

The New Moon

Is it the Conjunction (Dark) Moon Or Is it the Crescent (First Illuminated Sliver) Moon?

“...By the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established.”

(2 Corinthians 13:1, The Scriptures Translation, emphasis added)

In this teaching, we will be looking for evidence to support either a Conjunction (dark) Moon or the First Illuminated Crescent Moon to start the New Hebrew Month.

Various Views

All through the ages, man has and continues to be at odds with one another over **what** constitutes representing the “*New Moon*.” Listed below are three of the more common views on what represents the “New Moon:”

1. **First visibility of the young illuminated crescent moon** – The young crescent moon always appears during twilight in any given location. Scholars generally agree that the ancient Hebrew calendar was based on actual lunar crescent sightings. A small sect of the Jews—the Karaites as well as some Messianic/Hebrew Roots groups follow this practice today.
2. **The lunar conjunction** – The lunar conjunction is a precise moment in time, which may occur at any time of the day or night. Just as midnight begins and ends the astronomical “*day*,” the lunar conjunction is that to which modern astronomers refer, when they use the term “*new moon*.”¹ Consequently, the lunar conjunction is what is commonly labeled as the “*new moon*” on secular calendars.
3. **Averaged lunar conjunction** – Like the conjunction itself, the averaged lunar conjunction may occur at any moment of the day or night. However, due to the irregularities of the moon’s orbit, any averaged conjunction can occur on the day preceding, or on the following day after the actual conjunction. The common calculated Jewish calendar begins with the calculation of the *molad*, generally considered to be an approximation of the mean average lunar conjunction.
4. **Other ideas** – Among the various phenomena included within this category of “*other ideas*,” are the full moon, and the waning crescent.

As you can see, there are different schools of understanding/beliefs on what represents the “*New Moon*.” Many earnestly believe that the conjunction (dark) moon

¹ “Conjunction.” Britannica 2002 Deluxe Edition; Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc.; 1994-2002.

starts the New Month. Others are of the understanding that it is the first illuminated Crescent Moon that constitutes the beginning of the New Month. So, which one is it?

We have to set aside what astrologers “say” constitutes the “New Moon” and look at what the ancient Israelites did to determine the beginning of each Hebrew month. So, our question should be, “*Did the ancient Israelites use the Conjunction (dark) Moon to determine the beginning of each month or did they use the First Illuminated Crescent Moon to determine the beginning of each Hebrew month?*”

The Meaning of “New Moon” Now and Then

Let’s first define the phrase **New Moon**. Modern scientists regard the new moon as beginning at the conjunction when the moon is in its dark phase and it is blocked from the sun’s light by the earth, while the ancient Israelites regarded it as beginning when it first appeared as a sliver or illuminated crescent. We have a clash of definitions here. The term **New Moon** meant one thing to the ancient Israelites as attested to by their writings, and it means something quite different to modern scientists and astrologers. To properly understand Scripture, we must put ourselves in the proverbial sandals of the ancient Israelite people and understand the concept of **New Moon** from their perspective. To not do so is to violate Scripture and to take the chances of **adding** to the Word of Almighty YHWH and arriving at **false conclusions** regarding the truth of what is written in the Scriptures.

Psalm 81 tells us that Joseph instituted Rosh Chodesh during his tenure as the viceroy of Egypt. Joseph had the power to declare the decree and the people of Egypt, principally the sons of Israel, were delighted to make the recognition of the new moon as a joyful feast. The testimony was to honor Joseph for what he did as a righteous deliverer, who in many ways prefigured the coming of the Messiah of Israel and the redemption that He would ultimately bring. All of YHWH’s Feasts are a role play of eternal truths in His eternal purposes and they keep His redemptive plan before us. What Joseph set in place as a testimony, has been established as a “statute for Israel, a law of the God of Jacob.” (Psalm 81:3-4)

In Numbers Chapter 10, it is recorded that the trumpet is to be blown to sanctify the New Moon as a feast day.

“Also in the day of your gladness, and in your solemn days, and **in the beginnings of your months, ye shall blow with the trumpets** over your burnt offerings, and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings; that they may be to you for a memorial before your God: I *am* the LORD your God.”

(Numbers 10:10, KJV, emphasis added)

In Numbers Chapter 28, it is recorded that the different offerings are to be made for each New Moon.

“11 And in the beginnings of your months ye shall offer a burnt offering unto the LORD; two young bullocks, and one ram, seven lambs of the first year without spot; **12** And three tenth deals of flour *for* a meat offering, mingled with oil, for one bullock; and two tenth deals of flour *for* a meat offering, mingled with oil, for one ram; **13** And a several tenth deal of flour mingled with oil *for* a meat offering unto one lamb; *for* a burnt offering of a sweet savour, a sacrifice made by fire unto the LORD. **14** And their drink offerings shall be half an hin of wine unto a bullock, and the third *part* of an hin unto a ram, and a fourth *part* of an hin unto a lamb: **this is the burnt offering of every month throughout the months of the year.** **15** And one kid of the goats for a sin offering unto the LORD shall be offered, beside the continual burnt offering, and his drink offering.”

(Numbers 28:11-15, KJV, emphasis added)

Moses called the people to assemble on the New Moon and he spoke to them according to the commandments he had been given by YHWH, exhorting them to faith and obedience. (Deuteronomy 1:3) It is also recorded that YHWH chose this sabbatical day to speak to Moses and give him instructions for Israel. (Numbers 1:1-5)

Moses commanded the keeping of the New Moons. (2 Chronicles 8:12-13) Solomon said that it, as well as the other feasts, were “an ordinance forever to Israel.” (2 Chronicles 2:3-4)

The kings of Israel kept the feast of the New Moon with its stipulated temple procedure. (1 Chronicles 23:31; 2 Chronicles 31:3)

We find a record that Saul held feasts on the New Moon, according to what is written in the Tanakh. When Saul turned against David and he fled and hid in the country, David gave instructions to explain his absence from the feast, indicating that this was a day when David would be missed, if he did not attend the King’s table on the New Moon. (1 Samuel 20:4-18, 24)

It was usual during the Temple period to seek guidance from the prophets on the New Moons. (2 Kings 4:23)

In the restoration of the Torah under Nehemiah, the New Moons were re-instituted and kept from that time through to the destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E. Josephus records that they were kept during the entire Temple period and the High Priest attended in the Temple on the New Moons and Sabbaths.

The New Testament church also understood them, hence the reference in Colossians Chapter 2 when the Gnostics were criticizing them for their festivities, contrary to their ascetic practices.

“Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the **new moon**, or of the sabbath *days*.”

(Colossians 2:16, KJV, emphasis added)

During the Millennium, the Sabbaths and New Moons will be kept. Isaiah tells us the entire world will be honoring the New Moons and the Sabbaths as they worship YHWH in the coming Kingdom.

“And it shall come to pass, *that* from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the LORD.”

(Isaiah 66:23, KJV, emphasis added)

We also see in the book of Ezekiel the aspect of Temple service for the New Moons in the Millennium:

“And it shall be the prince’s part *to give* burnt offerings, and meat offerings, and drink offerings, in the feasts, and in the new moons, and in the sabbaths, in all solemnities of the house of Israel: he shall prepare the sin offering, and the meat offering, and the burnt offering, and the peace offerings, to make reconciliation for the house of Israel.”

(Ezekiel 45:17, KJV, emphasis added)

Again, we see in the book of Ezekiel where the new moons will be observed in the Millennium:

“**1** Thus saith the Lord GOD; The gate of the inner court that looketh toward the east shall be shut the six working days; but on the sabbath it shall be opened, and **in the day of the new moon it shall be opened...** **3** Likewise the people of the land shall worship at the door of this gate before the LORD in the sabbaths and in the new moons.”

(Ezekiel 46:1, 3, KJV, emphasis added)

As sincere followers of YHWH’s word, we should be observing the New Moons now and preparing ourselves as His Bride, fully adorned in all righteousness.

The Bible and the New Moon

Let's start with the Bible, the foundation of all spiritual knowledge. We are confronted with two options when determining truth: (1) we can rely on the mind of man in an attempt to figure things out, or (2) divinely revealed truth as recorded in the Word of YHWH. When we base our beliefs and actions on the latter, we are feeding from the tree of life; if on the former, we are feeding from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. To rely on the mind of man (i.e., secular humanism) to determine what is good and evil is tantamount to seeking spiritual truth in Babylon, which is a confused mixture of good and evil. Let's look to the Spirit of Elohim to lead and direct us into all truth as Yeshua promised (John 16:13); let us begin searching the Word of YHWH for His Truths.

The first question we need to ask is what is the biblical Hebrew word for **New Moon**? The English word for month actually means "*moon*." It is Strong's number H2320/TWOT 613b:² חֹדֶשׁ -- chôdesh -- kho'-desh – (From Strong's number H2318/TWOT 613a:² חָדַשׁ -- châdash -- khaw-dash' -- A primitive root; to be new; causatively to rebuild: - renew, repair.); the new moon; by implication a *month*: - month (-ly), new moon. The Hebrew word chôdesh is found in the Tanakh (the Hebrew Scriptures or Old Testament) 276 times and it is translated in the King James Version as "*month*" 254 times, "*new moon*" 20 times, and "*monthly*" 1 time. We see that from these definitions that the terms "*month*" and "*new moon*" are synonymous. It has been understood for millennia that ancient Israelites began their month with the New Moon.

Why was it important for the Israelites to know when the new moon occurred and when the month began? The dates of the annual biblical festivals that YHWH gave to Israel and instructed them to observe were determined based on *when* the New Moon occurred (Leviticus 23:5, 6, 24, 27, 34).

The next question to ask is this: "*When does the biblical month begin?*" As noted above, for modern astronomers the term "*new moon*" means something different than it did to the ancient Israelites, including those who YHWH inspired to write the Bible. Ancient calendars were determined by the moon, while modern ones are not. Some biblical expositors teach that the new moon begins when the moon is in conjunction (the dark moon) or in line with the earth and the sun and it is in its dark phase. Others believe that the month begins just after the moon has moved out of its dark phase and begins to show a sliver of light, which is called the visible or crescent new moon. Who is right?

Some Bible teachers *claim* that there is no place in the Scriptures that specifically states that the new moon begins at the first visible sliver after being dark for several days. Therefore, they *reason*, it is **an assumption** to say that it does (even though, as we will see below, this was the understanding of the ancient Israelites), and therefore,

² Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, Volume 1, pages 265-266.

the New Moon should be determined from its conjunction with the earth and sun while it is in its dark phase. While on the surface, this may *seem* like a valid argument, one important verse in the Scriptures, however, and some simple logic will quickly disprove this notion. We see this in Genesis Chapter 1:

And Elohim said, “**Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons** [*mo’edim* / biblical festivals], **and for days, and years.**”

(Genesis 1:14, The Scriptures Translation, comment and emphasis added)

In this verse, we see that the sun and the moon are “*signs*” for seasons, days, and years. The word “*sign*” in Hebrew is *owt* / אוֹת (Strong’s H226/TWOT 41a) meaning “*sign, signal, mark, token, emblem, signboard, standard.*” In the Tanakh, *owt* **is** described as **visible** (not invisible) **signs** as Noah’s rainbow (Genesis 9:12–13, 17), Cain’s mark (Genesis 4:15), circumcision (Genesis 17:11), and the Sabbath (Exodus 31:13, 17; Ezekiel 20:12) are all **visible** “*signs*” one can “*see*.” In addition, *owt* is used some 80 times in the Tanakh to refer to *miraculous signs*. These include the plagues of Egypt (Exodus 7:3; Deuteronomy 4:34, etc.), the *sign* of the virgin birth of Yeshua (Isaiah 7:11, 14); YHWH’s *miraculous signs* to Gideon (Judges 6:17) and King Hezekiah (2 Kings 20:9; Isaiah 38:7). In addition, Aaron’s rod that budded was a *sign* or *token* (Numbers 17:25). All of these are **visible** “*signs*” which we can “*see*.” There are many more examples throughout the Bible which demonstrate that they are **visible** “*signs*” which we can “*see*.” I will leave it to the reader to explore those additional examples.

What do all these examples of how the Bible uses the Hebrew word *owt* have in common? They were all **a visible sign that one could see**. This is the definition of the word *owt* and how it is used in the Hebrew Scriptures. Simply stated, the visible sliver of the New Moon fits the definition of *owt* as used in Genesis 1:14, while the astronomical conjunction (when the moon is in its dark phase and it is invisible to the naked eye because the earth is between the moon and the sun) does not. Psalm 104:19 is definitive biblical proof that the moon’s purpose is to determine the biblical feasts when it says YHWH “appointed the moon for seasons [*Hebrew mo’edim*, which means ‘Appointed Times’ or ‘Biblical Holy Days’].” **The moon cannot be a visible sign to determine seasons or biblical festivals if it is hidden or dark.**

The fact that ancient Israelites determined the new moon based on the sighting with the naked eye of the moon’s sliver has been substantiated repeatedly by historians and religious scholars over the past 2000 years.

Just what is the Biblical New Moon?

We will now take a look at Genesis Chapter 1:14-16. Let's look again, with a slightly different focus:

“**14** And God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. And let them be for **signs** and for **seasons** [or Appointed Times], and for days and years, **15** and let them be lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth.” And it was so. **16** And God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars.”

(Genesis 1:14-16, ESV, comment and emphasis added)

Thus, we are reminded that YHWH has given us the moon as a **sign**—a marker—of time. Each evening, the sun slips into the horizon and it gives us a *visible marker* of the beginning of the day. By the terms used and by logic, it would seem that the moon, likewise, should provide a **visible indication** of the beginning of the month.

The most common Biblical Hebrew word for “month” is the noun *chodesh* (or *hodesh* or *hodes*), which “properly means ‘new moon.’ According to Harris’ Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament:

“Although this word properly means ‘new moon,’ it is commonly used as an equivalent to our word ‘month’ because the month began when the thin crescent of the new moon was first visible at sunset. It was used along with the more rare *yerah*, from *yareah* meaning ‘moon.’ ... In early Israel the first of each month, or new moon, was determined by observation and proclaimed officially by the blowing of trumpets ... When *hodesh* refers only to the beginning of the month, it is naturally translated ‘new moon,’ which was a feast day ...”³

However, there is ***much more to the story*** of this Hebrew noun. This is perhaps best illustrated by the fact that in Vine’s Dictionary, which lists Hebrew terms according to their English equivalents, this word is not even found under the heading “month.” Instead, it is found under the listing “NEW; NEW MOON.”⁴

This seemingly curious fact is because the **verb form** of *hodesh* is *chadash* (or *hadash* or *hadas*), which is a primary root, meaning to **renew or repair**.⁵ How is the **verb form** of this word used in Scripture?

³ THEOLOGICAL WORDBOOK OF THE OLD TESTAMENT (TWOT); Harris, Archer, and Waltke; Moody Press; Chicago; 1980.

⁴ VINE'S COMPLETE EXPOSITORY DICTIONARY OF OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT WORDS; Vine, Unger, and White; Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville; 1984, 1996.

⁵ *New American Standard Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*; The Lockman Foundation; 1981.

“*hadash* is used in the sense of ‘repair’ or ‘rebuild’ referring to cities (Isa 61:4), the temple (II Chr 24:4, 12), and the altar (II Chr 15:8). It is also used figuratively. Under Samuel the kingdom was renewed at Gilgal (I Sam 11:14). David wanted a right spirit, equivalent to a clean heart, renewed within him (Ps 51:10 [H 12]). The prophet asked for renewal as of old (Lam 5:21). God renews the face of the ground, that is, gives it new life (Ps 104:30), and he renews one’s youth (Ps 103:5). Job complained that God was bringing new witnesses against him (Job 10:17). The use of the verb as well as its derivatives is attested in Ugaritic (see UT 19:no. 843.)”⁶

Accordingly, the **adjective form** of this word also means “**new, new thing, fresh.**”⁷ Regarding the **adjective**, Vine’s points out:

“*Hadas* means ‘new’ both in the sense of recent or fresh (as the opposite of old) and in the sense of something not previously existing. The first nuance appears in Lev. 23:16: ‘Even unto the morrow after the seventh Sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the Lord.’ The first biblical occurrence of *hadas* (Exod. 1:8) demonstrates the second meaning: ‘Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph.’”⁸

Thus, within the various forms of this Hebrew word, we see a *profound association* with **restoration, rebuilding, and renewal**. This emphasis is unlike anything found in Scripture in connection with the beginning of the day, the beginning of the week, or even the beginning of the year. ***The Biblical new moon has an emphatic and distinct quality of newness.***

What else does the Bible reveal that is pertinent to the Biblical new moon?

YHWH associates the moon with His Called Out Assembly of Believers:

“**1** And **a great sign** was seen in the heaven: a woman clad with the sun, with the **moon under her feet**, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. **2** And being pregnant, she cried out in labour and in pain to give birth. **3** And **another sign** was seen in the heaven: and see, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns on his heads. **4** And his tail draws a third of the stars of the heaven and throws them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, to devour her child as soon as it was born. **5** And she bore a male

⁶ THEOLOGICAL WORDBOOK OF THE OLD TESTAMENT (TWOT); Harris, Archer, and Waltke; Moody Press; Chicago; 1980.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ VINE'S COMPLETE EXPOSITORY DICTIONARY OF OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT WORDS; Vine, Unger, and White; Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville; 1984, 1996.

child [see Isaiah 66:7] who was to shepherd all nations with a rod of iron. And her child was caught away to Elohim and to His throne.”

(Revelation 12:1-5, The Scriptures Translation, comment and emphasis added)

Throughout Scripture, we see where darkness is associated with evil, and YHWH is associated with Light. Here is one example:

“**7** Therefore do not become partakers with them. **8** For you were once darkness [see Ephesians 2:2, 4:18 and Colossians 3:7], but now **you are light in the Master**. Walk as children of light **9** for the fruit of the Spirit [see Philippians 1:11] is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth **10** proving what is well-pleasing to the Master.”

(Ephesians 5:7-10, The Scriptures Translation, comments and emphasis added)

The Sun is used as a symbol of Yeshua:

“**76** And you, child [John the Baptist], shall be called prophet of the Most High, for you shall go BEFORE THE FACE OF YHWH TO PREPARE HIS WAYS, **77** to give knowledge of deliverance to His people, by the forgiveness of their sins, **78** through the tender compassion of our Elohim, with which the daybreak from on high has looked upon us, **79** TO GIVE **LIGHT** TO THOSE WHO SIT IN DARKNESS AND THE SHADOW OF DEATH, to guide our feet into the way of peace.”

(Luke 1:76-79, The Scriptures Translation, comment and emphasis added)

“That is why He says, “Wake up, you who sleep, and arise from the dead, and Messiah shall **shine on you**.”

(Ephesians 5:14, The Scriptures Translation, emphasis added)

“I, Yeshua, have sent My messenger to witness to you these matters in the assemblies. I am the Root and the Offspring of Dawid [see Isaiah 11:1 and 10; Revelation 5:5], **the Bright and Morning Star**.”

(Revelation 22:16, The Scriptures Translation, comment and emphasis added)

The moon is totally void of having light of its own like the sun. Likewise, the Called Out Assemblies of Yeshua have no light of their own apart from Yeshua:

“Therefore Yeshua spoke to them again, saying, **“I am the light of the world.** He who follows Me shall by no means walk in darkness, but possess the light of life [see John 11:9-10].”

(John 8:12, The Scriptures Translation, comment and emphasis added)

To the degree that YHWH’s Called Out Assembly of Believers is yielding to Him, **She is clothed with the light of Yeshua, just as the moon is clothed with the light of the sun.** Moreover, **She has a duty to reflect that light to the world, just as the moon reflects the light of the sun to the world:**

“14 You are the light of the world. It is impossible for a city to be hidden on a mountain. **15** Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it shines to all those in the house. **16** Let your light so shine before men, **so that they see your good works** and praise your Father who is in the heavens.”

(Matthew 5:14-16, The Scriptures Translation, emphasis added)

After we are baptized into the Body of Yeshua, we each individually begin to reflect some light to the world. We do not reflect that light before our sins are forgiven, when we are still walking in darkness. Our “*newness*” does not begin—we do not yet reflect that light—when our “*old*” man is first dead, and we are still buried (immersed) in the watery grave of baptism:

“having been buried with Him in immersion, in which you also were raised with Him through the belief in the working of Elohim, who raised Him from the dead.”

(Colossians 2:12, The Scriptures Translation)

“3 Or do you not know that as many of us as were immersed into Messiah Yeshua were immersed into His death? **4** We were therefore buried with Him through immersion into death, that as Messiah was **raised** from the **dead** by the esteem of the Father, **so also we should walk in newness of life.**”

(Romans 6:3-4, The Scriptures Translation, emphasis added)

All Believers in Yeshua are a new creature—they begin to **reflect** the light of Yeshua—when they are **raised up** out of the water and they receive the Set-Apart (Holy) Spirit of Almighty YHWH. **According to what is written in the Bible, Believers are not a “new man” until we come up out of the watery grave.**

These Scriptural principles reveal an important question for us to contemplate: Can the Biblical new moon be “*new*,” with all the sense that “*newness*” implies, before it emerges from darkness and begins to visibly reflect the light of the sun?

What Leading Scholars Say About the New Moon

In researching and examining secular records from over the past two thousand years, it has been found that the world's leading scholars *unanimously* agree that the ancient Israelites determined the beginning of their New Month (*rosh chodesh*) is based on the sighting of the first crescent, sliver, or sickle of the New Moon. Of all the sources checked out, none indicated that the ancient Israelites relied on the astronomical conjunction (dark moon) for determining *rosh chodesh*. Below is what was found.

How did the ancient Israelites determine the New Moon?

What we need to base our understanding on is “**How did the ancient Israelites determine the New Moon or as some say *New Month*?**” It makes no difference what we *think* it is today or what the scientists and astrologist say. What matters is *how* the Israelites did it in their time. Who are we going to follow—man or YHWH?

“He made the moon for appointed times;...”

(Psalm 104:19, The Scriptures Translation, emphasis added)

Each Biblical month begins on a New Moon which is known in Hebrew as ***Rosh Chodesh***. We know that the head of each Biblical New Year, according to YHWH, begins on the first of Abib/Nisan along with the barley being Aviv (ripe) which typically falls in the Gregorian calendar in the months of March or April according to Exodus Chapter 12:

“**1** And YHWH spoke to Mosheh and to Aharon in the land of Mitsrayim (Egypt), saying, **2 This month is the beginning of months for you** (**NOTE:** The children of Israel were still in Egypt in bondage to the Egyptians before YHWH used Moses to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt to Mt. Sinai. This was in the Hebrew month of Abib/Nisan.), it is the first month of the year for you.”

(Exodus 12:1-2, The Scriptures Translation, comments and emphasis added)

The New Moon celebrations are unfamiliar to most Christians. Yet, we can see in Isaiah Chapter 66 where it prophetically says that **all will worship on this day**:

“And it shall be that **from New Moon to New Moon, and from Sabbath to Sabbath, all flesh shall come to worship before Me, declares YHWH.**”

(Isaiah 66:23, The Scriptures Translation, emphasis added)

We know this will take place during the time when Yeshua comes back to Rule and Reign from Jerusalem during the Millennium. Isaiah 66:10-24 is a description of the Millennial Age.

YHWH established His Appointed Times (Hebrew: Mo'edim) in Genesis 1:14 by using the New Moon each month to set the dates for His Biblical Feasts which He gave to us in Leviticus Chapter 23.

The tribe of Issachar in ancient Israel understood how to calculate the New Moons given to us:

“And of the children of Issachar, *which were men* that **had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do...**”

(1 Chronicles 12:32, KJV, emphasis added)

When Yeshua came and lived among men in His lifetime, there were at least two witnesses who would go out and search the skies looking for the first illuminated sliver of the New Moon. Once they spotted it, they would report it to the Sanhedrin. The Sanhedrin was a group of 70 elders who were headed by the High Priest. This governing body of 71 men is based on Numbers Chapter 11 who authorized the new month:

“Then YHWH said to Mosheh, “**Gather to Me seventy men of the elders of Yisra’el**, whom you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them. And bring them to the Tent of Meeting, and let them stand there with you.”

(Numbers 11:16, The Scriptures Translation, emphasis added)

The New Moons were important to the ancient Israelites because they knew that they were tied to YHWH's Appointed Times. They would announce each New Month/Moon by blowing one long blast with their silver trumpets from the top of the Temple as we read in Numbers Chapter 10:

“...in your appointed times, and **at the beginning of your months**, you shall blow the trumpets over your burnt offerings and over your peace offerings. And they shall be a remembrance for you before your Elohim. I am YHWH your Elohim.”

(Numbers 10:10, The Scriptures Translation, emphasis added)



Men would listen for the blasts of the trumpet each month and they would light great signal fires from mountain to mountain to announce the New Month. At the last mountain, they had relay runners who would carry the word that the New Month had started to all the distant places the children of Israel

lived including Babylon. By this, everyone knew the New Month had started and everyone could start at the same time. We know from Exodus Chapter 40 that YHWH's glory first filled Moses' Tabernacle on a New Moon. We know from Numbers Chapter 28 that "*Special*" offerings were made to YHWH on this day as a special feast day.

"11 'And on the beginnings of your months you bring near a burnt offering to YHWH: two young bulls and one ram, and seven lambs a year old, perfect ones; 12 three-tenths of an *ěphah* of fine flour as a grain offering, mixed with oil, for each bull; two-tenths of an *ěphah* of fine flour as a grain offering, mixed with oil, for the one ram; 13 and one-tenth of an *ěphah* of fine flour, mixed with oil, as a grain offering for each lamb, as a burnt offering of sweet fragrance, an offering made by fire to YHWH. 14 'And their drink offering is half a hin of wine for a bull, and one-third of a hin for a ram, and one-fourth of a hin for a lamb. This is the burnt offering for each month throughout the months of the year, 15 and one male goat as a sin offering to YHWH is prepared, besides the continual burnt offering and its drink offering."

(Numbers 28:11-15, The Scriptures Translation, emphasis added)

Many Orthodox Jews as well as a growing number of Hebrew Roots Believers today celebrate the New Moon when the first lunar crescent is visible just like the ancient Israelites did in their time.

Modern Sources

- ⌘ [T]he new moon began **when the thin crescent of the new moon was first visible** at sunset. (*Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, volume 1, p. 266, emphasis added.)
- ⌘ The ancient Greeks recognized **the visible new moon** as the beginning of the month when they celebrated the "sickle of the new moon" with offerings and meals. This was also the case with the ancient Babylonians who worshipped the new moon as the goddess Isis, and had her wearing horns, which resembled the new moon." (*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, volume 4, p. 639, emphasis added.)
- ⌘ The new moon festival maintained its importance in the Jewish cults up to NT times. The time was not set by astronomical calculations but **by observation....** [Jewish law] demanded that...as many witnesses as possible should report **the appearance of the sickle** to the appropriate authorities." (*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, volume 4, p. 640, emphasis added.)
- ⌘ When the Temple stood, this was a festival proclaimed by the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem after witnesses testified to **observing the new moon**. (*Dictionary of*

Judaism in the Biblical Period, p. 454, by Jacob Neusner, Hendrickson, 2002, emphasis added.)

- ⌘ [T]he ancient Jewish calendar depended not on mathematical calculations and arrangements, but was set from month to month according to **the physical appearance of the new moon**. Witnesses who had **seen the first sign of the crescent** on the horizon after sunset were expected to report the fact to the authorities, who thereupon published throughout the country the fact that the new month had begun. (*The Pharisees*, by Louis Finkelstein, p. 601, Jewish Publication Society, 1938, Philadelphia, emphasis added.)
- ⌘ **Until Hillel II instituted a permanent calendar based on calculations (ca. 360), the fixing of the new moon was determined by observation and the evidence of witnesses.** During the earlier period, the practice of adding a second day to festivals ... was introduced for communities lying at a distance from Palestine, because it was doubtful on precisely which of the two days the new moon occurred.” (*Encyclopedia of the Jewish Religion*, p. 78; Massada-P.E.C. Press Ltd, 1965, emphasis added.)
- ⌘ **The Hillel II calendar was based on fixed calculations, not on the visible new moon sighting** as the Jews had previously done when determining the beginning of months. (*Dictionary of Judaism in the Biblical Period*, by Jacob Neusner, p. 454, emphasis added.)
- ⌘ In old Israel the new moon—the day after **the crescent was first sighted in the sky**—was celebrated by sacrifices and feasting...” (*Judaism*, by George Foot Moore, professor of the history of religion, Harvard, volume 2, p. 22, emphasis added).
- ⌘ **[T]he ancient Jewish calendar depended not on mathematical calculations and arrangements, but was set from month to month according the physical appearance of the new moon. Witnesses who had seen the first sign of the crescent on the horizon after sunset were expected to report the fact to the authorities,** who thereupon published throughout the country the fact that a new month had begun. The year consisted of 12 months whose limits were determined **by these observations**. But, since the lunar year consists of only 354 days, eleven less than the solar year, it was necessary from time to time to “intercalate” a thirteenth month before the Passover, to prevent its being moved back into the winter. This intercalary month was a “second Adar” and was added whenever a consideration of the sun’s position in the heavens, the state of the crops, or the new-born lambs, made it appear necessary.” (*The Pharisees*, pp. 601–602, by Louis Finkelstein, professor of theology at Jewish Theological Seminary of America; Jewish Publication Society of America, 1938, emphasis added.)

- ⌘ “**The phases of the moon could easily be recognized by everybody. The new moon indicated the beginning of the month.... Though the ‘new moon’ could be observed by every individual, to prevent any mistake or doubt the duty of fixing the new month was assigned to a rabbinical council in Jerusalem.** Their decision was subject to the testimony of two reliable witnesses. As soon as their reports have been received and checked by astronomical calculation, an official message was sent out by chains of fire signals” (*The Judaic Heritage*, by Rabbi Dr. R. Brasch, pp. 22, 24, emphasis added).
- ⌘ “Rosh Chodesh [is the] Hebrew term meaning ‘the beginning of a month’ applied to the religious half-holiday observed in connection with **the appearance of the New Moon**; that is, the beginning of each new month of the Hebrew calendar.” (*The New Jewish Encyclopedia*, p. 409, Behrman House Publishers, 1976, emphasis added).
- ⌘ [The Jews] at the time of Jesus Christ [did not] as yet possess any fixed calendar, but **on the basis of purely empirical observation**, on each occasion they **began a new month with the appearing of the new moon...** (*History of Jewish People in the Time of Christ*, first division, vol. 2, p. 366, by Emil Schurer; Hendrickson; 2009, emphasis added).
- ⌘ “The Sanhedrin was assembled in the courtyard (“bet ya’azek”) of Jerusalem on the 30th of each month from morning to evening, waiting for the reports of those appointed **to observe the new moon**; and after the examination of these reports the president of the Sanhedrin, in the presence of at least three members, called out: “The New Moon is consecrated”; whereupon the whole assembly of people twice repeated the words: “It is consecrated” (R. H. ii. 5-7; Sanh. 102). (**The Jewish Encyclopedia** (1901–1906 ed., s.vv. “New Moon,” [http:// www.jewishencyclopedia.com/](http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/); emphasis added.)
- ⌘ The Sanhedrin, which was the council of elders in Israel, would confirm the sighting of the new moon based upon reliable witnesses and shofars were blown in accordance with the scripture to announce the beginning of the month. Today, the rabbinical calendar is based on calculations set up by Rabbi Hillel the second in the mid fourth century. Around this time, the Sanhedrin (the high court of ancient Israel) ceased to exist. Hillel felt that the New Moon could not be declared visually without a Sanhedrin to affirm its sighting, so he decided it must be calculated. Rabbis now know that Hillel’s calculations were/are off, sometimes as much as two days, which means the festivals are not celebrated on the correct day. But they have decided to wait until a Sanhedrin is established again to change it.⁹
- ⌘ **The Jewish Encyclopedia** (1901–1906 ed., s.vv. “*History of the Calendar*,” <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/>, emphasis added):

⁹ Wikibooks, Hebrew Roots/New Moon, https://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Hebrew_Roots/New_Moon.

- “In the times of the Second Temple it appears from the Mishnah (R. H. i. 7) that the priests had a court to which witnesses came and reported. This function was afterward taken over by the civil court (see B. Zuckermann, “Materialien zur Entwicklung der Altjüdischen Zeitrechnung im Talmud, “Breslau, 1882).

The fixing of the lengths of the months and the intercalation of months was the prerogative of the Sanhedrin, at whose head there was a patriarch. The entire Sanhedrin was not called upon to act in this matter, the decision being left to a special court of three. The Sanhedrin met on the 29th of each month to await the report of the witnesses.

- On the evening before the announcement of the intercalation the patriarch assembled certain scholars who assisted in the decision. It was then announced to the various Jewish communities by letters. To this epistle was added the reason for the intercalation. A copy of such a letter of Rabban Gamaliel is preserved in the Talmud (Sanh. xi. 2).

The country people and the inhabitants of Babylonia were informed of the beginning of the month by fire-signals, which were readily carried from station to station in the mountain country. These signals could not be carried to the exiles in Egypt, Asia Minor, and Greece, who, being accordingly left in doubt, celebrated two days as the new moon.

Owing to the weather it was frequently impossible to observe the new moon. In order to remove any uncertainty with regard to the length of the year on this account, it was ordained that the year should not have less than 4 nor more than 8 full months. After the fixing of the calendar it was settled that the year should not have less than 5 nor more than 7 full months.”

R. Gamaliel II. (80-116 C.E.) used to receive the reports of the witnesses in person, and showed them representations of the moon to test their accuracy. On one occasion he fixed the first of Tishri after the testimony of two suspected witnesses. The accuracy of the decision was disputed by Rabbi Joshua, who was thereupon commanded by the patriarch to appear before him prepared for travel on the day which was, according to his (Joshua's) calculation, the Day of Atonement, an order with which he most reluctantly complied.”

- One of the important figures in the history of the calendar was Samuel (born about 165, died about 250), surnamed “Yarinai” because of his familiarity with the moon. He was an astronomer, and it was said that he knew the courses of the heavens as well as the streets of his city (Ber. 58b). He was director of a school in Nehardea (Babylonia), and while there arranged a calendar of the feasts in order that his fellow-countrymen might be independent of Judea. He also calculated the calendar for sixty years. His calculations greatly influenced

the subsequent calendar of Hillel. According to Bartolocci his tables are preserved in the Vatican. A contemporary of his, R. Adda (born 183), also left a work on the calendar.

Mar Samuel reckoned the solar year at 365 days and 6 hours, and Rab Adda at 365 days, 5 hours, 55 minutes, and 25 25/57 seconds.

- Under the patriarchate of Rabbi Judah III (300-330) **the testimony of the witnesses with regard to the appearance of the new moon** was received as a mere formality, the settlement of the day depending entirely on calculation. This innovation seems to have been viewed with disfavor by some members of the Sanhedrin, particularly Rabbi Jose, who wrote to both the Babylonian and the Alexandrian communities, advising them to follow the customs of their fathers and continue to celebrate two days, an advice which was followed, and is still followed, by the majority of Jews living outside of Palestine.”

Nineteenth Century Sources

- ⌘ **The Jews calculated the month according to the phases of the moon... beginning with the appearance of the new moon....**[T]he Sanhedrin sat in the Hall of Polished Stones to receive testimony of credible witnesses that they had **seen the new moon.**” (Edersheim, *The Temple—Its Ministry and Services*, p. 156; 1994, Hendrickson, emphasis added).
- ⌘ **The new moon was reckoned by actual personal observation, not by astronomical calculation....**So important was it deemed to have faithful witnesses, that they were even allowed, in order to reach Jerusalem in time, to travel on the Sabbath, and, if necessary, to make use of horse or mule (*Mish. Rosh ha Shana*, i. 9; iii 2). While strict rules determined who were not to be admitted as witnesses (*Mish. Rosh ha Shana*, i. 8), every encouragement was given to trustworthy persons and the Sanhedrin provided for them a banquet in a large building specially destined for that purpose and known as the *Beth Yaazek* (*Mish. Rosh ha Shana*, ii. 5). (Edersheim, *The Temple—Its Ministry and Services*, p. 230; 1994, Hendrickson, emphasis added)

Second Century Sources

In the *Mishnah*, the book containing the late second century record of Jewish legal rulings and other religious records, we find recorded that the Jews’ religious leaders established rigorous protocols and rituals for determining when the new moon had been sighted. The following quotes are from the *Mishanah*.

“A father and son who **saw** the new moon...” (*Rosh Hash* 1:1a, emphasis added.)

“Tobiah, the physician, **saw** the new moon in Jerusalem...” (*Rosh Hash* 1:7e, emphasis added.)

“He who **saw** the new moon...” (*Rosh Hash* 1:9a, emphasis added.)

The *Mishnah* then goes on to discuss how to examine those who claimed to have been eye witnesses of the new moon to determine if their testimony was accurate or not (*Rosh Hash* 2:6ff). One of the questions the religious leaders in Jerusalem would ask of the Jewish witnesses was, “*How did you see the moon?*” (*Rosh. Hash* 2:6c). The Jewish leader, Gamaliel [of Acts 5:34] actually showed pictures of the shapes of the moon to the witnesses to help ascertain the accuracy of the witnesses’ testimony (*Rosh Hash* 2:8).

From the most ancient Jewish records in existence, including the *Mishnah*, there is no hint that the Jews before, during or after the time of Yeshua (until at least the middle of the fourth century) determined the new moon in any other way than by sighting the visible sliver of the new moon! Based on these facts, we can be absolutely certain that Yeshua and his early followers (the authors of the Apostolic Scriptures or New Testament) determined the new moon’s advent, the beginning of the biblical month and, hence, the biblical calendar and the biblical feasts based on the visible sighting of the new moon’s crescent! There is no evidence to the contrary that they determined the new moon in any other way.

Another ancient Jewish record that testifies to the fact that the ancient Jews looked to the visible new moon to determine the appointed times (biblical feasts) is the Old Testament pseudepigraphal *Book of Jubilees* (ca. 2nd century B.C.E.) that mentions “**those who will examine the moon diligently...**” (6:36, emphasis added).

As a witness, Philo corroborates the second historical witness, the Jewish Mishnah.

According to the Encyclopaedia Britannica, the Mishna, “*also spelled **Mishnah*** (Hebrew: “***Repeated Study***”), plural ***Mishnayot***,” is:

“the oldest authoritative postbiblical collection and codification of Jewish oral laws, systematically compiled by numerous scholars (called tannaim) over a period of about two centuries. The codification was given final form early in the 3rd century AD by Judah ha-Nasi. The **Mishna** supplements the written, or scriptural, laws found in the Pentateuch. It presents various interpretations of selective legal traditions that had been preserved orally since at least the time of Ezra (c. 450 BC).”

“Intensive study of the **Mishna** by subsequent scholars (called amoraim) in Palestine and Babylonia resulted in two collections of interpretations

and annotations of it called the Gemara, or Talmud. In the broader sense of the latter terms, the **Mishna** and Gemara together make up the Talmud.”¹⁰

Within the tractates of the Mishna, in *Massekhtaot Rosh HaShana* 21b-25b, there are extensive discussions of the Jewish process for the sanctification of the new crescent moon. While the rabbis argued among themselves about many of the particulars of the process, the Mishnah records ***no disagreement*** as to what constitutes the new moon.

Here are just a few excerpts from the Mishnah, pertaining to the declaration of the new moon. Please note that the upper-case letters are carried over from the Soncino Talmud:

“WHEN THE TEMPLE WAS STANDING THEY USED TO PROFANE SABBATH FOR ALL THE MONTHS, IN ORDER THAT THE SACRIFICE [OF NEW MOON] MIGHT BE OFFERED ON THE RIGHT DAY.... WHETHER [THE NEW MOON] HAS BEEN SEEN CLEARLY OR HAS NOT BEEN SEEN CLEARLY, SABBATH MAY BE PROFANED ON ACCOUNT OF IT.” (*Mas. Rosh HaShana* 21b)

“IF ONE WHO HAS SEEN THE MOON IS NOT ABLE TO GO ON FOOT, HE MAY BE BROUGHT ON AN ASS OR EVEN IN A LITTER [ON SABBATH]. IF THEY [THE WITNESSES] ARE LIKELY TO BE WAYLAID, THEY MAY TAKE CUDGELS [TO DEFEND THEMSELVES].... ORIGINALLY TESTIMONY WITH REGARD TO [THE APPEARANCE OF] THE NEW MOON WAS RECEIVED FROM ANYONE. WHEN, HOWEVER, THE BOETHUSIANS ADOPTED EVIL COURSES, IT WAS ORDAINED THAT TESTIMONY SHOULD BE RECEIVED ONLY FROM PERSONS KNOWN [TO THE BETH DIN].” (*Mas. Rosh HaShana* 22a)

“ORIGINALLY THEY USED TO LIGHT BEACONS. WHEN THE CUTHEANS [SAMARITANS] ADOPTED EVIL COURSES, THEY MADE A RULE THAT MESSENGERS SHOULD GO FORTH. HOW DID THEY LIGHT THE BEACONS? THEY USED TO BRING LONG POLES OF CEDAR AND REEDS AND OLIVE WOOD AND FLAX FLUFF WHICH THEY TIED TO THE POLES WITH A STRING, AND SOMEONE USED TO GO UP TO THE TOP OF A MOUNTAIN AND SET FIRE TO THEM AND WAVE THEM TO AND FRO AND UP AND DOWN UNTIL HE SAW THE NEXT ONE DOING THE SAME THING ON THE TOP OF THE SECOND MOUNTAIN; AND SO ON THE TOP OF THE THIRD MOUNTAIN. WHENCE DID THEY CARRY THE [CHAIN OF] BEACONS? FROM THE MOUNT OF OLIVES [IN JERUSALEM] TO SARTABA, AND

¹⁰ “Mishna.” Britannica 2002 Deluxe Edition; Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc.; 1994-2002.

FROM SARTABA TO GROFINA, AND FROM GROFINA TO HAURAN, AND FROM HAURAN TO BETH BALTIM. THE ONE ON BETH BALTIM DID NOT BUDGE FROM THERE BUT WENT ON WAVING TO AND FRO AND UP AND DOWN UNTIL HE SAW THE WHOLE OF THE DIASPORA BEFORE HIM LIKE ONE BONFIRE.” (*Mas. Rosh HaShana* 22b)

“HOW DO THEY TEST THE WITNESSES? THE PAIR WHO ARRIVE FIRST ARE TESTED FIRST. THE SENIOR OF THEM IS BROUGHT IN AND THEY SAY TO HIM, TELL US HOW YOU SAW THE MOON — IN FRONT OF THE SUN OR BEHIND THE SUN? TO THE NORTH OF IT OR THE SOUTH? HOW BIG WAS IT, AND IN WHICH DIRECTION WAS IT INCLINED? AND HOW BROAD WAS IT? IF HE SAYS [HE SAW IT] IN FRONT OF THE SUN, HIS EVIDENCE IS REJECTED. AFTER THAT THEY WOULD BRING IN THE SECOND AND TEST HIM. IF THEIR ACCOUNTS TALLIED, THEIR EVIDENCE WAS ACCEPTED, AND THE OTHER PAIRS WERE ONLY QUESTIONED BRIEFLY, NOT BECAUSE THEY WERE REQUIRED AT ALL, BUT SO THAT THEY SHOULD NOT BE DISAPPOINTED, [AND] SO THAT THEY SHOULD NOT BE DISSUADED FROM COMING.” (*Mas. Rosh HaShana* 23b)

“R. GAMALIEL USED TO HAVE A DIAGRAM OF PHASES OF THE MOON ON A TABLET [HUNG] ON THE WALL OF HIS UPPER CHAMBER, AND HE USED TO SHOW THEM TO THE UNLEARNED AND SAY, DID IT LOOK LIKE THIS OR THIS?” (*Mas. Rosh HaShana* 24a)¹¹

Thus, we have a second historical witness that the “new moon” is the young crescent moon.

The apostle Paul said, “In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established.” (2 Corinthians 13:1) Hence, we have the two or more witnesses which YHWH stipulates, and there are **no** extant ancient historical witnesses which contradict their testimony regarding the normative Jewish method of determining the new moon.

Not until the tenth century of the Common Era, in the face of heated Karaite opposition to the common calculated Jewish calendar, do we find **any hint** of argument against the testimony of these ancient historical witnesses. Then, in the midst of that prolonged controversy, the prominent Jewish rabbi Sa’ada Gaon “asserted that even in Biblical times the calendar rested on the system of calculation.”¹² However, even among his peers, Sa’ada’s contention ultimately became recognized as specious. The Encyclopaedia Britannica reports:

¹¹ All citations of the *Mishnah* are from *The Soncino Talmud*; Judaica Press, Inc.; Brooklyn, NY; 1990.

¹² *Saadya Studies*; edited by Rosenthal, Erwin J.; Manchester University Press; Manchester, England; 1943; p. 228.

“The Qaraites opposed the Rabbanites on no point more vehemently than on the calendar; they regarded calculations as impious and useless and sought to reintroduce observation. In this matter they were victorious over the great Rabbanite champion Sa’ada (892-942), whose theory that calculation preceded observation, they could easily disprove.”¹³

It is important at this point that we also make ourselves aware of the early sectarian Jewish calendars, such as the Qumran Calendar and the Jubilees Calendar (2nd century B.C.E.). These calendars were very similar to one another, and yet, they differed markedly from the majority of the Jewish calendar. There is debate as to whether any of these calendars were ever actually implemented by the isolated sectarian groups, but these calendars need not particularly concern us for two reasons:

First, although some scholars believe that the (non-Jewish) Samaritan calendar was constructed along the lines of the sectarian calendars, ***there is no historical evidence to suggest that the sectarian calendars were ever in use in the temple, or by any broad group of Jews.***

This is a significant fact, because the New Testament Gospel accounts record that ***Yeshua’s disciples observed certain of the annual Holy Days at the same time as the broader Jewish community.***

Second, and most importantly, the sectarian calendars, like the secular Gregorian calendar of today, were *solar* based, and ***not lunar*** based calendars. The Jewish sectarian calendars would have been a little less accurate than the solar calendar in common use today, as the sectarian year consisted of exactly 52 weeks – a total of 364 days. Not being lunar calendars, ***the sectarian calendars do not conform to the rules which YHWH has given for the Biblical calendar.***

To this point, we have diligently searched out the historical record of the Biblical new moon and we have the necessary witnesses before us; then, according to the Word of Almighty YHWH, what does He require of those who are confronted with the testimony of two or more witnesses? His answer is poignantly illustrated in the writings of the prophet Isaiah:

“...Let them give their witnesses, to be declared right; or let them hear and say, “It is truth.” ”

(Isaiah 43:9, The Scriptures Translation)

God expects us to act upon the testimony of the witnesses!

¹³ “CALENDAR, JEWISH.” *Encyclopaedia Britannica*; Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc.; Chicago; 1957.

First Century Sources

We have the witness of Philo who was a first century prominent Jewish leader and historian. He was a contemporary of Josephus. He lived in Alexandria Egypt from about 20 B.C.E. to about 50 of the C.E.

In Philo's "*The Works of Philo*," he says:

"[A]t the time of the new moon, the sun begins to illuminate the moon with a light which **is visible to the outward senses**, and then she displays her own beauty to the beholders."

(*The Works of Philo*, Special Laws II, 141, p. 581, Hendrickson, 1997, emphasis added)

We have yet one more witness from Philo. Philo apportions the Biblical observances as follows:

"Now there are ten festivals in number, as the law sets them down.

The first is that which any one will perhaps be astonished to hear called a festival. This festival is every day.

The second festival is the seventh day, which the Hebrews in their native language call the Sabbath.

The third is **that which comes after the conjunction, which happens on the day of the new moon in each month.**

The fourth is that of the Passover which is called the Passover.

The fifth is the first fruits of the corn—the sacred sheaf.

The sixth is the feast of unleavened bread, after which that festival is celebrated, which is really

The seventh day of seventh days.

The eighth is the festival of the sacred moon, or the feast of trumpets.

The ninth is the fast.

The tenth is the feast of tabernacles, which is the last of all the annual festivals, ending so as to make the perfect number of ten. We must now begin with the first festival."¹⁴

(*Treatise on the Special Laws, Book II, XI. (41)*, emphasis added.)

In his detailed discussion of the new moon, Philo clarifies further:

"Following the order which we have adopted, we proceed to speak of the third festival, that of the new moon. First of all, because **it is the beginning of the month**, and the beginning, whether of number or of

¹⁴ Philo Judaeus, *A Treatise on the The Special Laws, Book II; The Works of Philo Complete and Unabridged*, Translated by C. D. Yonge, Hendrickson Publishers; 1995; XI. (41).

time, is honourable. Secondly, because at this time there is nothing in the whole of heaven destitute of light. Thirdly, because at that period the more powerful and important body gives a portion of necessary assistance to the less important and weaker body; for, **at the time of the new moon, the sun begins to illuminate the moon with a light which is visible to the outward senses**, and then she displays her own beauty to the beholders. And this is, as it seems, an evident lesson of kindness and humanity to men, to teach them that they should never grudge to impart their own good things to others, but, imitating the heavenly bodies, should drive envy away and banish it from the soul.”¹⁵

(*Treatise on the Special Laws, Book II, XI. (41)*, emphasis added.)

Philo’s record of the Jewish method of defining the new moon is distinct and clear: The new moon was determined by the observable young crescent moon.

Let us take a look at the book of Enoch to see what it offers.

“**12** Uriel likewise shewed me [Enoch] another regulation, when light is poured into the moon, how it is poured into it from the sun. **13** All the time that the moon is in progress with its light, it is poured into it [the moon] in the presence of the sun, until its light is in fourteen days completed in heaven. **14** And when it is wholly extinguished [the sun], its light is consumed in heaven [it is totally dark]; and **on the first day it is called the new moon, for on that day light is received into it.**”

(The Book of Enoch the Prophet, 77:12-14, comments and emphasis added)¹⁶

We see in verse 14 in the above reference where even the prophet Enoch agrees that the New Moon is the first illuminated sliver of the New Moon. The “**key**” is in the connecting words “**on that day**” because they are talking about the New Moon. When the moon’s light has been fully extinguished, it has completed its cycle. Thus, the moon is ready to start its next cycle starting off with the first illuminated sliver of the new cycle.

“At the time that **it [the moon] appears**, and becomes to you the **beginning of the month.**”

(The Book of Enoch the Prophet, 72:5, comment and emphasis added)¹⁶

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, XXVI.(140-141). Bold emphases added.

¹⁶ The Book of Enoch the Prophet-Literally translated from the Ethiopic by Richard Laurence, LL.D., Archbishop of Cashel, Late Professor of Hebrew in the University of Oxford 1821.

Again, in the above reference, we see the “**key**” is in the connecting words “**it appears**.” If this was talking about the conjunction, the words “**it appears**” would not have been used.

“**9** In certain fixed months, the moon completes its cycle every twenty nine days, in certain others, every twenty eight. **10** Then Uriel showed me another order concerning when light is beamed into the moon, from which direction of the bright sun it is beamed. **11** During all the seasons when the moon is made to run its cycle, the light is being beamed into it the moon facing the sun until the illumination of the moon is completed in the course of fourteen days; and when it is lit completely [full illuminated moon], it radiates light in the sky. **12 On the first day, it is called the new moon because on that day the illumination begins to set upon it.** **13** These illuminations are completed with exactitude on the day when the sun descends into the west, and the moon simultaneously rises in the east in the evening, shining during the night until the sun rises opposite it, and it is over against the sun. **14** From the same side where light entered the moon, from there also it gradually wanes until all the illumination disappears [all light is extinguished in the moon finishing it full cycle] and the days of the moon expire, its disk empty without light.”

(78 HANOCH - ENOCH 78, 78:9-14, comments and emphasis added)¹⁷

Again, in the above reference, we see the “**key**” is in the connecting words “**it appears**.” If this was talking about the conjunction, the words “**it appears**” would not have been used.

A Little Simple Astronomy

As a preface, it will be helpful to understand a little bit about the relationship of the sun, moon, and earth, and a few of the terms that are used.

Like the sun, the moon rises on the eastern horizon, and sets in the west.

In each lunar month, the moon first becomes visible from the earth a day or two¹⁸ after the lunar conjunction described below. The moon appears as a crescent-shaped sliver of light, shortly after sunset, just above the western horizon.¹⁹ This is what is called by astronomers, the “*young crescent moon*.”

¹⁷ 78 HANOCH - ENOCH 78, Names of the sun and the moon; waxing and waning of the moon, http://www.YHWHswordarchives.org/book-of-enoach/hanoch_enoach_078.htm.

¹⁸ This is generally true within the temperate regions. The Encyclopaedia Judaica asserts that the appearance of the young crescent moon *can* follow the conjunction by nearly as much as 72 hours. “CALENDAR.” Encyclopaedia Judaica; Keter Publishing House Ltd; Jerusalem, Israel; 1971.

¹⁹ Kaplan, G. H. “Crescent Moon Visibility and the Islamic Calendar.” Frequently Asked Questions, U.S. Naval Observatory; 2001.

The **young crescent moon** is visible *only at twilight*²⁰ which happens near the beginning of a Biblical day.

As the days pass, the moon will appear more and more separated toward the east from the sun, with the lighted portion of the moon **waxing** (growing larger) each night, until the time of the full moon.

At the **full moon**, the entire visible face of the moon is fully bathed in light.

The full moon always rises in the east at approximately the same time as the sun is setting in the west. Lunar eclipses can occur only at the time of the full moon.

According to the U.S. Naval Observatory,

“the Moon’s disk may appear to be full for several nights in a row if it is clear. This is because the percentage of the Moon’s disk that appears illuminated changes very slowly around the time of Full Moon...The Moon may appear 100% illuminated only on the night closest to the time of exact Full Moon, but on the night before and night after, will appear 97-99% illuminated; most people would not notice the difference. Even two days from Full Moon, the Moon’s disk is 93-97% illuminated.”²¹

After the full moon, as the days pass, the moon will appear to continue shifting toward the east, its lighted area diminishing in size each night, until the **waning** (shrinking) **crescent** is finally visible only as a sliver of light near the eastern horizon just before sunrise, a day, or two before the approaching lunar conjunction.

The lunar **conjunction** is the moment in time each month, when the moon moves most directly between the Earth and Sun and the side of the moon turned toward the Earth is dark.²² The moon is **not visible** from the earth (unless during a solar eclipse) for a period of about 1.5 to 3.5 days surrounding the time of the lunar conjunction. Solar eclipses can occur only at the time of the lunar conjunction.

A **lunation**, or synodic month, is the period of time from one lunar conjunction to the next. The mean average lunation is just under 29.53059 days²³. However, the moon’s orbit is not perfectly regular; therefore, lunar months vary in length. Thus, a given lunation can be as short as 29 days and 6 hours and 35 minutes, or as long as 29 days, 19 hours and 55 minutes.²⁴

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Cidadao, Antonio. “Phases of the Moon and Percent of the Moon Illuminated.” Frequently Asked Questions, U.S. Naval Observatory; 2001.

²² “conjunction.” Britannica 2002 Deluxe Edition; Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc.; 1994-2002.

²³ Hicks, Steacy D. “Synodical month,” *Tide and Current Glossary*. National Ocean Service; National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration; 1989.

²⁴ Kim, Long; *The Moon Book: Fascinating facts about the Magnificent, Mysterious Moon*; Johnson Books; Boulder, CO; 1998. (Data from Meeus’ calculations for years 1900-2100 C.E.)

Similarly, the period of time from the appearance of one young crescent moon to the next will be either 29 days or 30 days, but never more or less.²⁵

Another notable effect, caused by the irregularities of the moon's orbit, is that ***the full moon does not always fall at the exact midpoint between lunar conjunctions***. In contrast to popular belief, the full moon may follow the lunar conjunction by as little as 13 days, 21 hours and 53 minutes, or by as much as 15 days, 14 hours and 30 minutes.²⁶

Psalm 81

We will now take a look at one of the narrower arguments, a verse which is offered by some in an attempt to support the lunar conjunction method by using Psalm 81:3 for their argument. While the King James Bible translates this verse differently, most versions translate the verse much like the NASB (New American Standard Bible), which is a truer rendering of the Hebrew:

“Blow the trumpet at the new moon, At the full moon, on our feast day.”

(Psalm 81:3, New American Standard Bible [NASB], emphasis added)

The argument contends that in order for the astronomical full moon to fall upon the feast day (Hebrew for feast day here is *hag*), that the new moon must be determined by the lunar conjunction method.

There are a couple of fundamental flaws in this argument.

First, as we learned in our simple astronomy review (A Little Simple Astronomy) above, often the astronomical full moon does not fall at the exact midpoint between two lunar conjunctions. The full moon may follow the lunar conjunction by as little as 13 days, 21 hours and 53 minutes, or by as much as 15 days, 14 hours and 30 minutes. Consequently, no method of determining the new moon could precisely satisfy such a requirement.

Second, it is an unacceptable presumption to interpret the meaning of the obscure Hebrew כֶּסֶה *kese* or כֶּסֶה *keseh* (Strong's #H3677, properly fulness or the full moon, that is, its festival: - (time) appointed, “full moon”) as being limited to the precise moment of the astronomical full moon, rather than to the several nights during which the surface of the moon appears to be more than 90% illuminated.

²⁵ Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah: The Laws of the Sanctification of the New Moon*, translated by Rabbi Eliyahu Touger; Moznaim Publishing Corporation, New York. pp. 57-58.

²⁶ The actual variation can be assumed to be somewhat greater than what is stated, as these figures are based upon data only for years 1990-2005. Data cited in “Phases of the Moon,” Data Services, U.S. Naval Observatory; 2001.

Psalm 89

The Moon is called a faithful witness:

“It shall be established for ever as the moon, and *as a faithful **witness*** in heaven. Selah.”

(Psalm 89:37, KJV, emphasis added)

What is the definition of the term “*witness*?”

NOUN

1. **a person who sees an event**, typically a crime or accident, take place. “police are appealing for witnesses to the accident” synonyms: observer, onlooker, eyewitness, spectator, viewer, watcher; bystander, passerby “witnesses claimed that he started the fight”
2. **evidence**; proof. “the memorial service was witness to the wide circle of his interest”

VERB

1. **see** (an event, typically a crime or accident) take place. “a bartender who witnessed the murder” synonyms: **see, observe, watch, view, notice, spot; be present at**, attend; literary behold; informal get a look at “who witnessed the incident?”
2. give or serve as evidence of; testify to. “his writings witness to an inner toughness”

The Story of David and Jonathan

Another Biblical passage which has often been employed, in an attempt to support various methodologies for determining the new moon, is the account of David and Jonathan, which begins in 1 Samuel Chapter 20:

“And David said to Jonathan, Behold, the new moon is tomorrow. And sitting I should certainly sit with the king to eat. And you shall send me away, and I shall be hidden in the field until the third evening.”

(1 Samuel 20:5, Literal Translation of the Holy Bible [LITV])

There has and continues to be arguments made over the fact that David obviously **knew** that the next day “the new moon **is** tomorrow.” Without careful analysis of the facts, many have **presumed** that David’s advance knowledge requires the use of a calculated method of determining the new moon, other than by observation of the crescent.

What are the flaws with this argument?

First, the Bible records for us that the “*new moon*” in this instance was ***a two-day celebration***.

“And it happened on the day after the new moon, David’s place was empty. And Saul said to his son Jonathan, Why has the son of Jesse not come to the meal, either yesterday or today?”

(1 Samuel 20:27, Literal Translation of the Holy Bible [LITV])

Thus, when David knew that the next day was the “*new moon*,” did David refer to the king’s celebration or to the astronomical event? We simply do not know. Moreover, we are not told *why* the celebration lasted for two days. The two-day celebration could have been scheduled to encompass both *possible* dates for an observed crescent moon. We simply do not know for sure.

From the astronomy which we have learned above, however, another strong possibility arises. There are ***no*** 28-day or 31-day lunar months! Lunar months are ***always*** either ***29 or 30 days*** long.

Therefore, it had to be either the ***29th or the 30th day*** of the month in order for David to state: “the new moon is *tomorrow*.”

IF David’s comment was made on the ***30th day*** (which is just as likely as not), then ***regardless of which method*** of new moon determination was utilized, the following day— “*tomorrow*” —would definitely be the new moon!

Thus, while this narrative does provide an interesting glimpse into the new moon observance under the reign of Saul, it does not provide enough information for us to logically conclude that ***any*** particular method of determining the new moon was the practice.

Enoch

The book of Enoch gives us yet more witness as to “*when*” the New Moon arrives.

“**1** After this law, I beheld another law of an inferior luminary, the name of which is the moon, and the orb of which is as the orb of heaven. **2** Its chariot, which it secretly ascends, the wind blows; and light is given to it by measure. **3** Every month at its exit and entrance, it becomes changed; and its periods are as the periods of the sun. And when in like manner its light is to exit, its light is a seventh portion from the light of the sun. **4** Thus, it rises, and at its commencement towards the east goes forth for thirty days. **5 At that time, it appears** [the first illuminated crescent moon], **and becomes to you the beginning of the month**. Thirty days it is with the sun in the gate from which the sun goes forth.”

(Enoch 72:1-5, emphasis, and comment added.)¹⁶

It is clear from the above reference in the book of Enoch that it is the first illuminated crescent moon that starts the New Month.

“**10** On stated months the moon has twenty-nine days. **11** It also has a period of twenty-eight days. **12 Uriel likewise shewed me another regulation, when light is poured into the moon, how it is poured into it from the sun. 13** All the time that the moon is in progress with its light, it is pouring into it in the presence of the sun, until its light is in fourteen days completed in heaven. **14** And **when it** [the moon] **is wholly extinguished** [conjunction/dark moon], **its light is consumed in heaven; and on the first day, it is called the new moon** [because], **for on that day light is received into it.**”

(Enoch 77:10-14, emphasis, and comments added.)¹⁶

Again, it is clear from the above reference in the book of Enoch that it is the first illuminated crescent moon that starts the New Month.

How Many Dark Moons?

If the conjunction (dark) moon is used to establish the start of a New Month, how then do we know *which* conjunction (dark) moon to use in order to start the New Month? To illustrate this dilemma, please take note of the following Figures A through E where there are two conjunction (dark) moons that take place in five different months during the year 2020.



Figure A

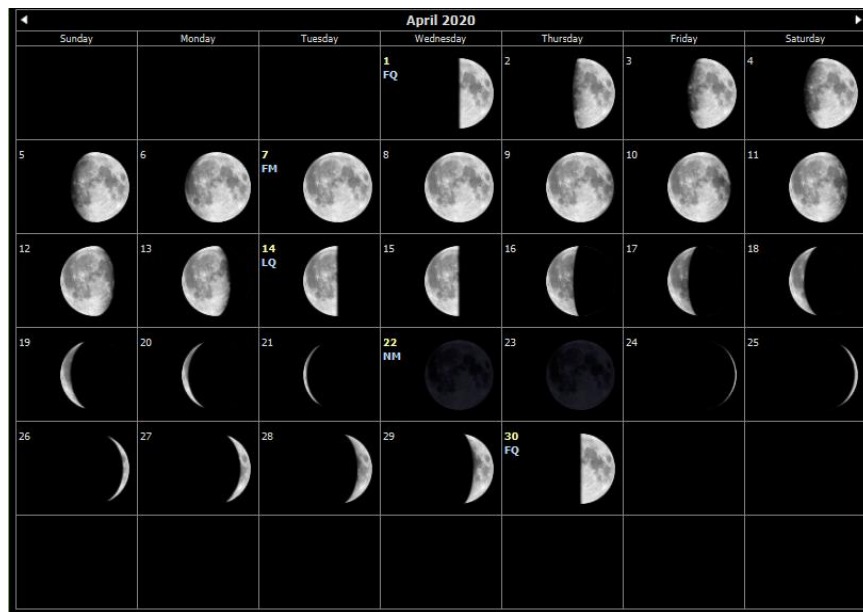


Figure B

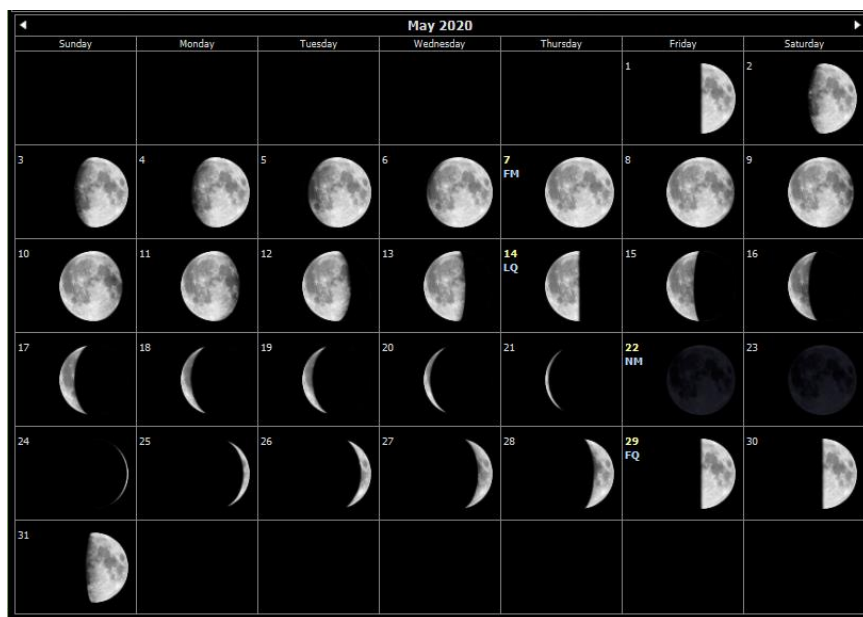


Figure C

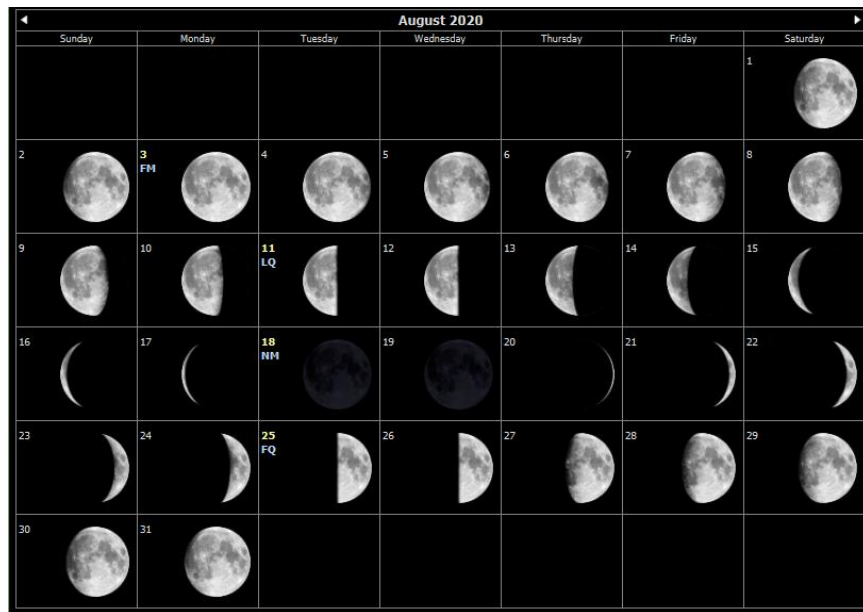


Figure D



Figure E

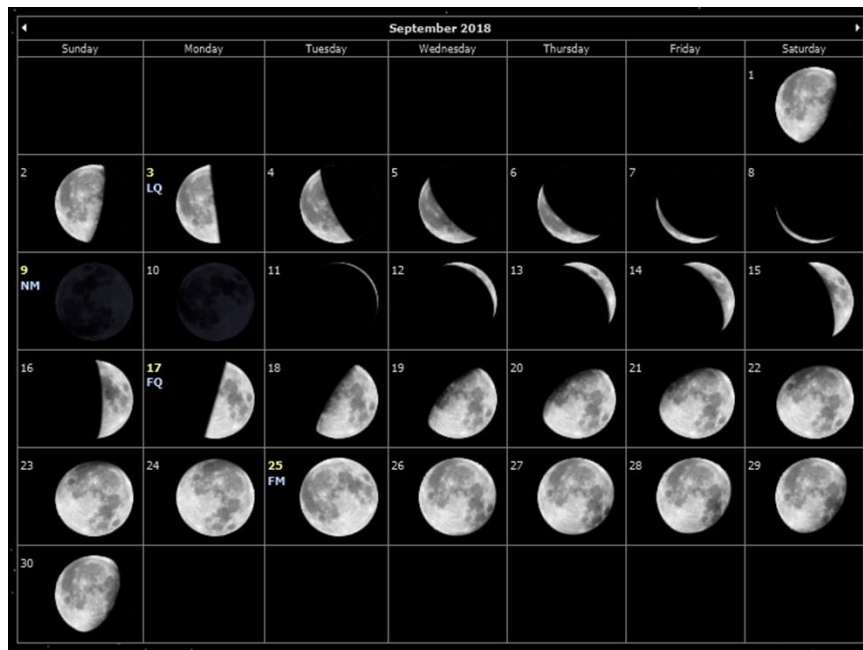


Figure F

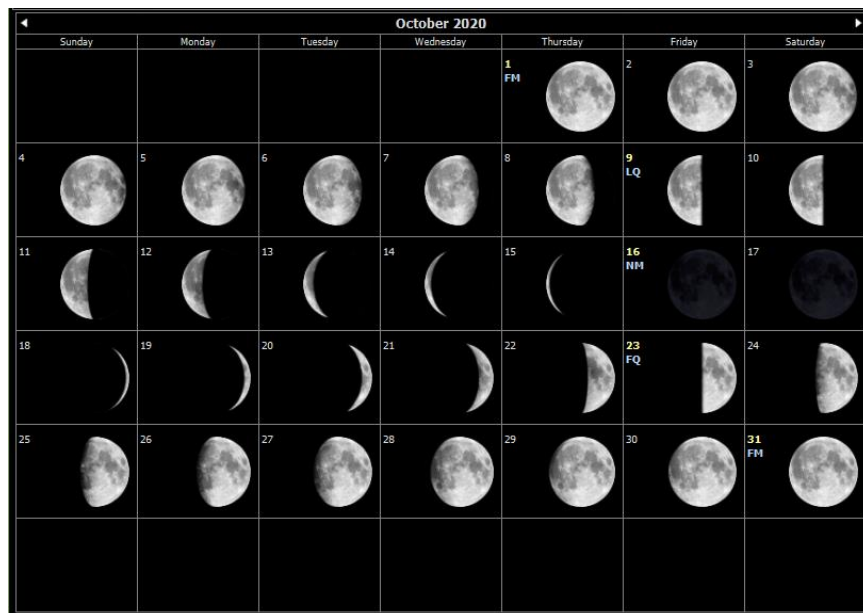


Figure G

We have five screen shot examples of different months for the year 2020 where we see in these five instances that there are two conjunction (dark) moons. The scientists have chosen the first conjunction (dark) moon to designate it as the “New Moon.” If we use the conjunction (dark) moon as our reference to determine the beginning of each New Hebrew month, how then can we “*know*” if there are one or two conjunction (dark)

moons in any given month without relying on modern technology? If it were not for modern technology, we have no way of knowing if there are one or two conjunction (dark) moons in a given month.

This brings up a valid question. Learning that some months have two dark moons, (1) how then do we determine “*which*” months have two conjunction (dark) moons and (2) which conjunction (dark) moon does one use to determine/start the New Month without using modern technology?

The ancient Israelites did not have computers or any of the modern tools available to them to “*know*” when the conjunction (dark) moon would occur much less to know if there are two conjunction (dark) moons in any given month.

If we put ourselves in the shoes of the ancient Israelites and we do not access any modern tools such as the Internet or our computers, cell phones, etc., how then can we determine if any given month will have two conjunction (dark) moons? We can’t because we cannot “*see*” the conjunction (dark) moon.

In the above screen shot for the month of January of 2020, you will see that there are two (24th and 25th) conjunction (dark) moons. The first one has been dubbed the “*New Moon*” by scientist. If the conjunction (dark) moon is used, then people, in this case, would not know **when** the New Month started until the sighting of the first illuminated crescent moon on the 26th. By the sighting of the first illuminated crescent moon, they would be able to back track and say the previous day (25th) started the New Month. However, this is not the case because we see that there were two conjunction (dark) moons. If we go by what the scientist says, we are off by one day, thus being one day late in our determining **when** the month actually began.

The seventh Hebrew month of Tishri typically falls in the month of September. Sometimes it will fall in the month of October. Looking at the above screen shot for the month of September of 2020 (**Figure E**), we see only one conjunction (dark) moon. In the year 2018 (**Figure F**) for the month of September there were two conjunction (dark) moons. The first one occurred on Sunday, September 9th and the one right after it was on Monday, September 10th. For the month of September 2018, we see that the first illuminated crescent moon did not happen until Tuesday, September 11th.

When it comes to the Hebrew month of Tishri, if there are two conjunction (dark) moons, this is an issue because number 1, we cannot see the dark moon and number 2, we would not know if there were two conjunctions (dark) moons.

YHWH has commanded us to keep Tishri 1 Holy because this is His Feast of Trumpets.

“23 And YHWH spoke to Mosheh, saying, **24** “Speak to the children of Yisra’el, saying, ‘In the seventh month (Tishri-September/October), on the first day of the month, you have a rest, a remembrance of blowing of

trumpets, a set-apart gathering. 25 You do no servile work, and you shall bring an offering made by fire to YHWH.’ ” ”

(Leviticus 23:23-25, The Scriptures Translation, emphasis and comment added)

Looking at the two conjunction (dark) moons, we see in **Figure F** above for the month of September 2018, there was a problem for those who subscribe to the conjunction (dark) moon to start their New Hebrew Month. Starting with the first conjunction (dark) moon the scientists have designated as the New Moon on Sunday, September 9th, we can see that there is no crescent moon that will appear on Monday, September 10th. Then the next day, Tuesday, September 11th, we see the first illuminated crescent moon. By using the first conjunction (dark) moon to start the month of Tishri, those observing YHWH’s Feast of Yom Teruah (Trumpets), they have totally missed it by two days since there were two back-to-back conjunction (dark) moons together. In this case, they were two days late. Thus, they have “*missed the mark.*”

For those who subscribe to the conjunction (dark) moon, if they are using the first illuminated crescent moon to establish the previous day was the start of the New Month, again, they have “*missed the mark*” because they would **wrongly assume** that the previous day was the start of the New Month which was on Monday, September 10th.

In both cases where there are two conjunction (dark) moons for September 2018, those who subscribed to the conjunction (dark) moon to start their New Month, they violated YHWH’s command to not work on Tishri 1—to keep it Holy. In both instances of the conjunction (dark) moon, they have “*missed the mark.*” They missed His Mo’ed, Appointed Time.

Needless to say, they have violated YHWH’s command to keep “**that**” day Holy by not working on “*that*” day. Since people cannot **see** either conjunction (dark) moon starting Tishri 1, they would be working on Tishri 1. Thus, they would not **know** that there are two conjunction (dark) moons. If the first conjunction (dark) moon is used to establish Tishri 1, they would not know it because following it is yet another conjunction (dark) moon. Then along comes the first illuminated crescent moon which gives them a “**false**” indicator that the previous day was the beginning of the New Month of Tishri 1. The only instance where the Israelites would not violate YHWH’s command to keep Tishri 1 Holy is if the conjunction (dark) moon were to happen on a Sabbath.

So, for those who observed the conjunction (dark) moon on September 9th in 2018, if they worked on that day, they would have violated YHWH’s command to not work on that Holy Day (Tishri 1). The same holds true for those who possibly use the second conjunction (dark) moon that took place on Monday, September 10th. For sure, people do go to work on Monday’s. Again, they have violated YHWH’s command to not work on this High Holy Day. In both scenarios presented above, both have “*missed the mark.*”

Needless to say, for those who use the conjunction (dark) moon to establish their New Month for September 2018, they “*miss the mark*” based on YHWH’s instructions He has given us in the Torah for keeping His Mo’edim (Appointed Times/Feasts). It all boils down to “*seeing*” in order to be a “*witness*.”

Sighting the New Moon

Various factors such as atmospheric pressure, temperature, humidity along the light path, altitude, latitude and longitude, fog, cloud/dust cover, glare etc. can all affect a first sighting. No one can infallibly predict the moment when the new moon will become visible to the naked eye. The general consensus of authoritative opinion is that a first sighting of the new moon could occur any time between about 15 and 48 hours after a conjunction. The conjunction takes place when the earth is between the sun and the moon in perfect alignment. The first sighting of the moon will be after the moon has moved out of this alignment.

In sighting the New Moon, one faces the western sky at sunset, drawing an imaginary line from the zenith overhead toward the setting sun, seeking the thin sliver of the illuminated crescent of light on either side of this imaginary line. The sun sets in the west slightly right of where the new moon will be seen. As the sky darkens the first star is seen and this star is planet Venus. Gradually the crescent appears as a sliver just above the horizon. The faint New Moon will bulge out to the right, with the horns pointing toward the left. However, in early spring (autumn in southern hemisphere) the “Passover moon” will appear much like saucers with both horns pointing upward much like the example we see on the right of this page. Variations of this New Moon may be seen in the springtime. Biblical months are either 29 or 30 alternating days in length; at times two consecutive 30-day months may occur. Only on the new moon will the moon be invisible until the sun sets. It is as if YHWH is concealing it so we will intentionally have to look for His *sign* in the sky.



The Ordination of the New Year

The annual calendar is set by the alignment of both the monthly lunar cycle and the annual solar cycle. The lunar cycle sets the seasons based on the solar equinoctal cycle. The moon and sun together are governing signs. YHWH’s Sacred Year begins with Abib/Nisan (Exodus 12:1-2; Deuteronomy 16:1).

“**1** And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, **2** “This month [Abib/Nisan—March/April] shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you.” ”

(Exodus 12:1-2, comment added, KJV)

This is determined from the New Moon nearest to the spring equinox in the Northern Hemisphere, which begins the summer season, (Not all scholars within the Hebrew Roots believe this statement is totally correct. Herb Solinski, who has researched this quite in-depth, says this should be the new moon crescent on or after the vernal equinox so noted at this website: www.biblicalcalendar.org. At this website, you will find his sources quoted in 300 plus pages of documentation where he notes that at which time the barley crop will be “*in the green*” ready for harvest at Passover. This month Abib or Nisan was to be the first of months and, hence, its determination would set the start and finish of the year and, hence, the calendar. The autumnal equinox in the Northern Hemisphere begins the winter season. These are the two seasons mentioned in the Bible which is used to determine the beginning of the year to coincide with the festival harvests. (Genesis 8:22; Psalm 74:17) Although it is never expressly commanded in the Torah/Pentateuch, some even believe the day of the New Year is to be kept as a solemn feast day. A record of the festival of the New Moon is found in the Temple Scroll (11Q19-20). In column 14, we see that the sacrifices for the first day of the month, that is the New Moon, are listed, as are the special instructions for the New Year of the first day of the First Month. Thus, the Dead Sea Scrolls quite clearly identify the New Moon of the First Month (Abib/Nisan) as the New Year and as a day of solemn assembly and sacrifice. These ordinances are followed by the requirements for the seven-day purification of the priesthood, which the Temple Scroll treats as annual, though the corresponding chapters of the Bible (Exodus 29:1-35; Leviticus 8-10) do not specify that this specifically takes place on a recurring interval. This is what column 14 says of the New Year of Nisan: “On the first day of the [first] month [the months (of the year) shall start; it shall be the first month] of the year [for you. You shall do no] work. [You shall offer”²⁷

Judaism changed the New Year from Abib/Nisan (March/April) to Tishri (September/October), which is the seventh month, based on a man-made system derived from the rabbinical determinations introduced from Babylon in 344 C.E. and it was sanctioned by Rabbi Hillel II in 358 C.E. The Dead Sea Scrolls, the LXX (Septuagint) and modern scholarship have exposed this change which was made by Judaism. However, even rabbinical scholars such as Rabbi Kohn, the Chief Rabbi of Budapest writing in 1894, stated categorically that the New Year of Rosh haShanah in Tishri is a late third century post-Temple period innovation (Sabbatarians in Transylvania, CCG Publishing, 1998, p. v et. seq). The Temple Scroll records that at least some Jews kept a Feast of Nisan (New Year’s Day).

²⁷ *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, pg. 236,
<http://www.thechristianidentityforum.net/downloads/Complete-Scrolls.pdf>.

Celebrating the New Moon

The word used for New Moon in Hebrew is 'Rosh Chodesh' which literally means "beginning, head, or renewal" and thus, the beginning or head of the month. It is a time of spiritual renewal.

The beginning of the month is determined by the first visible sighting after the conjunction of the moon and for its commencement the shofar is blown in one long blast. Numbers 10:10 states that the trumpets should be blown at all New Moons to sanctify the day and the offerings. The new month is announced and brethren commence to fellowship. After the blessing is said, greetings of peace are given to one another. A traditional greeting of peace is Shalom Alechem (peace be with you)! The response is Alechem Shalom (upon you peace)!

All through the scriptural record, the New Moon was a day when the prophets heard from YHWH, being a day designated for waiting upon YHWH, for discerning His purposes and for prophetic revelation. (Ezekiel 26:1; 29:17; Haggai 1:1)

They were days of assembly and YHWH dealt with Israel at these times, speaking through His servants, the Prophets.

We are also told in the New Testament these days are prophetic and they are "a foreshadow" of future events. (Colossians 2:16-17) The celebration of the new moon has great prophetic significance for Israel as the Bride of YHWH and it was/is an appointed time of His choosing to give prophetic revelation to His people of His purposes for them.

The New Moon and the Sabbath were closely linked as both were holy, set-apart days unto YHWH Himself and the celebration of the new moon is placed in importance in the Scriptures alongside keeping the Sabbath. It is not cited in the Torah until Numbers Chapter 10 because it is a celebration based upon the testimony of YHWH's corporate people being established as His luminary in the world. YHWH called Israel to be a light to the Gentiles, a holy, set-apart nation which reflected His glorious light (Exodus 19:6; Isaiah 42:6; 49:6; 1 Peter 2:4-5, 9). At the beginning of each month they were called to come aside from their normal functions for existence in this world, to reflect upon their ordained purpose of reflecting His presence in the world and revitalizing their spiritual lives in Him.

Joseph was given a dream of the sun, moon, and stars as it related to their initial household of faith (Genesis 37:9). This is carried through into its fulfillment in Revelation Chapter 12 with the woman (YHWH's corporate people) arrayed with the glory of the sun (representing the glory of the Father), with her feet standing upon the moon (the reflected light of the sun), and the deputation of the twelve stars of His government assigned to her. This portrays that the woman (YHWH's Bride) in the End of Days will have come into the glory of the Father in her witness and testimony as the

light-bearer of the Son (sun) in her earthly commission (standing upon the moon - i.e. established in her testimony as being THE light to this world).

As His Bride keeps this feast of her appointment with YHWH and comes into alignment with Him, she will reflect His light in ever increasing degrees of magnitude, until she actually shines with the glory of the Son of righteousness.

“And we all, as with unveiled face we see as in a mirror the esteem of YHWH, are being transformed into the same likeness from esteem to esteem, as from YHWH, the Spirit.”

(2 Corinthians 3:18, The Scriptures Translation)

It is a time to refresh our dedication of ourselves to YHWH and of blessing Him and seeking His direction for the new month ahead. We also take this time to ask His blessings on the planned endeavors for the coming month.

These days are sanctified or set apart as days of sacrifice, for worship, for assembly and for us to make our spiritual offerings to YHWH. (2 Chronicles 2:4; Nehemiah 10:33; Ezekiel 44:24; 45:17)

It is now a spiritual act in a spiritual Temple, which makes it more powerful and just as important, as now we see its real significance in preparing us for the Kingdom to come.

Traditionally, there is singing and dancing in celebration of the occasion, and the partaking of a festive meal together with suggested Scripture reading of Deuteronomy 4:7-9; Psalm 104; and Psalm 81.

They were days of festivity, as Psalm 81 portrays:

“1 To the chief Musician upon Gittith (harp), *A Psalm of Asaph.* Sing aloud unto God our strength: make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob. 2 Take a psalm, and bring hither the timbrel, the pleasant harp with the psaltery. 3 Blow up the trumpet in the new moon, in the time appointed,²⁸ on our solemn feast day. 4 For this *was* a statute for Israel, *and* a law of the God of Jacob.”

(Psalm 81:1-4, KJV, emphasis and comment added)

They were a “joyous occasion” (Numbers 10:10), so much so that YHWH threatened to take away these festive times, in punishment for their disobedience. (Hosea 2:13)

The New Moon of the Feast of Trumpets (Yom Teruah) was also a day of restoration (or reading) of the Law of YHWH. (Nehemiah 8:2)

²⁸ As the Hebrew word *kese* means ‘to cover’ it is twice incorrectly translated as ‘full moon.’ A more literal rendering from the original language would be “Cover our feast day with the sound of the shofar!”

A cleansing process began in the physical temple with the commencement of the New Year and in turn it points towards the spiritual cleansing of the spiritual Temple. We are that spiritual Temple and the process of cleansing begins with us on the First New Moon of each New Year as a preparation for the coming Passover season. It then is repeated throughout the year from New Moon to New Moon as we each come before YHWH and renew our life in Him. (Ezekiel 45:18; Numbers 28:11) This will continue in the 1000-year reign of Yeshua. (Isaiah 66:22-23)

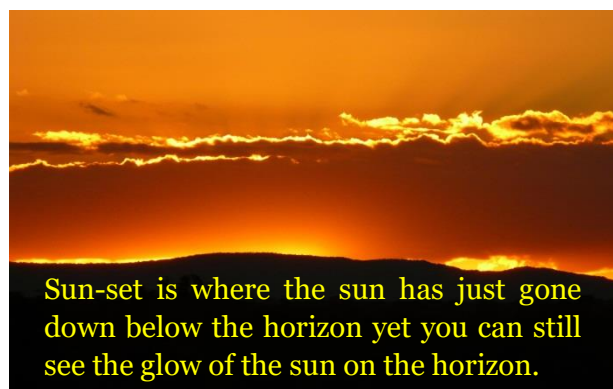
The New Moon of the other months of the year is similar to Sabbath days in which no trade or unnecessary work is done. (Amos 8:5; Nehemiah 10:31) Work which has to be done is allowed on the New Moon.

YHWH keeps His appointments with those who choose to meet with Him at His designated times and He enters His assembly at these times on these holy days of the Sabbaths and the New Moons to fulfill the spiritual reality of these feasts in the lives of His people. (Ezekiel 46:1-6)

You may want to consider starting a fellowship group that meets on each sighting of the New Moon. Assemble before sunset with snacks and Bibles. Then, read aloud the New Moon Scriptures:

Genesis 1:14-19	1 Chronicles 23:30-31	Psalms 81:1-4
Numbers 10:10	2 Chronicles 2:4	Isaiah 66:23
Numbers 28:11-15	2 Chronicles 31:3	Ezekiel 46:1-3, 6
1 Samuel 20:5, 18, 24-27	Ezra 3:5-6	Amos 8:4-5
2 Kings 4:22-23	Nehemiah 10:32-33	Col. 2:16-17

Be sure to look for the first illuminated sliver of the New Moon either before, during or after the recommended Scripture readings above.



Each New Moon is a “*special*” time of dedicating ourselves to our Loving Heavenly Father YHWH and of blessing Him and seeking His direction for the New Month ahead.

We also take this time to ask His blessings on the planned endeavors for the coming month.

These days are sanctified or set-apart (holy) as days of sacrifice, for worship, for assembly and for us to make our spiritual offerings to YHWH. (Exodus 13:10; 23:14-17; 34:18-23; Leviticus 23; 2 Chronicles 2:4; Nehemiah 10:33; Ezekiel 44:24; 45:17)

Some traditionally sing and dance to celebrate this occasion, and the partaking of a festive meal together with suggested Scripture reading of Deuteronomy 4:7-9; Psalm 104; and Psalm 81.

The First New Moon to start the Scriptural New Year (Rosh Hashanah-Head of the year) is Abib (Exodus 12:1-2). It is a Solemn (Psalm 81:3) Feast Day. The New Moon of the Seventh Scriptural (Tishri) Month is Yom Teruah also known as the Day of Trumpets. This is a High Holy/Sabbath Day. The New Moon of Trumpets was also a day of restoration of the Torah/Law of YHWH. (Nehemiah 8:2)

A cleansing process began in the physical Temple with the commencement of the New Year (Abib) and this points us towards the spiritual cleansing of the spiritual Temple which is in each believer in Yeshua (Jesus). We are that *spiritual* Temple and the process of cleansing begins with us on the First New Moon of each year as a preparation for the coming Passover season. The Passover season consists of the following Mo'edim (Appointed Times): 1. Pesach (Passover) 2. Hag HaMatzah (Unleavened Bread) 3. Bikkurim (First Fruits) and 4. Shavuot (Pentecost). It then is repeated throughout the year from New Moon to New Moon as we each come before YHWH and renew our life in Him. (Ezekiel 45:18; Numbers 28:11) This will continue in the Millennium. (Isaiah 66:22-23)

The New Moons of the other months of the year are similar to Sabbath days in which no trade or unnecessary work is done. (Amos 8:5; Nehemiah 10:31) Work which must to be done is allowed on the new moon.

YHWH keeps His Mo'edim (Appointed Times) with those who choose to meet with Him at His Designated Times and He enters His assembly at these times on these Holy Days of the Sabbaths and the New Moons to fulfill the spiritual reality of these Feasts in the lives of His people. (Ezekiel 46:1-6)

Spiritual Meaning of the New Moon

When we observe the New Moon, we are honoring Almighty YHWH as the Creator of Time and the Giver of new beginnings. This "*new light*" each month points to Him.

“...Elohim is light and in Him is no darkness at all.”
(1 John 1:5, The Scriptures Translation)

This also points to Yeshua (Jesus). Just as the Moon reflects the light of the Sun, so also Yeshua's Light is a reflection of His Father's Light. (John 1:4-5)

We read in Luke 2:32 where Simeon prophesied that Yeshua (Jesus) was a Light to the gentiles, and the glory of Israel. Matthew called Yeshua a Great Light shining on those living in darkness and the shadow of death. (Matthew 4:16)

When we are obedient to look for the New Moon each month, it should remind us that Almighty YHWH makes all things new. One day soon, He will give His people a new name, a new heaven and a new earth, a new song, and a New Jerusalem! (Revelation 2:17, 3:12, 21:5, 15:2-4, and 21:2) All those belonging to Him are looking forward to "that" Day.

Conclusion

The Biblical and scholarly evidence presented above speaks for itself; therefore, the Scriptural as well as the witnesses presented show that the first illuminated sliver of the crescent moon begins the new month. The ancient Israelites determined the beginning of each Hebrew month based on the sighting of the first illuminated crescent or sliver of the new moon after it had emerged from being dark for a day or two and so should we.

For more information on the biblical calendar, I encourage the reader to read the online teaching "*The Biblical Calendar and the New Moon—Traditions of Men Versus the Word of Elohim*" at http://www.hoshanarabbah.org/pdfs/new_moons.pdf.

[One Crying In The Wilderness!](#)

[\(https://www.torah-truths.com/\)](https://www.torah-truths.com/)

[\(https://www.truenews4u.com/\)](https://www.truenews4u.com/)