

What is the Biblical “New Moon”?

When is the Biblical “New Moon”? Is it the “dark” of the moon? Is it the first faint visible crescent? Can it be “calculated” mathematically in advance, as the Jewish calendar does? Should we go by the Jewish calendar and its “approximate” New Moons? What does the Bible say? What does GOD Almighty say?

William F. Dankenbring

One of the slickest heists in history is the hijacking of the New Moon! It was so subtle, so clever, that no one noticed it – or paid it any attention – for 1,500 years – a millennium and a half! Here is how Satan the devil “stole” the New Moon of the Bible, and thereby corrupted and outrageously perverted the “Jewish” calendar to cause God’s people to MISS THE MARK on observing God’s true Holy Days and to FAIL to keep them HOLY!

When the Jewish nation was driven into exile by the Romans – called the “Diaspora” – they were forbidden to return to Jerusalem, and their supreme court was abolished. In the context of this disaster to the Jewish nation and religion, the rabbis about 358 A.D., under Hillel II, sought to do something to bind the Jews together wherever they were on earth, and invoked a fascinating mathematical model to “predict” Hebrew months, heretofore always based on the sighting of the visible crescent of the New Moon, to “predict” new moons hundreds of years in advance, based on the 19-year time cycle. The calculations up to that time were used only as a “back up system” in Israel to the visual sighting of the New Moons by observers in Israel.

Famed educator, scholar and calendar expert, Arthur Spier tells us,

“In the early times of our history . . . [the] beginnings of the months were determined by direct observation of the new moon. Then those beginnings of the months (Rosh Hodesh) were sanctified and announced by the Sanhedrin, the Supreme Court in Jerusalem, after witnesses had testified that they had seen the new crescent and after their testimony had been thoroughly examined, *confirmed by calculation*, and duly accepted” (*The Comprehensive Hebrew Calendar*, p.1).

Says Arthur Spier:

“This method of observation and intercalation was in use throughout the period of the second temple (516 B.C.E. -- 70 C.E.), and about three centuries after its destruction, *as long as*

there was an independent Sanhedrin. In the fourth century, however, when OPPRESSION AND PERSECUTION THREATENED THE CONTINUED EXISTENCE OF THE SANHEDRIN, *the patriarch Hillel II took an extraordinary step to PRESERVE the UNITY OF ISRAEL. In order to prevent the Jews SCATTERED ALL OVER THE SURFACE OF THE EARTH from celebrating their New Moons, FESTIVALS and holidays at DIFFERENT TIMES, HE MADE PUBLIC THE SYSTEM OF CALENDAR CALCULATION WHICH UP TO THEN HAD BEEN A CLOSELY GUARDED SECRET.* It had been used in the past only to check the observations and testimonies of witnesses, and to determine the beginnings of the spring season.

“In accordance with this system, Hillel II formally sanctified all months in advance, and intercalated all future leap years UNTIL SUCH TIME AS A NEW, RECOGNIZED SANHEDRIN would be established in Israel. This is the PERMANENT CALENDAR according to which the New Moons and Festivals are calculated and celebrated today by the Jews ALL OVER THE WORLD” (p.1-2).

That is why the Jews have the present Jewish calendar, today – and most all of the church groups that came out of the Worldwide Church of God use that calendar without question as the bona fide calendar of God!

Other Witnesses

Says Lesli Koppelman Ross in *Celebrate! The Complete Jewish Holidays Handbook*, "The importance of community in Jewish life dictated that all Jews celebrate holidays at the same time. That meant that a standard start of a new month had to be known by everyone so they could count the days before a festival in unison. At the time of the first Temple, the high priest made the determination based on the moon's first appearance in the sky. During the time of the Second Temple, two eyewitnesses would testify before the Sanhedrin (rabbinical court) that they had seen the crescent sliver" (p.xxv).

In *The Essence of the Holy Days*, Rabbi Avraham Yaakov Finkel tells us, "Finally, at the end of the lunar month, when the moon passes a point between the sun and the earth -- the point of conjunction -- the moon appears completely dark and is invisible to us. Shortly after that, it reemerges as a thin, crescent-shaped line. That moment is called *molad halevanah*, ‘birth of the new moon,’ and *Rosh Chodesh* is the day on which the new moon appears. *The calculation of the precise moment of the appearance of the new moon was transmitted to the sages in an unbroken tradition that goes back to Sinai.* It was called *sod ha'ibur*, ‘principle of intercalation’ (*Rosh Hashanah* 20b). Although the exact time of its reemergence was known, the new moon was sanctified by the *Bet Din* in Jerusalem on the testimony of two witnesses who had sighted its appearance" (p.212).

In *The Jewish Book of Why*, by Alfred J. Kolatch, we read further: “Up until the year 359 the arrival of the New Moon was announced by the Sanhedrin each month, based on the testimony of two eyewitnesses who appeared before the Sanhedrin and were questioned about the crescent of the New Moon that they reported having observed. If the Sanhedrin was satisfied with the integrity of the witnesses and their testimony, it then checked the testimony against its own (secret) calculations, which had been worked out in advance using mathematical and astrological knowledge. If everything harmonized,

the Sanhedrin would send torch signals from mountaintop to mountaintop to notify all communities that the New Moon had officially been sighted. . . .

“When the Romans who ruled Palestine had begun to deny the Patriarch some of the freedom he and his court had enjoyed for many years, and the situation had become generally grave for the Jewish community in Palestine, Hillel II decided to publish the calendar for distribution to all communities. By this action, the official day(s) of Rosh Chodesh (beginning of the new month) and each of the Jewish holidays was fixed; the testimony of witnesses was no longer required” (p.9-10).

But Is It “KOSHER”?!

Notice that the Jews ADMIT plainly that THEY CHANGED THE CALENDAR IN 358 A.D.!!! What is wrong with their manifest CHANGES?

The simple truth is that God Almighty says, in regard to human reasoning and human excuses for changing His Word, His calendar, His commandments – “There is a way that seems right to a man, but the END thereof are the ways of DEATH” (Prov.14:12; 16:25).

Hillel II *did away with the observation of the REAL New Moons, AS IS COMMANDED IN THE BIBLE!* Why? His excuse was because of the scattered conditions of the Jews, to preserve “unity.” But “unity” at the expense of obedience to God’s laws is still *DISOBEDIENCE TO GOD!* And, “The wages of SIN [disobedience] IS DEATH!” says your BIBLE! (Rom.6:23.)

God says in His Word: “BLOW THE TRUMPET *IN THE NEW MOON, IN THE TIME APPOINTED, ON OUR SOLEMN FEAST DAY*” (Psalm 81:3). How can you do that, and observe the “solemn feast day,” IF YOU CHANGE THE CALENDAR DATE OF THE NEW MOON by a system of mathematics which causes you to APPROXIMATE the New Moon date, based on averages, rather than really SEE the New Moon?

Yet God also commands: “And it shall come to pass, that from ONE NEWMOON TO ANOTHER . . . shall all flesh come to worship before Me, says the LORD” (Isaiah 66:23). Proper observance of the New Moons determines the true DATES upon which fall the annual Festivals and Holy Days of Almighty GOD!

God’s True COMMAND

God commands you and me and ALL His people: “OBSERVE THE MONTH OF ABIB, and keep the Passover to the LORD your God” (Deut.16:1). The Hebrew word for “observe” here is Strong’s #8104, *shamar*, and means “prop. to hedge about (as with thorns), i.e. *guard*, gen. to *protect, extend to*, etc.: -- beware, BE CIRCUMSPECT, TAKE HEED, KEEP, MARK, LOOK NARROWLY, OBSERVE, PRESERVE, regard, reserve, save (self), sure, (that lay) wait (for), WATCH (-man).”

Are you DOING that? The Jews today are NOT! They calculate [try to determine mathematically, hundreds of years in advance] the months of the year based on the CALCULATION of the “New Moon” of TISHRI – something that God NOWHERE commands in His Word!

Plus they then “ADD” to God’s law so-called “Postponements” – rules that DELAY the “New Moon” of Tishri, upon which they base the entire YEAR of holy days. That is, whenever their calculation causes Yom Kippur to fall on a Friday or Sunday, they ARBITRARILY “POSTPONE” THE FIRST DAY OF TISHRI! By delaying it a day, therefore, they automatically “postpone” the Feast of Trumpets by one day, the Day of Atonement one day, and the Feast of Tabernacles one day, THEREBY VIOLATING THE ORDINANCES OF GOD IN HEAVEN! They perpetrate VIOLENCE to God’s eternal LAW!

Their “calculation” also only gives them an APPROXIMATE DATE – not a reliable or accurate date – for the “New Moon” or beginning of Tishri! It is *clever*, but human “cleverness” does not obey GOD! The result may be “good enough” for the Jews, and “government work,” but it is really SLOPPY, inefficient, poor workmanship, CRUDE, and WRONGLY BASED! It causes ERRORS TO BE MADE, because it is often WRONG, and does NOT accurately predict the true NEW MOON SIGHTINGS IN ISRAEL!

God THUNDERS

And God says, “Observe [watch, carefully regard, guard, hedge about, protect, etc.] THE MONTH OF ABIB” – *NOWHERE DOES HE SAY TO CALCULATE THE MONTH OF “TISHRI”!!!!!!!*

And the word for “MONTH” in this verse is “CHODESH” and means by definition “NEW MOON” IN HEBREW (Strong’s #2320 – “the new moon: by impl. a month”).

The churches of God today are FLAGRANTLY DISOBEYING THIS COMMANDMENT OF GOD, as are the rabbinical JEWS in Israel and around the world! Among the Jews, only the Karaites are properly obeying this commandment today!

What about YOU? Do you REALIZE that by ignoring the careful watching for and observance of the “New Moon” of Abib, as well as all the New Moons (proper beginnings of months), especially those containing Holy Days and Festivals, that you are SINNING? You are FLAGRANTLY TRANSGRESSING THE LAWS OF GOD, neglecting careful observance of PASSOVER, PENTECOST, FEAST OF TRUMPETS, YOM KIPPUR, THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES, and THE EIGHTH DAY (Shemini Atzeret)!!!!

This is very serious in the sight of GOD! It amounts to stubborn REBELLION AND REJECTION OF GOD’S TRUTH! Christ says, “You will know the TRUTH, and the TRUTH will make you FREE”(John 8:32). God also says, “for REBELLION is as

the sin of WITCHCRAFT, and STUBBORNESS is as INIQUITY and IDOLATRY” (I Samuel 15:23)!!! Those who REJECT the word of God will themselves be REJECTED *BY God in terms of their SALVATION!!!*

A Sad and Deplorable History

Rather than change God’s calendar, in 358 A.D., the Jews should have *repented of their sins, including rejecting the Messiah*, so that they would have been restored to their land!

But they did not – and continued in exile for nearly 2,000 years of punishment from God!

However, in the centuries that followed, the Jewish leaders became even more hostile toward the Christian elements in their society. Messianic Jews were banished from the synagogues following the rebellion in 70 A.D. By 135 A.D., a “CURSE” had been written into the daily synagogue prayer, the Amidah. This “curse” was against all “heretics” and “Nazarenes” – meaning those who followed Jesus Christ, the “Nazarene.”

By the time of Hillel II, Judaism had become more and more legalistic. To the legalistic Jewish leaders, if you celebrated Yom Kippur on a Friday, a day of mourning and repentance of sin, you could not leap right into a festive day of joy and rejoicing that very Friday evening. Therefore, they *moved the Day of Atonement*, so it could not fall on a Friday!

Stroke of a pen – change in a divine law! But were these changes legitimate?

God Hates Tampering

To the contrary, in the prophets, God says in His Word, “The New Moons, the Sabbaths, and the calling of assemblies – *I cannot endure iniquity and the sacred meeting. Your New Moons and your appointed feasts My soul HATES*; they are a trouble to Me, I am *weary* of bearing them” (Isaiah 1:13-14, NKJV).

Why in the world would God say such a thing about the New Moons and Annual Festivals which He Himself appointed for Israel to observe?

Furthermore, He says through the prophet Amos, “*I hate, I despise your feast days, and I do not savor your sacred assemblies. . .*” (Amos 5:21, NKJV). Isn’t this strange? Why would God feel this way?

BECAUSE HIS PEOPLE, THE JEWISH RABBIS, TAMPERED WITH, CHANGED, MANIPULATED, TWISTED, CORRUPTED AND PERVERTED HIS OWN SACRED CALENDAR by changing the requirements of the calendar creation and adding HUMAN laws, restrictions, prohibitions, and changes to what God gave in pure perfection! They CORRUPTED HIS LAW!

The prophet Isaiah quotes God as saying, “Stop bringing meaningless offerings! New Moons, Sabbaths and convocations – I cannot bear your evil assemblies. *Your New Moons, festivals and your appointed feasts my soul hates.* They have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them. When you spread out your hands in prayer, *I will hide my eyes from you; even if you offer many prayers, I will not listen*” (Isa.1:13-15, NIV).

This is very serious, indeed! Here is a vital reason WHY God does not listen to prayers of many people! Because THEY are not listening to HIM!

The Jews not only “changed” the New Moons, however. In effect, they BURIED THEM! Many Jewish “calendars” do not even give the dates of the astronomical conjunction of the sun and moon which determines the following new crescent of the New Moon. They “HIDE” it. This enables them to publish their calendars for years in advance with NO REGARD for the actual “New Moons” which are given by God to begin each new month! In doing this dastardly deed, they ABOLISHED THEIR OBSERVANCE! Their new “perpetual” calendar only APPROXIMATES THE “NEW MOONS”!

This egregious blazing FACT has been lying hidden beneath the “added” calendar rules and regulations of the “fixed” calendar which virtually nobody has noticed, till NOW!

Yet Almighty God thunders, “You shall not ADD TO the word which I command you, nor shall you diminish anything from it, that you may KEEP the commandments of the LORD your God” (Deut.4:2). “You must neither add anything to what I command you to observe nor take away anything from it, but keep the commandments of the Lord your God” (NRSV).

God also commands, like mighty thundering, earthshaking, roaring waves of the ocean: “You must DILIGENTLY OBSERVE EVERYTHING THAT I COMMAND YOU; *DO NOT ADD TO IT OR TAKE ANYTHING FROM IT*” (Deut.12:32, NRSV).

The Jewish “perpetual calendar” – which is not “perpetual” nor God’s calendar – is an “imitation” – a “fraud” – a “COUNTERFEIT” calendar, foisted off upon the world by ingenious, clever, crafty, cunning Satan the devil! Just as he seduced Eve in the garden of Eden, he has seduced GOD’S PEOPLE INTO SINNING by following HIS *counterfeit calendar!*

Read the Scriptures! Study God’s Word! It is very CLEAR on these matters! It does not take a rocket scientist to understand or comprehend it!

This means that the Jews and those who follow their calendar, today, including United Church of God, Living Church of God, Philadelphia Church of God, and hundreds of other “breakaway” churches, often observe a DIFFERENT DAY that God NEVER made “HOLY,” *THEY ARE OFTEN “OFF” ONE OR TWO DAYS, thus causing God’s people to WORK on “holy time” and to celebrate days that are NOT HOLY, days that*

are NOT SANCTIFIED BY GOD'S WORD!

Leap Years, Too!

Not only this, but when they “calculate” leap years in advance, as they do, totally IGNORING what Scripture commands about the beginning of MONTHS, PARTICULARLY ABIB, THEY INSERT A LEAP YEAR WHEN THERE SHOULD BE NONE, AND LEAVE ONE OUT WHEN THE BIBLE REQUIRES IT, causing them to be OFF 30 DAYS – ONE WHOLE MONTH – IN ALL HOLY DAY CELEBRATIONS FOR THAT YEAR!

Think of it! How astounded, how angry and furious God must be with His proud, arrogant, mischievous, misbehaving, stubborn and unrepentant PEOPLE!

THUS THE NEW MOONS THEY OUGHT TO CELEBRATE THEY DO NOT! And the New Moons they do celebrate ARE NOT REALLY “NEW MOONS”! It is only by a “stroke of luck” that sometimes their New Moons do happen at the true observed, visible New Moon!

The Biblical “New Moon”

The Biblical month begins with the crescent New Moon, also called First Visible Sliver. The Hebrew word for month (Hodesh) literally means New Moon and only by extension the period between one New Moon and the next.

There can be no doubt that the biblical Holidays are dependent on the moon. The strongest proof of this is the passage in Psalm 104:19 which declares:

“He created the moon for Mo'adim [appointed times].”

The Hebrew term Mo'adim [appointed times] is the same word used to describe the Biblical Holidays. Leviticus 23, which contains a catalogue of the Biblical Holidays opens with the statement: ‘These are the **Mo'adim** [appointed times] of YHWH, holy convocations which you shall proclaim in their appointed times [Mo'adim].’ So when the Psalmist tells us that God created the moon for Mo'adim [appointed times] he means that the moon was created to determine the time of the Mo'adim of YHWH, that is, the Biblical Holidays.

There is no historical evidence that the Jews ever began the new month with the disappearance of the old moon. If the Pharisees had been wrong in their month declarations, you would think that Christ would have clearly corrected such an egregious error and the matter would be clearly discussed in the four gospels. No such controversy is mentioned however, because there was none. Such a thing is not even hinted at in the four gospels.

In our book on the True Bible Calendar, I cite Bible references, Jewish history, the Talmud, and the Mishnah, and carefully prove that not only were the “postponements” not a part of the original Biblical calendar prior to the time of Hillel II in 357-58 AD, but that the new months began with the visual sighting of the new crescent moon. The “new” crescent reflects the “new” month. The word for month and moon – “chodesh” – means both, indicating the two are interchangeable. For more information on this topic, you can go to the website of the Karaites in Jerusalem. It is: www.karaite-korner.org.

There is no historical evidence, or Biblical evidence, that the month begins with the time the moon becomes invisible. True, the new day begins when the sun goes down – at sunset – but this is nowhere stated to correspond to the beginning of a new month.

Why assume a parallel or correlation when the Bible mentions none? We must be very careful not to read our own ideas into the Scriptures.

Psalm 104:19 simply says God appointed the moon for the “seasons.” The word for seasons is *moadim*, and means “appointed times” or FESTIVALS. That verse also says the “sun knows its going down.” That is, its setting, when it goes under the horizon, and night begins. Yes, that is the beginning of a new “day” (Lev.23:32), but that fact has nothing whatsoever to do with the new month.

God's True Calendar

Nehemiah Gordon of the Worldwide Karaite Movement shows us how the rabbis corrupted God's true calendar in the fourth century of the present era. He mentions no controversy in ancient times over the “no moon” concept, although some people today have suggested such an idea.

He writes, “There is no evidence whatsoever for an ancient ‘no-moon’ calendar. On the contrary, it is a documented fact that until the Rabbis came along and corrupted the calendar in 359 CE all of Israel followed an observational lunar calendar. This is evident from the writings of the Rabbis themselves. The Mishnah (completed c.200 CE) has an entire tractate called ‘Rosh Hashanah’ that discusses how to interrogate new moon WITNESSES. Here are some proofs that the calendar was observational before Hillel II tampered with it:

“A) The Mishnah talks about ‘seeing the New Moon’ (e.g. Rosh Hashannah 1:7); as far as the Rabbis before the time of Hillel II were concerned, New Moon was a VISIBLE event, not a calculated one.

“B) Mishnah Rosh Hashanah 1:7 tells about a dispute at the time of the Second Temple between the Rabbis and the Temple priests. It is clear from this account that the Temple priests did not obey Rabbinic authority but had their own new moon court. The disagreement was about whether a certain pair of witnesses was reliable for new moon testimony or not. There was no dispute whatsoever that the month begins based on the testimony of new moon witnesses: The Mishnaic account runs as follows: ‘R. Jose said:

It happened once with Tobiah the physician that he saw the new moon in Jerusalem along with his son and his emancipated slave, and the priests accepted his evidence and that of his son and disqualified his slave, but when they appeared before the [Rabbinic] beth din they accepted his evidence and that of his slave and disqualified his son.’

“(C) Mishnah Rosh Hashanah 2:7: ‘Whether it was seen in its time [i.e. on the 30th] or not seen in its time, it is sanctified [i.e. New Moon day is declared by a court]. Rabbi Eleazar bar Zadok says, If it is not seen in its time, we [the court] do not sanctify it for it has already been sanctified by heaven.’ The Talmud (Bab. Rosh Hashanah 24a) rules, ‘The Halachah [law] is according to R. Eleazar b. R. Zadok.’ Rabbi Eleazar is describing a pure 30-day observational calendar which means if the moon is seen on the 30th evening, that evening is new moon; if not, the next day is new moon by default without any reference to calculations or any other consideration. The Talmud informs us that this was the DE FACTO ‘halachic’ practice up until the time of Hillel II!”

The evidence should be crystal clear as to how the Jews determined the beginnings of new months. If the new month began at the time the moon disappeared from visibility, then you would think there would be clear Biblical evidence showing this to be the case, but there is none.

Also, you would think that there would be much discussion of this belief in the Jewish literature, but, alas, there is none. It was a complete ‘non-starter.’ Nobody in ancient Jewish history taught this idea.

But Jesus Christ did say clearly that the scribes and Pharisees sat in “Moses seat,” and we should DO as they taught (Matt.23:1-3), and during the time of Christ, they clearly taught that the new month began when the new crescent of the moon was sighted and verified in ancient Israel. If you have not read it, I suggest you read our article, “What Is Moses’ Seat?”, which gives a careful, thoughtful analysis of Jesus’ comments in Matthew 23:1-3.

Rabbi’s Fairy Tales

Nehemia Gordon also writes: “The Rabbanite Midrash relates that when God said to Moses ‘This month (**HODESH**) shall be for you the beginning of months’ (Ex 12,2) the Almighty pointed up into the heavens at the crescent New Moon and said ‘When you see like this, sanctify! [=declare New Moon day].’ This Rabbinic fairy-tale highlights an important point, namely that the Bible never comes out and says we should determine the beginning of months based on the New Moon. The reason for this is that the term for ‘Month’ (Hodesh) itself implies that the month begins with the crescent New Moon. As will be seen, this would have been obvious to any ancient Israelite present when Moses recited the prophecies of YHWH to the Children of Israel and therefore there was no need to elucidate this concept any more than such terms as ‘light’ or ‘dark.’ However, due to the long exile, we have lost the use of Biblical Hebrew in day to day speech. Therefore, we will have to reconstruct the meaning of Hodesh from the usage of the word in the Biblical text using sound linguistic principles.”

"Hodesh" Is Related To the Moon

The verse in Psalms 104:19 clearly teaches us that the holidays are related to the moon. But when the Torah was given Ps 104 had not yet been written by the Levitical prophets, and the question still remains of how the ancient Israelites could have known this. The answer is that the Hebrew word for month (Hodesh) itself indicates a connection to the moon. We can see this connection in a number of instances in which Hodesh (month) is used interchangeably with the word 'Yerah', the common Biblical Hebrew word for **moon**, which by extension also means 'month.' For example:

"...in the **month (Yerah)** of Ziv, which is the Second **month (Hodesh)**. . ."
(1Kings 6,1)

". . . in the **month (Yerah)** of Ethanim . . . which is the Seventh **month (Hodesh)** . . ." (1Kings 8,2)

Another proof that Hodesh is related to the moon (Yerah) is the phrase "A **Hodesh (month)** of days" (Gen.29,14; Num.11,20-21) [meaning a period of 29 or 30 days] which is equivalent to the phrase "A **Yerah (month/ moon)** of days" (Deut.21:13; 2 Kings 15:13). Clearly then Hodesh is related to "Yerah", which itself literally means "moon".

"Hodesh" Means New Moon (Day)

Says Nehemia Gordon, "The primary meaning of Hodesh (month) is actually 'New Moon' or 'New Moon Day' and it is only by extension that it came to mean 'month', that is, the period between one New Moon and the next. This primary meaning is preserved in a number of passages such as 1Sam.20:5 in which Jonathan says to David 'Tomorrow is the New Moon (Hodesh).' Clearly, in this verse Hodesh is used to refer to the specific day on which the month begins and not the entire month. Another passage which uses Hodesh in its primary sense is Ezek.46:1 which talks about 'The Day (Yom) of the New Moon (Ha-Hodesh).' Clearly in this verse Hodesh (New Moon) is a specific event and the beginning of the month is the day on which this event (New Moon) occurs."

The Biblical New Moon is the "First Crescent"

"Hodesh" (New Moon), is derived from the root H.D.SH. **ה.ד.ש.** meaning "new" or "to make new/ renew." Says Gordon, "The Crescent New Moon is called Hodesh because it is the first time the moon is seen *anew* after being concealed for several days at the end of the lunar cycle. At the end of the lunar month the moon is close to the sun and eventually reaches the point of 'conjunction' when it passes between the Sun and the Earth. As a result, around the time of conjunction very little of the moon's illuminated surface faces the Earth and it is not visible through the infinitely brighter glare of the sun. After the moon moves past the sun it continues towards the opposite side of the Earth. As it gets farther away from the sun the percentage of its illuminated

surface facing the Earth increases and one evening shortly after sunset the moon is seen anew after being invisible for 1.5-3.5 days. Because the moon is seen anew after a period of invisibility the ancients called it a 'New Moon' or 'Hodesh' (from Hadash meaning 'new')."

Crescent New Moon vs. Astronomical New Moon

Gordon continues: "Many people have been led astray by the inaccurate use in modern languages of the term 'New Moon'. Modern astronomers adopted this otherwise unused term, which had always referred to the first visible sliver, and used it to refer to *conjunction* (when the Moon passes between the Earth and the Sun, at which time it is not visible). The astronomers soon realized that the inaccurate use of 'New Moon' to refer to conjunction would lead to confusion so to be more accurate scientists now distinguish between 'Astronomical New Moon' and 'Crescent New Moon'. 'Astronomical New Moon' means New Moon as the term is used by astronomers, i.e. conjunction. In contrast, 'Crescent New Moon' uses the term in the original meaning of the first visible sliver. A good English dictionary should reflect both meanings. For example, the Random House Dictionary of the English Language, Unabridged Edition defines New Moon as: 'The moon either when in conjunction with the sun or soon after being either invisible [Astronomical New Moon] or visible [Crescent New Moon] only as a slender crescent.'" (square brackets added by NG).

The Supposed Evidence For "Concealed Moon"

Having been confused by the use of the term New Moon in modern astronomy some people have sought Biblical support for this incorrect meaning of the term. Psalm 81:3 [Hebrew Tanakh Psalm 81:4] is usually cited which says:

"Blow on a horn for the Hodesh (New Moon) On the Keseh (Full Moon) for the Day of our Hag (Feast)."

According to the "Concealed Moon Theory", the term "Keseh" is derived from the root K.S.Y. meaning "to cover" and thus means "covered moon" or "concealed moon". According to this interpretation, when the verse says to blow on a horn on the day of Keseh it actually means "[blow on a horn] on the day of Concealed Moon".

However, the language does not support this argument for the second half of the verse also refers to the day of Keseh as "the day of our Feast (Hag)".

In the Bible, Feast (Hag) is a technical term which **always** refers to the three annual pilgrimage-feasts (Matzot, Shavuot, Sukkot; see Exo.23; Exo.34). New Moon Day (Hodesh) is **never** classified as a "Pilgrimage-Feast" so Keseh/ Hag can not possibly be synonymous with New Moon Day (Hodesh).

It has further been suggested that Keseh refers to the Biblical holiday of Yom Teruah (Day of Shouting), which always falls out on New Moon Day. However, the

Bible describes Yom Teruah as a *Moed* (appointed time) and never as a *Hag* (Pilgrimage-Feast) so Kesh/ Hag can not refer to Yom Teruah either.

What Does *Kesh* Really Mean?

Says Nehemia Gordon, “It is likely that Kesh is related to the Aramaic word ‘Kista’ and the Assyrian word ‘Kuseu’ which mean ‘full moon’ (see Brown-Driver-Briggs p.490b) [Hebrew, Aramaic, and Assyrian are all Semitic languages and often share common roots].

“This fits in perfectly with the description of Kesh as the day of the Hag since two of the three Pilgrimage-Feasts (Hag HaMatzot and Hag HaSukkot) are on the 15th of the month, which is about the time of the Full Moon!”

More on “Concealed Moon”

Here is another vital point to consider! In truth, there is no actual “day” of the concealed moon! In actual fact the *moon stays concealed anywhere from 1.5 to 3.5 days in the Middle East.*

It has been proposed by some that the “day” of concealed moon is actually the day of “conjunction” (when the moon passes between the Earth and Sun).

However, this flies in the face of ancient history. It was not until 1000 years *after* Moses that the Babylonian astronomers discovered how to calculate the moment of conjunction! Therefore, clearly, the ancient Israelites would have had no way of knowing exactly when the moment of conjunction takes place and would not have known on which day to observe the so-called “Concealed Moon Day.”

It has also been suggested that the ancient Israelites could have looked at the “Old Moon” and determined the Day of Conjunction by when the Old Moon was no longer visible in the morning sky. However, such a method would not work in the Middle East where the so-called “concealed moon” can remain concealed for as many as 3.5 days! It is in fact common for the moon to stay concealed for 2.5 days and in such instances how would the ancient Israelites have known which day was the Day of Conjunction?

Writes Gordon, “In contrast, the ancient Israelites would have been well aware of the Crescent New Moon. In ancient societies people worked from dawn to dusk and they would have noticed the Old Moon getting smaller and smaller in the morning sky. When the morning moon had disappeared the ancient Israelites would have anxiously awaited its reappearance 1.5-3.5 days later in the evening sky. Having disappeared for several days and then appearing anew in the early evening sky they would have called it the ‘New Moon.’

“Even in the few instances where Hag does not refer to the three Biblical Pilgrimage-Feasts, it refers to non-Biblical pilgrimage-feasts. For example, in Judges 21:19 Hag refers to the annual pilgrimage-feast held around the shrine of Shiloh.

Also, in Exodus 10:9 Moses tells Pharaoh that the Israelites must leave Egypt to celebrate a Hag to YHWH in the desert, which clearly is a pilgrimage-feast. It is worth noting that Moses says that they have a Hag, meaning they must make a pilgrimage, in this case to Mt. Sinai, and thus they must leave Egypt in order to observe the Hag properly.

Questions Answered

One man wrote to me, “I recently bought a copy of Philo (The Works of), published by Hendrickson, copyright 1993. References under ‘Special Laws’ prove that the New Moons were determined by the conjunction (dark) of the Moon. Now its up to you, what you do with this information.”

I have a copy of Philo and have been using it for years. This person needs to get reading glasses. It says no such thing. In fact, apparently he overlooked reference XXVI (140) on page 581, although he quoted the very next reference which said “the law has honored the end of its orbit, the point where the moon has finished at the beginning point from which it began to travel, by calling that day a feast . . .”

Notice section 140-141, about the festival of the new moon: “First of all, it is the beginning of the month, and the beginning, whether of number or of time, is honorable. Second, because there is nothing in the whole heaven destitute of light. (141) 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, 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” (page 581).

How a person could miss this clear reference to the New Moon, proving that it occurs, in Hebrew understanding, at the FIRST VISIBLE CRESCENT OF THE MOON, is completely beyond me.

But there it is – clear as night and day! The real “new moon” is when “the sun begins to illuminate the moon with a LIGHT WHICH IS VISIBLE” – not the point of actual conjunction, when there is NO light from the moon, but it is totally “in the dark” or INVISIBLE!

The Jews understood it correctly. As I said before, Arthur Spier in his book *The Comprehensive Jewish Calendar* writes with authority and clarity, “The beginnings of the months were determined by DIRECT OBSERVATION OF THE NEW MOON. Then

those beginnings of the months (Rosh Hodesh) were sanctified and announced by the Sanhedrin, the Supreme Court in Jerusalem, after WITNESSES had testified that they had SEEN THE NEW CRESCENT and after their testimony had been thoroughly examined, confirmed by calculation, and duly accepted” (p.1).

Alfred Edersheim in his wonderful book *The Temple: Its Ministry and Services*, explained, “For the new moon was reckoned by ACTUAL PERSONAL OBSERVATION, not by astro-nomical calculation, with which, however, as we know, many of the rabbis must have been familiar . . . 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” (page 230).

It only makes sense that the new moon would be when the first faint sliver or crescent of the moon is seen after a period of total darkness of the moon. Ancient nations did not have the incredible tools of astronomy that we have today. The Hebrew word Hodesh means both “moon” and “month.” The month and new moon are both represented by the same word, showing that the new month is determined by and begins with the “new moon” – which MUST be visible, in order for people to KNOW when it occurs.

In the case of poor visibility, due to bad weather, however, a month would automatically be declared to be 30 days since no month could be more than 30 days in length. The moon’s cycle around the earth is approximately 29.5 days, so months would vary as being either 29 or 30 days, and the method used was the sighting of the new crescent.

It’s Time to Repent, NOW!

What about YOU? Isn’t it about time you begin to REALLY obey GOD? Isn’t it about time you got to the bottom of this calendar “MESS”? Isn’t it about time you QUIT LETTING SATAN lead you around by the nose?

Isn’t it about time you QUIT TRUSTING YOUR “MINISTER” AND TRUSTED GOD’S WORD INSTEAD?

Jeremiah declared, “*CURSED* BE THE MAN that trusts in man, and makes flesh his arm, and whose heart departs from the LORD” (Jeremiah 17:5).

King David wrote, “Put not your trust in princes [or human leaders, including pastors and ministers], nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. His breath goes forth, he returns to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish” (Psalms 146:3-4).

God declares of modern day “ministers” of God, during this end-time generation, “WOE be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks?” (Ezek.34:2). He says, “Behold, I am AGAINST the shepherds; and I will require My flock at their hand” (verse 10).

God rails at the ministers of the various churches, “WOE BE TO THE PASTORS that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! says the LORD” (Jer.23:1).

Says Almighty God in warning to His erring people, His flock, and their erring ministers, who cleverly follow a man – even a dead man, such as Herbert W. Armstrong – instead of God’s Word: “But you are *departed out of the way*; you have caused MANY to *stumble at the Law* . . . You have not kept My ways, but have been PARTIAL in the Law” (Malachi 2:8-9).

The time has come to WAKE UP, BE SHAKEN UP, AND REPENT of this horrendous, terrible SIN against Almighty GOD!!!!!!!

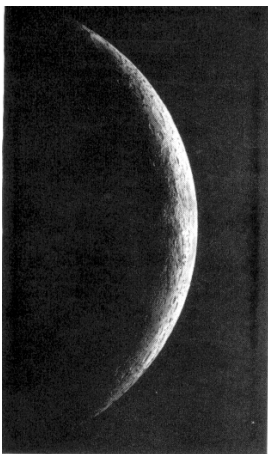
You have been *TAUGHT FALSELY* by ministers who may be very SINCERE, who profess to teach you the Word of God – men who profess to know the TRUTH – yet who remain IGNORANT of fundamental, foundational TRUTH! Some seem to REFUSE TO EXAMINE THE EVIDENCE to see whether they could be teaching Satan implanted ERROR or not! Perhaps their heads are buried in the sand and they simply have “CLOSED MINDS” where new truth cannot penetrate. They just “ASSUME” they are right – that they could not be wrong! So they stubbornly, resolutely cling to TRADITIONAL teachings inherited from others, including Herbert W. Armstrong!

But “stubbornness” God says is “as INIQUITY and IDOLATRY” (I Sam.15:22-23). What are you going to do about it? What “action” will you take? Will this article “stir you up,” fire you with ZEAL, and lead you to re-examine the evidence, study the facts of the case, and REPENT of sin and RETURN to GOD?

I sincerely hope and pray you will take HEED to this warning, given in LOVE!

* * *

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Yes, I don’t want to be deceived or lied to. I want to “prove all things” and hold fast to the TRUTH (I Thess. 5:21). Please send to me the following literature ABSOLUTELY FREE:

- A New Look at God’s TRUE Calendar
- When Does the Year Begin?
- Should Christians Observe the New Moons?
- Can Passover Occur Before Spring?

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