

3. Joining the “Remnant” Bandwagon!

Before addressing the problems incurred by *Lunar Sabbath* observance, we believe it is important to direct your attention to a technique that is often utilized by some individuals in an attempt to persuade others to give views such as this one more serious consideration than they might otherwise be willing to give it. This technique is what we term *Reverse Numbers Logic*. Perhaps a better designation is the *Remnant Bandwagon* (Romans 9:27), often used as an appeal to the emotional value of being “few in number.” Here is how this system works: We all know of how society in general teaches that anything practiced and believed by the majority of people “must” be correct. This is the *truth in numbers* logic. In other words, our society, as a whole, believes that truth is decided by majority vote. Hopefully, we all know better than to believe such a thing. We know the Messiah taught that broad is the way leading to destruction and of how “many” will follow that path. The road to eternal life, however, is narrow, and only a “few” will follow it (Matt. 7:13-14). In other words, as the Messiah plainly outlined, majority vote most certainly does *not* decide truth. *Lunar Sabbath* proponents capitalize on this reality, using the fact that their numbers are currently *small* as a springboard to subtly persuading others of how this demonstrates that their position “must” be the correct one. They then play a little “hardball” with this “reverse numbers logic” by sprinkling in sporadic comments to the effect that anyone who doesn’t accept their position is “closed minded.” We have found that promoting the “remnant” bandwagon works on many people, and since we have found examples of lunar sabbatarians who have used this technique, we thought we should incorporate this cautionary section before proceeding with our study.

Lunar sabbatarian Eric Bess, who read the above introduction to this chapter in a previous version of our study that first appeared on the Web, did not appreciate our observation. In September 2006 he sent me a lengthy rebuttal, some of which I will incorporate into this revision, including his objection to this chapter’s introduction:

The implication that a Lunar Sabbath proponent would believe that they “must be correct”, and that others would be “close minded” on the basis of numbers is a fabricated accusation.¹

I believe Eric’s response was premature, for I had proceeded to cite examples to illustrate our point. Perhaps I didn’t give him enough, though, so I will add a few others here and ask you, the reader, to be the judge. From Ernie L. Hoch’s online study entitled “The Burning Questions: Sabbath - When is it?”

Let me say right now, that I do believe that there are some of Yahweh’s chosen who are, in fact, keeping Sabbath as Yahweh intended.²

This was Mr. Hoch’s subtle introduction to his lunar sabbath study. His remark that “some” are keeping Sabbath as Yahweh intended strongly implies that “many” are not. If we read the rest of his study, it becomes clear that those who practice lunar sabbaths are “keeping Sabbath as Yahweh intended.” It would certainly not be possible for Mr. Hoch to make his allusion to the “**some**” who are “doing it right” if the *majority* of Sabbathkeepers were lunar sabbatarians. He thus takes a subtle approach to

¹ From the response entitled “Something Different/Something Renewed,” chapter two, that Eric e-mailed me on 9/5/2006 2:32:15 P.M. Central Standard Time.

² From “The Burning Questions: Sabbath - When is it?”, by Ernie L. Hoch, 1/18/2002, found online at the following URL: <http://www.yahwehmusic.com/covenants/burningquestion.htm>

promoting the Remnant bandwagon approach, something he couldn't do if he didn't ascribe a certain amount of credibility to the belief that "the 'few' must be right."

Lunar sabbatarian Arnold Bowen more forcefully echoes this same thought process in a remark he made while participating in an internet forum discussion. The following is a direct, unedited quote from a commentary he submitted in January 2007. The only additions are what I supplied in brackets for clarification purposes:

RESPONSE; he [YHWH] is restoring it [the true Sabbath] now as we speak but he is doing it His way, through His ministers, Apostles, Profits, etc. but if you don't believe in these and know how to distinguish between the true and false you will not be perfected.

Here is a clue, our Saviour said there will be "many" false teachers and they will deceive "many", now I ask you do I or Brother Matthew fit the category of the "many"? How "many" do you see like us?³

Mr. Bowen here simultaneously presents his belief that the Almighty is restoring the "true Sabbath" while candidly playing the "reverse numbers logic" card. He would not be able to use this approach if the majority of believers agreed with his doctrine. However, since the majority of believers do *not* (at this time) share his interpretation of Scripture, it is convenient and often effective to employ the *Reverse Numbers Logic* approach at persuading others of his position. Since there aren't "many like him" out there, the implication is understood that he and Brother Matthew (his son-in-law) are among the "few" ... the "remnant."

If I were out to gain a large following, I might use this same approach. When anyone examines the beliefs that June and I have, it soon becomes apparent that there really aren't many believers out there quite like us! Of course, we could start with the weekly Sabbath. We live in a neighborhood consisting of few, if any, Sabbathkeepers. If there *are* any Sabbathkeepers in our neighborhood, we have not yet met them. The nearest Sabbathkeepers we know of live approximately 10 miles away. On the occasions that we travel on the Sabbath to visit these believers, we cannot help but notice how crowded the shopping centers and malls are as we drive by. Conversely, on Sundays the local church parking lots are *packed!* Thus, I believe it is safe to say that there really aren't a whole lot of folks out there who practice Sabbath observance on the same day that June and I do. We can narrow the field down even further by mentioning that June and I do not believe that Yahweh wants His children to do extensive food preparation, including cooking of any kind, on the weekly Sabbath. There is an Hispanic group of believers, known as *Soldados de la Cruz*, that meets about 25 miles south of here, and this group is one of the few we know of that shares our belief with regard to food preparation on the weekly Sabbath.

However, to narrow things down even further, there aren't a whole lot of believers who share our belief that we honor Yahweh by calling upon Him by His name, and the field gets even smaller when we explain that we do not believe we honor Him by even referring to Him as *God* when this word is used as a *title*. Just in case you're still in agreement with each of the beliefs I have just mentioned, I will continue by mentioning that we believe the Scriptural month begins with the sighting of the new moon crescent over Israel. We also believe the commandment to wear tassels (Numbers 15:37-40) hasn't been "done away." Are you still with us? If you are, do you count to Pentecost the same way we do? We personally believe the count to Pentecost is reckoned from the morrow after the "festival Sabbath," not the weekly

³ From a posting submitted by Arnold Bowen on 01-23-2007 at 05:58 AM in the "True Sabbath" forum at EliYah's Forums, forum thread entitled "Debunking Larry's Book."

Sabbath. I could probably narrow things down even more by mentioning such things as men's and women's headcoverings, the fact that we observe *Hanukkah*, and the fact that we *do not* observe the United States' version of *Thanksgiving*. June and I have authored studies addressing each of these beliefs. If you should somehow *still* agree with all the beliefs I have listed to this point, I could mention a few others that would very likely separate us, such as the fact that we do not agree with the "trinity doctrine," nor do we believe that Yeshua is Yahweh. Please understand that I am not bringing up these beliefs in an attempt to present ourselves as "holier than thou" or to otherwise underscore how small our numbers are. We are simply not out to separate ourselves from other believers, nor do we have any desire to set ourselves apart by pointing out how we are obviously not a part of "the many." Indeed, our chief concern lies in the fact that we have a very difficult time fellowshiping with others because virtually all of the above items have resulted in friction with various groups we have visited over the years. In short, we have no desire to point out how "few" our numbers are in any attempt to subtly present ourselves as not being a part of "the many." We believe the bottom-line focus should be on seeking *the truth*, not how "few" of us there are.

As we have demonstrated, the tendency of lunar sabbatarians is to coerce others into joining their "remnant bandwagon" by bringing up their numbers. I believe our "numbers" demonstration should suffice to illustrate that "reverse numbers logic" is indeed employed by lunar sabbatarians. Therefore, contrary to Eric Bess' claim, the "reverse numbers" approach is *not* a "fabricated accusation" on my part. It is an observation that can be demonstrated, as I have just done.

Yet another example of a lunar sabbatarian using the *Reverse Numbers Logic* technique is found within the commentary offered by a man who goes by the screen name of "legalbear":

The reason I'm saying these things is to remind you that when it comes to obeying Jahuwah, you never look around you asking, is anybody else doing this? As you know, broad is that path that leads to destruction and many there are that are on it. If you are the only one in your whole city or state that keeps a Lunar based Sabbath it should matter not. Like Jahshuwah, you should spend your time bringing others to the truth and blessing of keeping a Lunar based Sabbath. Remember, it's the ones that both do and teach the least of Jah's Commandments that will be called great in the Kingdom. Mat. 5:19. People to fellowship with on Sabbath will come around easy when they see you walking in the blessing.⁴

On the surface, the above commentary appears very profound. Indeed, if we are the only ones found to be obeying the Almighty, this should not discourage us from continuing in obedience out of our love for Him. The only thing is, the subtle message the author attempts to convey is that to *avoid* the "broad path" leading to destruction, we need to understand "the truth and blessing of keeping a Lunar based Sabbath." Since, conversely, he does *not* consider the continuously-repeating weekly Sabbath as "the truth," then those who observe it can only be regarded as being among the "**many**" who are headed down the wrong path leading to destruction. Once again, the *Reverse Numbers Logic* technique is applied. I believe it is safe to say that "Legalbear" would not have considered using this technique if the majority of Sabbathkeepers were lunar sabbatarians.

⁴ Excerpt from a posting submitted by "legalbear" on Dec 04 2004 at 1:44:23 PM in ECC Forum and Fellowship's "Lunar Sabbath" forum, page 2. "Legalbear" also offered his website: www.legalbears.com. The forum thread where this posting was submitted may be accessed at the following URL: http://ecclesia.org/forum/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=364&whichpage=2

Lunar Sabbatarian “Hardball”

As I mentioned earlier, once lunar sabbatarians play the “reverse numbers logic” card, they then go for a little “hardball,” portraying those who are unable to either see or embrace their position as “closed-minded.” For example, here are a few quotations from some articles I have found on the internet:

The new moon is indeed a PENDANT – the weekly Sabbath depends on it for its very existence since it is counted from the day after the new moon. Anybody with an open mind should be able to see this.⁵

Of course, the implication is that those with closed minds will *not* be able to grasp the lunar sabbatarian position. The author of the above comment employs a method known as “the obvious fallacy,” an approach marked by the introduction of sparse evidence combined with the forceful reasoning that the author’s conclusion should be “obvious” to everyone. In the above case, the author’s premise is that the weekly Sabbath *depends* upon the moon “for its very existence,” and anyone with an open mind should understand this to be true. However, there is not a single place in Scripture where we are ever told that the weekly Sabbath is determined by counting from the day after the new moon. In fact, there isn’t, to my knowledge, a text of Scripture outlining *any* connections between the weekly Sabbath and the lunar cycle. How, then, could someone expect an open-minded person to “just accept” such a thing? I believe those who are well-grounded in Scripture will be able to see through such subtle uses of propaganda. Tactics such as “the obvious fallacy” are designed to sway the reader into accepting the author’s position without regard to any distortions found in his interpretation of Scripture. Thus, although there isn’t a single verse of Scripture telling us the weekly Sabbath depends upon the moon for its existence, if we don’t agree with the author’s completely unsubstantiated premise, our minds are not considered open ... at least not by lunar sabbatarians.

The author goes on to write:

Most of professing Christianity claims Sunday is the day, while Jews and various of the Adventists and Churches of God claim YEHOVAH God set Saturday apart from the rest of the week. This article suggests that both parties are in error and that we have no way of knowing when YEHOVAH’s Sabbath day falls in our Gregorian calendar. The fact is, time has been lost! But YEHOVAH God, in His infinite wisdom and mercy, has planted clues in His Word the Bible – clues that those with an understanding mind can uncover and use to reinstate YEHOVAH God’s TRUE SABBATH DAY!⁶

It appears that not only do open-minded folk grasp that the weekly Sabbath is dependent upon the lunar cycle, but those with an “understanding mind” can unearth the hidden clues that are apparently buried in Scripture and thus accomplish reinstating the “true Sabbath day” by sharing this “hidden treasure” with others. Conversely, then, those who are closed-minded and *lacking* an “understanding mind” will *not* be able to accomplish this feat. Surely, since all of us want to be open-minded and possess superior understanding, we will see and understand what the author sees, or so he reasons. From all indications, the author of the above comments has a simple criterion for determining whether or not an individual has an open mind: Agreement with his position.

⁵ From “The New Moon and the Weekly Sabbath – *Side-By-Side!*”, by John D. Keyser, Hope of Israel Ministries (Church of Jehovah), <http://www.hope-of-israel.org/sideside.htm>, p. 9.

⁶ Ibid.

The author concludes his study with the following remark:

It is my sincere hope and prayer that you, the reader, will have an open mind and see the irrefutable truth that YEHOVAH God set up His holy Sabbath days on the four quarters of the moon (Exodus 16) and intends for us to worship Him on these very days. The Saturday sabbath is NOT YEHOVAH God's day – any more than Sunday is. In the search for truth we have uncovered vital new truth that, frankly, is going to separate the men from the boys; those who will obey YEHOVAH God without equivocation from those who will continue to thumb their noses at YEHOVAH and resist to the very end.⁷

Are you a real man or are you just a “boy”? Are you an obedient believer or do you “thumb your nose” at Almighty Yahweh? According to the author of the above commentary, if you worship on the “Saturday sabbath,” you are, metaphorically speaking, just a “boy,” not a man. Moreover, unless you are able to understand and observe Lunar Sabbaths as the author does, you are figuratively thumbing your nose at the Creator.

Lunar sabbatarian Eric Bess, in his own rebuttal to our original study, built upon the “man/boy” approach:

Meanwhile, this [i.e., a quote Eric had supplied from the *Encyclopædia Britannica*] is just one of the many historically documented pieces of evidence that demonstrate several key things:

1st – The calendar has been altered throughout history, changing days and dates, including Saturday.

2nd – The Saturday Sabbath cannot possibly be traced back to creation.

3rd – The earliest calendars and time keeping were based on the moon.

4th – This commentary [i.e., our study *Something Different: Lunar Sabbaths*] is completely wrong in its assessment of historical facts and the availability of evidence which contradicts that Saturday must be the true Sabbath.

I hope it is not too offensive to state that one would have to be close-minded and blind and an intellectual “boy” not to see this. For to not see it is to smack the face of historical fact, whether you disagree with me or not.

The changes were made summarily by godless men in order to accommodate economic trade and their pagan religious practices. Thank goodness that Yahweh's system for keeping time has never changed, which is the Sun, Moon, and Stars (Gen. 1:14-18). This astrological basis for time keeping has been replaced repeatedly by man-made tradition, especially the concept of a “week”.⁸

Building upon John D. Keyser's “man/boy” approach that understanding and embracing lunar sabbaths is what “separates the men from the boys,” Eric Bess maintains that one would have to be an

⁷ Ibid, p. 31.

⁸ From a response entitled “Something Different/Something Renewed,” chapter three, which we received via e-mail from Eric Bess, Jonesboro, GA on September 5, 2006.

“intellectual boy” to not see that unregenerate heathens forced Judaism to switch from an original weekly cycle governed by the lunar cycle to a continuously-repeating one that is independent of astronomical observation. The lunar sabbatarian quoted above, as I noted within his commentary, cites the *Encyclopædia Britannica* as his supporting evidence that, since there have been various calendar alterations throughout history, this of necessity means the weekly Sabbath is included. While we do not dispute the various calendar changes that have been implemented by various cultures throughout history, this does not mean we can arbitrarily lump the continuously-repeating weekly cycle in with those calendars, especially since there is no record that it was ever done! Moreover, the continuously-repeating weekly cycle is not connected to any calendars or the changes that have been wrought upon them. By the way, the references cited by Eric, including the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, all support various calendar changes throughout history, but *none* offer supportive evidence that Judaism ever allowed the lunar cycle to determine the days of the week. Regrettably, we have found that this attempt to manipulate a trustworthy reference so as to make it appear to support their position is a common practice among lunar sabbatarians, so we urge the reader to exercise caution when reviewing the “supportive evidence” supplied by proponents of Lunar Sabbaths.

We have already seen the “obvious fallacy” technique at work among lunar sabbatarian writers. Eric Bess, with his use of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* article, calls to mind another tactic that we need to be aware of. The term we use to describe this practice is “selective scholarship.” Selective scholarship, in its most abusive form, involves picking and choosing select quotes from a particular reference or work, then citing them as scholarly support to validate a certain doctrinal position while conveniently ignoring other information presented in the same reference that presents the full, true picture. In the above instance, Eric Bess selected some quotes from the *Encyclopædia Britannica* which he feels validates his position that heathens imposed the continuously-repeating weekly cycle upon Judaism, and that Judaism subsequently embraced the change without so much as a whimper of protest. Let’s review the quote that Mr. Bess selected to see if there is any mention with regard to a change from a lunar-based weekly cycle to a continuously-repeating one:

Either way, let us dispel this notion of the absence of historical evidence right now. Let’s look at what the widely acclaimed and internationally recognized *Encyclopedia Britannica* has to say about the origin if the seven day week:

"The origins of three familiar units of time—the year, the month, and the day—are rooted in the natural cycles observed by ancient peoples (see [Calendar](#)). The seven-day week may have originated in the Middle East. It is probably from the ancient Sumerian method of reckoning (which featured divisions based on gradations of 60) that days are divided into 24 hours, hours into 60 minutes, and minutes into 60 seconds. Today the second is precisely defined on the basis of energy changes in atoms.

Early Calendars

"The Sumerians of Babylonia were probably the first people to make a calendar. They used the phases of the moon, counting 12 lunar months as a year. To make up for the difference between this year and the solar year of the seasons, they inserted an extra month in the calendar about

every four years. The early Egyptians, Greeks, and Semitic peoples copied this calendar. Later the Egyptians worked out a calendar that corresponded almost exactly to the seasons.

"The early Romans also used a calendar that was based on the moon. The year in this calendar was 355 days long. The months corresponding to March, May, July, and October each had 31 days; February had 28 days; and the rest had 29. An extra month was added about every fourth year. The high priest regulated the calendar. On the calends, or day of the new moon, he announced to the people the times of the nones (first quarter) and ides (full moon) for that month. The word calendar is from the Latin word kalendae.

"The priests, however, performed their calendar-keeping duties poorly, and by Julius Caesar's time they had summer months coming in the spring. Caesar corrected this situation in 46 BC in the Julian calendar. He adopted the plan of the Egyptian astronomer Sosigenes—a 365-day year, with one day added every fourth, or "leap," year. He distributed the extra ten days among the 29-day months, making them identical with the months today. Pope Gregory XIII remedied this by directing that ten days be dropped from the calendar and that the day after Thursday, Oct. 4, 1582, should be Friday, October 15."⁹

This, then, was Eric's "historical support" for an original, lunar-based weekly cycle. Please notice that the word "week" only appears *once* in the entire article, and even with this one isolated appearance of the word, there is not so much as a *hint* that the author of the encyclopedia article believes the week was ever determined by the lunar cycle. In addition, let's pay close attention to the very first sentence of the citation offered by Mr. Bess: "The origins of three familiar units of time—the year, the month, and the day—are rooted in the natural cycles observed by ancient peoples." It is a "given" that Mr. Bess would have included a *fourth* unit of time ... the week ... in the above list. The author of the article he cited, however, did not. The only mention of the word "week" in the above encyclopedia excerpt involves the author's recognition that it may have originated in the Middle East, a statement that we agree with. Since the encyclopedia author chose to *not* lump the "week" in with the year, month and day, it is clear that he does not recognize the "lunar connection" that lunar sabbatarians attempt to impose upon the weekly cycle.

Clearly, the above attempt at forcing the *Encyclopedia Britannica* article to offer support for an original, lunar-based weekly cycle is an example of "selective scholarship," albeit a sloppy one. Sometimes lunar sabbatarians do produce quotes that actually appear, on the surface, to support believing that the author recognizes an original, lunar-based weekly cycle. We will show examples of this later in our study. In each instance that we have seen of such "apparent" support for a lunar-based weekly cycle, the same author, in other articles or even excerpts from the same article (or book), produces statements invalidating either his previous remarks or his own scholarly credibility.

⁹ Ibid.

If Mr. Bess had somehow come across an *Encyclopædia Britannica* article that might, on the surface, appear to offer support for an original, lunar-based weekly cycle, the fact that he employed “selective scholarship” would have been made clearly manifest via one simple statement found in *The New Encyclopædia Britannica*, Vol. 15, which states:

Moreover, by the 1st century BC the Jewish seven-day week seems to have been adopted throughout the Roman world, and this influenced Christendom.¹⁰

The above statement invalidates any attempts to infuse any understanding into the *Encyclopædia Britannica* articles that the continuously-repeating weekly cycle as handed down to us by Judaism is a “modern invention.” According to the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, the current “Jewish seven-day week” was in place by the 1st century BCE. This is the clear, unbiased understanding as expressed by the authors of articles in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, as well as the other authoritative references we have reviewed.

Our purpose in this chapter, however, is not so much to address lunar sabbatarian research miscues as it is to address the “hardball approach” tactics that we have observed to this point. As we observed, Eric Bess, instead of agreeing that John D. Keyser’s “man/boy” approach is unscrupulous, built upon the same concept in his own response, while citing a reference that in no way suggests the veracity of lunar sabbatarian concept.

Using another “hardball” tactic, some lunar sabbatarians approach this issue from the perspective that those who observe the continuously-repeating seventh-day Sabbath are following “traditions of men.” Notice the claim listed in a booklet we were given by a proponent of Lunar Sabbaths:

Many people keep a seventh day, Heathens included, the Christians on Sunday, the Muslims on Friday, and the Jews on Saturday, etc. Anyone can keep a 7th day count, but how many can keep a Sabbath of YHWH? How many are willing to forget all the traditions of men that they have inherited? (The lies) ‘Our fathers have inherited lies, vanity and things where there is no profit’ (Jer. 16:19) Follow the scriptures they are profitable for doctrine (II Tim. 3:16).¹¹

According to the above author, the true “Sabbath of YHWH” is, by process of elimination, not necessarily based upon a “7th day count,” and those who observe a continuously-repeating seven-day cycle ending in a Sabbath each week are keeping a Sabbath based upon “the traditions of men,” which is in turn based upon “lies” that they have inherited. He then cites a verse of Scripture which outlines the fact that our ancestors have inherited lies, as though offering such a “proof text” validates his lunar sabbatarian premise. Is the continuously-repeating weekly Sabbath a “tradition of men” or is it ordained by Yahweh? We do not prove a point by making a negative remark about a certain belief, then citing Jeremiah 16:19!

¹⁰ From *The New Encyclopædia Britannica*, Vol. 15, 15th edition, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., Chicago, IL, article “Calendar,” p. 417.

¹¹ Source: Booklet entitled *Proof That Weekly Sabbath Days Are Determined by the Moon* by Arnold Bowen, p. 45.