written literature additionally indicates that the track of a 'count 50' cycle (and a law of tithing) was at first taught by the antediluvian patriarch Enoch. More about the major accomplishments of the cited astronomer (Enoch) can be understood from a historical sketch presented by Bar-Hebraeus. This medieval author's writings about the life and times of Enoch appear to represent a compendium that was drawn from a number of more ancient sources. According to this respective author, Enoch was also the first to have "discovered the knowledge of the Zodiac, and the course of the Planets".

The occupation of Enoch as a priest is only hinted at from amid the various texts attributed to Enoch's own authorship. However, some considerable degree as to the scope and effectiveness of his service in a priesthood office seems to be mirrored from certain passages of early-written literature. In example, Enoch is shown to have " . . . appointed festivals for sacrifices to the Sun, at each of the Zodiacal Signs". Enoch is further shown to have taught men "how to worship God . . . how/when to fast . . . to pray . . . give alms, votive offerings, and tenths". Enoch "reprobated inappropriate foods and drunkenness [= on holy days]" (Bar-Hebraeus).

The vigil

The historical record shows the celebration of an all night vigil in association with the 50th day. During the vigil, certain foods were avoided; and in particular, meat and intoxicating beverages were refrained from.

The celebration of a vigil in association with '50 count' (every 7th Sabbath) can especially be recited from passages of 'de Vita Contemplativa' or 'The Contemplative Life'. (This treatise was written by Philo Judaeus at about the beginning of the Common Era). The respective report has a large focus upon the liturgical practices of a communal group known as the Therapeutae or the Healers. This movement was described to have abandoned commercial enterprise in a fuller pursuit of religious study and prayer--as follows:

> " . . . [Therapeutae] may be met with in many places . . . [in] both Greece and the country of the barbarians . . . and there is the greatest number of such men in Egypt.
>
> And in every house there is a sacred shrine which is called the holy place, and the monastery in which they retire by themselves and perform all the mysteries of a holy life, bringing in nothing, neither meat, nor drink, nor anything else which is indispensable towards supplying the necessities of the body, but studying in that place the laws and the sacred oracles of God enunciated by the holy prophets . . .
>
> These men assemble AT THE END of 7 weeks, venerating NOT ONLY the simple week of seven days . . . it is a prelude and a kind of forefeast of the greatest feast, which is assigned to THE NUMBER 50 . . . They come together clothed in white garments . . . they sit down to meat standing in order in a row, and raising their eyes and their hands to heaven . . . they pray to God that the entertainment may be acceptable, and welcome, and pleasing; and after having offered up these prayers the elders sit down to meat, still observing the order in which they were previously arranged . . . And the women also share in this feast . . . And the order in which they sit down to meat is a divided one, the men sitting on the right hand and the women apart from them on the left . . . [They sit on] rugs of the coarsest materials, cheap mats of the most ordinary kind of the papyrus of the land . . .
>
> And in those days wine is not introduced, but only the clearest water; cold water for the generality, and hot water for those old men who are accustomed to a luxurious life.
>
> And the table, too, bears NOTHING WHICH HAS BLOOD, but there is placed upon it bread for food and salt for seasoning, to which also hyssop is sometimes added as an extra sauce for the sake of those who are delicate in their eating . . .
>
> [A sermon is delivered, and when] the president appears to have spoken at sufficient length . . . applause arises from them all as of men rejoicing together at what they have seen and heard; and then some one rising up sings a hymn . . . then they all, both men and women, join in the hymn . . .
>
> Then the young men bring in the table which was mentioned a little while ago, on which

> was placed that MOST HOLY food, the leavened bread, with a seasoning of salt, with which hyssop is mingled, out of reverence for the sacred table, which lies thus in the holy outer temple; for on this table are placed loaves and salt without seasoning, and the bread is unleavened, and the salt unmixed with anything else, for it was becoming that the simplest and purest things should be allotted to the most excellent portion of the priests, as a reward for their ministrations, and that the others should admire similar things, but should abstain from the loaves, in order that those who are the more excellent person may have the precedence.
>
> And after the feast they celebrate the SACRED FESTIVAL during the whole night; and this NOCTURNAL FESTIVAL is celebrated in the following manner: they all stand up together, and in the middle of the entertainment two choruses are formed at first, the one of men and the other of women, and for each chorus there is a leader and chief selected, who is the most honourable and most excellent of the band. Then they sing hymns which have been composed in honour of God in many metres and tunes, at one time all singing together, and at another moving their hands and dancing in corresponding harmony, and uttering in an inspired manner songs of thanksgiving, and at another time regular odes, and performing all necessary strophes and antistrophes. Then, when each chorus of the men and each chorus of the women has feasted separately by itself, like persons in the bacchanalian revels, drinking the pure wine of the love of God, they join together, and the two become one chorus, an imitation of that one which, in old time, was established by the Red Sea, on account of the wondrous works which were displayed there; for, by the commandment of God, the sea became to one party the cause of safety, and to the other that of utter destruction . . . When the Israelites saw and experienced this great miracle, which was an event beyond all description, beyond all imagination, and beyond all hope, both men and women together, under the influence of divine inspiration, becoming all one chorus, sang hymns of thanksgiving to God the Saviour, Moses the prophet leading the men, and Miriam the prophetess leading the women. Now the chorus of male and female worshippers being formed, as far as possible on this model, makes a most humorous concert, and a truly musical symphony, the shrill voices of the women mingling with the deep-toned voices of the men. The ideas were beautiful, the expressions beautiful, and the chorus-singers were beautiful . . .
>
> [Staying] till morning, when they saw the sun rising they raised their hands to heaven, imploring tranquillity and truth, and acuteness of understanding. And after their prayers they each retired to their own separate abodes . . .
>
> This then is what I have to say of those who are called Therapeutae, who have devoted themselves to the contemplation of nature, and who have lived in it and in the soul alone, being citizens of heaven and of the world, and very acceptable to the Father and Creator of the universe because of their virtue, which has procured them his love as their most appropriate reward, which far surpasses all the gifts of fortune, and conducts them to the very summit and perfection of happiness" (translation borrowed from Yonge).

Of significance about this religious movement is that adherents (who flourished at the turn of the Common Era) are shown to have assembled "in many places". At the 7th week, an all night vigil appears to have routinely been held. The bread and water that was served during the evening banquet was understood to represent "most holy food", and the bread that was eaten is shown to have been mingled with hyssop out of reverence for the sacred table in the vestibule of the Temple.

In reference to the set of religious liturgy subscribed to among the Therapeutae, the holding of a vigil in association with '50 count' can also be recited from the almost contemporary record of Acts:

> "And in the day of the Pentecost [50 count] being fulfilled, they were all with one accord at the same place . . . " (Acts, Chapter 2).

The Pentecost event recorded in the book of Acts shows that festival keepers were gathered before "the third hour"--or before 9 o'clock in the morning. The chronology that is given thus implies either a very early morning assembly, or more probably, an evening vigil. In either case, a rather large number of festival keepers are indicated to have been up and about (and they were assembled before 9 o'clock on the Sabbath morning).

Josephus likewise noted that Temple priests who were contemporary with the era of the late 2nd Temple followed a prescribed set of religious liturgy. Of significance here is that the commemoration of the 'number-50 feast' is shown to have required the enactment of predawn ceremony:

> " . . . at that feast which we call 'Pentecost' as the priests were going by night into the inner temple as their custom was, to perform their sacred ministrations . . . ". (Quote borrowed from Whiston's translation of Wars, Bk.6:5:3).

The ancient custom of routinely celebrating an all night vigil at the distance of 7 weeks--even in modern times--continues to be celebrated among priests of the Falasha or Ethiopian Jews. For additional information of this priestly vigil, refer to 'The Liturgy of the Seventh Sabbath: a Beta Israel (Falasha) text', by Monica Davis. (Note: The Beta Israel custom is celebrated in association with the traditional 7-day week--not in association with the lunar week).

The indicated assembly for the all night banquet (Asartha) appears to mirror a rather similar all night assembly that is described in the following portion of the New Testament:

> "And upon the One-to-the-Sabbaths [or Greek: Mia twn Sabbatwn], when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, IN EXPECTATION (observance) of the coming of morning; and continued his speech until midnight . . . When he . . . had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of light had come, they brought the young man . . . " (refer to the Greek language version of Acts, Chapter 20: verses 7-12).

Note that because this assembly was held on the One-to-the-Sabbaths then it is somewhat probable that this event was celebrated in association with the renewal of lunar weeks (or the renewal of months). Of related significance is that several instances of this peculiar date 'Mia twn Sabbatwn' [= the One-to-the-Sabbaths] can be recited from New Testament accounts that have detail of the resurrection of Jesus.

As is further shown below, this Christian celebration of a feast in line with a lunar schedule (One-to-the-Sabbaths) can additionally be recited from 'The Stromata', by Clement of Alexandria (c. 2nd century CE).

The Christian celebration of an evening rest can, in fact, be recited from Christian literature written as late as the 4th century CE. As an example, Eusebius of Caesarea described how mainstream Christians of his day observed a night vigil in correspondence with a great festival--as follows:

> "[Christians observe] a mode of life which has been preserved to the present time by us alone [or by the Christians alone] . . . especially the vigils kept in connection with the Great Festival, and the exercises performed during those vigils . . . [The customs demand] no wine at all, nor any flesh, but water is their only drink, and the relish with their bread is salt and hyssop". ('Church History, Book II').

The peculiar vigil held by Christians at the occasion of a "Great Festival" was also noted by Eusebius to have been a very ancient custom--and THE SAME custom as was adhered to by the Therapeutae.

In the centuries that ensued the destruction of the Temple, the several descriptions of Christians celebrating an EVENING Sabbath (or Asartha) then surely do indicate a continuation of the traditions of former priests.

The cited custom of holding an evening banquet where "most holy food" was served is mirrored from a certain passage of the Colossian's letter--as follows:

> "Therefore do not let anyone condemn you in matters of food and drink or of observing festivals, new moons, or sabbaths" (refer to chapter 2:16).

Of significance here is that primal Christians are nowhere shown to have assembled for religious services by any schedule other than was subscribed to by priests who flourished in the era of the Temple. This then means that the cited set of liturgy that pertained to a Sabbath night of rest (and the eating of holy food) would surely have been followed by the earliest of the Christian converts. The ancient tradition of having restricted diet during holy evenings is also rather well mirrored from 2nd-century writings attributed to Justin Martyr. Of significance here is that adherence to a Sabbath ritual with unleavened bread can be deduced from a certain passage of 'Dialogue with Trypho':

> "The new law requires you to keep perpetual Sabbath, and you, because you are idle for one day, suppose you are pious, not discerning why this has been commanded you: and if you eat unleavened bread, you say the will of God has been fulfilled."

A commandment to periodically abstain from foods of flesh (meat) is also mirrored from passages of 'The Shepherd of Hermas'. This 1st century publication is unusual in showing the enactment of liturgy in pace with a 'time station':

> "[Parable 5:] As I was fasting . . . in the early morning . . . keeping a station . . . [A shepherd told me] "You know not . . . how to fast unto the Lord . . . I will teach you what is a complete fast and acceptable to the Lord . . . If then, while you keep the commandments of God, add these services likewise . . . First of all, keep yourself from every evil word and every evil desire, and purify your heart from all the vanities of this world. If you keep these things, this fast shall be perfect for you. And thus shall you do. HAVING FULFILLED WHAT IS WRITTEN ON THAT DAY ON WHICH YOU FAST YOU SHALT TASTE NOTHING BUT BREAD AND WATER; and from your meats, which you would have eaten, you shalt reckon up the amount of that day's expenditure, which you would have incurred, and shall give it to a widow, or an orphan, or to one in want, and so shall you humble your soul, that he that has received from your humiliation may satisfy his own soul, and may pray for you to the Lord. If then you shall so accomplish this fast, as I have commanded you, your sacrifice shall be acceptable in the sight of God, and this fasting shall be recorded; and the service so performed is beautiful and joyous and acceptable to the Lord. These things you shall so observe, you and your children and your whole household; and, observing them, you shall be blessed; yes, and all those, who shall hear and observe them, shall be blessed, and whatsoever things they shall ask of the Lord, they shall receive."

The primal Christian adherence to "days of Stations" can further be detected from the contents of a treatise entitled: 'On Prayer'. The authorship of this document is attributed to the 2nd century bishop: Tertullian. Of course, it is somewhat doubtful that the entirety of the text that comprises the current document could have been penned by the original author. The following notation about 'standing' before God's Altar is somewhat unusual in comparison with other Christian literature in that the author of this text explores a possible meaning for the word 'statio' [Latin]:

> "Of Stations--Similarly, too, touching the days of Stations, most think that they must not be present at the sacrificial prayers, on the ground that the Station must be dissolved by reception of the Lord's Body. Does, then, the Eucharist cancel a service devoted to God, or bind it more to God? Will not your Station be more solemn if you have withal stood at God's altar? When the Lord's Body has been received and reserved each point is secured, both the participation of the sacrifice and the discharge of duty. If the "Station" has received its name from the example of military life 'for we withal are God's military' of course no gladness or sadness chanting to the camp abolishes the "stations" of the soldiers: for gladness will carry out discipline more willingly, sadness more carefully . . . Prayer is the wall of faith: her arms and missiles against the foe who keeps watch over us on all sides. And, so never walk we unarmed. By day, be we mindful of Station; by night, of vigil. Under the arms of prayer guard we the standard of our General; await we in prayer the angel's trump . . . ".

Writings attributed to the same 2nd century bishop (Tertullian) do furthermore expound upon the Christian tradition of observing stations. The custom among primal Christians of periodically abstaining from certain foods is especially manifested from the contents of a treatise entitled: 'On Fasting--In Opposition to the Psychics':

> " . . . [On holy days, Psychics have marital sex, and they hate to fast. However, spiritual discipline requires] reins upon the appetite, through taking, sometimes no meals, or late meals, or dry meals . . . They charge us with keeping fasts of our own . . . Being, therefore, observers of "seasons" for these things, and of "days, and months, and years," we Galaticize. Plainly we do, if we are observers of Jewish ceremonies, of legal

> solemnities: for those the apostle unteaches, suppressing the continuance of the Old Testament which has been buried in Christ, and establishing that of the New. But if there is a new creation in Christ,' our solemnities too will be bound to be new: else, if the apostle has erased all devotion absolutely "of seasons, and days, and months, and years," why do we celebrate the passover by an annual rotation in the first month? Why in the 50 ensuing days do we spend our time in all exultation? Why do we devote to Stations . . . of the week(s), and to fasts . . . ". (my paraphrase, translation borrowed from S. Thelwall).

Again, there are indications that texts attributed to Tertullian (c. 2nd-century) have been redacted by subsequent scribes. Even so, the cited "devotion to Stations" by the Montanist assemblies seems to have been understood in the context of liturgy subscribed to in an earlier era by the Levitical priesthood.

A count of 364 days

Of related interest here is that sometime prior to the 1st century, Jews in the Roman province of Judea can be recited to have stressed observance of a solar calendar, a calendar that charted 52 weeks (or 364 days) per year. This respective calendar was divided into working days and sabbath days--where after 6 working days, each 7th day was assigned as a day of rest.

> More information about a calendar of 52 weeks is shown in the following online publication:

Significance of 70 years

According to 'The Book of Jubilees', a command to work 6 days and then to keep a Sabbath on the 7th day was a tenet known only to the "Angels of the Presence" and also to the "Angels of Sanctification". Furthermore, this document notes that sanctification was exclusively granted to Israel. In essence, it was understood by the author (or authors) of 'The Book of Jubilees' (c. 165 BCE) that the Heavenly Hosts had sanctified ONLY Israel to celebrate each 7th day:

> " . . . He gave us a great sign, the Sabbath day, that we should work six days, but keep Sabbath on the seventh day from all work. And all the Angels-of-the-Presence, and all the Angels-of-Sanctification, these two Great Classes--He hath bidden us to keep the Sabbath with Him in heaven AND ON EARTH. And He said unto us: 'Behold, I will separate unto Myself a people from among all the peoples, and these shall keep the Sabbath day, and I will sanctify them unto Myself as My people. . . And thus He created therein a sign in accordance with which they should keep Sabbath with us on the seventh day, to eat and to drink, and to bless Him who has created all things as He has blessed and sanctified unto Himself a peculiar people above all peoples, and that they should keep Sabbath together with us . . . Wherefore do thou command the children of

> Israel to observe this day that they may keep it holy and not do thereon any work, and not to defile it, AS IT IS HOLIER than all other days . . . that day is more holy and blessed than any jubilee day of the jubilees . . . he did not sanctify ALL PEOPLES AND NATIONS to keep Sabbath thereon, but Israel alone: THEM ALONE he permitted to EAT and DRINK and to keep Sabbath thereon on the earth . . . " (Chapter 2, translated by Charles).

Passages from the book of Jubilees do then stress the significance of keeping the 7th day as a holy Sabbath only on the part of Israel. Of special interest about the quoted passage from Chapter 2 is that any "jubilee day of the jubilees" is shown as "less holy" and "less blessed" than was the covenental sabbath that was revealed to Moses.

This mention about a 'less blessed' jubilee day is curious, and it raises question as to whether a diverse type of Sabbath might have been interpreted and celebrated among contemporary Jews and Gentiles.

The possibility that a 7th day Sabbath was not universally celebrated is pointed at in a 1st century document entitled: 'The Life of Flavius Josephus'. This short autobiography by Flavius Josephus is very unusual in the regard that--from the perspective of a Judean--considerable detail of the Galilean society is written. From some passages of the cited autobiography, it is certain that some local rulers in the region of Galilee were of "noble birth" and were members of the Levitical priesthood. In one passage of the cited autobiography, the ruler of Tiberias is shown to have opposed the young Judean (General Josephus). To encourage his countrymen away from following Josephus, the priestly ruler of Tiberias is shown to have taken "the laws of Moses into his hands" and admonished the populace to "have regard... to these laws of your country". In another passage, the multitude was incited on the grounds that it was required that men should change their "religion to the religion of those to whom they fled for safety" (based upon Whiston's translation).

> Note that in the time of Jesus, Galilee was a separate province located to the north of Judea. Of interest here is that a walking journey from Jesus' home village of Nazareth (in Galilee) down to the city of Jerusalem (in Judea) would have taken 4 days (and this assumes a walking pace of 17 miles per day).

The peculiar Galilean reverence for their own brand of religion and their own priestly form of government seems to be summed up in the following passage of Flavius Josephus' autobiography:

> "[In gaining the confidence of the Galileans, would-be administrators of Galilee should state] that they... [were] well versed in their law [= the law of the Galileans], they should [also] reply, that neither were they unacquainted with the practices of their country [= practices in Galilee]... they should say, they... were priests also".

So, disparate forms of religion and government may have been followed among Israelite communities outside the province of Judea.

The possibility that a Sabbath type (defined by the Moon) was celebrated outside 1st-century Judea is made manifest from a contemporary Jewish author--as follows:

> "The fourth commandment [= of the Ten Commandments] has reference to the sacred 7th day, that it may be observed in a sacred and holy manner. Now some regions keep a HOLY FESTIVAL . . . [and then] count from the new Moon [= renewal] each SACRED DAY to God; but the region of Judea keeps every 7th day regularly, after each interval of 6 days . . . " ('The Decalogue' by Philo Judaeus, my paraphrase of the Yonge translation).

The celebration of liturgy in pace with phases of the Moon can also be recited from certain passages published by Clement of Alexandria (c. 2nd century CE):

> [The Apostle Peter] inferred thus: "Neither worship as in Judea . . . for in not viewing the Moon, they do not hold the Sabbath, which is called First [= One]; nor do they hold the New Month, nor the Unleavened Bread, nor the Feast, nor the Great Day." (Stromata, 5th Chapter).

Religious leaders inside the province of Judea would almost surely have grown to be at odds with communities in other regions because of foreign interference. This is sketched in those books of the Maccabees that show the Greeks in control of Jerusalem (c. 167 BCE). At this time the high priest was deposed, and the Jews revolted from Greek control. A new dynasty of high priests (the Maccabees) eventually ascended to the office of both priest and king (160 BCE). Then, a century later, religious leaders who were opposed to the traditional priesthood--the Pharisees--acquired royal authority under Queen Salome Alexandra. The historian Josephus noted that upon "becoming administrators of public affairs, they [= the Pharisees] banished and reduced whom they pleased... [and their enemies] were dispersed all over the country".

Eventually, Herod-the-Great was promoted to governorship of Judea and he was declared to be king in 37 BCE. The ruthless rule of Herod extended across four decades and opponents of this civil administrator would likewise have been forced into submission or into exile. Due to a degree of interference and opposition, it appears that a number of religious communities were eventually established outside the territory of Judea. As an example, the anciently written 'Damascus Document' describes communal life under the exclusive rule of the Levitical priesthood. These (pure) priestly communities were chartered out and away from the confines of Judea.

> "Jewish tradition in the Talmud and poems from the period [= of the Temple's destruction] record that the descendants of each priestly watch established a separate residential seat in towns and villages of the Galilee, and maintained this residential pattern for at least several centuries in anticipation of the reconstruction of the Temple and reinstitution of the cycle of priestly courses. Specifically, this Kohanic settlement region stretched from the Beit Netofa Valley, through the Nazareth region to Arbel and the vicinity of Tiberias. In subsequent years, there was a custom of publicly recalling every Sabbath in the synagogues the courses of the priests, a practice that reinforced

> the prestige of the priests' lineage. Such mention evoked the hope of return to Jerusalem and reconstruction of the Temple." Wikipedia, Priestly divisions.

Perhaps a better understanding of the Galilean religion can be gained by examining early Jewish manuscripts that were written in Greek. To be more specific, the Greek word 'Sabbasin', as it appears throughout the synoptic Gospels, seems to largely be used in reference to the performance of Temple liturgy (refer to Matthew 12:1-5; Mark 2: 23-28; and Luke 6: 1-5). Of yet possible significance concerning the 'Sabbasin' is that this type of Sabbath appears to have been celebrated throughout regions of the territory of Galilee.

1. "[In a city of Galilee]... on the Sabbasin... [Jesus] entered into the synagogue, and taught" (Mark 1:21)."
2. "[In]... a city of Galilee... [Jesus] taught them on the Sabbasin" (Luke 4:31).
3. "And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbaths [= Sabbasin]" (Luke 13:10).

To the converse of the celebrated 'Sabbasin' in the region of Galilee, the 'Sabbasin' is not shown--in any passage of the Greek New Testament--to have been celebrated inside the southern province of Judea.

The cited celebration of the 'Sabbasin' in the region of Galilee can also be recited from works written by Flavius Josephus in the following two instances:

1. "Ptolemy fell upon Asochis, a city of Galilee, and took it by force on the Sabbasin" ('Antiquities of the Jews', Book 8:7).
2. "... they desired me [= General Josephus] to lodge somewhere else because the next day was the Sabbath, and that it was not fit the city of Tiberias [= a city in the region of Galilee] should be disturbed... on Sabbasin" ('The Life of Flavius Josephus', Paragraph 53).

Of significance here that many of the 12 Apostles, as well as even Jesus, were originally residents of the province of Galilee. The origin of Christianity in the villages of Galilee then perhaps explains why, throughout the book of John, the author typed certain of the festivals celebrated at Jerusalem as 'feasts of the Jews' [= feasts celebrated in Judea] (refer to John 5:1; 6:4; and 7:2).

A considerable degree of disagreement between Judeans and Galileans over religious issues seems to be mirrored in the following passage from the book of Acts:

> [Rulers of Judea grew concerned] that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered... And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem". (Refer to Chapter 6: 13-14; and to Chapter 8:1).

In consideration that rulers in the region of Judea recommended strict observance of a 7th day sabbath, it is somewhat puzzling that--throughout the synoptic Gospels--Jesus cannot be recited to have advised his followers to observe the Jewish sabbath.

> The Disciples can be recited to have been admonished by Jesus to rest on the 50th days [jubilee days]. This is perhaps made most manifest in the Matthew 24:20 text. Here the English translated phrase 'not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day' seems incorrect in the regard that this text is clearly a parallelism. (For more information about parallelism, research the Internet for articles on the sayings of Jesus).
>
> This all means that the Greek word shown as 'winter' (cheimOnos) should properly be understood to represent a hebriasm in that 'fifty' in Hebrew is 'chmshim'.
>
> This respective example of an hebriasm is not uncommon; and it is apparent that this word (cheimOnos), along with other hebraisms, can be found in other New Testament passages (as shown below). So, if Jesus original words can be reconstructed in the context of a hebraism for the word 'fifty' (and additionally interpreted in the context of a parallel between a '50th day' and a 'Sabbath day') a better translation can untimately be arrived at: ". . . pray that your flight be not on the 50th, neither on the sabbath".

Of related significance is that Jews and foreigners are shown in the book of Acts to have assembled at Jerusalem for a 'count 50' event--as follows:

> "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God" (KJV text of Chapter 2: 1-11).

In addition, the following New Testament passages (written in the era of the late 2nd Temple) also mirror the celebration of Pentecost:

1. "For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia: for he hasted, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost" (AV text of Ac 20:16).
2. "And it may be that I will abide, yea, and 'cheimOnos' [= a Greek hebraism for fifty] with you, that ye may bring me on my journey whithersoever I go . . . But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost." (AV text of 1Co 16:6-8).
3. " And the 'dedication' [Greek = 'renewal'] in Jerusalem came, and it was 'cheimOnos' [= a Greek hebraism for fifty] , and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the porch of Solomon," (YLT text of John 10:22-23).

In summary to the above, the New Testament authors (and other period writers) provide a not-too-clear snapshot of Sabbath liturgy as it was celebrated among Temple adherents at the turn of the Common Era. For example, the Greek texts have 6 different variations for the word Sabbath or Sabbaths. In addition, several related

calendar terms can be interpreted (such as 'between' sabbath, 'second-first' sabbath, 'one to the sabbaths', 'first' or 'chief' sabbath).>/p>

Puzzling here is that the Torah (attributed to Moses) so very highly stresses observance of a 7th day Sabbath for the descendants of Israel, yet, no such admonition appears amid the writings of primal Christians.

A major reason why Gentile Christians did not teach the keeping of a Jewish sabbath is rather obvious in that passages in the Torah clearly forbade them to do so. In essence, period writings show that among ALL peoples and nations, ONLY Israel was sanctified to celebrate a 7th day sabbath (as previosly has been shown).

Perhaps a better perspective of 'Divine law' (as was understood among early Temple adherents) can be focused in using definitions in the Talmud as a lens. (The Talmud defines modern Judaism, and even though it was written down centuries into the Common Era, the writings are largely based upon what was taught by more primal rabbis).

> "According to Judaism, as expressed in the Talmud, the Noahide Laws apply to all humanity through mankind's descent from one paternal ancestor who in Hebrew tradition is called Noah (the head of the only family to survive during The Flood). In Judaism . . . the "Descendants of Noah" . . . refers to all of mankind. The Talmud also states: "Righteous people of all nations have a share in the world to come" (Sanhedrin 105a). Any non-Jew who lives according to these laws is regarded as one of "the righteous among the Gentiles" . . . According to the Biblical narrative, the Deluge covered the whole world killing every surface-dwelling creature except Noah, his wife, his sons and their wives, sea creatures, and the animals taken by Noah on Noah's Ark. After the flood, God sealed a covenant with Noah . . . The Talmud states that the instruction to not eat "flesh with the life" was given to Noah, and that Adam and Eve had already received six other commandments . . . One rabbinic opinion holds that not only are non-Jews NOT OBLIGATED to adhere to all the laws of the Torah, but they are actually FORBIDDEN to observe them. Rabbinic Judaism and its modern-day descendants discourage proselytization. The Noahide Laws are regarded as the way through which non-Jews can have a direct and meaningful relationship with God or at least comply with the minimal requisites of civilization and of divine law. A non-Jew who keeps the Noahide Laws in all their details is said to attain the same spiritual and moral level as Israel's own Kohen Gadol (high priest) . . . The 18th century rabbi, Jacob Emden proposed that Jesus, and Paul after him, intended to convert the Gentiles to the Noahide laws while allowing the Jews to follow full Mosaic Law . . . " (Seven Laws of Noah, Wikipedia).

So, period writings make it clear enough that the Apostles would not have taught Gentile converts to keep the same covenental sabbath that was believed to have been granted only to Israel. Rather the Gentiles would have been taught to celebrate the renewal of 7 lunar weeks (as a tenet of a Divine covenant that was believed to have been granted to all nations under Noah).

Festival of ingathering

In a further research as to how the harvest was celebrated among residents of the ancient Middle East, a biblically described Feast of Ingathering (sometimes called the Feast of Tabernacles) appears to have a considerable amount of significance.

A passage of bible text within Chapter 23 of Exodus reflects a command to celebrate the harvest in stages: 1. the firstfruits; and 2. the feast of ingathering.

> [Thou shall keep] . . . the feast of harvest, the firstfruits of thy labours, which thou hast sown in the field: and the feast of ingathering, which is in the end of the year, when thou hast gathered in thy labours out of the field. (KJV, verse 16--my paraphrase).

Writings attributed to Jeremiah, a priest-prophet who flourished prior to 600 BCE, indicate the harvest under the late 1st Temple was conducted in weekly stages

> " . . . the LORD our God, that giveth rain, both the former and the latter, in his season: he reserveth unto us the appointed weeks of the harvest." (KJV of Jer 5:24).

The ingathering feast is shown throughout bible texts to have been celebrated inline with the feast of weeks:

> "Six days thou dost work, and on the seventh day thou dost rest; in ploughing-time and in harvest thou dost rest. And a feast of weeks thou dost observe for thyself; first-fruits of wheat-harvest; and the feast of in-gathering, at the revolution of the year." (YLT, Ex 34: 21, 22)

In yet another passage of the bible, a 7-day festival (the feast of tabernacles) is shown to have been celebrated after the gathering of grain and wine:

> "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, which thou shalt give unto the LORD thy God, according as the LORD thy God hath blessed thee: And thou shalt rejoice before the LORD thy God, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite that is within thy gates, and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are among you, in the place which the LORD thy God hath chosen to place his name there. And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt: and thou shalt observe and do these statutes. Thou shalt observe the feast of tabernacles seven days, after that thou hast gathered in thy corn [= wheat] and thy wine [= grapes]: And thou shalt rejoice in thy feast, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite, the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are within thy gates. Seven days shalt thou keep a solemn feast unto the LORD thy God in the place which the LORD shall choose: because the LORD thy God shall bless thee in all thine increase, and in all the works of thine hands, therefore thou shalt surely rejoice." (KJV of De: 9-15).

The feast of tabernacles is shown in some passages of the bible to have been celebrated in the 7th 'month' [= the 7th 'renewal']. However, the feast of ingathering may have originally been celebrated in the 8th month:

1. "And in the eleventh year, in the 'month' [= yrch = moon] Bul, which [is] the eighth 'month' [= chdsh = renewal], was the house [= Temple] finished . . . " (YLT text of 1Ki 6:38).
2. "And all the men of Israel assembled themselves unto king Solomon at the feast in the 'month' [= yrch = moon] Ethanim, which [is] the 7th 'month' [= chdsh = renewal]" (YLT text of 1Ki 8:2).
3. "And Jeroboam ordained a feast in the eighth 'month' [= chdsh = renewal] . . . like unto the feast that [is] in Judah . . . " (YLT text of 1Ki 12:32).

For more information about the feast of tabernacles, refer to the following article in the online Jewish Encyclopedia: 'Tabernacles, Feast of.', by Joseph Jacobs, H.G. Friedmann.

According to some bible passages, a harvest feast was celebrated for 7 days beginning upon the 15th day of the month or chodesh.

> "Also in the fifteenth day of the seventh 'month' [= chdsh = renewal], when ye have gathered in the fruit of the land, ye shall keep a feast unto the LORD seven days: on the first day [shall be] a sabbath, and on the eighth day [shall be] a sabbath."(KJV of Le 23:39)

What is somewhat puzzling here is that if the feast of ingathering was really celebrated on the 15th day of the 7th month then the feast (on average) would have been celebrated on the 192nd day of the year. However, if the feast of ingathering was instead celebrated on the 15th of the 8th month (refer to 1Ki 12:32) then the feast (on average) would have been celebrated on the 221st day of the year.

Of significance here is that the feast of ingathering should probably be interpreted to have been celebrated inline with the wave sheaf presentation (which Josephus has in the middle of the 1st month). This means that after 7 weeks a new grain offering would have been made, and after 7 more weeks a new wine offering would have been made, and after 7 more weeks, a new oil offering would have been made. Then, the feast of ingathering would have been celebrated after yet 7 more weeks. This time span happens to straddle half a month plus 7 more months, and it points to an ingathering feast celebrated on the 15th day of the 8th month. So, perhaps the early written text should be understood to mean that a feast was celebrated after 15 days (half a month) and then after 7 more months?

As previously has been shown, tithes were mandated to be stored and firstfruit offerings were to be made each year (one offering for grain, one offering for wine, and one offering for oil). After the firstfruits portion of the year was past then a feast of ingathering was celebrated.

> Thou mayest not eat within thy gates the tithe of thy corn, or of thy wine, or of thy oil, or the firstlings of thy herds or of thy flock, nor any of thy vows which thou vowest, nor thy freewill offerings, or heave offering of thine hand: But thou must eat them before the LORD thy God in the place which the LORD thy God shall choose, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite that is within thy gates: and thou shalt rejoice before the LORD thy God in all that thou puttest thine hands unto." (KJV text of De 12:17-18).

Of significance about the tithe [or Hebrew: 10] is that the first portion is shown to have been used to cover the expense of attending the firstfruit festivals. The remainder of the annual tenth is described to have been used to sustain the clergy and the poor.

> "And thou shalt eat before the LORD thy God, in the place which he shall choose to place his name there, the tithe of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil, and the firstlings of thy herds and of thy flocks; that thou mayest learn to fear the LORD thy God always." (KJV text of De 14:23).

The time of tithing was then geared to the harvest of grain, wine, oil and the ingathering. Of possible significance here is that 3 bible passages in the book of Leviticus (Lev 16:29-31; Lev 23:27-32; and Lev 26:8-10) have detail of an atonement ceremony that was celebrated on a 'ten', or perhaps more correctly, on the 'tithe date'. Two of these verses show the time of the ceremony in association with a **שַׁבַּת שַׁבָּתוֹן** [Hebrew = Sabbath of Sabbaths = a week of weeks].

> "And thou shalt number seven sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years; and the space of the seven sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years. Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubile to sound on 'at the time of ten on the 7th renewal', in the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land. And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubile unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family." (my paraphrase of Lev 26:8-10).

The time of the atonement ceremony is further described in the Leviticus texts as a time for 'affliction' [= not a time for ordinary eating and drinking]. Of interest here is that the Therapeautae, the Ethiopian Jews, and Christians can be recited to have held a vigil prior to the coming of dawn on the 50th day. During the nighttime assembly, they fasted [= were afflicted] without eating meat.

> Of related significance is that in modern times, Sigd is uniquely celebrated among Ethiopian Jews (Beta Israel). The single-day festival coincides with the 50th DAY AFTER YOM KIPPUR. This custom of counting 50 days may have been handed down from those who flourished under the First Temple. The Sigd festival is celebrated by a half-day fast when heavy rocks are carried and when priestly prayers of repentance are offered. Then, the community gathers, and the remainder of this day is celebrated with food and music. (Sigd-Widipedia)

Summary and conclusions

In summary to all the above, the feast of weeks was believed among primal Hebrews to have had a non-Jewish origin. Of significance here is that early written Hebrew texts show that Enoch (a patriarch who flourished prior to the Deluge) was the first among all of mankind to have "recounted the weeks of the jubilees . . . and set in order the months . . . " (Jubilees).

The Hebrew record (as well as Babylonian) shows that Noah (or Ut-Napistim) was Divinely warned that all life (that breathed) would end in flood waters. He was instructed to build an ark, and consequently, Noah managed to survive the Deluge (as well as all who were onboard the ark).

Upon escaping death, Ut-napishtim [= the Chaldean Noah] is shown to have sacrificed to the gods--as follows:

> "I sent forth to the four winds,
> I poured out a libation
> I made an offering on the peak of the mountain:
> SEVEN AND SEVEN I set incense-vases there,
> Into their depths I poured cane, cedar, scented wood.
> The gods smelled a savour,
> The gods smelled a sweet savour,
> The gods gathered like flies over the sacrificer."
> ('The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria', Pinches)

The Hebrew version of the account has that Noah went forth from the ark, and built an altar and he made atonement for the earth. This is told in the book of Jubilees--as follows:

> "[On the Altar, Noah] poured thereon an offering mingled with oil, and sprinkled wine and strewed frankincense over everything, and caused a goodly savour to arise, acceptable before the Lord. And the Lord smelt the goodly savour, and He made a covenant with him . . . And Noah and his sons swore that they would not eat any blood that was in any flesh [= during the renewal ceremony], and he made a covenant before the Lord God for ever throughout all the generations of the earth . . . And for this law there is no limit of days, for it is for ever. They shall observe it throughout their generations . . . for this reason it is ordain and written on the heavenly tablets, that they should celebrate the feast of weeks . . . TO RENEW THE COVENANT . . . For it is the feast of weeks and the feast of first fruits: this feast is twofold and of a double nature: according to what is written and engraven concerning it, celebrate it. For I have written in the book of the first law, in that which I have written for thee, that thou shouldst celebrate it . . . and I explained to thee its sacrifices that the children of Israel should remember and should celebrate it throughout their generations . . . And all the children of Israel will forget and will not find the path of the years, and will forget the new moons, and seasons, and sabbaths and they will go wrong as to all the order of the years . . . they will go wrong as to the new moons and seasons and sabbaths and festivals, and they will eat all kinds of blood with all kinds of flesh" (my paraphrase of Jubilees 6, Charles version).

Of special interest here is that the ATONEMENT CEREMONY, performed after the Deluge, is shown to have been made inline with a calendar of weeks (at the feast of firstfruits). [Note that the 'weeks of the jubilees' were believed to have first been revealed to mankind in the era of Enoch.]

> " . . . they should celebrate the feast of weeks . . . to renew the covenant . . . For it is the feast of weeks and the feast of first fruits: this feast is twofold and of a double nature . . ." (ibid).

What is remarkable concerning Enoch's description of a day or a time station of the Moon (1 day every 7 weeks) is that the identification of this renewal day points to a functional lunisolar system. This respective time station--within the additional context of a day or a time station of the Sun (1 day every 30 days)--inherently achieves a perfect annual scribe.

> In this modern era, a time track of stations of the Moon and Sun can be used to almost perfectly measure and meter the cycle of the solar year (to within the limits of only 11 seconds). However, due to the slowing spin of the Earth (which slows at a rate of 1 to 3 milliseconds per century) it can be predicted that a perfect day count of the year would have been possible in the era of Enoch.

So, can it be that secrets of the Heavenly luminaries actually were revealed to a bible patriarch named Enoch . . . and can it be that Earth's transit of the Sun actually does contain Divinely created renewal days [= 1 day at the renewal of weeks and 1 day at the renewal of months]?

Of related significance is that early-written literature indicates that primal priest-astronomers once used axioms and time formulas to effectively measure and meter the lunar and solar periods. (Certain of these early used axioms/formulas are so very accurate that even a contemporary/modern astronomer would find them to be of use). For additional information concerning the early use of axioms and time formulas, refer to the following online publications:

Significance of 40 Days	**Ancient Astronomy**
Significanct Lunar Week	**Moon's 50-Day Cycle**
The Day-of-the-Sun	**Chronology of Jubilees**

For additional information about functional time design, refer to the following online publications:

Interrelated Time Design	**A Count of 360 Days**
Significance of 70 Years?	**The Jubilee Time Cycle**
Circle of Sevens	**The Genesis Eclipse**

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