

The New Moon



According to the Creation account, God established the sun and the moon with the Earth to solve some timekeeping problems. From observing the sun, moon, and stars we earthlings understand the years, months, and seasons. Simply said, the sun sets the measure of years. Each time the Earth orbits around the sun we say it is one year. The moon sets the measure of months. Each time the moon orbits the Earth we refer to it as a month. The stars of the night sky mark the seasons of spring, summer, fall, and winter. The constellations of the night sky and their placement relative to the horizon give evidence of the Earth's tilt giving more sunlight to the northern or southern hemisphere.

The ancient peoples of the Earth observed the sun, moon, and movements of the stars for many years. The first ever documented scientific study was attributed to the ancient Babylonians observing the phases of the moon. They could not accurately calculate solar and lunar eclipses but they came relatively close. Astrology originated from Babylon placing the twelve Zodiac signs, thus partitioning solar years into twelve parts.

The Hebrew people also developed a particular method, primarily affixed to the moon phases, to measure time and to synchronize the appointed times of the LORD (HaMo'adim). The Hebrews would observe the New Moon (the first waxing crescent) to count the days to Passover and the resulting spring and summer feasts. To this day, the month of the Aviv (also called Nisan) is the head of months. Observing the New Moon for the month of Aviv calibrates the season of spring in the Solar cycle and affixes the reference for month/day observances of Passover, First Fruits, Unleavened Bread, the counting of the Omer, and the Feast of Weeks. Passover is the 14th of the month of Aviv.

Unleavened bread begins on the 15th and concludes on the 21st inclusively. First Fruits is always on a first day of the week after the first weekly Sabbath following the Passover. Counting the Omer counts each of the 50 days beginning with First Fruits resulting in Shavuot (the Feast of Weeks). Shavuot, therefore, is the “morrow after the seventh Sabbath” after Passover. It is evident that measuring time is very important to all those who are attempting to keep the Biblical Feasts (the appointed times of the LORD).

Observing the New Moon takes on an even more significant part in observing the late summer and fall feasts. In the seventh month, they would observe a special New Moon called the Feast of Trumpets. Counting from Aviv, the New Moon (Rosh Chodesh) of the month of Tishri is Yom Teruah (the Day of Trumpets). It is also commonly referred to as Rosh HaShanah (the Head of the Year or Jewish New Year). Actually, the Bible called it the *turn of the year*. Trumpets, Day of Atonement, and Tabernacles are all observed in the month of Tishri based upon the New Moon observance with the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) occurring on the 10th and Tabernacles beginning on the 15th through the 22nd. The 22nd is actually called HaShanah Raba (the great day of the feast).

All of the appointed times of the LORD are biblically mandated for all who hold to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. However, there are disputes between God’s people about how and when to observe and keep these commandments.

First, Christians in the orthodox Church don’t keep any feasts. They have adopted and follow the Gregorian Calendar (a purely Solar based method). In times past the idea of paying attention to the moon phases was regarded as a form of “lunacy” or the behavior of “lunatics” since the moon is the “Lunar” object in the night sky. Christianity used this slander against the Jewish people after their dispersion among the nations.

Modern Evangelical Christians have a renewed interest in the biblical holidays primarily because of the Messianic Movement. However, they are not oriented to God’s method of time keeping, and understanding and affixing the feast dates is both complex and confusing. This is primarily why their friends and family think they are becoming “lunatics.”

The Science of the New Moon

Before we go further, let us establish a few facts about the business of the moon. This will help us to understand why judgments have to be made at certain times to keep the appointed times of the LORD together.

The moon orbits the Earth. The Earth and moon together orbit the sun. It takes the moon approximately 27.3 days to successfully orbit the Earth coming

back to the same location relative to the Earth and the stars. Yet it takes 29.5 days for the moon to arrive back at the same phase or appearance of the moon on the Earth. The phase of the moon is dependent upon the reflection of light from the sun. So, to have the same geometry of reflected light it requires additional time since the Earth and moon are always moving around the sun.

A lunar orbit around the Earth is called a *sidereal* month. A *synodic* month is the time it takes for the moon phase to reach the same moon phase. This is measuring a month relative to Hebrew timekeeping. I should also mention that there are other monthly measurements of the moon. For example, the moon is not always at the exact same distance from the Earth when orbiting the Earth. Every orbit has a *perigee* (nearest point) and an *apogee* (greatest point). The perigee to perigee month is called the *anomalistic* month. From the ascending node (neither the lower nor greater point – middle distance) to the ascending node it is called the *draconic* month. You may have heard of a legendary figure named “Dracula” that played mythologically off the facts of the moon.

Further, the phases of the moon—the reflected light of the moon—has a specific progressive order. The New Moon according to the Farmer’s Almanac is when the moon is completely dark, no light is being reflected. However, the Hebrews and other Semitic people define the New Moon to be at the first waxing crescent. The chart shows the Earth in the middle with sunlight coming from the right side. As the moon orbits about the Earth, the darker moon (the least reflected light) is whenever the moon is closer to the sun than the Earth. Conversely, when the moon is farther from the sun than the Earth, the moon reflects more sunlight. Thus a New Moon is when it is closer to the sun and the full moon is when the moon is farther from the sun relative to the Earth. The moon phases are divided into four quarters. First is the New Moon, followed by the 1st quarter, then the full moon (2nd quarter), followed by the 3rd quarter. The cycle then repeats itself. The first quarter is also called a “waxing crescent” moon. The second quarter is called a “waxing gibbous” moon. A “waxing” moon is increasing in light toward a full moon. The third quarter is called a “waning gibbous” moon. Finally, a 4th quarter moon is called a “waning crescent” moon.

Here is another interesting fact for you. If you are in the Northern Hemisphere, and the moon is in the “crescent” phase, you can draw an imaginary line from the points of the crescent toward the Earth and it will show you the direction of South. Ancient mariners used both the moon and stars to navigate the oceans.

Growing up in the plains of Kansas I had a very elementary understanding of the moon. There was the “fingernail” moon. There was the “man in the moon.” There was a “blue” moon whenever there was second full moon in the same month. There was a BIG orange moon that looked like a pumpkin that we called the “harvest moon.” And, finally, moonlight was for “romance” which

made you a little “crazy.” Every culture group has its version of moon observations that form a timekeeping context for that culture.

How did the ancients keep the New Moon

The ancients did a lot more than just look into the sky. The first New Moon observance recorded in the Bible came on the eighth day after setting up the Tabernacle in the wilderness. Leviticus 9 records this event as the first day of the first month (1 Nisan). This initiated what we attempt to observe to this day as the Biblical New Moon. The Torah specified that the priests and elders of Israel were to observe a New Moon festival by offering specific burnt offerings and a specific sin offering. Only the goat of the sin offering was eaten in the feast. When the temple was in Jerusalem, the New Moon festival was both calculated and observed. Let me explain a bit. Everyone would count the days of the month, and as the 29th or 30th day arrived there would be the anticipation of the New Moon.

Most Jewish commentary about the New Moon festival deal extensively with the trustworthiness of those who would declare the day of the New Moon and establish the first day of the first month of Aviv. Part of the reason why the elders of the tribes were an integral part of the New Moon festival was to keep the people connected to the commandment and keep them attuned to the timing of each month. Preparation is required to properly keep the Feasts of the LORD. Therefore, the people needed to know accurately when each month began to maintain the count of days. Further, the priests wanted to ensure that the New Moon and other appointed times did not just become temple only services. They wanted to ensure that the people were full participants in the appointed times. To accomplish this, twenty-four elders were recognized separate from the Sanhedrin and the Levite priests. This eldership dates back to Moses when the leaders of the tribes were first established. Two of these elders were selected on a rotating basis to represent the twelve tribes other than the Levites. These elders would make the journey to Jerusalem expecting to see the New Moon at the temple. If the New Moon was sighted, the shofar was blown from the temple, and then the first day of the month would be declared in the temple during the following daytime. The New Moon sacrifices would be prepared that day and the elders would eat their portion in the evening of the second day of the month. The New Moon celebration was a two-day event. To disseminate the declaration of the New Moon throughout the land, signal fires would be lit on the high places of Israel on the second night (the second day of the month) for three consecutive nights synchronizing all of the land to the month/day count.

A powerful Biblical reference to the twenty-four elders is found in John’s account of seeing the temple of God in the book of Revelation with the twenty-four elders seated around the altar.

And when He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, having each one a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

Revelation 5:8

The twenty-four elders represented the twelve tribes dating back to Moses in the wilderness when the tribes were first established. This group was completely separate from the priests, the king, or the Sanhedrin Council of 70. The tribal elders did not go away when the kingship was established. This is a similar comparison to our own United States leadership. While the president is the leader of the nation, individual governors are the leaders of states. In ancient Israel, the King led the nation, but the elders were the overseers and leaders of the tribes. In fact, the elders were the original leaders of the nation. In addition to dealing with their tribes, their primary task each month was to synchronize the entire nation to the New Moon and the days of the month. The Sanhedrin (the temple's highest court), along with the High Priest, joined with these elders to make the formal declaration.

Not just anyone could make the New Moon declaration. It was paramount to the ancients that the elders be trustworthy and be true representatives of the people of Israel. They also maintained the calculations of the ancient calendar and were known for their skill in this regard.

When King Saul was established as the first King of Israel, even he would eat the New Moon feast with the leaders of the nation. A specific reference is made to this feast in the story of King Saul, Jonathan, and David. Saul attempted to use the requirement of the New Moon feast to arrest David, but David avoided apprehension by not attending the feast.

So David said to Jonathan, "Behold, tomorrow is the new moon, and I ought to sit down to eat with the king. But let me go, that I may hide myself in the field until the third evening."

I Samuel 20:5

Then Jonathan said to him, "Tomorrow is the new moon, and you will be missed because your seat will be empty."

I Samuel 20:18

And it came about the next day, the second day of the new moon, that David's place was empty; so Saul said to Jonathan his son,

“Why has the son of Jesse not come to the meal, either yesterday or today?”

I Samuel 20:27

This is one of the few references in Scripture that gives any insight into how the New Moon was observed in a two-day fashion. Saul’s question about David’s absence “yesterday or today” speaks of the day of observation and day of eating the feast as two in number, not just one. This is also the reason why the traditional Jewish Diaspora calendars shows 1 Tishri for Rosh HaShanah (Yom Teruah) as a two-day event. 1 Tishri is a New Moon!

I mentioned earlier that a shofar was blown at the observation of the New Moon. This was a warm-up of sorts for the seventh month that would begin with the Feast of Trumpets. On the Feast of Trumpets, it is a day of blowing trumpets, the great celebration of the New Moon at the “turn of the year.” I will address the “turn of the year” in a moment.

When Israel became divided into two kingdoms, the House of Judah (the southern kingdom) and the House of Israel (the northern kingdom), Jeroboam (the leader of the northern kingdom) did not want the northern tribes to go down to Jerusalem to observe the appointed times. To accomplish this, he built imitation temples in Bethel and Dan for his citizens to pilgrimage to those locations. To thwart the efforts of the New Moon synchronization, he permitted (encouraged) others to build false fires on the high places to confuse the signal to the peoples as to when the New Moon had been declared. As you can imagine, the Jews in Jerusalem regarded all of the people in the northern kingdom as apostates, traitors, and “Samaritans.” Even the New Testament recognizes that a “Samaritan” was considered a very bad reputation for a person.

As a result of the two kingdoms, the twenty-four elders of Israel and the New Moon synchronization went through some changes. The High Priest and the Sanhedrin assumed the leadership role for the declaration of the New Moon, thereby standing in for all of the tribal elders. The office of the twenty-four elders seemed to fade away. The Sanhedrin Council was primarily composed of Jews (those from Judea) who also displayed a great bias against the northern tribes. Some of that bias remains with us to this day. It is clear from the evidence in the Revelation account that before God’s throne the role and place of the twenty-four elders has not diminished. You could argue that the New Moon observance then has definitely not gone away from before God as well.

The Diaspora Calendar

With the destruction of the temple by the Romans in 70 A.D. the observance of the New Moon at the temple by the Sanhedrin Council could no longer be maintained as was done previously. Simply said, there was no observance

except by individuals and small groups. However, the calculations that had been used in conjunction with the observance still remained.

As the dispersed Jews collected themselves into communities in the various nations, the need arose to synchronize the months and days to keep the appointed times. What could they do? The Rabbis of Judaism began to hold to only a calculated calendar since they could no longer make the observation from Jerusalem. Jewish communities, regardless of where they were scattered, followed the calculated calendar shared by all. The present day Jewish calendar is commonly referred to as the *Diaspora Calendar* (the calendar of the dispersion). This calendar was codified into Jewish Law by Moses Maimonides in the Mishnah Torah around 1200 A.D.

Let me summarize what the perpetual Diaspora Calendar does. It is based on a 19 year cycle with seven leap years. There are six different lengths for the years. In short years the total number of days is 353, 354, or 355 days. In long years the total number of days are 383, 384, or 385 days. Short years have twelve months, long years have 13 months. The final month of the calendar is Adar (the last part of winter). If spring has not yet come, then a second month of Adar is added to cause Aviv to always be in the springtime. Given that the lunar cycle is 29.5 days, the month alternated with either 29 or 30 days, the lesser or greater one day of the varying years to maintain an accurate New Moon of the first of each month. But, the additional month of Adar was to maintain the season of spring in the month of Aviv.

Setting the Month of Aviv

Let me elaborate on how the specific determination was made for setting the month of Aviv in the springtime. The priests in the temple had a designated plot of ground for barley. This was the single field that was used to observe the barley “in the ear” (having a head of grain). Barley is the first grain crop of the year with wheat following. The priest would wave barley sheaves before the LORD on the feast of First Fruits. Sometimes the barley would have become ripe and could be harvested prior to the waving of the sheaves, however, the Torah specifically commanded that no one could eat of the new harvest until it was waved before the LORD on First Fruits.

Until this same day [first fruits], until you have brought in the offering of your God, you shall eat neither bread nor roasted grain nor new growth. It is to be a perpetual statute throughout your generations in all your dwelling places.

Leviticus 23:14

To make the judgment of whether the New Moon in our March time frame should either be Adar II or Aviv/Nisan, a judgment would have to be made by

the priests and the Sanhedrin Council. These are the three things they considered in the judgment:

First - the flax had to be *in the bud* and the barley had to be *in the ear*, meaning the head of the grain had to be fully developed (not filling out).

Second - the full barley sheaves were to be waved before the LORD somewhere during the third week of Nisan, thus, a judgment would be made as to whether the sheaves would be harvested before First Fruits. Some have suggested that these could have been “green” sheaves. In my humble opinion this doesn’t make sense. Mature grain is the proper offering for all meal-type offerings. The Scripture quoted above gives the impression the grain is mature enough to be used for food. The designated plot of barley grown by the priests was crucial for this judgment. Based on moisture content and prevailing winds one field of grain could ripen earlier or later than other fields in the same land.

Third - the final component came from the calculated calendar. They would consider the proximity of the spring equinox (when the sun crosses the equator into the norther hemisphere). March 21 on the civil (Gregorian) calendar is that time. This would avoid the confusion caused by a freak heat wave coming in the late winter. The grain by itself did not conclusively determine the springtime judgment. We have all seen trees bud and blossom and other signs of springtime in advance of the real spring (prior to March 21) only to have more winter instead of spring. The life of the barley is more dependent upon sunlight and warmth (the solar cycle) than the phases of the moon or the name of the month.

Observation and calculation were always used together to make the most accurate determination and resulting declaration of the month of Aviv. The elders and priests of Israel were highly educated in the ancient knowledge of these things. The declaration of the month of Aviv set the rest of the year and the months into motion. Truly, the month of Aviv became the “head of months.”

This month shall be the beginning of months for you; it is to be the first month of the year to you.

Exodus 12:2

So powerful was the “head of months” that the counting of the years of the King was measured by the month of Aviv. When the Scripture says that David was king of Israel for 40 years it means that 1 Aviv (Nisan) occurred 40 times while he was king.

The month of Aviv was the month of salvation and deliverance for the children of Israel from Egypt. As Messianic believers of Yeshua of Nazareth, the month of Aviv is our month of redemption.

The “Head of Months” vs. the “Turn of the Year”

Maybe you are asking the next logical question. If Aviv is the *head of months*, then why is Rosh HaShanah on 1 Tishri (the seventh month) called *Jewish New Year* - the *turn of the year*? The month of Tishri (in the fall) has three Holy periods just like Aviv (in the spring). First there is Trumpets, then the Day of Atonement, and finally Tabernacles. Tabernacles has several names: Sukkot is the Hebrew name but it is also called the Feast of Booths, the Feast of Tabernacles, and the Feast of Ingathering. This reference in Exodus clearly shows that Moses regarded the turn of the year to be associated with the month of Tishri since the Feast of Ingathering occurs there.

And you shall celebrate ... and the Feast of Ingathering at the turn of the year.

Exodus 34:22

This is not a single instance with the phrase the *turn of the year* in the Scripture. In 1 Kings 20, the time frame of the Arameans' attack on Israel was at the *turn of the year* in the fall. King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon made Zedekiah king over Judah and Jerusalem at the *turn of the year* according to 2 Chronicles 36:10. Both of these events came in the fall of the year, not the springtime.

Therefore, the month of Aviv is the *head of months* with all other months following in numbered sequence. This is how Tishri is the seventh month but also the New Year (the turn of the year).

The New Moon of Tishri was therefore very significant as well. Instead of just sounding the shofar when the New Moon appeared, the day of Trumpets (Yom Teruah) was to have trumpets sounded all day long. In effect, 1 Tishri, the Feast of Trumpets, was a *super* New Moon Festival. The trumpets of Tishri would also make the trumpet declaration for the Jubilee year on Yom Kippur (10 Tishri). This is when tribal lands would be released - to revert to the tribal heirs every 50 years. Valuation of land was a calculation based on how many years the land had remaining with its current owner before it would revert to tribal heirs. The New Moon had a role not only for the tribal elders to synchronize the appointed times, it was the marker for the year of release.

Hebrew scholars hold to the creation count being done in Tishri, not in Aviv. Therefore the number of years are adjusted at Rosh HaShanah, not on 1 Aviv.

The Creation Count Calculation

Presently here in 2009 of the Gregorian Calendar (named after Pope Gregory) the Hebrew Diaspora calendar lists the year as 5769. Hebrew history of the Old Testament is referred to as *Before the Common Era* (B.C.E.) and New Testament period and our present day is called the *Common Era* (C.E.). The number of Hebrew years is a calculation back to the life of Adam and the creation. If you think the calculated calendar for the New Moon observance is slightly flawed, wait till you see the problems with counting all of the years of the Biblical record.

Christians believe that the Messiah's ministry began at approximately the creation year 4000 since the year of creation. Christian scholars and Hebrew scholars differ on the count of Biblical years going back to creation. Hebrew chronologists admit that they have made mistakes in counting the past years but have stuck to their guns saying the total is 5769 on the present Hebrew calendar. The known range of error in the Hebrew count is from 168 to 240 years. Therefore, the Hebrew year count really should be somewhere between 5937 and 6009 instead of 5769 for their calendar.

If you are concluding at this point that no calendar seems to be correct in all respects, then you are right. On this one point everyone who studies chronology agrees.

I mentioned the year count problem because observing the New Moon and not considering the implications of 1 Tishri with its counting of years is short-sighted. If we are going to be diligent in keeping the New Moon, then we need to be just as diligent in understanding the "turn of the year" and its resulting count.

The Apostle Peter warned us that in the last days the counting of years would be a powerful sign to know which generation would see the end of the ages and God's final judgment. Quoting from the Psalms he said:

But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the LORD one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

II Peter 3:8

Prophetically, the seven single days of creation correspond to the resulting 1,000 time periods of Biblical history. Understanding this prophetic pattern and Peter's specific warning has caused prophecy students to ask where is the Biblical year 6,000. That year will begin the Sabbath of Millennia, the last thousand years called the Messianic Age after the previous three 2,000 year ages totaling 6,000 years. Therefore, the counting of years for Tishri is

extremely significant for prophetic reasons. We are looking for the final fulfillment of God's great plan given in the creation plan.

If anyone says to you that the New Moon is only by observation and not by calculation, then they have failed to understand the implications of the New Moon and the month of Tishri. If anyone says that observation of the New Moon is not necessary since we have the calculated calendar, then they have failed to understand the implications of the New Moon and the month of Aviv. Both are essential to fully understanding God's timing and great plan.

Synchronizing the Observation and the Calculation

During the days of the temple, the calculated calendar and the observations of the new crescent moon were synchronized. The observations were made monthly and the calculations were verified. As you will recall, the temple in Jerusalem did not exist after 70 C.E. Even during the Talmudic period 250 to 450 C.E. there was no serious question raised as to accuracy of the calculated calendar, even though observations were not being made from the temple in Jerusalem. Each New Moon seemed to track with the calculated calendar. However in our days, we can no longer say the calculated Diaspora calendar always matches the actual observation of the New Moon.

Calculations for space time tend to have some element of mathematical error. This is because most calculations are "rounded off" at some point after the decimal point. The last time we believe the calculation was set (synchronized) with the observed New Moon was approximately 1700 years ago. The Hebrew community has continued to use this ancient formula (the Hebrew method of counting 19 years with seven leap years, adding or subtracting a day) with no update. The "rounded off" part of the calculation is beginning to manifest itself now. For example, this year (2009) the Hebrew Diaspora calendar said the New Moon of 1 Aviv was Thursday, March 26. But actually, the New Moon did not appear at Jerusalem until Friday evening, March 27, and the first day of Nisan should have been March 28, not March 26. The Hebrew Diaspora calendar was two days early from the actual observation date. As a result, there were multiple dates for Passover observances by Messianics trying to keep it on the 14th of Nisan. Some followed the Diaspora calendar, some tried to follow the New Moon observation, and some threw their hands in the air saying, "Whatever!" Similar errors have surfaced in recent years affecting the observance of Tabernacles in the month of Tishri as well.

This problem is not going to go away on its own. A correction is needed. If a correction is not found, this predicament will further confuse, and cause dissension among, Messianic believers who are trying to keep the appointed times of the LORD.

I have known of this issue for a few years. Believing that the Messiah would restore the New Moon and all of the issues related to Sabbath and the Festivals, I tried to follow the last standing order (the Diaspora Calendar) while encouraging unity among the brethren. We all need the same calendar to have any chance of unity in keeping the feasts.

Corrections to the Calculated Calendar

Before we speak to how the Diaspora calendar can be corrected, maybe we should address some other issues that need correction as well. Some Messianic brethren have taken the point of view holding to the New Moon by “observation only.” I have made the point that calculation and observation should be made together. In their zeal to be right, they have challenged other believers keeping the feasts based on the Diaspora calendar. We need to remember that no one has the authority to judge anyone else concerning the New Moon, any Sabbath, or any Feast of the LORD.

Therefore let no one act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day—

Colossians 2:16

If you are keeping the appointed times based on the Diaspora calendar, and you are asked, “Why aren’t you doing it correctly?” then feel free to instruct that person with Colossians 2:16.

For the record, no one is keeping the appointed times of the LORD correctly *since there is no temple nor priesthood to keep the commanded sacrifices*. We are all doing something less than what the LORD has commanded us to do. All we can do is sincerely keep His commandments with all of our hearts, souls, and might. Since we are all scattered, I believe the sincerity of our hearts is of paramount importance over being technically right about the observations of the lunar phases. Wisdom tells me there is a difference between being “right” and being “dead right.” As Paul said:

Who are you to judge the servant of another? To his own master he stands or falls; and stand he will, for the LORD is able to make him stand. One man regards one day above another, another regards every day alike. Let each man be fully convinced in his own mind. He who observes the day, observes it for the LORD, and he who eats, does so for the LORD, for he gives thanks to God; and he who eats not, for the LORD he does not eat, and gives thanks to God.

Romans 14:4-6

Moses has prophesied of our days. He has said that while we are in all the nations we should focus on obeying with our hearts and souls. This is the path of obedience and return.

So it shall be when all of these things have come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call them to mind in all nations where the LORD your God has banished you, and you return to the LORD your God and obey Him with all your heart and soul according to all that I command you today, you and your sons, then the LORD your God will restore you from captivity, and have compassion on you, and will gather you again from all the peoples where the LORD your God has scattered you. If your outcasts are at the ends of the Earth, from there the LORD your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you back. And the LORD your God will bring you into the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it; and He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers.

Deuteronomy 30:1-5

According to the Prophet Isaiah, once all Israel has returned with the Messiah, there will be no conflict on how or when to keep the New Moon.

“And it shall be from new moon to new moon and from Sabbath to Sabbath, all mankind will come to bow down before Me,” says the LORD.

Isaiah 66:23

God knows what we can and cannot do to keep His commandments correctly with all of our hearts. He also knows our hearts and desire to follow His instruction fully and completely. I believe He is full of mercy toward us as long as our hearts are directed toward Him.

Secondly, some brethren have made *declarations* concerning the first of the month or announcement of Aviv different from the Diaspora calendar with no consideration for the adverse impact it has had on the body of Messiah in the nations. This has been disruptive and sown confusion among many groups. A few years back, a group of individuals declared the month of Aviv one full month earlier than the Diaspora calendar. It devastated Messianic fellowships and congregations all over the world for the following eight months. It widened the gap between one house and two house congregations spreading disrepute on all Messianic brethren. In my opinion those declaring the month of Aviv were technically incorrect about the barley judgment. But further, I question the authority used by these persons to make such a declaration. They are

neither the Elders of Israel, the priests, the Sanhedrin Council, nor Congregational leaders themselves. By what authority do they make their declarations? I have always said that I am not impressed with a shepherd who can jump like a Gazelle to get across a creek; I am impressed with a shepherd who can get the flock across the creek without drowning any of them.

Updating the Diaspora Calendar

Why can't the Diaspora calendar be recalculated and synchronized again to the New Moon observation? It would be so much easier if the calendar published each year with the Hebrew dates matched once again (every month) to the New Moon observation from Jerusalem. We would all be able to plan correctly for the appointed times and everyone would be keeping the same dates. We could then keep the day/month commandments in unity.

As a national Messianic leader, I have never shied away from controversial subjects. I have pursued the path of truth trying to carefully weigh the principles of knowledge, understanding, and wisdom. Therefore, I propose to publish a synchronized calendar, corrected by computer calculations to the observance of the New Moon from Jerusalem for my Messianic brethren who wish to keep the appointed times of the LORD and be in unity. The calendar will once again accurately represent the first day of each Hebrew month based on the calculation of the new waxing crescent moon from Jerusalem, Israel (the center of the Earth) in the first quarter of the evening (6 pm to 9 pm). Therefore, no one will need to make any *declarations* usurping the authority of the Elders, Sanhedrin, or priests of Israel. Any observation made will simply verify the accuracy of the calculated calendar. Furthermore, this calendar will hold closely to the Diaspora calendar in setting the month of Aviv. It is essential that Feast of First Fruits continue to fall well past the spring equinox. I still believe that anyone reporting the status of spurious barley fields in Israel is technically inadequate by itself to declare the month of Aviv. If some of the barley ripens early, then we should not eat of it until First Fruits. But mostly, an updated calendar would help brethren to plan ahead, reconciling work schedules and days off, enabling them to keep the appointed times. For most of 2009, the Diaspora calendar is setting the New Moon one day early.

Enclosed in this issue of *YAVOH*, a comparative list of dates is offered showing the calculated New Moon dates along side the Hebrew Diaspora and Civil calendars. Later this year we will publish a more traditional calendar with the corrected Hebrew dates extending through all of 2010. Please note, the sighting of the New Moon is in the evening prior to the date.

By what authority do I do this? Answer: By the rules of mathematics, I am correcting a space/time mathematical problem. That is all I am doing. I make no declaration. However, with this calendar there will be no reason for

independent Messianic brethren to observe at different dates. Hopefully, this will help to promote unity among brethren until the Messiah returns. In the meantime, let's keep the appointed times of the LORD as best we can together with all our hearts, minds, and souls.

Amen and Amen



YAVOH - He is Coming is a monthly newsletter published as an outreach ministry of Lion and Lamb Ministries.

The ministry is a non-profit organization with an end time prophetic message in a Messianic Jewish context.

Subscription to *YAVOH - He is Coming* is without cost and supported only by donation.

Permission is granted to reprint any article in *YAVOH - He is Coming* with attribution given to *YAVOH - He is Coming*.

Editor - Monte Judah
Electronic Editor - Ephraim Judah

Lion and Lamb Ministries
PO Box 720968
Norman, OK 73070
Phone: (405) 447 4429
Fax: (405) 447 3775
E-mail: info@lionlamb.net
Web: lionlamb.net