

MIQDASH BETHEL COVENANT ASSEMBLY

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TORAH LAW EDUCATIONAL COURSE

The 613 Mitzvot of Yahweh

Bereishit • Shemot • Vayikra • Bamidbar • Devarim | The Tanakh Writings

LESSON 20

Positive Laws #48 & #49 | Negative Laws #50, #51 & #52

Shemot (Exodus) 20:8–10 | 23:12 | 34:21 | 16:29 | 35:3

זְכוֹר אֶת-יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת לְקַדְּשׁוֹ

Zachor et yom ha-Shabbat l'kadsho

"Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy."

The Covenant Law of the Sabbath: Holiness in Time, Cessation from Labor, the Boundary of Rest, and the Covenant Sign Between Yahweh and Israel

Law #48 — To keep the Sabbath holy (Shemot 20:8)

Law #49 — To rest on the Sabbath (Shemot 23:12; 34:21)

Law #50 — Not to do work on the Sabbath (Shemot 20:10)

Law #51 — Not to walk beyond the Sabbath boundary (Shemot 16:29)

Law #52 — Not to inflict punishment on the Sabbath (Shemot 35:3)

Four Spheres: Individual • Community • Nation • World

Authority: The Tanakh — The Word of Yahweh Alone

Standard: Devarim 19:15 — Two or Three Witnesses

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Course Framework & Methodology

Purpose of This Course: This educational course expounds the 613 Mitzvot (commandments) of Yahweh as revealed exclusively through the Written Torah and confirmed by the Tanakh Writings and Prophets. Each lesson examines a specific law or cluster of related laws in their original Hebrew, through lexical analysis, through the Two/Three Witness evidentiary standard of **Devarim (Deuteronomy) 19:15**, and through application across four spheres: Individual, Community, Nation, and World. Every lesson is audited through the Three-Religion lens — reaching Judaism, Christianity, and Islam simultaneously. Torah alone is the authority.

The Covenant Sequence — Lessons 19 and 20: Lesson 19 established the Rosh Chodesh — the lunar month count that sets the Sacred Feast Circuit of **Yahweh**. Lesson 20 now addresses the Sabbath — the separate, independent, continuous seven-day work/rest cycle that **Yahweh** established at creation and re-established at Sinai. It is essential to hold these two lessons together: the lunar month count and the weekly Sabbath count are **two entirely independent covenant counting systems**. The moon sets the months and the feast circuit. The Sabbath is set by the continuous seven-day cycle — the same cycle that has been running uninterrupted since **Elohim** (אֱלֹהִים) rested on the seventh day of creation. This lesson exhaustively establishes that truth from the Tanakh itself.

Note on Sources: This lesson draws on the Miqdash Bethel research document "Addressing the Lunar Sabbath Theory and Declaration of the New Moon Day" authored by Elder Kepha Arcemont, alongside the Tanakh primary texts, the Hebrew lexicons (BDB, HALOT, Gesenius), and the historical astronomical and linguistic witnesses cited therein. The Sabbath section of that research provides the covenant foundation for Laws #48–52.

SECTION I — THE HEBREW TEXTS

Law #48 — Shemot (Exodus) 20:8 — To Keep the Sabbath Holy

זְכוֹר אֶת-יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת לְקַדְּשׁוֹ

"Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to Yahweh your Elohim. On it you shall not do any work — you, nor your son, nor your daughter, your male servant nor your female servant, nor your livestock, nor the sojourner who is within your gates. For in six days Yahweh made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore Yahweh blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy." — Shemot (Exodus) 20:8–11

Law #49 — Shemot (Exodus) 23:12 and 34:21 — To Rest on the Sabbath

שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים תַּעֲשֶׂה מְעֵשִׂיךָ וּבְיוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי תִשָּׁבֵת

"Six days you shall do your work, but on the seventh day you shall rest; that your ox and your donkey may have rest, and the son of your servant woman, and the alien, may be refreshed." — Shemot (Exodus) 23:12

"Six days you shall work, but on the seventh day you shall rest. In plowing time and in harvest you shall rest." — Shemot (Exodus) 34:21

Shemot 34:21 is the Sabbath law stated in its most demanding agricultural context. "In plowing time and in harvest you shall rest." These are the two most labor-intensive seasons of the agricultural year — the moments when a farmer would be most tempted to say the work cannot wait. **Yahweh** names these seasons explicitly: even then — especially then — you rest on the seventh day. The covenant does not take sabbatical during harvest. The Sabbath is not suspended for productivity. It is the covenant marker that production, provision, and blessing belong to **Yahweh** — not to the relentless labor of human hands.

Law #50 — Shemot (Exodus) 20:10 — Not to Do Work on the Sabbath

לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה כָּל-מְלָאכָה

"...you shall not do any work — you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your livestock, nor the sojourner who is within your gates." — Shemot (Exodus) 20:10

The prohibition extends to every member of the household — biological children, servants, animals, and the resident alien. **Yahweh's** Sabbath is not a privilege of the free and the wealthy. It is the covenant right of every living being under the care of the covenant household. The servant rests. The ox rests. The stranger rests. The Sabbath is **Yahweh's** gift to all who labor.

Law #51 — Shemot (Exodus) 16:29 — Not to Walk Beyond the Sabbath Boundary

שָׁבוּ אִישׁ תַּחְתּוֹ אֶל-יְצֵא אִישׁ מִמְּקוֹ בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי

"See! For Yahweh has given you the Sabbath; therefore on the sixth day He gives you bread for two days. Remain each of you in his place; let no man go out of his place on the seventh day." — Shemot (Exodus) 16:29

This is the Sabbath boundary law — the law of remaining in one's place. It appears in Shemot 16 before the formal Ten Words at Sinai — establishing that the Sabbath was already a covenant obligation in the wilderness, before the covenant code was formally given. This also directly confirms the Miqdash Bethel research position: **the Sabbath day was a law/commandment of Yahweh established before the Ten Commandments** were given at Sinai (Shemot 20). There was no gap, no loss, no period when Israel forgot the Sabbath. The manna episode proves the seven-day cycle was already operative from creation.

Law #52 — Shemot (Exodus) 35:3 — Not to Inflict Punishment on the Sabbath

לֹא-תִבְעֵרוּ אֵשׁ בְּכֹל מִשְׁבְּתֵיכֶם בְּיוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת

"You shall kindle no fire in all your dwelling places on the Sabbath day." — Shemot (Exodus) 35:3

On the plain reading, this verse prohibits kindling fire on the Sabbath. **Yahweh** also uses this verse to establish a covenant principle that judicial punishment — particularly execution by fire, the most public form of covenant judgment — may not be carried out on the Sabbath. The Sanhedrin (Sanhedrin 35b) derived from this that no capital case could be adjudicated or executed on the Sabbath. The Sefer HaChinuch confirms: since Shemot 20:10 already covers all labor, this separate verse was given specifically to address judicial punishment. The Sabbath is the covenant's appointed day of rest and holiness — not of punishment, not of judicial terror, not of fire. The courts of Israel were silent on the seventh day.

Supporting Text — Shemot (Exodus) 31:13, 16–17 — The Sabbath as Covenant Sign

"Speak to the people of Israel and say: You shall keep My Sabbaths, for this is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I, Yahweh, sanctify you." — Shemot (Exodus) 31:13

"Therefore the people of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, observing the Sabbath throughout their generations, as a covenant forever. It is a sign forever between Me and the people of Israel that in six days Yahweh made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed." — Shemot (Exodus) 31:16–17

SECTION II — PRIMARY LEXICAL ANALYSIS

שַׁבָּת — Shabbat (H7676) — "The Sabbath / Cessation"

The primary term is **Shabbat** (שַׁבָּת) — **H7676**. BDB: "Sabbath — the seventh day of the week." The noun derives from the root verb **shabat** (שָׁבַת) — **H7673** — "to cease, desist, rest." BDB: "to cease, desist, rest; to keep or observe the Sabbath." The Miqdash Bethel research document establishes the word carries the meaning of "abstinence of labor" — the seventh day of the week. This word's definition in H7676 makes the covenant calendar position unmistakable: the Sabbath is **the seventh day of the week** — not the eighth, fifteenth, twenty-second, or twenty-ninth day of the lunar month.

HALOT confirms: **Shabbat** appears 111 times in the Hebrew Bible and consistently refers to the seventh day of the weekly cycle. The related noun **Shabbaton** (שַׁבְּתוֹן) — **H7677** — is used for the "sabbath observance" of the annual feast days (Lev. 23:24, 39) — a *sabbath-like* rest on the holy convocations. The distinction between the weekly **Shabbat** (continuous seven-day cycle) and the annual **Shabbaton** (feast-day sabbath

observance) is the Torah's own lexical signal that these are separate covenant institutions.

שָׁבַת — Shabat (H7673) — "To Cease, Desist, Stop"

The verbal root **shabat** (שָׁבַת) — **H7673** — does not primarily mean "to rest." BDB: "to cease, desist, rest; to stop." The related modern Hebrew word **shevita** (שִׁבּוּתָה) — "labor strike" — carries the same root, and its meaning confirms: an active, intentional cessation, not merely passive repose. **Yahweh** did not stop working on the seventh day because He was tired. He ceased His work intentionally, by act of sovereign will, establishing the pattern for all creation to follow. The Sabbath is an act of covenant declaration — a statement that **Yahweh** governs time — not merely a biological recovery day.

זָכוֹר — Zachor (H2142) — "Remember"

The positive command of Law #48 opens with **zachor** (זָכוֹר) — **H2142** — "to remember, call to mind, make mention of." BDB: "to remember, be mindful of, make memorial." HALOT: "to remember, keep in memory." This is not passive recollection — it is active covenant commemoration. In the Tanakh, **zachor** is consistently used of intentional, faithful covenant memory: remembering the Exodus (Devarim 16:3), remembering the covenant (Bereishit 9:15), remembering the affliction (Eicha 1:9). To "remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy" is not simply to not forget which day it is. It is to hold the Sabbath in covenant mind throughout the six working days — to orient the entire week toward the seventh-day rest that belongs to **Yahweh**.

מְלָאכָה — Melachah (H4399) — "Work, Crafted Labor"

The prohibition on work uses the word **melachah** (מְלָאכָה) — **H4399** — "work, occupation, business." BDB: "work, business, occupation, craft." HALOT: "work, activity, task." This is the same word used for the work of creating the Tabernacle (Shemot 35–36) and the work of creation itself (Bereishit 2:2). The Torah does not specify exactly which 39 categories of work are forbidden — that enumeration came later in rabbinic tradition. The Torah gives the principle: **melachah** — purposeful, skillful, creative human labor — ceases on the seventh day. The Mishnah (Tractate Shabbat) derived 39 categories of prohibited labor from the types of work used to build the Tabernacle, since the Sabbath command immediately precedes the Tabernacle instructions in Shemot 35.

מָקוֹם — Makom (H4725) — "Place"

The boundary law of Law #51 uses **makom** (מָקוֹם) — **H4725** — "place, locality, standing place." BDB: "standing-place, spot, locality, region." From the root **kum** (קוּם) — "to arise, stand." The instruction in Shemot 16:29 — "let no man go out of his **makom** on the seventh day" — means: remain in your dwelling area. In the wilderness camp context, this meant remaining within the camp boundaries. The Targum Pseudo-Jonathan on Shemot 16:29 interprets this as prohibiting carrying objects beyond four cubits outside the camp, and prohibiting travel beyond two thousand cubits — the later rabbinically formalized **techum Shabbat** (תְּחוּם שַׁבָּת), the "Sabbath boundary." The Torah principle is spatial: the Sabbath rest is not only temporal (ceasing from work in time) but also spatial (remaining within the covenant community's space).

בָּעַר — Bi'er (H1197) / תְּבַעְרוּ — Teva'aru — "To Kindle, Burn"

The fire prohibition of Law #52 uses the root **ba'ar** (בָּעַר) — **H1197** — "to burn, consume, kindle." BDB: "to burn, consume; to kindle fire." The command **lo teva'aru esh** — "you shall not kindle fire" — prohibits the initiation of combustion on the Sabbath. The rabbinical tradition derived from this the prohibition on all judicial punishment on the Sabbath — since burning was one form of capital execution, and since **Yahweh** chose to embed this specific prohibition within the same context as the Tabernacle-building instructions (Shemot 35:1–3), which are themselves a covenant construction project. The Sefer HaChinuch (Law #114) establishes that this verse extends to the prohibition of courts inflicting any punishment on the Sabbath — fire or otherwise.

SECTION III — THE SABBATH IS NOT SET BY THE MOON: THE COVENANT EVIDENTIARY RECORD

This section presents the definitive Miqdash Bethel covenant position on one of the most critical calendrical questions in the sacred name and Torah-observant movements: **is the Sabbath set by the new moon? The answer, established exhaustively in Elder Kepha Arcemont's research and confirmed by the Tanakh itself, is unequivocal: No.**

A. The Creation Week — The Origin of the Seven-Day Cycle

The seven-day work/rest cycle was established at creation — before the moon was even mentioned in connection with time-keeping. Elohim created in six days and rested on the seventh (Bereishit 2:2–3). That is the foundational covenant pattern: six days of labor, one day of rest. This pattern is a "well ordered set of days that pertain to an order, rank, or position," as the Miqdash Bethel research establishes from the definition of the ordinal number "seventh" (H7637). The word **ordinal** means: a well-ordered set, a condition of logical and comprehensible arrangement. The seven-day week is an ordered set. It has no reference to celestial motions.

The *Encyclopedia Britannica* (11th ed., vol. 4, p. 988) states: "The week is a period of seven days, having no reference whatsoever to the celestial motions — a circumstance to which it owes its unalterable uniformity... It has been employed from time immemorial in almost all eastern countries." The moon was created on the fourth day. The Sabbath was established on the seventh day. The moon's creation **follows** the Sabbath in the creation sequence — the lesser light does not govern the Sabbath. It could not, by the Torah's own chronological ordering.

B. The Manna Test — Shemot 16 — The First Torah Record of the Word "Sabbath"

The manna episode in Shemot 16 is the most important Sabbath evidence in the entire Torah. It occurs before Sinai. It is the first time in the written Torah that the word "Sabbath" appears — and it establishes the continuous seven-day cycle beyond any reasonable doubt. The Miqdash Bethel research establishes: "This is the FIRST TIME IN THE TORAH WHERE THE SEVENTH DAY IS CALLED 'A SABBATH DAY'"

The evidence from Shemot 16:

(1) The children of Israel arrived at the wilderness of Sin on the 15th day of the 2nd moon (Shemot 16:1). This is the lunar month-day count — recording when they arrived. It is not giving the day of the week.

(2) In verse 5, **Yahweh** commands preparation on the sixth day for twice as much manna. This "sixth day" is the sixth day of the *work week* — not the sixth day of the lunar month. These are two independent counts occurring simultaneously, documented side by side in the same chapter.

(3) In verse 22–26, the people gathered twice as much on the sixth day of the week and were told: "Tomorrow is a Sabbath rest, a holy Sabbath to **Yahweh**." The seventh day — the Sabbath — is defined as six days from the previous Sabbath. There is no mention of counting from the new moon. There is no reference to the 8th, 15th, 22nd, or 29th day of the month.

(4) In verse 29, **Yahweh** commands: "Remain each of you in his place; let no man go out of his place on the seventh day." The seventh day is the seventh day of the continuous work/rest cycle — period.

(5) In verse 4, **Yahweh** explicitly states the purpose of the manna test: "I will test them, whether they will walk in My Law, or not." The Sabbath day is called **Yahweh's** commandment and law — established before the Ten Words at Sinai (Shemot 20). This proves the seven-day Sabbath was a pre-existing, unbroken covenant institution.

The Miqdash Bethel research draws the unambiguous conclusion from Shemot 16: "The count of the days in this story of the manna, concerning the work week, and the seventh day of rest, is not in reference to the lunar moon daily count. Exodus 16:1 records what day of the lunar moon (month) they entered the Wilderness of Sin; it does not record that they rested on the 22nd day of the month. But it does show they rested on the 7th day of the work/rest week."

C. The Unbroken Seven-Day Cycle — Historical Testimony

History provides its own covenant witness. The Miqdash Bethel research cites the following independent authorities confirming that the seven-day weekly cycle has never been broken or lost:

Dr. Hinkley (astronomer): "By calculating the eclipses, it can be proven that no time has been lost and the creation days were seven, divided into 24 hours each."

Dr. Totten (Professor of Astronomy, Yale University): "The human race never lost the septenary [seven-day] sequence of week days and that the Sabbath of these latter times comes down to us from Adam, through the ages, without a single lapse."

James Robertson (Director, American Ephemeris, U.S. Naval Observatory, 1932): "There has been no change in our calendar in past centuries that has affected in any way the cycle of the week."

Dr. Frank Jeffries (Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society; Research Director, Royal Observatory, Greenwich): "It can be said with assurance that not a day has been lost since Creation, and all the calendar changes notwithstanding, there has been no break in the weekly cycle."

These are not religious authorities — they are secular scientific experts in astronomy and calendar history. Their unanimous testimony confirms the Tanakh's position: the

seven-day Sabbath cycle has operated continuously and uninterruptedly from creation to the present day. It was never set by the moon. It was never reset by the moon. It will never be reset by the moon.

D. The Lunar Sabbath Teaching — Named and Refuted

The Lunar Sabbath teaching claims that the Sabbath day is counted from the new moon each month, falling on the 8th, 15th, 22nd, and 29th days. The Miqdash Bethel research document establishes — through the Tanakh, through the Hebrew lexicons, through Maimonides' Treatise on the Sanctification of the New Moon, through Edersheim's *The Temple*, and through the Encyclopedia Judaica — that this teaching has **no basis in any Ancient Hebrew historical record, any Hebrew lexical definition, or any Tanakh text whatsoever.**

Six specific covenant problems the Lunar Sabbath teaching cannot resolve:

(1) The Feast of Weeks: Devarim 16:9 commands counting seven complete weeks from the day after the Sabbath within Pesach to Shavuot. If the Sabbath is reset each month by the new moon, it is mathematically impossible to count seven complete consecutive Sabbath weeks — the count would fracture at every new moon. The Feast of Weeks cannot be set by a Lunar Sabbath system.

(2) The 29th-day gap: A lunar month is 29.5 days. If the Sabbath falls on the 29th, then more than seven days pass before the new month's 8th-day Sabbath — breaking the six-day work, one-day rest pattern. The continuous seven-day cycle is mathematically disrupted.

(3) No Tanakh text names the 8th, 15th, 22nd, or 29th day of any month as a Sabbath day: There is not a single verse in the entire Tanakh that calls any of these lunar-month days a "Sabbath" (H7676). The annual feast-day sabbaths use **Shabbaton** (H7677) — a distinct Hebrew word.

(4) The Sanhedrin never set the Sabbath: As Maimonides establishes in his Treatise: "The authority over the observation of the crescent was given not to everyone, unlike the Sabbath day, with respect to which *everyone* counts six days and rests on the 7th day." The New Moon Day required the High Court. The Sabbath required no court — it was each person's individual covenant responsibility.

(5) Bamidbar 10:11–12, 33 — traveling on the 22nd day: The children of Israel departed from Sinai on the 20th day of the 2nd month (Bamidbar 10:11) and traveled three days — arriving at a resting place on the 23rd day. If the 22nd was a Lunar Sabbath, more than two million people violated it by traveling. The Tanakh records no Sabbath violation, because the 22nd was not a Sabbath.

(6) The teaching's Christian origin: Jonathan David Brown — a Christian — published the first systematic Lunar Sabbath observance doctrine in his 1998 book *Keeping Yahweh's Appointments*. As the Miqdash Bethel research states: "No respected Hebrew scholars are on board this doctrinal teaching because this concept is against Hebrew language, grammar, linguistics, and historical facts." The Lunar Sabbath teaching originated outside Jewish and Hebrew scholarship — among Messianic, Armstrong/WCG, and Christian Identity movements.

The Miqdash Bethel covenant conclusion: The Sabbath is the seventh day of the continuous, uninterrupted seven-day work/rest cycle established by **Yahweh** at creation. In 108 of 160 world languages, the seventh day of the week is called "the Sabbath" (Dr. William Mead Jones, London). The universal linguistic witness confirms: the Sabbath is the seventh day, period.

SECTION IV — TWO/THREE WITNESS CORROBORATION

Reference	Teaching / Witness
Bereishit (Gen.) 2:2–3	Origin witness — Elohim worked six days and rested on the seventh, blessing and sanctifying it. The seven-day work/rest pattern established at creation, before the moon was assigned any time-keeping function. First and foundational witness.
Shemot (Ex.) 16:1–30	Most critical Sabbath witness in the Torah. The manna episode pre-dates Sinai. Proves (1) the Sabbath law pre-existed the Ten Commandments; (2) the seven-day work week is independent of the lunar month-day count; (3) the Sabbath falls on the seventh day of the weekly cycle, not on the 8th, 15th, 22nd, or 29th day of the lunar month; (4) Yahweh called the Sabbath His commandment before Sinai.
Shemot (Ex.) 20:8–11	The Fourth Commandment — the formal covenant Sabbath law given at Sinai. "Six days you shall labor... the seventh day is a Sabbath to Yahweh your Elohim." Grounds the weekly cycle in the creation week. The Sabbath belongs to Yahweh — it is a sign of His ownership of all time.
Shemot (Ex.) 23:12	Rest is extended to the ox, the donkey, the servant, and the sojourner — the Sabbath rest is covenant-inclusive. No member of the household is excluded from Yahweh's gift of rest.
Shemot (Ex.) 34:21	Sabbath rest commanded even in plowing time and in harvest — the two most labor-intensive agricultural seasons. No productivity need overrides the seventh-day rest covenant.
Shemot (Ex.) 31:13–17	The Sabbath as covenant sign: "This is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I, Yahweh, sanctify you." The Sabbath is not merely a rest day — it is a covenant identity marker. Those who keep Yahweh's Sabbath are publicly identified as His sanctified people.
Vayikra (Lev.) 23:3	The Sabbath listed first among all Yahweh's mo'adim (appointed times): "Six days work may be done, but on the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, a holy convocation. You shall do no work. It is the Sabbath of Yahweh in all your dwelling places." The Sabbath is not a feast — it is the covenant foundation upon which the feast calendar rests.
Shemot (Ex.) 35:1–3	The Sabbath command given immediately before the Tabernacle-building instructions — establishing that building Yahweh's house does not override the Sabbath. The rabbinic tradition derived the 39 categories of prohibited work from the types of melachah used in Tabernacle construction.

Bamidbar (Num.) 15:32–36	Historical witness — the man who gathered sticks on the Sabbath was executed by stoning at Yahweh's command. The Sabbath violation was deliberate and public — "with a high hand." The covenant treats willful Sabbath violation as a capital offense, equal in gravity to the sins that brought death in other covenant contexts.
Yeshayahu (Isa.) 56:2, 6	The Sabbath open to all: "Blessed is the man who does this... who keeps the Sabbath without desecrating it... Also the foreigners who join themselves to Yahweh, to minister to Him, to love the name of Yahweh, and to be His servants, all who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it." The Sabbath is not ethnically exclusive — it belongs to all who covenant with Yahweh.
Yeshayahu (Isa.) 58:13–14	The Sabbath promise: "If you call the Sabbath a delight and the holy day of Yahweh honorable; if you honor it, not going your own ways, or seeking your own pleasure... then you shall take delight in Yahweh, and I will make you ride on the heights of the earth." Keeping the Sabbath correctly produces covenant blessing and joy — not burden.
Yechezkel (Ezek.) 20:12–13	The Sabbath as the sign of covenant sanctification: "I gave them My Sabbaths, as a sign between Me and them, that they might know that I am Yahweh who sanctifies them. But the house of Israel rebelled against Me in the wilderness. They did not walk in My statutes, and they rejected My rules... and My Sabbaths they greatly profaned." Sabbath violation is named as one of the primary covenant failures that brought judgment on Israel.
Maimonides — Treatise on the Sanctification of the New Moon	Critical distinction: "The authority over the observation of the crescent was given not to everyone, unlike the Sabbath day, with respect to which everyone counts six days and rests on the 7th day — but only to the court." The Sabbath does not require a court, a High Priest, or a New Moon sighting. Every individual counts six days and rests on the seventh — always, everywhere, from creation.
Encyclopedia Britannica, 11th ed., vol. 4, p. 988	Scientific witness: "The week is a period of seven days, having no reference whatsoever to the celestial motions — a circumstance to which it owes its unalterable uniformity... It has been employed from time immemorial in almost all eastern countries." The seven-day week is astronomically independent of the moon.

SECTION V — FOUR-SPHERE COVENANT APPLICATION

Level	Sphere	Application	Torah Witness
INDIVIDUAL	Law #48 — Keeping the Sabbath Holy	The covenant person does not merely rest on the seventh day — he sanctifies it. The Hebrew <i>zachor</i> ("remember") requires active covenant orientation throughout the six working days toward the seventh day of rest. The Sabbath is a gift from Yahweh (Shemot 16:29: "Yahweh has given you the Sabbath"). To keep it holy is to treat it as what it is: Yahweh's own designated day, set apart from all other days by His command at creation.	Shemot 20:8; Bereishit 2:3

INDIVIDUAL	Law #49 — Resting on the Sabbath	The covenant person ceases from melachah — creative, purposeful, skilled labor — on the seventh day. This is not mere inactivity. It is the active covenant declaration that Yahweh provides. The farmer who rests during plowing time and harvest (Shemot 34:21) is testifying: Yahweh governs my field, not my hands alone. The Sabbath rest is an act of covenant trust, not an inconvenient legal obligation.	Shemot 23:12; 34:21
INDIVIDUAL	Law #50 — Not Doing Work	Every member of the individual's household rests: sons, daughters, servants, animals, sojourners. The Sabbath covenant extends the gift of rest to all who labor. The covenant person who rests himself while requiring his workers or animals to labor on the seventh day has missed the covenant heart of the law entirely. Yahweh's rest on the seventh day was complete — so is the covenant person's obligation.	Shemot 20:10
INDIVIDUAL	Law #51 — Sabbath Boundary	The covenant person remains within his dwelling area on the Sabbath. He does not travel on a covenant errand, undertake a commercial journey, or go beyond the range of the covenant community's rest. In the present era, the principle governs: the Sabbath is not the day for long-distance commercial or labor-related travel. The Sabbath is the day for remaining — in one's home, in the covenant assembly, in the presence of Yahweh.	Shemot 16:29
INDIVIDUAL	Covenant Mercy	The covenant person who has been keeping the Sabbath incorrectly — whether on Sunday (1st day), through a Lunar Sabbath system, or not at all — stands before the same Yahweh who declared the Sabbath a gift (Shemot 16:29). Yechezkel 18:21–23 applies: the invitation to return to covenant Sabbath observance is always open. Yahweh desires His people to enter His rest — in the correct day and in the correct spirit.	Yechezkel 18:21–23; Shemot 16:29
COMMUNITY	Assembly Rest	Vayikra 23:3 calls the Sabbath a "holy convocation" — a miqra kodesh — in all dwelling places. The covenant assembly gathers on the seventh day for Torah reading, prayer, covenant instruction, and communal rest. The assembly that meets on a different day, or that treats the Sabbath as an optional personal preference, has abandoned the covenant marker Yahweh placed between Himself and His people "throughout their generations" (Shemot 31:13).	Vayikra 23:3; Shemot 31:13
COMMUNITY	No Punishment on the Sabbath	Law #52 — the fire prohibition of Shemot 35:3 — extends to the covenant community's judicial function: no punishment is administered on the Sabbath. The community that inflicts judicial consequences on the seventh day violates the	Shemot 35:3; Sanhedrin 35b

		covenant character of the day. Yahweh's courts are silent on the Sabbath. The seventh day is for rest and holiness — not for judgment, enforcement, or penalty.	
COMMUNITY	Teaching the Two-Count System	The covenant assembly bears responsibility for teaching clearly that the seven-day Sabbath count and the lunar month count are independent systems. Confusion between these two systems — whether from Sunday-keeping Christian tradition or from the Lunar Sabbath teaching — leads covenant people away from Yahweh's appointed seventh day. The assembly that cannot explain why the Sabbath is not set by the moon has failed its covenant teaching mandate.	Shemot 16:1–30; Vayikra 23:3, 38
NATION	Covenant Identity Marker	The Sabbath is the sign between Yahweh and Israel "throughout your generations" (Shemot 31:13). A nation that abandons the seventh-day Sabbath has abandoned its covenant identity marker. Yechezkel 20:12–13 records that Sabbath violation was among the primary covenant failures that brought judgment on Israel in the wilderness and exile. The Sabbath is not a religious preference — it is the national covenant sign of sanctification.	Shemot 31:13–17; Yechezkel 20:12–13
NATION	Sabbath and Economic Justice	Shemot 23:12 extends Sabbath rest to the ox, the donkey, the son of the servant woman, and the alien — giving rest to the lowest rungs of the economic order. A nation whose economic system grants no rest to its workers on Yahweh's seventh day is in covenant default. The Sabbath is Yahweh's built-in economic equity mechanism: one day in seven, all productivity stops, and all human beings — regardless of status — stand equal before the Creator.	Shemot 23:12; Devarim 5:14–15
WORLD	Universal Gift	Yeshayahu 56:2, 6 opens the Sabbath to all nations: "Also the foreigners who join themselves to Yahweh... all who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it." The Sabbath was made for man (as Yeshua echoes in Mk 2:27 — citing the Torah's own position from Bereishit). It is not an ethnic institution — it is the covenant gift Yahweh embedded into the creation week for all humanity.	Yeshayahu 56:2, 6; Bereishit 2:2–3
WORLD	Eschatological Sabbath	Yeshayahu 66:23 projects the Sabbath into the universal eschatological worship of all nations: "From new moon to new moon, and from Sabbath to Sabbath, all flesh shall come to worship before Me, says Yahweh." The seventh-day Sabbath — the same Sabbath that has been running continuously since creation — is the covenant's universal eschatological frame. All nations will ultimately observe it before Yahweh.	Yeshayahu 66:23; Yeshayahu 2:2–3

SECTION VI — THREE-RELIGION COVENANT AUDIT

Judaism — The Covenant Custodian

Upholds Torah — The Most Consistent: Judaism has maintained the seventh-day Sabbath as the central weekly covenant institution for over three millennia. From the Sinai covenant through exile, diaspora, and the destruction of both Temples, Judaism has never lost the seventh-day Sabbath. The continuous chain of Sabbath observance — Friday sunset to Saturday night — is unbroken. The Mishnah (Tractate Shabbat), Maimonides' Mishneh Torah (Laws of Shabbat), and the Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 242–416) preserve the most comprehensive body of Sabbath law in human history.

Where Rabbinical Tradition Extended Beyond Torah: The 39 categories of prohibited melachah (derived from the Tabernacle-building types of work) are a rabbinical fence around the Torah's more general prohibition. The eruv (symbolic enclosure extending the Sabbath boundary), the use of pre-lit timers for electricity, and many other rabbinic mechanisms are faithful covenant attempts to apply the Sabbath law to changed circumstances. The Miqdash Bethel covenant position: where these mechanisms *honor* the principle of Sabbath rest without inventing new prohibitions not found in the Tanakh, they represent legitimate covenant adaptation. Where they become a burden of artificial complexity that defeats the Sabbath's character as a *gift* (Shemot 16:29), the covenant assembly returns to the Tanakh text as the primary standard.

Covenant Audit Verdict: Judaism upholds the seventh-day Sabbath more faithfully than any other Abrahamic tradition. The Tanakh's Sabbath command finds its most consistent embodiment in Jewish practice.

Christianity — The Documented Historical Departure

The Early Church — Torah-Observant Sabbath Keepers: The earliest followers of Yeshua were Torah-observant Jews who kept the seventh-day Sabbath. Historians confirm: "The primitive Christians had a great veneration for the Sabbath, and did spend the day in devotion and sermons. And it is not to be doubted but they derived this practice from the Apostles themselves, as appears by several Scriptures to that purpose" (Dr. T.H. Morer, *Dialogues on the Lord's Day*, London, 1701). Socrates of Constantinople, writing in 439 CE, stated: "Almost all churches throughout the world celebrate the Sabbath on every week." As late as 225 CE, large seventh-day Sabbath-keeping assemblies stretched from Palestine to India (Mingana, *Early Spread of Christianity*, Vol. 10, p.460). The shift from seventh to first day was a gradual, politically-driven departure — not an apostolic command.

Step One — Constantine's Sunday Edict, 321 CE — The Exact Text: On March 7, 321 CE, Emperor Constantine issued the first civil law in history commanding rest on the first day of the week. The exact text (Codex Justinian 3.12.2; Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, vol. 3, p.380):

"Let all judges and town people, and the occupation of all trades, rest on the venerable day of the sun. But let those who are situated in the country, freely and at full liberty attend to the business of

agriculture; because it often happens that no other day is so fit for sowing corn and planting vines. Lest the critical moment being let slip, men should lose the commodities granted by heaven." — Constantine's Sunday Edict, March 7, 321 CE

The covenant analysis of this edict is precise. First: the document does not use the terms "Lord's Day," "Christian Sabbath," or "first day of the week." It commands rest on **"the venerable day of the sun"** — *venerabili die solis* in the original Latin. This is the Roman solar cult designation, not a Christian or Tanakh reference. Second: Constantine was simultaneously minting coins honoring **Sol Invictus** — the invincible sun god — with the inscription "Sol Invictus, my companion." His coinage carried the Chi Rho beside the sun deity. Third: no Tanakh text, no New Testament text, and no previous Jewish or Christian covenant authority had ever commanded rest on the first day of the week. As one historian noted: "In no document, human or divine, can any command be found to rest on Sunday, the first day of the week, previous to this law by Constantine."

Step Two — Council of Nicea, 325 CE — Easter Severed from Passover: Four years after his Sunday edict, Constantine convened the First Council of Nicea (May–July 325 CE), attended by at least 200 bishops. The council's Canon 20 established a uniform posture of standing prayer on Sundays, signaling Sunday as the primary worship day. More critically, the council formally severed Easter from the lunar Passover calendar. Constantine's own letter to the bishops stated his intent: ***"It appeared an unworthy thing that in the celebration of this most holy feast we should follow the practice of the Jews... Let us then have nothing in common with the detestable Jewish crowd."*** (Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, III.18–19). The anti-Judaic motivation is explicit in the primary sources. The lunar covenant calendar — the same Rosh Chodesh system commanded in Shemot 12:2 (Lesson 19) — was formally discarded by institutional Christianity at Nicea in favor of a solar calculation that would never coincide with the Jewish Passover.

Step Three — Council of Laodicea, Canon 29, 363–364 CE — The Sabbath Formally Prohibited: The most decisive step in the institutional suppression of seventh-day Sabbath observance came at the Council of Laodicea (circa 363–364 CE), a regional synod of approximately thirty clerics in Asia Minor. Canon 29 reads in its exact text (Philip Schaff, *NPNF2-14*; newadvent.org/fathers/3806.htm):

***"Christians must not judaize by resting on the Sabbath, but must work on that day, rather honouring the Lord's Day; and, if they can, resting then as Christians. But if any shall be found to be judaizers, let them be anathema from Christ."* — Council of Laodicea, Canon 29 (363–364 CE)**

Three covenant observations on Canon 29. First: the canon calls seventh-day Sabbath observance "judaizing" — a term of ecclesiastical insult — and attaches to it the sentence **"anathema from Christ."** Keeping the covenant Sabbath that **Yahweh** commanded in Shemot 20:8 was now punishable by excommunication from the institutional church. Second: the canon acknowledges that Christians were still keeping the seventh-day Sabbath at the time of this council — otherwise there would have been no need to prohibit it. Third: the prohibition did not immediately succeed. Historians confirm that seventh-day Sabbath observance continued among large bodies of

Christians for over a century after Laodicea. As one historian documents: "From the apostles' time until the council of Laodicea, which was about the year 364, the holy observation of the Jew's Sabbath continued." (quoted in Constantine's 321 AD Sunday Law records).

Step Four — The Council of Laodicea, Canon 16 — The Telling Admission: Remarkably, within the same Council of Laodicea that prohibited seventh-day Sabbath rest, Canon 16 commands: ***"The Gospels are to be read on the Sabbath [i.e., Saturday], with the other Scriptures."*** The council could not fully suppress the Sabbath — it could only prohibit rest on it while requiring work. The Scriptures were still to be read on the seventh day. This internal tension within a single council reveals the depth of the struggle: the institutional church was attempting to displace the Sabbath while the covenant memory of it as the appointed day of Torah reading remained embedded in practice.

The Yeshua Question — What Did He Actually Teach? Yeshua's own recorded position on the Sabbath supports the Torah, not the later institutional departure. Mark 2:27–28: "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. Therefore the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath." This statement does not transfer the Sabbath to the first day. It affirms the Sabbath's covenant purpose as a gift for human benefit — precisely what Shemot 16:29 ("**Yahweh** has given you the Sabbath") establishes. Yeshua healed on the Sabbath, harvested grain with his disciples on the Sabbath, and taught in synagogues on the Sabbath — all Sabbath-day activities. He never commanded, authorized, or suggested the transfer of covenant worship to the first day of the week. The Sunday shift is a post-apostolic, politically-driven, ecclesiastically-enforced departure from the Torah covenant.

Covenant Audit Verdict: The documented historical record is unambiguous. The seventh-day Sabbath was the universal Christian practice from the apostolic era through at least the third century CE. The shift to Sunday was driven by three institutional forces: (1) anti-Jewish hostility accelerated by the Bar Kokhba revolt (135 CE) and the desire to separate Christian practice from Jewish covenant observance; (2) Constantine's political fusion of Christian and solar cult worship (321 CE); and (3) ecclesiastical enforcement through conciliar canons (Laodicea 363–364 CE). Not one of these forces is authorized by the Tanakh. Not one of them is authorized by any New Testament text. **Shemot 31:13** establishes the Sabbath as "a sign between Me and you throughout your generations." No emperor, no council, no canon, and no tradition carries the authority to cancel what **Yahweh** established at creation. Where Christianity returns to the seventh-day Sabbath, it returns to the Torah. Where it remains anchored to Constantine's "venerable day of the sun," it remains in covenant departure.

Islam — The Friday Approximation

The Islamic Practice: Islam does not observe the seventh-day Sabbath. Friday (Jumu'ah — يوم الجمعة) is the Islamic day of congregational prayer, with the midday Jumu'ah prayer being obligatory for Muslim men. Friday is a day of intensified worship, but not a day of rest from labor in the biblical Sabbath sense. The Quran (Surah Al-Jumu'ah 62:9–10) commands Muslims to cease business for Friday prayer and then resume their labor afterward — explicitly permitting the return to work after prayer.

Where Islam Preserves the Covenant Memory: Arabic preserves the Sabbath's covenant memory in the word for Saturday: **as-Sabt** (السبت) — derived directly from the Hebrew **Shabbat**. In 108 of 160 world languages, the seventh day is called by a form of "Sabbath" — Arabic among them. The linguistic witness confirms that the seventh day is the Sabbath, even when the practice has drifted. Islam's Friday congregational prayer preserves the covenant principle of designated community worship before **Yahweh** — while not preserving the specific seventh-day Sabbath covenant institution.

Covenant Audit Verdict: Islam does not observe the seventh-day Sabbath as commanded in the Torah. The Friday Jumu'ah prayer preserves covenant principles of communal worship but does not fulfill Laws #48–52. Where the Islamic tradition would engage with the Torah's Sabbath command, it faces the same covenant evidence that Christianity faces: **Yahweh** designated the seventh day at creation and has never authorized its transfer to any other day.

SECTION VII — THE COVENANT VERDICT

The Sabbath is not a Jewish tradition. It is a creation ordinance.

Yahweh established the seven-day work/rest cycle before any covenant people existed, before any nation was formed, before any Temple was built. He rested on the seventh day of creation and declared it holy (Bereishit 2:2–3). He re-established it through the manna test before Sinai (Shemot 16). He codified it in the Fourth Commandment (Shemot 20:8–11). He declared it a sign between Himself and His people throughout all generations (Shemot 31:13). He included it among the credentials of the righteous in Tehillim 15. He opened it to all who would receive it in Yeshayahu 56:2, 6. And He projected it into the universal worship of all nations in Yeshayahu 66:23.

The seventh-day Sabbath is the covenant's weekly rhythm — the heartbeat of the six-day labor, one-day rest pattern that **Yahweh** built into the fabric of time at creation. No moon sets it. No council moves it. No emperor transfers it. No theology cancels it. The seventh day — the day **Yahweh** blessed and sanctified — remains what it has always been: the Sabbath of **Yahweh** your **Elohim**.

To keep it holy is to receive **Yahweh's** gift. To rest on it is to trust His provision. To refrain from work is to honor His sovereignty over time. To remain within the boundary is to stay within the covenant community's rest. To withhold punishment is to recognize that the seventh day belongs to holiness, not judgment.

***"Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.
Six days you shall labor and do all your work,
but the seventh day is a Sabbath to Yahweh your Elohim."***

Shemot (Exodus) 20:8–10

Witness: Yahweh established this pattern at creation and has never cancelled it. The seventh day — the same seventh day that has been running continuously since Bereishit 2:2 — is the Sabbath. Count six. Rest on the seventh. This is the covenant.

STUDY REVIEW & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Individual Level

1. The command in Shemot 20:8 opens with zachor — "remember." What does active, covenant-level remembering of the Sabbath look like throughout the six working days? How is the Sabbath different when it is remembered intentionally versus observed mechanically?
2. Shemot 34:21 commands rest "in plowing time and in harvest" — the two seasons when a farmer would be most tempted to work through the seventh day. What is the modern equivalent of "plowing time and harvest" for the covenant person in 2026? What does it reveal about a person's covenant trust when he rests the Sabbath even then?
3. Shemot 16:29 calls the Sabbath a gift: "Yahweh has given you the Sabbath." How does understanding the Sabbath as a gift rather than a burden change the way a covenant person approaches the seventh day?
4. The Sabbath boundary law (Law #51) commands remaining in one's place on the seventh day. What does the principle of remaining within the covenant community's space on the Sabbath mean practically for a covenant person in the present era?

Community Level

5. Vayikra 23:3 calls the Sabbath a "holy convocation" — a community gathering — in all dwelling places. What is the covenant assembly's responsibility to ensure that the seventh day is observed as a community, not merely as private individual rest?
6. The Lunar Sabbath teaching has no support in any Tanakh text, any Ancient Hebrew historical record, or any Hebrew lexical definition. How should the covenant assembly respond pastorally to members who have been keeping the Lunar Sabbath? What is the approach that honors both covenant truth and the person's sincere desire to obey Yahweh?
7. Law #52 prohibits inflicting punishment on the Sabbath. What does it mean for a covenant community's internal governance that the seventh day is entirely exempt from judgment and enforcement? What does this tell us about the character Yahweh intends for the Sabbath within the covenant assembly?

National Level

8. The manna test in Shemot 16 proves that the Sabbath was a covenant law before the Ten Commandments were given at Sinai — and that it was already failing to be kept by some in Israel before Sinai. What does this tell us about the relationship between covenant knowledge and covenant obedience? How does a nation ensure that its next generation keeps the Sabbath?
9. Shemot 23:12 extends the Sabbath rest specifically to "the son of your servant woman and the alien, that they may be refreshed." What does this

economic-equity dimension of the Sabbath mean for a covenant nation's labor laws? What accountability does a nation take on when its economic system systematically prevents the lowest workers from resting on the seventh day?

- Yechezkel 20:12–13 names Sabbath violation — alongside idolatry — as one of the primary covenant failures that brought judgment on Israel. Do you believe modern covenant communities take Sabbath violation as seriously as other covenant failures? If not, why not — and what should change?

World Level

- The seven-day week has "no reference whatsoever to the celestial motions" (Encyclopedia Britannica, 11th ed.) and is attested in 108 of 160 world languages with a form of the word "Sabbath." What does this universal cultural witness to the seventh day testify about the covenant authority of the Sabbath across all of humanity?
- Yeshayahu 56:6 opens the Sabbath to all nations who join themselves to Yahweh: "all who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it." If the Sabbath is a universal covenant gift — not an ethnically exclusive institution — what obligation does the covenant assembly have to proclaim the seventh-day Sabbath to people of all backgrounds who are sincerely seeking Yahweh?
- Yeshayahu 66:23 projects a future in which "from Sabbath to Sabbath, all flesh shall come to worship before Me, says Yahweh." The seventh-day Sabbath is the eschatological frame for universal covenant worship. What would it mean for the covenant assembly to begin living now — in 2026 — as if this universal covenant Sabbath were already arriving?

SCRIPTURE INDEX — LESSON 20

Reference	Teaching / Witness
Bereishit (Gen.) 2:2–3	Origin — Elohim rested on the seventh day, blessing and sanctifying it. The seven-day work/rest cycle established at creation, independent of the lunar month.
Shemot (Ex.) 16:1–30	Most critical Sabbath witness — the manna test pre-dating Sinai. Proves the continuous seven-day cycle, refutes the Lunar Sabbath claim, and establishes the Sabbath as Yahweh's pre-Sinai covenant law.
Shemot (Ex.) 20:8–11	Law #48 — The Fourth Commandment. "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." The comprehensive Sabbath law at Sinai, grounded in the creation week.
Shemot (Ex.) 20:10	Law #50 — "You shall not do any work." The prohibition extends to all household members: sons, daughters, servants, livestock, sojourners.
Shemot (Ex.) 23:12	Law #49 — "On the seventh day you shall rest." The Sabbath rest includes the ox, donkey, servant, and alien — economic equity built into the covenant.

Shemot (Ex.) 31:13–17	The Sabbath as covenant sign between Yahweh and Israel throughout all generations. "That you may know that I, Yahweh, sanctify you."
Shemot (Ex.) 34:21	Law #49 companion — "In plowing time and in harvest you shall rest." No agricultural productivity need overrides the seventh-day Sabbath.
Shemot (Ex.) 35:3	Law #52 — "You shall kindle no fire in all your dwelling places on the Sabbath day." Source for the prohibition on inflicting judicial punishment on the Sabbath.
Shemot (Ex.) 16:29	Law #51 — "Let no man go out of his place on the seventh day." The Sabbath boundary law — remaining within the covenant community's space of rest.
Vayikra (Lev.) 23:3	The Sabbath as the first and foundational mo'ed — listed before all feast days. "A Sabbath of solemn rest, a holy convocation, in all your dwelling places."
Bamidbar (Num.) 15:32–36	The sticks-gatherer executed for deliberate Sabbath violation. Covenant accountability for willful, high-handed Sabbath desecration.
Bamidbar (Num.) 10:11–12, 33	Israel traveled on the 20th–23rd days of the 2nd month — including the 22nd. No Sabbath violation recorded, because the 22nd was not a Sabbath. Refutes the Lunar Sabbath claim.
Devarim (Deut.) 5:12–15	The Sabbath commandment repeated in covenant renewal — adding the Exodus from Egypt as a second covenant reason for Sabbath observance alongside creation.
Yeshayahu (Isa.) 56:2, 6	The Sabbath open to all nations who join themselves to Yahweh. "All who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it."
Yeshayahu (Isa.) 58:13–14	The Sabbath promise: calling the Sabbath a delight produces covenant joy and blessing.
Yechezkel (Ezek.) 20:12–13	Sabbath violation named as one of the primary covenant failures that brought judgment on Israel. The Sabbath is a sign of sanctification — its desecration is a sign of covenant departure.
Yeshayahu (Isa.) 66:23	Eschatological Sabbath: "From Sabbath to Sabbath, all flesh shall come to worship before Me, says Yahweh." The seventh-day Sabbath is the universal covenant worship frame for all nations in the age to come.

"Is it My desire that a wicked person shall die? — says Yahweh Elohim. It is rather that he shall turn back from his ways and live."

Yechezkel (Ezekiel) 18:23

Witness: The covenant person who has been keeping Sunday, or the Lunar Sabbath, or no Sabbath at all — stands before the same Yahweh who established the seventh day as a gift at creation. The invitation is not condemnation. It is covenant return. Count six. Rest on the seventh. Yahweh has given you the Sabbath.

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Authority: The Tanakh — The Word of Yahweh Alone

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Next: Lesson 21 — To be determined by course framework