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The information on this page is also found in [Chapter 7](#) of
[*The Model for the Messianic Community*](#)

Shabbat or the “Lord’s Day”?

God has made it very clear in His Word that He has reserved the seventh day of every week as His “Date Day” to be with His Bride.

“But,” I hear someone asking, “what about all the references in the Book of Acts about the Disciples breaking bread on the first day of the week? Doesn’t that mean that they moved the Sabbath to Sunday in honor of the Resurrection?”

I have been taught my entire life, both in Sunday school as a youngster and in seminary as an adult—and I was guilty of incorrectly teaching it myself for many, many years—that the “New Testament” says the Disciples met on the first day of the week to break bread, indicating that they moved the Sabbath to Sunday in honor of the Resurrection. After having carefully reviewed both the Scriptural and extra-biblical historical evidence, I now know *that is simply not true*. In fact, I have now come to believe that the idea first came into being as part of the paganization of Biblical Messianic Judaism by Emperor Constantine and his successors in 325 CE and the years following.

First, we must carefully consider what the Scriptures have to say about the Sabbath, or Shabbat in Hebrew, and then we will examine Shabbat from the modern Jewish perspective.

Scriptural Authority for the Seventh-Day Shabbat

In the Torah, God established the seventh day of the week as the day that He was setting aside [separating or sanctifying] for His children to enjoy particular fellowship with Him.

Then God said all these words: ... “Remember the day, Shabbat, to set it apart for God. You have six days to labor and do all your work, but *the seventh day* [not the first day] is a Shabbat for ADONAI your God. On it, you are not to do any kind of work—not you, your son or your



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Shabbat or the “Lord’s Day”?

daughter, not your male or female slave, not your livestock, and not the foreigner¹ staying with you inside the gates to your property. For in six days, ADONAI made heaven and earth, the sea and everything in them; but on *the seventh day* [not the first day] he rested. This is why ADONAI blessed the day, Shabbat, and separated it for Himself. ([Exodus 20:1,8-11](#)²)

ADONAI said to Moshe, “Tell the people of Isra’el: ‘The designated times of ADONAI which you are to proclaim as holy convocations are *My designated times*. Work is to be done on six days; but *the seventh day* [not the first day] is a Shabbat of complete rest, a holy convocation; you are not to do any kind of work; it is a Shabbat for ADONAI, even in your homes. ([Leviticus 23:1-3](#))

[ADONAI said to Moshe,] “Observe the day of Shabbat, to set it apart as holy, as ADONAI your God ordered you to do. You have six days to labor and do all your work, but *the seventh day* [not the first day] is a Shabbat for ADONAI your God. On it you are not to do any kind of work — not you, your son or your daughter, not your male or female slave, not your ox, your donkey or any of your other livestock, and not the foreigner staying with you inside the gates to your property—so that your male and female servants can rest just as you do. You are to remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and ADONAI your God brought you out from there with a strong hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore, *ADONAI your God has ordered you to keep the day of Shabbat*. ([Deuteronomy 5:12-15](#))

God felt that spending one day a week with Him was so important that He imposed the death penalty upon anyone who failed to keep that appointment with Him.

ADONAI said to Moshe, “Tell the people of Isra’el, ‘You are to observe my Shabbats; for this is a sign between me and you through all your generations; so that you will know that I am ADONAI, who sets you apart for me. Therefore, you are to keep my Shabbat, because it is set apart for you. Everyone who treats it as ordinary must be put to death; for whoever does any work on it is to be cut off from his people. On six days work will get done; but the *seventh day* [not the first day] is Shabbat, for complete rest, set apart for ADONAI. Whoever does any work on the day of Shabbat must be put to death. The people of Isra’el³ are to keep the Shabbat, to observe Shabbat through all their generations as a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the people of Isra’el forever; for in six days ADONAI made heaven and earth, but on the seventh day he stopped working and rested.’” When he had finished speaking with Moshe on

¹ God Himself said that the mitzvot [commandments] concerning Shabbat observance apply not only to the Jew, but also to the Gentile who associates with Israel, and even to all service animals as well. Thus, Shabbat observance is equally mandatory for all Gentile Christians, who are associated with Israel — that is “grafted in” — through Messiah and the Renewed Covenant.

² Unless otherwise stated, Scripture quotations are taken from the *Complete Jewish Bible* by David H. Stern. Copyright © 1998. All rights reserved. Used by permission of Messianic Jewish Publishers, 6120 Day Long Lane, Clarksville, MD 21029. www.messianicjewish.net. All emphasis has been added to the text.

³ Again, it is important to note that Gentile Christians are only able to appropriate salvation because they have been “grafted into” Israel and are thus, and *only* thus, partakers of the Renewed Covenant, which God made *only with Israel*, not with “the Church”! “Here, the days are coming,’ says ADONAI, ‘when I will make a new covenant with the house of *Isra’el* and with the house of *Y’hudah*.’” ([Jer. 31:31](#)) If you are a Christian and reject your position as part of Israel, you have no part in the Renewed Covenant.

Mount Sinai, ADONAI gave him the two tablets of the testimony, tablets of stone inscribed by the finger of God. ([Exodus 31:12-18](#))

Moshe assembled the whole community of the people of Isra'el and said to them, “These are the things which ADONAI has ordered you to do. On six days work is to be done, but the *seventh* day [not the first day] is to be a holy day for you, a Shabbat of complete rest in honor of ADONAI. *Whoever does any work on it is to be put to death.*” ([Exodus 35:1-2](#))

In case someone should make the claim that Shabbat was part of Jewish Law and therefore not applicable to non-Jewish believers — even though God has specifically said that the Shabbat applies to the Gentile who associates with Israel — God provided additional clarification through the prophet Isaiah. All who join themselves to ADONAI, including those who come to ADONAI through His Messiah (i.e., Gentile Christians), are expected — nay, are *required* — to observe the seventh-day Sabbath.

Here is what ADONAI says: “Observe justice, do what is right, for my salvation [the Hebrew word is *Yeshua*, the Messiah’s actual name] is close to coming, my righteousness to being revealed.” Happy is the person who does this, *anyone* who grasps it firmly, who keeps Shabbat and does not profane it, and keeps himself from doing any evil. ... And the foreigners [Gentiles] who join themselves to ADONAI to serve him⁴, to love the name of ADONAI, and to be his workers, *all who keep Shabbat and do not profane it, and hold fast to my covenant, I will bring them to my holy mountain and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house [the Temple] will be called a house of prayer for all peoples.*” ([Isaiah 56: 1-2,6-7](#))

God promises all—both Jew and Gentile—who honor His Shabbat a particular delight.

“If you hold back your foot on Shabbat from pursuing your own interests on My holy day; if you call Shabbat a delight, ADONAI’s holy day, worth honoring; then honor it by not doing your usual things or pursuing your interests or speaking about them. If you do, you will find delight in ADONAI — I will make you ride on the heights of the land and feed you with the heritage of your ancestor Ya’akov, for the mouth of ADONAI has spoken.” ([Isaiah 58:13-14](#))

God promises that if Israel will just honor Him by keeping the Shabbat, He will preserve both the kingdom of David and the safety of Jerusalem as Israel’s capitol city. In fact, many believe that if all Israel will observe just one Shabbat, Messiah will immediately come. However, if Israel fails to keep Shabbat, Jerusalem will be destroyed.

Then ADONAI said this to me: “Go, and stand at the People’s Gate, where the kings of Y’hudah⁵ go in and out, and at all the gates of Yerushalayim⁶; and say to them: ‘Kings of Y’hudah, all Y’hudah and all living in Yerushalayim who enter through these gates, hear the word of ADONAI!

⁴ Please note carefully that this commandment is *not a suggestion*, and that it is given to all those “who join themselves to ADONAI to serve Him, to love the name of ADONAI, and to be His workers.” If you do not join yourself to ADONAI to serve Him, if you do not love the name of ADONAI, if you choose not to be His worker, *only then* are you exempt from observing the seventh-day Shabbat that He established.

⁵ Judah.

⁶ Jerusalem.

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Here is what ADONAI says: “If you value your lives, don’t carry anything on Shabbat or bring it in through the gates of Yerushalayim; don’t carry anything out of your houses on Shabbat; and don’t do any work. Instead, make Shabbat a holy day. I ordered your ancestors to do this, but they neither listened nor paid attention; rather, they stiffened their necks, so that they wouldn’t have to hear or receive instruction. However, if you will pay careful heed to me,” says ADONAI, “and carry nothing through the gates of this city on Shabbat, but instead make Shabbat a day which is holy and not for doing work; then kings and princes occupying the throne of David will enter through the gates of this city, riding in chariots and on horses. They, their princes, the people of Y’hudah and the inhabitants of Yerushalayim will enter; and this city will be inhabited forever. They will come from the cities of Y’hudah, from the places surrounding Yerushalayim, from the land of Binyamin⁷, from the Sh’felah⁸, from the hills and from the Negev, bringing burnt offerings, sacrifices, grain offerings, frankincense and thanksgiving sacrifices to the house of ADONAI. But if you will not obey me and make Shabbat a holy day and not carry loads through the gates of Yerushalayim on Shabbat, then I will set its gates on fire; it will burn up the palaces of Yerushalayim and not be quenched.” ([Jeremiah 17:19-27](#))

Because Israel failed to observe God’s Shabbats, God sent them into the Babylonian captivity.

Those who had escaped the sword he carried off to Bavel⁹, and they became slaves to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia. Thus was fulfilled the word of A spoken by Yirmeyahu¹⁰, “until the land has been paid her Shabbats”—for as long as it lay desolate, it kept Shabbat, until seventy years had passed. [[2 Chronicles 36:20,21](#)]

It was Yeshua’s custom to observe the Shabbat. If we desire to follow Him, we should do as He did.

And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and *as was His custom*, He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath, and stood up to read. ([Luke 4:16](#), NAS)

Yeshua declared that His day, the true “Lord’s Day,” is the seventh-day Shabbat.

“For the Son of Man is Lord of Shabbat!” ([Matthew 12:8](#); [Luke 6:5](#))

Yeshua taught that the Shabbat is to be observed continuously throughout the so-called “Church Age” and into the so-called “Tribulation Age.”

“So when you see the abomination that causes devastation¹¹ spoken about through the prophet Dani’el standing in the Holy Place¹²” (let the reader understand the allusion), “that will be the time

⁷ Benjamin.

⁸ The Shephelah, a strip near the coast north of Mount Carmel.

⁹ Babylon.

¹⁰ [Jeremiah 25:8-14](#).

¹¹ The Anti-Messiah, or Anti-Christ.

¹² As I understand the chronology of “future things,” the Anti-Messiah will enter the Third Temple in Jerusalem and declare Himself to be God at the exact mid-point of the seven-year Tribulation period.

for those in Y'hudah¹³ to escape to the hills. If someone is on the roof, he must not go down to gather his belongings from his house; if someone is in the field, he must not turn back to get his coat. What a terrible time it will be for pregnant women and nursing mothers! Pray that you will not have to escape in winter *or on Shabbat*.¹⁴ [[Matthew 24:15-19](#)]

The writer of the Letter to the Messianic Jews¹⁵ says that “Shabbat-keeping” remains for all of God’s people.

For there is a place where it is said, concerning the seventh day, “And God rested on the seventh day from all His works.” And once more, our present text says, “They will not enter My rest.” Therefore, since it still remains for some to enter it, and those who received the Good News earlier did not enter, He again fixes a certain day, “Today,” saying through David, so long afterwards, in the text already given, “Today, if you hear God’s voice, don’t harden your hearts.” For if Y’hoshua¹⁶ had given them rest, God would not have spoken later of another “day.” *So there remains a Shabbat-keeping for God’s people.* For the one who has entered God’s rest has also rested from his own works, as God did from His. [[Hebrews 4:4-10](#)]

Though he had been specifically commissioned by Yeshua to serve Him as the “Emis-sary to the Gentiles,” it was still Rav Sha’ul’s custom to observe Shabbat.

According to his usual practice, Sha’ul went in; and on three Shabbats he gave them drashes¹⁷ from the Tanakh¹⁸ ... [[Acts 17:2](#)]

Sha’ul also began carrying on discussions *every Shabat* in the synagogue, where he tried to convince both Jews and Greeks. [[Acts 18:4](#)]

... but the others went on from Perga to Pisidian Antioch, and on Shabbat they went into the synagogue and sat down. [[Acts 13:14](#)]

The next Shabbat, nearly the whole city gathered together to hear the message about the Lord; [[Acts 13:44](#)]

Yeshua taught that **everyone** is to keep the whole Torah, including Shabbat:

“Don’t think that I have come to abolish the Torah or the Prophets. I have come not to abolish but to complete. Yes indeed! I tell you that until heaven and earth pass away, not so much as a yud¹⁹ or a stroke²⁰ will pass from the Torah—not until everything that must happen has happened.

¹³ Judea.

¹⁴ Assuming that Yeshua is referring to the End Times and not to the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem in 70 CE, His comment strongly suggests that the prohibition against exceeding the “Sabbath’s-day journey” will still be in effect at that time, which in turn requires that observance of the seventh-day Shabbat will also still be in effect at that time.

¹⁵ The Epistle to the Hebrews.

¹⁶ Joshua.

¹⁷ Expository sermons. An expository sermon is one in which the Scripture is thoroughly explained.

¹⁸ The Hebrew Bible, or incorrectly-designated “Old Testament.”

¹⁹ The smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet.

²⁰ The smallest part of a Hebrew letter, or an ornamental flourish on some Hebrew letters.

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So whoever disobeys the least of these mitzvot²¹ and teaches others to do so will be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven. But whoever obeys them and so teaches will be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven. For I tell you that unless your righteousness²² is far greater than that of the Torah-teachers and P'rushim²³, you will certainly not enter the Kingdom of Heaven! [[Matthew 5:17-20](#)]

In case you are not yet convinced that Shabbat is for everyone and is not just part of “Jewish Law,” I wish you would look at two more facts. First, please note that Shabbat was given at creation, not at Sinai; how could it therefore be for the Jews only, since they did not exist until thousands of years later.

God blessed the seventh day and separated it as holy; because on that day God rested from all his work which he had created, so that it itself could produce. ([Genesis 2:3](#))

Shabbat was being observed by Israel *long before* the Torah was given. Thus, in the Torah, God *reinforced* the sanctity of Shabbat, he did not *initiate* it.

On the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread [manna], two 'omers per person; and all the community leaders came and reported to Moshe. He told them, “This is what ADONAI has said: ‘Tomorrow is a holy Shabbat for ADONAI. Bake what you want to bake; boil what you want to boil; and whatever is left over, set aside and keep for the morning.’” They set it aside till morning, as Moshe had ordered; and it didn’t rot or have worms. Moshe said, “Today, eat that; because today is a Shabbat for ADONAI — today you won’t find it in the field. Gather it six days, but the seventh day is the Shabbat — on that day there won’t be any.” However, on the seventh day, some of the people went out to gather and found none. ADONAI said to Moshe, “How long will you refuse to observe my mitzvot and teachings? Look, ADONAI has given you the Shabbat. This is why He is providing bread for two days on the sixth day. Each of you, stay where you are; no one is to leave his place on the seventh day.” So the people rested on the seventh day. ([Exodus 16:22-30](#), *before the giving of Torah*)

The final piece of evidence that I would like you to consider is that through the prophet Isaiah, Adonai says that when Messiah reigns on earth, *every living person* (not just Jews or not even all of Israel) will worship on Shabbat.

“Every month on Rosh-Hodesh [the first day of each month] and every week on Shabbat, *everyone living* [not just Israel] will come to worship in my presence,” says ADONAI. ([Isaiah 66:23](#))

So then, to briefly recap the Scriptural authority for *all* believers to observe the seventh-day Shabbat:

- God set aside (sanctified) the seventh day of the week for His children to enjoy particular fellowship with Him. He did this immediately following the completion of creation, not thousands of years later as part of the Torah at Sinai.
- The seventh-day Shabbat was being observed by Israel before the Torah was given.

²¹ Any instruction contained in any part of Torah; a command.

²² In the Scriptures, “righteousness” is always determined by one’s *obedience* to ADONAI.

²³ Pharisees, who diligently observed every provision of Torah, particularly Shabbat.

- God imposed the death penalty on anyone who failed to keep that seventh-day appointment with Him.
- Through the prophet Isaiah, God clarified His intent that *all* who join themselves to Adonai, *both Jew and Gentile*, are expected to observe the seventh-day Shabbat.
- God promises *all* who honor His Shabbat—*both Jew and Gentile*—a particular delight.
- God promised that if Israel would simply honor His Shabbat, He would preserve both the kingdom of David and the safety of Jerusalem as Israel’s capitol city. However, if they failed to keep Shabbat, Jerusalem would be destroyed.
- Because they failed to observe His Shabbats, God sent Israel into the Babylonian captivity for a period of time equal to the exact number of Shabbats they had ignored.
- It was Yeshua’s custom to observe the Shabbat. If we desire to follow Him, we should do as He did.
- Yeshua declared that His day, the true “Lord’s Day,” is the seventh-day Shabbat.
- Yeshua taught that everyone is to keep the whole Torah, including Shabbat.
- Yeshua taught that the Shabbat is to be observed continuously throughout the so-called “Church Age” and into the so-called “Tribulation Age.”
- Though Sha’ul was specifically commissioned as “the Apostle to the Gentiles,” it was his custom to continue to observe Shabbat.
- The writer of the Epistle to the Messianic Jews [Hebrews] says that “Shabbat-keeping” remains for all of God’s people. (Hebrews 4:9)

The Modern Jewish Understanding of Shabbat

Let us now turn our attention to the modern Jewish understanding of Shabbat, which I believe is quite probably the same—or at least essentially the same—understanding that first-century Messianic Jews would have had.

Of all Jewish observances, Shabbat is probably the best known, but often the least understood. People who don’t understand Shabbat often think of it as a day of stifling restrictions, or just a day of worship like Sunday is for most Gentile Christians. But to the Jew, Shabbat is considered a gift from God, a day of great joy. It is often said, “More than Israel has kept Shabbat, Shabbat has kept Israel.”²⁴

In post-Biblical Jewish poetry, music, and liturgy Shabbat is often described as a bride or a queen, whose arrival is eagerly anticipated throughout the entire week. In her “bride” aspect Shabbat is seen through the eyes of a bridegroom standing at the *chuppa* (wedding canopy, equivalent to the altar in a Christian wedding) full of love, joy, and devotion, and eagerly waiting for his bride to appear. In her “queen” aspect Shabbat is the “avatar”²⁵ who causes one to “remember” those restrictions that God places on Shabbat activities, and to keep His day holy and separate from the cares and concerns of the rest of the week.

Before the development of the day-names that we use on our modern Roman calendar, Jewish days were counted by their relationship to Shabbat: First, Second, and Third day of the week, followed by Third Day Toward Shabbat, Second Day Toward Shabbat, Erev [the day before] Shabbat and, of course, Shabbat. It was a day that God gave to Israel to be a day of rest on which all the cares of the week could be set aside, and even the poorest

²⁴ For a much more detailed study of Shabbat from a Jewish perspective, see George Robinson, *Essential Judaism*, (New York: Pocket Books, 2000, pp. 81-92) and Rich, “Shabbat,” www.jewfaq.org/shabbat.htm.

²⁵ An avatar is an incarnation in human form, or an embodiment of a concept or philosophy as a person; a personification or anthropomorphism.

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could pursue without interruption the highest and most honored of all activities, the study of Torah.

To usher in Shabbat, two candles are lit and a *brakah* (blessing or prayer) is recited no later than eighteen minutes before sunset. Two candles are used as a reminder that there are two parts of God’s instruction that we are (1) to “remember” Shabbat, and (2) to “keep it holy.” The family then typically attends a brief evening service and returns home for a festive, leisurely dinner.

Before dinner, the man of the house recites Kiddush, a *brakah* over a cup of wine sanctifying Shabbat, and the *brakah* for eating bread is recited over two loaves of *challah*, a sweet egg bread which is usually braided.²⁶ The two loaves serve as a reminder that when Israel was in the wilderness, God always provided a double portion of manna on the day before Shabbat. After dinner, the *birkatha-mazon* (grace after meals) is recited.

Shabbat morning begins with the synagogue service that usually begins between 9 and 10 AM, and runs until noon or a little later. After services, the family does Kiddush again, followed by another leisurely, festive meal (Oneg) that lasts until about 2 PM. In many Messianic Jewish congregations, Kiddush and Oneg are shared by the entire congregation, quite similar to the traditional “pot luck” or “covered dish dinner” that is popular in so many Christian congregations.

The afternoon is generally spent in Torah study, accompanied by lively discussion [“wherever there are two Jews, there are three opinions”]. Tradition requires that at least three meals be eaten on Shabbat, and the third is usually a light meal in the late afternoon.

The end of Shabbat, or *motza’ei Shabbat* (Saturday sunset), is marked by Havdalah.²⁷ Just as Shabbat is ushered in as early as possible (no later than 18 minutes before sunset), so Shabbat is allowed to linger as long as possible, until three stars are visible, or approximately 40 minutes after sunset, at which time the concluding ritual called Havdalah (separation, division) is performed.^{28,29}

Three items are used for Havdalah: a glass of wine, a special multi-wicked candle, and some fragrant spices (cloves, cinnamon, or bay leaves are commonly used, and kept in a special decorated holder called a *b’samim* box).

There are four Havdalah *brakot* (blessings) recited. The first is the traditional *brakah* over the wine. The second *brakah* is recited over the fragrant spices, which represent a compensation for the loss of the special Shabbat spirit; their sweet fragrance lingers after the departure of the Shabbat bride.

Since the Rabbis do not permit a flame to be kindled on Shabbat, the *brakah* and lighting of the Havdalah candle truly indicates that Shabbat is over. The fourth and final is the Havdalah blessing itself, which is the blessing over the separation of different things.

²⁶ I think it an extremely interesting “coincidence” that in the braided form of the challah loaf that Jews have used for thousands of years of Shabbat observances, there are three individual strands that are interwoven to become a single loaf, just as there are three individual divine Persons within the one single God.

²⁷ Havdalah is a Hebrew word meaning “separation.” It separates Holy Shabbat from the mundane week.

²⁸ See also Rich, “Havdalah Home Ritual,” www.jewfaq.org/prayer/havdalah.htm.

²⁹ Michael Beer, “Shabbat or the Sabbath,” fp.thebeers.f9.co.uk/shabat.htm [page no longer in the Internet]

After the Havdalah *brakah*, the wine is drunk, and the candle is extinguished with a few remaining drops of wine.

Thus, on both the ancient and modern Hebrew calendars, the Havdalah ceremony officially marks the end of Shabbat and the beginning of “the first day of the week.”

Scriptural Authority for Moving Shabbat to the First Day of the Week

Where, then, in the Apostolic Scriptures do we find the authority for moving God’s Shabbat from the seventh day of the week to the first day of the week?

Nowhere at all! I performed a computer search of both the King James Version and New American Standard Bible which revealed that there are only two possible references to the first-century Messianic Community meeting on “the first day of the week,” and when the Shabbat is properly understood, these two references are certainly referring to *motza’ei Shabbat* (Saturday sunset) and Havdalah!

On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul began talking to them, intending to leave the next day, and he prolonged his message until midnight. ([Acts 20:7](#), NAS)

On the first day of every week each one of you is to put aside and save, as he may prosper, so that no collections be made when I come. ([1 Corinthians 16:2](#), NAS)

Thus, I believe that David Stern correctly interprets these two events as he renders them in *The Complete Jewish Bible*:

On Motza’ei-Shabbat, when we were gathered to break bread, Sha’ul addressed them. Since he was going to leave the next day, he kept talking until midnight. ([Acts 20:7](#)) [So he didn’t “preach” from the Sunday morning service until midnight, as I have frequent heard taught.]

Every week, on *Motza’ei-Shabbat*, each of you should set some money aside, according to his resources, and save it up; so that when I come I won’t have to do fundraising. ([1 Cor. 16:2](#))

Yeshua’s Talmidim (Messianic Jews, every one of them) faithfully observed the entire Shabbat, and met together in each other’s homes on *Motza’ei-Shabbat* for the Havdalah service, which began “about 40 minutes to an hour after sunset ... at the conclusion of Shabbat,” for a fellowship meal after Havdalah, followed by “Bible study” and teaching after dinner. Since on the Hebrew calendar, the day begins and ends at sunset, the Saturday-evening Havdalah service and the meal which follows actually occur on the first day of the week, but on Saturday evening, not on Sunday morning as according to the western calendar!

The Scriptures tell us that the Messianic Jews did not abandon the Temple—and we can therefore assume that they did not abandon the Synagogue, either—and that their numbers continued to grow daily.

Continuing faithfully and with singleness of purpose to meet in the Temple courts daily, and breaking bread in their several homes, they shared their food in joy and simplicity of heart,

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praising God and having the respect of all the people. And day after day the Lord kept adding to them those who were being saved. ([Acts 2:46-47](#))

Meanwhile, through the emissaries many signs and miracles continued to be done among the people. United in mind and purpose, the believers met in Shlomo’s Colonnade;³⁰ and no one else dared to join them. Nevertheless, the people continued to regard them highly; and throngs of believers were added to the Lord, both men and women. ([Acts 5:12-14](#))

“But,” someone may well ask (as I used to do), “what about all the biblical references to ‘the Lord’s Day’ in the New Testament?” I performed an additional computer search of both the KJV and the NAS, and was actually quite surprised to find that the phrase “Lord’s day” appears **only once** in all of Scripture!

In [Revelation 1:10](#) Yochanan [John] says that he was “in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day” (κυριακή ἡμέρα, *kuriakee hemera*). Although I have almost always heard this verse interpreted, both in church and in seminary, as “John was in worship on Sunday when he received this vision,” this is the **only** place in all of Scripture that the Greek term *kuriakee hemera* is translated as “the Lord’s day,” and there is absolutely no indication whatever that Yochanan was referring to the first day of the week.

Thus, we again turn to David Stern’s more accurate rendering in the *Complete Jewish Bible* for clarification:

I, Yochanan, am a brother of yours and a fellow-sharer in the suffering, kingship and perseverance that come from being united with Yeshua. I had been exiled to the island called Patmos for having proclaimed the message of God and borne witness to Yeshua. I came to be, in the Spirit, *on the Day of the Lord*; and I heard behind me a loud voice, like a trumpet, ... ([Rev. 1:9-10](#))

In fact, the entire Book of the Revelation is about events that occur during “the Day of the Lord,” which is how the term *kuriakee hemera* is translated *every other time* it appears in the Apostolic Scriptures, and it *never* refers to Sunday, but *always* refers to the period of time in which Yeshua returns in glory to judge and to reign.

Blow a trumpet in Zion, And sound an alarm on My holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, For the *day of the LORD* is coming; Surely it is near, ([Joel 2:1](#), NAS)

The LORD utters His voice before His army; Surely His camp is very great, For strong is he who carries out His word. The *day of the LORD* is indeed great and very awesome, And who can endure it? ([Joel 2:11](#), NAS)

The sun will be turned into darkness And the moon into blood Before the great and awesome *day of the LORD* comes. ([Joel 3:14](#), NAS)

For the *day of the LORD* draws near on all the nations. As you have done, it will be done to you. Your dealings will return on your own head. ([Obadiah 1:15](#), NAS)

Near is the great *day of the LORD*, Near and coming very quickly; Listen, the *day of the LORD*! In it the warrior cries out bitterly. ([Zephaniah 1:14](#), NAS)

³⁰ Also called Solomon’s Porch

Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible *day of the LORD*. ([Malachi 4:5](#), NAS)

But the *day of the LORD* will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. ([2 Peter 3:10](#), NAS)

I, Yochanan, am a brother of yours and a fellow-sharer in the suffering, kingship and perseverance that come from being united with Yeshua. I had been exiled to the island called Patmos for having proclaimed the message of God and borne witness to Yeshua. I came to be, in the Spirit, *on the Day of the Lord*; and I heard behind me a loud voice, like a trumpet, ... ([Rev. 1:9-10](#))

As if to clearly settle the issue once and for all, Yeshua Himself tells us which day of the week is His day: “The Son of Man is Lord of Shabbat!” ([Matthew 12:8](#), [Mark 2:28](#), [Luke 6:5](#))

About the Author: Dr. Rickard L. Sawyer (aka Ari ben Gavriel haLevi) has been privileged to serve the Master as a Bible teacher, pastor, and theologian since 1965. He holds a Master of Arts (MA) in Bible, a Master of Theology (ThM) in Systematic Theology, a Doctor of Theology (ThD) in Cults and Comparative Religion, a Doctor of Ministry (DMin) in Bible College Administration and Curriculum Development, a Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Business and Organizational Management, a Master of Business Administration (MBA) in Church Administration (all summa cum laude), an Associate of Arts in Criminal Justice (magna cum laude), and completed four years of study towards a Doctor of Naturopathy (ND).