

**SHOULD CHRISTIANS RECOGNISE THE
SIGNIFICANCE AND MEANING OF THE**

***NEW MOONS
& SACRED
CALENDAR***

IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY?

A COLLECTION OF PAPERS WHICH DISCUSS THIS ISSUE ARE ATTACHED

CONTENTS

1. **NEW MOONS: SIGNIFICANCE FOR CHRISTIANS TODAY?**
by Richard Nickels
2. **40 SCRIPTURES ON THE NEW MOONS**
by Marie Casale
3. **THE NEW MOONS**
by Marie Casale
4. **New Month Days**
by Keith Hunt
5. **THE NEW MOON**
by Bert Otten
6. **What are the 'Postponements'**
by Raymond F McNair
7. **Which Calendar has God Authorised?**
by Raymond F McNair
8. **The Mystery of the Moon**
by Becky McCall

New Moons: Significance for Christians Today

by Richard C Nickels

Are you keeping all of God's appointed times? Should the New Moons be observed by Christians today? What is the meaning of New Moons? Should the follower of God know and use God's calendar?

We Must Grow in Truth

All true Christians desire to get back to "the faith once delivered," Jude 3, and recapture the full truth of God.

In doing this, one must remember that we must tenaciously cling to the initial beliefs revealed to us at baptism, Hebrews 3:14. If others throw these truths aside, we must instead undauntedly hold onto them. Yet there is more! We must "go on unto perfection," Hebrews 6:1. Not falling from steadfastness in our original beliefs, "but grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ," II Peter 3:17-18. "Growth" is defined as "adding thereto," see Colossians 1:10. Not throwing away what spiritual understanding one already has.

The Sabbath and the Holy Days have been and are attacked by some, watered down by others. Jesus said that His faithful servants would be keeping them in their seasons, Matthew 24:44-46. Yet there is more! God has a third type of day He wants us to observe, in addition to Sabbaths and Holy Days. His Word does not leave us any doubt. There are many things that we need to come to understand and put into practice in our lives, in order to come to the fullness of the stature of Christ, Ephesians 4:13.

Those who think they have all the truth are headed toward complacency, and ultimately will lose what truth they once had, Luke 19:20-27. Instead of fighting "windmill battles" of re-studying doctrines to question their validity, which we should have proven once and for all years ago, let us instead shift our efforts toward growth and overcoming, LIVING by every Word of God, Luke 4:4.

We should have known many more things than we presently do. Let us confess our sins as Nehemiah did, Nehemiah 1:6-7, and turn to God as never before, seeking to keep all His statutes, judgments and commandments. Only by doing this will God truly work a work through us, II Chronicles 15:1-15. Only by doing this will we be spared from the horrendous and terrifying events destined to befall the world in these last days.

The New Moons have much to do with such principles as Luke 21:36, as well as our entire covenant relationship with God. Will we learn the lesson God wants us to learn from the New Moons, or will we instead scoff and ridicule?

For those of a poor and contrite heart who tremble at God's Word, Isaiah 66:2, persecution and ridicule may come for obeying God's simple instructions, such as worshipping God every Sabbath and New Moon, see Isaiah 66:23. When the Eternal appears, it will be to the joy of the righteous and the shame and ignominy of the wicked, Isaiah 66:5. Let God's Word judge us, not men, Colossians 2:16-17.

Why Did God Make the Sun and the Moon?

Genesis 1:14-18, "And God 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 [Hebrew moed, used in Leviticus 23 and elsewhere to refer to God's Holy Days], and for days, and years And God made two great lights; the greater light for the rule of the day [margin] and the lesser light [Hebrew maor, bright light,' from ohr, light'] for the rule of the night; He made the stars also."

The moon is the "lesser light," and the word "lesser" is from the Hebrew *gat*, derived from *guwt*, "to be grieved, to loathe the self." Are we little, *gat*, in our own eyes, I Samuel 1 5:17? The moon is a little light, with an awesome purpose. Selfless, it only reflects the brightness of the sun.

God compares Himself to the "Sun of righteousness," Malachi 4:2. We are to be like the moon, reflecting His glory. We can only do this if we remain little in our eyes, loathing ourselves. Christ is "the true light, which lights every man that comes into the world," John 1:9. His very first words on the first day of creation were "Let there be light," Genesis 1:3. Light comes from God.

Specifically, one of the purposes for which God made the moon, and the sun, is to delineate His Holy Day seasons, in order to demonstrate His plan and purpose for mankind. Are we acting out fully the plan God has laid out for us?

Should the Moon TEACH Us Something?

The Bible has five primary words for "moon," "new moon," and "month." Information is provided for your personal study:

(1) *Hodesh*, "new moon" or "month," is the primary Old Testament word. It is #2320 in Strong's Exhaustive Concordance and located on pages 404-405 in the Englishman's Hebrew and Chaldean Concordance (EHC). *Hodesh* or *Chodesh* comes from (#2318 Strong's) *chadash*, "to be new, to rebuild, renew, repair." What new thing does the moon remind us of?

(2) *Yerach* and *yareach*, "month" or "moon," (#3391 and 3394 in Strong's, pages 564-565 in EHC) is similar to the Hebrew word "teach," *yahrah*, Isaiah 2:3. What is it that the New Moon should teach us?

(3) *Lebanah*, "the moon," (Strong's #3842, EHC p. 632) is from the word *laban*, "white," which is the symbol of purity and righteousness, Revelation 19:8.

(4) *Seleence* is a Greek word used in the New Testament for "moon" (Strong's #4582, Englishman's Greek Concordance (EGC), page 684). A form of this word is *seleeniazomai*, "lunatic," or "moonstruck" (Strong's #4523, EGC page 684). If we learn the wrong lesson from the moon, we could lose our spiritual sanity.

(5) *Meen* or *men*, "moon" (Strong's #3376, EGC page 499) is a New Testament word used frequently. Some of its forms are: *noumenia*, "new moon," (Strong's #3561, EGC page 519), *tetramenon*, "four months," and *trimenon*, "three months."

SUMMARY: A study of the above words forms the basis for this article. The definition of the words for "moon" and "new moon" show that we are to learn an uplifting lesson of righteousness from these physical things that God has ordained.

Has God REVEALED His Manner of Keeping Time?

Genesis 7:11 states, "In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened."

This is the first time the Bible mentions the Sacred Calendar. The second month, or *hodesh*, is in progress. Noah knew the proper month according to God's manner of keeping time. He was able to pass on this information to his righteous descendants. Events concerning the dates of various aspects of the flood are meticulously laid out, Genesis 8:4, 5, 13, 14.

Abraham, a righteous descendent of Noah, kept God's commandments, statutes and laws, Genesis 26:5. Shem, son of Noah, lived during Abraham's time. He must have passed on this calendar information that God had revealed from the beginning. Like tithing, Genesis 14:20. God's monthly cycle is revealed in the Bible as an on-going practice. Most likely, it was revealed in the Garden of Eden when God instructed Adam and Eve.

On a specific day God made a covenant with Abraham, promising his descendants the land from the river of Egypt to the River Euphrates, Genesis 15:18. He let Abraham

know that his descendents would be strangers and be afflicted 400 years, afterwards coming out with great substance, verses 13-14. On this selfsame day 430 years later, Israel came out of Egypt, Exodus 12:40-42. This was the month Abib, Exodus 13:4, of which God said, "This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year [literally: the first in the moons of the year'] to you," Exodus 12:2.

We are to "Observe the month of Abib, and keep the Passover unto the LORD thy God: for in the month Abib the LORD thy God brought thee forth out of Egypt by night," Deuteronomy 16:1. One cannot observe the month of Abib without knowing God's calendar which tells when that month begins.

"And they departed from Rameses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month; on the morrow after the Passover the children of Israel went out with an high hand in the sight of all the Egyptians," Numbers 33:3. This is the "night to be much observed unto the LORD," Exodus 12:42.

In calling Israel out of Egypt, the first thing that God revealed of His laws was the true solar-lunar calendar. Even before God instructed Israel concerning the Passover, Days of Unleavened Bread, the Sabbath, and the other commandments and statutes, He reiterated that Abib was the beginning of months, of moons, Exodus 12:1-2. The keeping of proper time is just that important to God, Genesis 2:14.

The proper keeping of time according to God's way has never been lost! Jesus observed the Holy Days according to the same Sacred Calendar we have today. Unto the Jews has been committed for safe-keeping this divinely-revealed truth, Romans 3:1-2, Deuteronomy 29:29.

How Many Different Types of Days Has God Ordained?

God has ordained three distinct types of days which He wants us to observe: (1) weekly Sabbaths, (2) New Moons, and (3) Feast Days, or Holy Days.

Read Colossians 2:16-17. Notice that the "is" of verse 17 is in italics, and is not part of the original Greek. These verses say: "Don't let any man judge you, but let the body of Christ _ His Word _ do the judging," in regards to Holy Days, New Moons and Sabbaths.

Now turn to I Chronicles 23:31. Special burnt sacrifices were offered on these three special times, Numbers 28:3, 9, 11, 19, 26-27; also see II Chronicles 2:4, 8:12-13, 31:3, Ezra 3:4-5, Nehemiah 10:33.

Are burnt offerings necessary today? Daniel 9:26-27, Hebrews 10:1-14. What kind of sacrifices does God require of us? I Peter 2:5, Romans 12:1-2.

HOW Are New Moons to be Observed?

Read Numbers 10:10. Trumpets were to be blown on the Sabbaths and "solemn days [moed, appointed times]" and New Moons as an integral part of the burnt offerings and sacrifices of those days. Also see Numbers 28:11, 14.

Some have argued that since sacrifices were given on the New Moons and Feast Days that we no longer have to observe these days. If this were true, then the Sabbath is not to be observed either, because special sacrifices were commanded on every Sabbath also, Numbers 28:9-10. Were sacrifices and burnt offerings originally a part of these days? Jeremiah 7:22-23, Galatians 3:19, and Hebrews 10:8.

Were the New Moons to be times of gladness? Psalms 81:1-3. Is the observance of New Moons part of God's statutes and laws? Verse 4. Are we to remember these statutes? Malachi 4:4.

New Moons were a time of assembly of the whole congregation, Numbers 1:1, 18, 10:2. A time to meet together to decide a religious question, Ezra 10:16-17. King Saul had a special gathering each New Moon, at which David was expected to attend, I Samuel 20:5, 18, 24.

The New Moon with the Sabbath was a time to seek fellowship and be taught by a man of God, II Kings 4:23, the case of the Shunammite and Elisha.

Isn't the New Moon somewhat like the Sabbath, in that full-scale pursuit of work is not to be done? Amos 8:4-5. NOTE: The Bible does not command cessation of work on the New Moons (except the Holy Day of Trumpets). New Moons are a time to seek God, fellowship with others if possible, spend extra time in prayer and Bible Study.

Will the New Moons Be Observed During the Millennium?

After the devastation of the Day of the LORD, Isaiah 66:15-16, God says, verse 23, "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."

Like the weekly Sabbath, the monthly New Moon is to be a time of religious assembly and worship. Unlike the Sabbath, the New Moons are not days on which servile work is prohibited.

Ezekiel chapters 40-47 give a prophecy of the re-established Temple during the Millennium, when God brings Israel again out of captivity and puts His Spirit in them, Ezekiel 39:25, 29. The Eternal will then dwell in Jerusalem for ever, Ezekiel 43:9, 48:35.

At this time, the Feasts, New Moons and Sabbaths shall be kept, all three types of days, Ezekiel 45:17.

The eastern gate of the inner court of the rebuilt Temple will be shut six days, but opened on the Sabbath and also the New Moon, Ezekiel 46:1.

People of the land will worship before the Eternal on the Sabbaths and on the New Moons, Ezekiel 46:3.

Again, the sacrifices of the New Moons, Sabbaths and Feasts will be instituted, Ezekiel 46:6, 11-12, for those who must have a schoolmaster to bring them unto Christ, Galatians 3:24. Those who have accepted Christ and are living by faith, will they also offer animal sacrifices? See Galatians 3:25-27.

What is the Spiritual Significance of the Moon?

The moon is God's primary indicator of His Holy Days, Hebrew moed in Psalms 104:19 and Genesis 1:14.

It is a reminder that God will fight for us, just as He did in Joshua's Long day, Joshua 10:13-14. He will preserve us from evil so that we will not be smitten by His plagues on the unjust, Psalms 121:1-8, 91:5-14. The moon reminds us that man is a worm, just as the moon is not clean in God's sight, so we are unclean before the Eternal. All must be cleaned up, Job 25:4-6.

The moon reminds us of the purpose for which God created man: to rule with Him and become sons in His Kingdom, Psalms 8:3-6, Hebrews 2:6-8.

Israel was delivered from Egypt under the light of the full moon of the first month. Do we remember this when we see the full moon on the Night To Be Much Remembered? Exodus 12:2, 41-42, Deuteronomy 16:1.

The moon and stars rule by night, showing that God's mercy endures forever, Psalms 136:9.

To those chastened by God, their days of life become months of vanity unless they learn their lesson, Job 7:3, 29:2.

A month is representative of the time to bewail dead family, relatives, and forget our past ways, Deuteronomy 21:10-13, Isaiah 45:10.

God knows exactly the number of months the wild goats take to deliver their young, Job 39:1-2. He even knows the number of months of a man's life, Job 14:5, 21:21. Though we don't know these things, what should we do? Psalms 90:10-16. We need God's help to learn the lesson we're supposed to from our trials.

The sun, moon, and stars praise the Eternal and tell of his power, Psalms 148:3. Why don't we?

The moon reminds us of God's blessings to Joseph, Deuteronomy 33:13-14. A month, or moon, is symbolic of a time of punishment upon shepherds that do not feed the flock, Zechariah 11:3-17.

Is the Moon a Symbol, or Witness?

The moon is symbolic of God's lasting covenant with Israel and David, despite their sins, and ours, Psalms 89:3-4, 27-37, Job 16:19, Jeremiah 31:35-37, 33:20-26. It is also symbolic of the eternal endurance of Christ's Kingdom, Psalms 72:1-11.

Is Worship of the Sun, Moon and Stars Condemned?

Even though the moon is a reminder of our deliverance from Egypt, we are never to worship the sun, moon and stars, Deuteronomy 4:14-20.

Under the civil government of the nation of Israel, what was the penalty for worshipping the sun, moon and of the host of heaven? Deuteronomy 17:2-5.

Was worship of the sun, moon and stars part of the false system of Baal worship? II Kings 23:5, 11. Notice the marginal note for the word "planets." What is meant is the twelve signs, or constellations, the twelve signs of zodiac, the foundation for astrology. Is the end result of such worship demon-possession, lunacy? Matthew 4:24, 17:15. The word for lunatic is seleeniazomai, moon struck.

Job knew that kissing the hand in worshipping the moon was an iniquity to be punished by the judge, for worship of the sun and moon is a denial of God, Job 31:26-28.

NOTE: the Jamieson, Fausset and Brown Commentary under Job 31:26 states that Sabaism (from tsaba, the heavenly hosts) was the earliest form of false worship. In contradistinction, God is called "Lord of Sabaoth, or Hosts." God made the heavenly hosts, He, and not they, are to be worshipped. Jamieson notes that our planetary week of Sun-day, Mon-day show traces of Sabaisin, or worship of the heavenly host.

Our present planetary week is of Greek origin, with traces of Babylonian influence. The names of the days of the week correspond to the seven greatest lights or "stars" one of which was thought to "rule" each day of the week. These astral bodies were held to the gods and worshipped. English names for the days of the week were derived from the Saxons, who renamed the Greek/Latin gods after their own.

LATIN	SAXON	ENGLISH
Dies Solis	Sun's Day	Sunday Dies
Lunae	Moon's Day	Monday
Dies Martes (Mars)	Tiw's Day	Tuesday
Dies Mercurii (Mercury)	Woden's Day	Wednesday
Dies Jovis (Jupiter)	Thor's Day	Thursday
Dies Venens (Venus)	Frigg's Day	Friday
Dies Saturni (Saturn)	Seterne's Day	Saturday

The western calendar in use today is of Roman origin. The names of the months were given to reflect either a Roman god (January-Janus, two faced god, February-februarius, Roman feast of purification held on February 15. March-Mars, god of war, April-aprills, from Greek Aphrodite, goddess of love, May-Main, goddess associated with Vulcan, June-Juno, a Roman goddess) or Roman emperor (July-Julius Caesar, August-Augustus Caesar) or the number of the month (September-the seventh month, October, November, December, the eighth, ninth and tenth months). Originally, March was the first month, and February was the last month (with the intercalary February 29 added at the end of the year). In 153 B.C., January was recognized as the first month. Julius Caesar reformed the old Roman calendar in 45 B.C., and Pope Gregory further modified it in 1582 which is the system used by most of the world today.

Pagan to the core, the calendar and planetary week of the world masks and precludes the true Sacred Calendar God wants us to follow, to keep in mind His Sabbath, Feast Days and New Moons.

Is it a light thing in the sight of God to so worship the sun, moon and host of heaven? Ezekiel 8:16-18.

Does God want us to remain in an observance of such days, months, times and years? Galatians 4:8-11. What instead does God want us to observe? Leviticus 23:2. Does God begin His year with January 1? Exodus 12:2, 13:4.

Will God Punish For Worshipping the Heavenly Host?

The sun will be darkened, stars and moon will not give their light because of sin, Isaiah 13:9-13, Ezekiel 32:7-8, Joel 2:10-11, 13, 3:15, Habakkuk 3:11-12, Acts 2:20, Matthew 24:29, Revelation 6:12, 8:12.

What shall we do now, before God's intervention in world affairs? Ecclesiastes 12:1-2.

What will also happen at a slightly different time? Isaiah 30:26, Revelation 16:8-9. Will astrologers be able to save us? Isaiah 47:13.

What is God's punishment for those who have loved, served and walked, after the sun, moon, and host of heaven? Jeremiah 8:1-3.

Does God even scold his own people for not knowing His times? Jeremiah 8:7. Yet do they claim to have God's law? Verse 8. NOTE: The word for "appointed times" in verse 7 is moed, the same word used for God's Holy Days, Leviticus 23:2. A "dumb" stork knows its time to migrate, the time to bear its young, yet some of God's own people don't know His judgments, His times. Why? Because they are observing wrong days, times, months, and years, Galatians 4:8-11.

God Hates Corruption of Sabbaths, Feast Days, New Moons

Is God angry at corrupted observance of His times? Isaiah 1:10-15. Will there be a small remnant who shall nevertheless remain faithful? Verse 9.

Will God cause polluted observance of His days to cease? Hosea 2:6-13, Amos 8:4-10.

Are these events destined to occur in the last days, just prior to Christ's Kingdom being established? Isaiah 2:2, Hosea 2:18, Amos 8:9, 11.

What Will Happen to the Sun and Moon in God's Kingdom?

How will the moon and sun be confounded in that day? Isaiah 24:23, Isaiah 60:1-22.

Will there be need of the light of the sun and the moon? Revelation 22:3-5. Yet will there still be a sun and moon, and twelve months in the year? Verses 1-2. Why? Genesis 1:14, God's times will continue to be delineated by the sun and moon to tell us when His times and seasons occur.

Did God's Prophets and Servants Know His Days and Times?

Visions of God came often to Ezekiel. He knew the date of these visions according to God's calendar, Ezekiel 1:1-2, 8:1, 20:1, 24:1, 26:1, 29:1, etc.

Haggai also marked the time when God directed him, Haggai 1:1, 15, 2:1, 20. So did Zechariah, Zechariah 1:1, 7, 7:1 and Daniel, Daniel 10:4-7. NOTE: God spoke to and led men who followed His manner of keeping time. He still does, Malachi 3:6. Not once did one of His prophets say, "On April 15, God's word came unto me." Storks know their times. Do we know God's times? Consider well Jeremiah 8:7.

Is the Moon Symbolic of the Christian Church?

Do the sun, moon, and stars show that there will be a difference in the resurrection from the dead? I Corinthians 15:35-44.

How is God's Church through the ages symbolically pictured? Revelation 12:1. Of what does "the moon under her feet" remind us? Psalms 8:3-6. NOTE: All things, Hebrews 2:6-8, will eventually be placed under those who become part of the Church and the Family of God. "But now we see not yet all things put under him, (man)" Hebrews 2:8, last part. In preparation for rulership over all things, the Church is to shine like the sun, Matthew 5:16. The moon is to be under her feet. The Church is to "walk" or follow, God's Sabbaths, Holy Days and New Moons so as to prepare to rule the very astral bodies in the future. The sun and moon determine these times God wants us to follow. Only those who have "the moon under their feet," who walk the way of God's appointed times, moed, will be part of the glorious resurrection, to shine like the sun and the moon and the stars, I Corinthians 15:40-44.

How did Solomon picture the glorified resurrected Church? Song of Solomon 6:10. How did Daniel represent her? Daniel 12:2-3.

CONCLUSION: Do You Stop With the Sabbath and Holy Days?

Some professing Christians observe none of God's appointed times. Instead, they keep Sunday, Easter, Christmas, and other days steeped in pagan customs.

Others observe only the weekly Sabbath, maintaining that the Feast Days were nailed to the cross. Still others observe the weekly Sabbath plus Passover on the fourteenth day of the first month of God's calendar. For these, however, the Holy Days are not for the "Christian Dispensation." Finally there are those who observe the weekly Sabbath, Passover, and Holy Days. Yet most of these latter groups observe Passover and/or Pentecost on an incorrect date. Like sheep, all mankind has gone astray.

The question has been asked, "Do you stop with the weekly Sabbath and Passover?" The world only sees a dead Christ on the cross, and has not come out of sin nor received the Holy Spirit to put away sin (pictured by the Feast of Unleavened Bread and Pentecost, I Corinthians 5:7-8, Acts 2:1-4). The Sabbath, Passover, and the Holy Days are definitely for the Christian.

But is that all? What about the New Moons, also appointed times of the Eternal God? The true God doesn't change His appointments, Malachi 3:6. New Moons were, are, and will be, observed by true followers of God, Psalms 81:3-4, Isaiah 66:23. Down through the ages, certain followers of God have remembered the first day of each month as a special time of prayer, study and worship of the Eternal God. Some in the Church of God, Seventh Day observed the New Moons in the mid-1920's (see Remnant of Israel, December 1927).

It is a little-known fact that Herbert W. Armstrong conducted Bible Studies on each New Moon during the early years of his work. In subsequent years this practice was discontinued. Much later, the practice of keeping New Moons was even ridiculed.

For those who wish to obey God completely, the monthly New Moon remains "a faithful witness in heaven," of God's sure promises and man's need of repentance, Psalms 89:37. The blast of the Levitical trumpet signified the beginning of a new month, Numbers 10:1-10. The New Moon should remind the true Christian of the return of Jesus Christ, Joel 2:1, 10-11, when He will make all things new, Acts 3:19-21 and Revelation 21:5. The New Moon should remind us of our imperative need to repent and turn to God now, Joel 2:12-15, so we will be spared during the terrible Day of the Eternal, verse 17.

After God's people do this, God will pour out His Spirit among His remnant people, Joel 2:28-32. These are they who undauntedly keep the Holy Days, New Moons and Sabbaths of the Eternal, regardless of what other men say, Colossians 2:16-17.

These are they who keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus, ever growing in the truth of God, recapturing lost truths, earnestly contending for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. Not stopping with merely the Sabbath and the Holy Days, the true follower of God must grow to have ALL of God's laws written in his heart and soul. With God's help he strives to obey all of God's perfect, immutable laws of liberty.

History repeats itself. God's people have forgotten Him and most of His laws and statutes for days without number, Jeremiah 2:32. the unconverted know and observe the

days of this world, steeped in paganism. God's people should know and observe the Eternal's days. Yet, paradoxically, those who claim to be God's people are often strangers to the days God has ordained. They can tell you when Christmas and New Year's Day are, but not God's Holy Days, nor His New Moons, nor His New Year. Today is very much as it was in the year 230 A.D., when the Catholic Tertullian wrote: "By us, who are strangers to Sabbaths, and new moons, and festivals, once acceptable to God, the Saturnalia (Christmas), the feasts of January, the Brumalia, and Matronalia are now frequented; gifts are carried to and fro, new year's day presents are made with din, and sports and banquets are celebrated with uproar; oh, how much more faithful are the heathen to their religion, who take special care to adopt no solemnity from the Christians" (from Tertullian's *De Idolatrica*, c. 14, volume i., page 682, cited in Hislop's *The Two Babylons*, page 93).

Those now made nigh unto God through the blood of Christ must not be strangers to His statutes which form the basis of our covenant with God, Ephesians 2:11-13, 19. Let us keep all of God's statutes binding upon us today, including the New Moons.

[NOTE: In order to follow God's calendar and observe the New Moons and Holy Days, be sure to read the companion article, "How Does God's Calendar Work?"]

40 SCRIPTURES ON THE NEW MOONS

by Marie Casale

God designed the observance of the New Moons as part of his plan for the spiritual nourishment of those he calls, just as the weekly Sabbaths and the annual Holy Days provide spiritual nourishment. We observe each New Moon with a special Bible Study. However, we are not required to cease from servile work on that day as on the Sabbath. Since God's sacred calendar is based on the lunar cycle, the observance of each New Moon encourages his people to maintain awareness of his calendar and his plan for mankind. As these scriptures show, the New Moons were observed by God's people during Old Testament times as well as apostolic times, and will be observed by all mankind as a Day of Worship after the return of Jesus Christ in the coming Kingdom of God.

1. Ge 1:14 And God 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, and for days, and years.

Ge 1:15 And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so.

Ge 1:16 And God made two great lights, the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also.

Ge 1:17 And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth.

Ge 1:18 And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good.

Ge 1:19 And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

Note: This is a general reference to the physical moon and its function. However, it also shows us the spiritual meaning of the church and its function as we read further.

2. Ge 8:5 And the waters decreased continually until the tenth month: in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, were the tops of the mountains seen.

Note: The first sight of land after the great flood was over occurred on a new moon.

3. Ge 8:13 And it came to pass in the six hundredth and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, the waters were dried up from off the earth: and Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and, behold, the face of the ground was dry.

4. Ge 37:9 And he (Joseph) dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me.

Ge 37:10 And he told it to his father, and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?

Note: Notice here that the moon is symbolic of Joseph's mother.

5. Ex 40:2 On the first day of the first month shalt thou set up the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation.

Ex 40:3 And thou shalt put therein the ark of the testimony, and cover the ark with the vail.

Ex 40:17 And it came to pass in the first month in the second year, on the first day of the month, that the tabernacle was reared up.

Note: This is the commandment that the very dwelling place of God was to be set up on the New Moon of the first month. This could very well apply to the future temple of which Ezekiel prophesied.

6. Lev 23:23 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,
Lev 23:24 Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, In the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall ye have a sabbath, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, an holy convocation.

Lev 23:25 Ye shall do no servile work therein: but ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD.

Note: This is the annual New Moon feast day, the Feast of Trumpets.

7. Num 1:1 And the LORD spake unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the tabernacle of the congregation, on the first day of the second month, in the second year after they were come out of the land of Egypt, saying,

Num 1:2 Take ye the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel, after their families, by the house of their fathers, with the number of their names, every male by their polls;

Num 1:3 From twenty years old and upward, all that are able to go forth to war in Israel: thou and Aaron shall number them by their armies.

Note: Continuing in verses 4-17, Moses appointed a leader from every tribe on this New Moon.

8. Num 1:18 And they assembled all the congregation together on the first day of the second month, and they declared their pedigrees after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, by their polls.

Num 1:19 As the LORD commanded Moses, so he numbered them in the wilderness of Sinai.

Note: The rest of the chapter, tells of their numbering on this New Moon.

9. Num 7:1 And it came to pass on the day that Moses had fully set up the tabernacle, and had anointed it, and sanctified it, and all the instruments thereof, both the altar and all the vessels thereof, and had anointed them, and sanctified them;

Num 7:2 That the princes of Israel, heads of the house of their fathers, who were the princes of the tribes, and were over them that were numbered, offered:

Note: As we know, the day that Moses had set up the tabernacle was the New Moon. (see Ex 40:2-3,17) The rest of this chapter tells how each prince offered from the day the tabernacle was set up for the next twelve days. Then they kept the Passover on the fourteenth of the month.

10. Num 10:10 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.

Note: This is the commandment to blow with the trumpet over the burnt offerings of the New Moons. The symbolism of blowing with the trumpets is found in Isa 58:1 "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins."

11. Num 28:11 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;

Num 28:12 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;

Num 28:13 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.

Num 28:14 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.

Note: This is the physical sacrifice which was required on the New Moons. As we know, under the New Covenant we are required to offer spiritual sacrifices. For example, Rom

12:1 says, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." (Please see the study on spiritual sacrifices.)

12. Num 29:1 And in the seventh month, on the first day of the month, ye shall have an holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work: it is a day of blowing the trumpets unto you.

Note: Verses 2-6 describe the sacrifices offered on this feast.

13. Num 33:38 And Aaron the priest went up into mount Hor at the commandment of the LORD, and died there, in the fortieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the first day of the fifth month.

Num 33:39 And Aaron was an hundred and twenty and three years old when he died in mount Hor.

14. De 1:3 And it came to pass in the fortieth year, in the eleventh month, on the first day of the month, that Moses spake unto the children of Israel, according unto all that the LORD had given him in commandment unto them;

Note: Continue reading the ENTIRE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY! This is the sermon which Moses preached on the first day of the eleventh month in the fortieth year of their wandering in the wilderness just before they were to go into the promised land and about a month before Moses' death.

15. De 33:13 And of Joseph he said, Blessed of the LORD be his land, for the precious things of heaven, for the dew, and for the deep that coucheth beneath,

De 33:14 And for the precious fruits brought forth by the sun, and for the precious things put forth by the moon (Margin: the months or moons)

Note: Here, when Jacob was blessing his sons, the greatest blessing was given to Joseph, part of which was the blessing of the New Moons.

16. 1Sa 20:5 And David said unto Jonathan, Behold, to morrow is the New Moon, and I should not fail to sit with the king at meat: but let me go, that I may hide myself in the field unto the third day at even.

1Sa 20:18 Then Jonathan said to David, To morrow is the New Moon: and thou shalt be missed, because thy seat will be empty.

1Sa 20:24 So David hid himself in the field: and when the New Moon was come, the king sat him down to eat meat.

Note: Apparently, at this time, the New Moon was a special occasion to dine with the King.

17. 2Ki 4:22 And she called unto her husband, and said, Send me, I pray thee, one of the young men, and one of the asses, that I may run to the man of God, and come again.

2Ki 4:23 And he said, Wherefore wilt thou go to him to day? it is neither New Moon, nor Sabbath. And she said, It shall be well.

Note: This was the incident of the woman whose son died whereupon she ran to fetch the prophet Elisha to pray over him. Her husband, who did not yet know the child died, was puzzled that she should go to see the prophet when it was neither the New Moon nor the Sabbath. This story reveals that it was customary to see him on the New Moons and the Sabbath days.

18. 1Chr 23:30 And to stand every morning to thank and praise the LORD, and likewise at even;

1Chr 23:31 And to offer all burnt sacrifices unto the LORD in the Sabbaths, in the New Moons, and on the set Feasts, by number, according to the order commanded unto them, continually before the LORD:

Note: This is speaking of the office of the Levites appointed by David for the service of the house of the Lord. This is an important verse because the true 'house of the Lord', Old Testament and New is identified by the keeping of these things including the New Moons.

19. 2Chr 2:4 Behold, I build an house to the name of the LORD my God, to dedicate it to him, and to burn before him sweet incense, and for the continual shewbread, and for the burnt offerings morning and evening, on the Sabbaths, and on the New Moons, and on the solemn Feasts of the LORD our God. This is an ordinance for ever to Israel.

2Chr 2:5 And the house which I build is great: for great is our God above all gods.

Note: This is the dedication of the house of the Lord which Solomon built. The word 'this' refers back to the required offerings and incense on these days. This offering is an ordinance forever. Here again the true house of the true God is identified by the keeping of these things.

20. 2Chr 8:12 Then Solomon offered burnt offerings unto the LORD on the altar of the LORD, which he had built before the porch,

2Chr 8:13 Even after a certain rate every day, offering according to the commandment of Moses, on the Sabbaths, and on the New Moons, and on the solemn Feasts, three times in the year, even in the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and in the Feast of Weeks, and in the Feast of Tabernacles.

21. 2Chr 29:16 And the priests went into the inner part of the house of the LORD, to cleanse it, and brought out all the uncleanness that they found in the temple of the LORD into the court of the house of the LORD. And the Levites took it, to carry it out abroad into the brook Kidron.

2Chr 29:17 Now they began on the first day of the first month to sanctify, and on the eighth day of the month came they to the porch of the LORD: so they sanctified the house of the LORD in eight days; and in the sixteenth day of the first month they made an end.

Note: This is speaking of the cleansing of the house of the Lord during the days of Hezekiah

22. 2Chr 31:2 And Hezekiah appointed the courses of the priests and the Levites after their courses, every man according to his service, the priests and Levites for burnt offerings and for peace offerings, to minister, and to give thanks, and to praise in the gates of the tents of the LORD.

2Chr 31:3 He appointed also the king's portion of his substance for the burnt offerings, to wit, for the morning and evening burnt offerings, and the burnt offerings for the Sabbaths, and for the New Moons, and for the Set Feasts, as it is written in the law of the LORD.

Note: After Hezekiah cleansed the house of the Lord he restored the offerings on the appointed days including the New Moons.

23. Ezz 3:5 And afterward offered the continual burnt offering, both of the New Moons, and of all the set Feasts of the LORD that were consecrated, and of every one that willingly offered a freewill offering unto the LORD.

Ezz 3:6 From the first day of the seventh month began they to offer burnt offerings unto the LORD. But the foundation of the temple of the LORD was not yet laid.

Note: This is speaking of the return of the captives to Jerusalem by the decree of Cyrus King of Persia who, when they returned began to rebuild the house of the Lord and restore the burnt offerings on the appointed days including the New Moons.

24. Ezz 7:8 And he (Ezra) came to Jerusalem in the fifth month, which was in the seventh year of the king.

Ezr 7:9 For upon the first day of the first month began he to go up from Babylon, and on the first day of the fifth month came he to Jerusalem, according to the good hand of his God upon him.

Ezr 7:10 For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments.

Note: The Lord made it possible for Ezra to return from the captivity to Jerusalem by the decree of Artaxerxes the king who granted him his request on this New Moon.

25. Ezr 10:16 And the children of the captivity did so. And Ezra the priest, with certain chief of the fathers, after the house of their fathers, and all of them by their names, were separated, and sat down in the first day of the tenth month to examine the matter.

Ezr 10:17 And they made an end with all the men that had taken strange wives by the first day of the first month.

Note: The matter they were discussing on these New Moons had to do with the taking of strange wives and their repentance of this transgression.

26. Ne 8:1 And all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street that was before the water gate; and they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded to Israel.

Ne 8:2 And Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding, upon the first day of the seventh month.

Ne 8:3 And he read therein before the street that was before the water gate from the morning until midday, before the men and the women, and those that could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law.

Ne 8:4 And Ezra the scribe stood upon a pulpit of wood, which they had made for the purpose; and beside him stood Mattithiah, and Shema, and Anaiah, and Urijah, and Hilkiah, and Maaseiah, on his right hand; and on his left hand, Pedaiah, and Mishael, and Malchiah, and Hashum, and Hashbadana, Zechariah, and Meshullam.

Ne 8:5 And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people; (for he was above all the people;) and when he opened it, all the people stood up:

Ne 8:6 And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God. And all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands: and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the LORD with their faces to the ground.

Note: Continue reading to verse 12. This was the Feast of Trumpets.

27. Ne 10:33 For the shewbread, and for the continual meat offering, and for the continual burnt offering, of the Sabbaths, of the New Moons, for the set feasts, and for the holy things, and for the sin offerings to make an atonement for Israel, and for all the work of the house of our God.

Ps 81:1 Sing aloud unto God our strength: make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob.

Ps 81:2 Take a psalm, and bring hither the timbrel, the pleasant harp with the psaltery.

Ps 81:3 Blow up the trumpet in the New Moon, in the time appointed, on our solemn Feast day.

Note: This entire psalm is for the occasion of the New Moon, probably for the 'feast day' of the Feast of Trumpets which is on the first day of the seventh month. However, trumpets were also to be blown on each New Moon.

28. Ps 104:19 He appointed the moon for seasons: the sun knoweth his going down.

Note: This concerns a general function of the moon.

29. Isa 1:12 When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts?

Isa 1:13 Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the New Moons and Sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting.

Isa 1:14 Your New Moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them.

Isa 1:15 And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood.

Isa 1:16 Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil;

Isa 1:17 Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.

Isa 1:18 Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

Isa 1:19 If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land:

Isa 1:20 But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.

Note: Some use this to say that the New Moons and Feast days are no longer required. In fact God hates them. If this were so then God hates prayers also (vs 15). What God is really saying here is that it does not matter if you keep the right days and say many prayers on the one hand if on the other hand you oppress people or leave out these other things such as taking care of the fatherless and the widow.

30. Isa 66:22 For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain.

Isa 66:23 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.

Note: This is perhaps one of the greatest proofs that it is God's will to keep the New Moon as a day of worship. This is a prophesy that all flesh shall come to do so.

31. Eze 26:1 And it came to pass in the eleventh year, in the first day of the month, that the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, **Note:** Continue reading to the end of chapter 28 the prophesy against Tyrus who is Satan (28:13).

32. Eze 31:1 And it came to pass in the eleventh year, in the third month, in the first day of the month, that the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

Note: Continue to the end of the chapter the prophesy against Pharaoh and Egypt.

33. Eze 32:1 And it came to pass in the twelfth year, in the twelfth month, in the first day of the month, that the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

Note: Continue to verse 16 the prophesy against Pharaoh and Egypt.

34. Eze 45:17 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.

Note: The New Moons is part of the new order of worship which shall be in the future temple in the Kingdom of God which Ezekiel saw in vision. The prince is probably Jesus Christ.

35. Eze 45:18 Thus saith the Lord GOD; In the first month, in the first day of the month, thou shalt take a young bullock without blemish, and cleanse the sanctuary:

Note: Here again, this refers to the new order of worship which shall be in the future temple in the Kingdom of God which Ezekiel saw in vision.

36. Eze 46:1 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.

Eze 46:2 And the prince shall enter by the way of the porch of that gate without, and shall stand by the post of the gate, and the priests shall prepare his burnt offering and his peace offerings, and he shall worship at the threshold of the gate: then he shall go forth; but the gate shall not be shut until the evening.

Eze 46:3 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.

Eze 46:4 And the burnt offering that the prince shall offer unto the LORD in the Sabbath day shall be six lambs without blemish, and a ram without blemish.

Eze 46:5 And the meat offering shall be an ephah for a ram, and the meat offering for the lambs as he shall be able to give, and an hin of oil to an ephah.

Eze 46:6 And in the day of the New Moon it shall be a young bullock without blemish, and six lambs, and a ram: they shall be without blemish.

Note: Here again, this refers to the new order of worship which shall be in the future temple in the Kingdom of God which Ezekiel saw in vision.

37. Ho 2:10 And now will I discover her lewdness in the sight of her lovers, and none shall deliver her out of mine hand.

Ho 2:11 I will also cause all her mirth to cease, her Feast days, her New Moons, and her Sabbaths, and all her solemn Feasts.

Ho 2:12 And I will destroy her vines and her fig trees, whereof she hath said, These are my rewards that my lovers have given me: and I will make them a forest, and the beasts of the field shall eat them.

Note: This is part of the prophesy of Hosea who ministered to the Northern Kingdom of Israel just before they went into the Assyrian captivity.

38. Am 8:4 Hear this, O ye that swallow up the needy, even to make the poor of the land to fail,

Am 8:5 Saying, When will the New Moon be gone, that we may sell corn? and the Sabbath, that we may set forth wheat, making the ephah small, and the shekel great, and falsifying the balances by deceit?

Am 8:6 That we may buy the poor for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes; yea, and sell the refuse of the wheat?

Note: A question was raised because of this verse, whether the New Moon is a required day of rest as is the Sabbath. At this time the Jews observed it as a day of rest. However, there is no command to do so. Also it is not called a holy day but seems to be stated in scripture as in a category by itself. (The Sabbaths, the New Moons, and the Feast Days) The New Moons is not listed in Lev 23 along with the other Feast Days. However, though the Jews were keeping the New Moons as a day of rest here, their ATTITUDE was, "O when is it going to be over with so that we may continue with our own business!" It was this ATTITUDE which the Lord was reproaching. You see that we may have this attitude with the Sabbaths and Holy Days as well as the New Moons.

39. Hag 1:1 In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, in the first day of the month, came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet unto Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, saying,

Note: This is concerning the Lord's commission for the rebuilding of the house of the Lord, Solomon's temple.

40. Col 2:16 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:

Col 2:17 Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.

Note: Some use this scripture to say that the New Moons and Sabbaths are no longer required. First of all Paul was speaking to Colosians who were formerly Greek idol worshippers who, when they converted to Christ now became Sabbath keepers as Paul himself was. (See study on the book of Acts) This actually shows that the Colosians were keeping these things since Paul said, "Let no man judge you concerning them". In the

second verse, the word 'is' is in italics showing that it was not originally there. So the true sense of the reading should be, "Let no man judge you concerning these things, but the body of Christ - let that judge you."

Another point is that this admonition follows along with the overview of the book of Colosians. Notice in chapt 2:8 that Paul says, "Beware lest ANY MAN SPOIL YOU through philosophy or vain deceit after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world and not after Christ." Then in verse 18 he says, Let NO MAN BEGUILLE YOU of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels..." Then here, he says, "Let NO MAN JUDGE YOU". To SPOIL or take away from you, to BEGUILLE or deceive you, and to JUDGE or condemn you are ways that MEN can possibly sabotage what you have in Christ.

Notice also here that the New Moons, Holy Days, and Sabbaths are a shadow of things to come. Does it make sense to say they are a shadow of things to come if they are done away?

MONTHS... 1) Abib or Nisan - April Ex 13:4... 2) Zif - May 1Ki 6:... 3) Sivan - June Est 8:9... 4) Tammuz - July Je 39:2, Zec 8:19... 5) Ab - Aug Num 33:38, Zec 7:3... 6) Elul - September Ne 6:15.. 7) Ethanim or Tisri - October 1Ki 8:2... 8) Bul - November 1Ki 6:38... 9) Chisleu - December Ezr 10:9... 10) Tebeth - January Est 2:16... 11) Sebat - February Zec 1:7... 12) Adar - Mar Est3:7.

THE NEW MOONS

by Marie Casale

Because the subject had come up concerning the New Moons and whether we should keep them, I was saying my prayer one morning and asked God to give us understanding on this subject. Immediately as I was asking it, this is the answer that flashed into my mind. "The astrologers study the stars and planets movements for the purpose of prophesy, right? Astrology is a counterfeit of God's New Moons because by observing them, God intends to give us a deeper understanding of prophesy." Because of this answer to prayer, my interest was kindled to do a Bible study on the New Moons. Included with this article is a list of every scripture in the Bible having to do with the New Moons.

There is a general principle found in Rom 1:20 which says that we can understand God or the spiritual things by looking at things that are physical. "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead..." I heard a sermon once where the minister said, "The physical universe is the analogy. The spiritual is the reality." We already know, for example, that our spiritual birth process is pictured by the physical birth process. Our spiritual marriage to Christ is pictured by physical marriage, etc. So, remembering this, I asked, "What is the meaning of the moon? The moon is a physical thing, but as an analogy of something spiritual, what does it mean?"

In Gen. 37:9, Joseph dreamed a dream. "...behold, the sun and the moon and the 11 stars made obeisance to me." In verse 10 this was interpreted by his father. "...his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?" The sun, then, was a type of father. The moon was a type of mother or woman. The stars represented his brothers. We already know that a woman is a type of the Church, so now we see that the moon is also a type of woman or church.

Notice how the physical moon fits the spiritual analogy. The moon does not generate any light at all. It merely reflects the light of the sun, just as we ought to reflect the light of our husband, Jesus Christ. Here are some scriptures showing this principle...

Jo 8:12 Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. Ps 119:105 Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

Mt 5:14 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

The moon is also responsible for the tides on the earth. It attracts the earth in obedience to the law of gravitation. The sun is vastly more massive than the moon but it lies at so great a distance that its tide raising influence is only 5/11 that of the moon. The moon attracts most strongly the side facing it, least the side furthest away from it. This difference in attractive force raises a tidal bulge which we know by its presence as high tide. When the attractive forces of the sun and moon combine - at new and full moon, the bulge is greatest and what are called "spring tides" result. When these two forces oppose, the bulge is least and "neap tides" result, at first and third quarter moon. The earth rotates under the tidal bulge bringing to almost every shore two high tides and two low tides every lunar day of 24 hours 50 minutes. We might meditate as to the spiritual meaning of this gravitational pull of the moon on the oceans by comparing these scriptures...

Ge 1:10 And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the WATERS called he SEAS: and God saw that it was good.

Rev 17:15 And he saith unto me, The WATERS which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are PEOPLES, AND MULTITUDES, AND NATIONS, AND TONGUES.

Jo 12:32 And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will DRAW all men unto me.

Isa 2:2 And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall FLOW unto it.

Isa 2:3 And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the HOUSE OF THE GOD OF JACOB; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

You see how these scriptures show the church's role in drawing mankind to Jesus Christ.

Another spiritual analogy we might draw has to do with the moon's cycle. Since the moon's cycle is a month and the moon is a type of woman, isn't it interesting that a woman has a monthly cycle in her body! Perhaps we can compare the moon's orbit around the earth to the menstrual cycle in women to understand the meaning of the law in Lev 15:19-33.

Lev 15:19 And if a woman have an issue, and her issue in her flesh be blood, she shall be put apart seven days: and whosoever toucheth her shall be unclean until the even.

Lev 15:20 And every thing that she lieth upon in her separation shall be unclean: every thing also that she sitteth upon shall be unclean.

Lev 15:21 And whosoever toucheth her bed shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even.

Lev 15:22 And whosoever toucheth any thing that she sat upon shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even.

Lev 15:23 And if it be on her bed, or on any thing whereon she sitteth, when he toucheth it, he shall be unclean until the even. Lev 15:24 And if any man lie with her at all, and her flowers be upon him, he shall be unclean seven days; and all the bed whereon he lieth shall be unclean.

Lev 15:25 And if a woman have an issue of her blood many days out of the time of her separation, or if it run beyond the time of her separation; all the days of the issue of her uncleanness shall be as the days of her separation: she shall be unclean.

Lev 15:26 Every bed whereon she lieth all the days of her issue shall be unto her as the bed of her separation: and whatsoever she sitteth upon shall be unclean, as the uncleanness of her separation.

Lev 15:27 And whosoever toucheth those things shall be unclean, and shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even.

Lev 15:28 But if she be cleansed of her issue, then she shall number to herself seven days, and after that she shall be clean. Lev 15:29 And on the eighth day she shall take unto her two turtles, or two young pigeons, and bring them unto the priest, to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

Lev 15:30 And the priest shall offer the one for a sin offering, and the other for a burnt offering; and the priest shall make an atonement for her before the LORD for the issue of her uncleanness.

Lev 15:31 Thus shall ye separate the children of Israel from their uncleanness; that they die not in their uncleanness, when they defile my tabernacle that is among them.

Lev 15:32 This is the law of him that hath an issue, and of him whose seed goeth from him, and is defiled therewith;

Lev 15:33 And of her that is sick of her flowers, and of him that hath an issue, of the man, and of the woman, and of him that lieth with her that is unclean.

What does menstruation represent spiritually? Notice the following scriptures...

Lam 1:9 Her (Jerusalem's) filthiness is in her skirts; she remembereth not her last end; therefore she came down wonderfully: she had no comforter...

Jer 2:34 Also in thy skirts (House of Israel) is found the blood of the souls of the poor innocents: I have not found it by secret search, but upon all these.

Na 3:5 Behold, I am against thee (Nineveh), saith the LORD of hosts; and I will discover thy skirts upon thy face, and I will shew the nations thy nakedness, and the kingdoms thy shame.

Eze 36:17 Son of man, when the house of Israel dwelt in their own land, they defiled it by their own way and by their doings: their way was before me as the uncleanness of a removed woman.

Eze 36:18 Wherefore I poured my fury upon them for the blood that they had shed upon the land, and for their idols wherewith they had polluted it:

Notice that the menstrual flow represents the bloodguiltiness of a nation and especially the house of Israel whereby they are to be put apart or "removed" out of God's sight. If you think about the removal of a menstrous woman in Lev. 15 in relation to the whole world, remembering the scripture, "A day to God is like a thousand years" (2Pe 3:8), you see that the whole world has been, because of their bloodguiltiness, separated from God the Father for a period of seven days (7000 years) and at the end of this time all mankind will be reunited with him.

Rev. 21:3 "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: ...And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God."

The New Moon is the time when the moon is just beginning to come up out of its dark phase during which it reflected no light at all. Notice these scriptures concerning spiritual darkness...

Pr 4:19 The way of the wicked is as darkness; they know not at what they stumble.

Jo 3:21 But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

Eph 5:8 For ye were sometimes darkness but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light

Eph 5:9 For the fruit of the spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;

Eph 5:10 Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord

Eph 5:11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness but rather reprove them

Eph 5:12 For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret

Eph 5:13 But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light

Col 1:13 Giving thanks unto the Father which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light

Col 1:14 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.

1Pe 2:9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light

1Jo 2:10 He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.

1Jo 2:11 But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.

The moon's brightness continues to increase until full moon at which time it reflects the most light. As an analogy, mid month is also the time when conception is most possible in women.

Eze 16:8 shows this: "Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I swore unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord GOD, and thou becamest mine."

In Gen 1:14 we read where God made the lights in the heavens. "And God 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, and for days, and years:" Seven reasons or purposes are listed for these lights. We might better understand our purpose as a church as we meditate on these.

1. To divide the day from the night.

1Thes 5:5 Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.

1Thes 5:6 Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.

1Thes 5:7 For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night.

1Thes 5:8 But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.

2. Signs

Isa 8:18 Behold, I and the children whom the LORD hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the LORD of hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion.

Mt 24:29 Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:

It might be interesting in connection with these signs to study eclipses. An eclipse of the moon occurs only when the moon is full. At this time it has a faint coppery glow (which can resemble blood) This could picture the time of the martyrdom of the saints

3. Seasons

Ps 104:19 He appointed the moon for seasons: the sun knoweth his going down.

Ec 3:1 To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:

4. Days (to keep track of time)

5. Years (to keep track of time)

6. To give light on the earth

Mt 5:14 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid.

2Co 4:6 For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

7. To rule over the day and over the night

Rev 2:26 And he that overcometh and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:

Rev 2:27 And he shall rule them with a rod of iron: as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers, even as I received of my Father.

The keeping of the New Moons helps us to remember, because of the cycle of light and darkness, that as long as we are in the flesh, we need the grace, forgiveness, and the correction of God. Ps 81:3, a command for the New Moons, says, "Blow up the trumpet in the new moon, in the time appointed, on our solemn feast day. One of the meanings of the blowing of trumpets is to lift up our voices like trumpets showing our people their

sins. As we keep the New Moons, then, let us pray that God will lighten all our darkness, remove all our blood guiltiness, and save us from all our sins so that we may come to our time of love which is the marriage of the church and the lamb.

**LOVE THE LORD WITH ALL YOUR HEART
MAY THE LORD BLESS AND KEEP YOU**

NEW MONTH DAYS?

By Keith Hunt

NEW MONTH DAYS FOR 1997

Jan 9 Feb 8 Mar 10 Apr 8 May 8 Jun 6 Aug 4 Sep 3 Oct 2 Nov 1 Dec 30

TWO SPECIFICS - NM DAYS SPECIAL TO GOD

1) Numbers 10:10. Two silver trumpets were to be blown on special days - the new month day was one of those days. 2) Numbers 28,29. Please read verses 16-19, and 26-27 of chapter 28. Now read verse 11 of same chapter. Also read verses 3, 9-10. The sacrifices on the new month days show that they were special to God.

NM DAYS WILL BE SPECIAL TO GOD IN THE MILLENNIUM

Isaiah 66:23. This verse has often been used by today's 7th day Sabbath observers in the church of God to show people that the Sabbath will be observed in the Kingdom of God on earth, but NOTICE - people will come to worship God also on the new month day in some form or another. Strange that people use this text to preach the Sabbath but ignore what it says about the new month day. Paul said the scripture was given for doctrine, to instruct, admonish, and correct us (2 Tim.3:16).

Ezekiel 46:1-3. Chapter 40 through 47 is a prophecy about the Millennium Temple. Notice the gate of the inner court that looks towards the east shall be shut the six working days, but on the Sabbath it is opened. And in the day of the new month it is opened. The people shall worship before the Lord at this gate on the Sabbath AND on the new month days.

WHAT THE NM DAYS ARE NOT

No where in the books of Moses are the new month days called "sabbaths." Nowhere are we told in the Bible that we cannot do our regular work on the new month day unless of course that day falls on a Sabbath.

HOW THE NM DAYS WERE CELEBRATED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

1 Samuel 20:5,18. It would seem people (families of people) would come together for fellowship meals.

2 Kings 4:23. It was a day people could go before the priest/minister of God.

THE NT CHURCH AND THE NM DAYS

Colossians 2:16. The predominantly Gentile church at Colossae was being judged by former friends and teachers etc. because they had accepted Christ as Messiah and Savior, and were now living by the laws of God which included not only the weekly Sabbath and Festivals of the Lord, but also the new month days.

GOD HAS THREE TYPES OF FESTIVALS

Many weekly Sabbath, annual Festival observers, have never been taught that God has not only a weekly festival(the Sabbath day) and annual festivals(as outlined in Lev.23)

BUT God also has a MONTHLY festival - the new month day. Thus making three types of festivals, namely, weekly, monthly, and annually.

HOW WE COULD OBSERVE THE NEW MONTH DAY TODAY

- 1) We could take less time watching TV, or doing our pleasures and more time in prayer, Bible study, and meditation on spiritual things. Visiting the sick, or the shut-ins. Writing letters of encouragement to others.
- 2) We could come together with other Christians for a meal and fellowship.
- 3) If there is a local church with minister/s, a Bible study hour could be arranged. If the church is a large one in membership, a number of in house Bible studies could be arranged among the leading members.

When I was pastoring in Ontario in the 80's the church was relatively small. On the new month days we would gather for a pot-luck fellowship meal and Bible study.

LAST WORD

The new month day is not a Sabbath. God allows our business to go on as usual. We must not become Pharisaical over new month observance. We must be very flexible and never judge others if they cannot fit into our invite or have arranged other plans of observance.

Be hospitable, kind, patient, and loving at all times.

[Written first in 1982]

The New Moon

by Bert Otten

JHWH decreed the Israelites to celebrate the New Moon; Saul, Jonathan and David used to have a feastmeal on the New Moon; at the time of Amos it was celebrated as a day of rest, which it will be again in the Millennium; Jesus was never reprimanded by anyone for contempt of the New Moon and Paul says that only God's Church, the Body of Christ, is to judge Christians regarding eating and drinking, sabbaths, New Moon and Feastday, at a time when the lunar calendar had been abandoned for more than a century by Rome.

God the Father created - through Jesus Christ - everything there is; so God is the Creator of time. He created both the sun and the moon, Genesis 1:14-19 (NIV throughout),

"And God said, 'Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark seasons and days and years, and let them be lights in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth.' And it was so. God made two great lights - the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars. God set them in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth, to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening, and there was morning - the fourth day."

God created the sun and the moon to mark seasons, days and years. The moon marks both the length of the month and the beginning and end of the month, a very important aspect of God's solar-lunar calendar.

Moreover, it is the beginning (New Moon) of a certain month (Tishri) which is the basis of calculation for God's Sacred Calendar.

Creation (Adam)

According to Jewish Tradition, the first Sabbath instituted by God fell on the 1st Tishri, on the New Moon of the first (later to be seventh) month, Genesis 2:2,

"By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day [New Moon - Rosh HaShanah - according to Jewish Tradition] he rested from all his work. And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done."

This is quite possible as the New Moon of the Feast of Trumpets (Rosh HaShanah) coincides regularly (30%) with the weekly Sabbath.

Flood (Noah)

The account of the Flood proves that God 'commemorated' the New Moon long before the Exodus. The story mentions five dates; two of these are New Moons!

17th, 2nd month (Heshvan),
17th, 7th month (Nisan),
1st, 10th m. (Tammuz), a New Moon,
1st, 1st m. (Tishri), a New Moon,
27th, 2nd month (Heshvan).

It was on the New Moon of the 10th month that the tops of the mountains became visible (Gn 8:5) and regarding the important New Moon of the first month the Bible says the following in Genesis 8:13,

"By the first day of the first month (New Moon!) of Noah's 601st year, the water had dried up from the earth. Noah then removed the covering from the ark and saw that the surface of the ground was dry".

God does things on time. He often makes events happen on important dates to help people remember, and also to express His Holy righteous character and purpose. Two of the five dates of Genesis 7 and 8 are New Moons.

One of the other dates is the 17th of the 7th month, later, after the change of the beginning of the year, called Abib (Nisan). It was on this day that the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. It was also on a 17th Abib (Nisan) that Christ was resurrected from the dead in A.D.31, another proof of God's perfect ways.

So both Jewish Tradition (very first Sabbath was a New Moon) and the Bible (the account of the Flood) not only testify to the early existence of the New Moon, but also its importance in God's eyes.

Exodus (Moses)

After Creation and the Flood, the New Moon is mentioned and officially instituted as a time of rejoicing at the time of the Exodus, at the time of Moses, Numbers 10:10,

"Also at your times of rejoicing - your appointed feasts and New Moon festivals - you are to sound the trumpets over your burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, and they will be a memorial for you before God. I am the Lord your God."

Although there is an obvious omission of the New Moon festival in Leviticus 23, where the 'appointed feasts of the Lord', both weekly and annually, are recorded, the New Moon is raised in Numbers 10:10 to a level close to that of the annual festivals. Trumpets were to be sounded not daily, not on the Sabbath, but rather on the New Moon festivals, as well as on God's appointed feasts. Both the New Moons and the Annual Holy Days are recorded here as 'your times of rejoicing'.

New Moon commanded

Clear proof that there is a command for the keeping of the New Moon, since its establishment at the Exodus can be found in Psalm 81:3-5,

"Blow up the trumpet in the new moon, in the time appointed, on our solemn feast day. For this was a statute for Israel [both physical and spiritual Israel], and a law of the God of Jacob. This he ordained in Joseph for a testimony, when he went out through the land of Egypt; where I heard a language that I understood not."(KJV)

The verses of this Psalm make very plain that the New Moon was instituted at the time of the Exodus, before arriving at Mount Sinai, before the so-called Mosaic law, or before the Old Covenant was established.

The Sabbath was not revealed to Israel at Mount Sinai, but rather a couple of weeks beforehand, when the Israelites were in the desert of Sin. By giving a double portion of manna on the sixth day and withholding the manna on the seventh day God taught Israel His Holy Sabbath Day, before arrival at Mount Sinai. Therefore the Sabbath cannot possibly be part of the Mosaic law. The same thing more or less goes for the New Moon.

Psalm 81 clearly states that the New Moon is a 'statute', a 'law of the God of Jacob', a 'testimony' and that it was instituted 'when he [Joseph = Israel] went out through the land of Egypt', so before the arrival at Mount Sinai, before the Ten Commandments were given, before the Law of Moses was given. The New Moon was even instituted before the miraculous revealing of the Sabbath to Israel!

In Egypt God had commanded Israel to select a goat or lamb on the 10th of Abib and to kill that Passover sacrifice 32 days later on the 14th Abib. Therefore Moses and Aaron had to sight the New Moon personally to make sure the selecting and killing would take place on the right date. The New Moon observance was of particular interest to keeping God's Feasts on the right dates and therefore the very first New Moon to be observed was the 1st Abib, two weeks before the Exodus.

According to Psalm 81 the New Moon was a 'statute for Israel' (both physical and spiritual), a 'law of God'! Ordained for a 'testimony'. What God has to say about 'laws,

commands, decrees, statutes and testimonies' can be studied in Psalm 119. Just a few extracts from this Psalm,

- teach me your decrees (v.26)
 - I will keep your law and obey it with all my heart (v.34)
 - turn my heart to your statutes (v.36)
 - for your laws are good (v.39)
 - I will always obey your law for ever and ever (v.44)
 - I remember your ancient laws, O Lord (v.52)
 - give me understanding to learn your command (v.73)
- God's laws, statutes and commandments are 'righteous' (v.75), 'trustworthy' (v.86), 'eternal' (v.89), 'boundless' (v.96), 'right' (v.128), 'wonderful' (v. 129), and 'true' (v.142), and so is the New Moon.

Abraham

Abraham kept God's commandments, statutes and laws, Genesis 26:5,

"Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, MY COMMANDMENTS, MY STATUTES, AND MY LAWS."

So Abraham most likely kept God's Sabbath and who knows, he may as well have commemorated the New Moon. Remember two historical New Moons had already been registrated by Noah at the time of the Flood. And the calendars known in those days were lunar-solar calendars.

Spiritual Israel

As the Church of God keeps the Sabbath, Passover and the Annual Festivals in a spiritual sense, likewise, there is a spiritual meaning for the blowing of trumpets, Isaiah 58:1,

"Shout it aloud, do not hold back. Raise your voice like a trumpet. Declare my people their rebellion and to the house of Jacob their sins."

A monthly Bible Study on the New Moon, or for practical reasons rather on the eve of the New Moon, would perfectly constitute a spiritual blowing of Trumpets as commanded in Psalm 81. Thus God would be revered on a daily, weekly, monthly and annual basis.

Joshua

After the 40 years in the desert the New Moon seems to have been elevated to the level of an annual Holy Day (Nu 28 and 29). God gave Moses instructions about all the offerings. The order is from smaller to bigger time units, and perhaps in order of importance,

- 1) daily offerings (every day)
(Nu 28:1-8)
- 2) weekly offerings (Sabbath)
(Nu 28:9-10)
- 3) monthly offerings (New Moon)
(Nu 28:11-15)
- 4) yearly offerings (Annual Feasts)
(Nu 28:16-29:39).

The offerings in the following chart will show that the New Moon seems to be closer to the Annual Festivals than to either the Sabbath or weekdays.

Every day two lambs were to be sacrificed, the morning and evening sacrifice. On the Sabbath two additional lambs were added to the daily sacrifice, thus four lambs were to be sacrificed on a weekly Sabbath.

New Moon Sacrifices

Numbers 28:11-15, "On the first of every month, present to the Lord a burnt offering of two young bulls, one ram and seven male lambs a year old, all without defect. With each bull there is to be a grain offering of three-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil; with the ram, a grain offering of two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil; and with each lamb, a grain offering of a tenth of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil. This is for a burnt offering, a pleasing aroma, an offering made to the Lord by fire. With each bull there is to be a drink offering of half a hin of wine; with the ram, a third of a hin; and with each lamb, a fourth of a hin. This is the monthly burnt offering to be made at EACH NEW MOON during the year. Besides the regular burnt offering with its drink offering, one male goat is to be presented to the Lord as a sin offering."

On the New Moon exactly the same number of animals were to be sacrificed as during the Days of Unleavened Bread and on the day of Pentecost. The Feast of Trumpets, Atonement and the Last Great Day nearly have the same pattern; only one bullock less is sacrificed. The sacrifices of the New Moon are clearly not those of a normal working day, even if there is no clear command for a sacred assembly or for abstention from regular work.

Remember, neither Passover nor the intermediate days of Unleavened Bread are Sabbaths either! Nor are the middle days of the Feast of Tabernacles. Thus the New Moon has at least a status, a level, equivalent to one of those; a feast day (Nu 10:10), a day to commemorate without (for the moment) the absolute command to abstain from work.

King Saul

One way to commemorate this festival is by having a special meal on the eve of the New Moon. This manner of celebrating the New Moon apparently was a custom in the days of King Saul, I Samuel 20:5,

"So David said 'Look, tomorrow is the New Moon festival, and I am supposed to dine with the king; but let me go and hide in the field until the evening of the day after tomorrow.'"

It was a habit of King Saul to have a meal on the New Moon Festival with his men, I Samuel 20:18 and 24,

"Then Jonathan said to David: 'Tomorrow is the New Moon festival. You will be missed, because your seat will be empty.' ... So David hid in the field, and when the New Moon festival came, the king sat down to eat."

The New Moon is a time of rejoicing. One of the best ways to rejoice is to have a meal with relatives and friends.

David

King David divided the Levites into three divisions as well as eight clans to help Aaron's descendants in the service of the temple of the Lord and to thank and praise the Lord every morning and evening,

I Chronicles 23:30-31, "They [the Levites] were also to stand [1] every morning to thank and praise the Lord. They were to do the same in [1] the evening and whenever burnt offerings were presented to the Lord on [2] Sabbaths and at [3] New Moon festivals and at [4] appointed feasts. They were to serve before the Lord regularly in the proper number and in the way prescribed for them."

This clearly shows that the New Moon festival had a permanent place in the worship of the Eternal. The enumeration of 1) daily, 2) weekly, 3) monthly and 4) yearly worship is mentioned eight (the number of salvation) times in scripture (Nu 28 & 29; I Chr 23:31; II Chr 2:4; 8:13; 31:13; Ezr 3:5; Ne 10:33; Col 2:16).

God - Creator of Time

God is the Creator of time and should be recognized as such, therefore God should be worshipped,

[1] daily (every morning and evening)

[2] weekly (every 7th day Sabbath)

[3] monthly (every New Moon)

[4] annually (every Annual Festival)

The number four denotes testing and judgement. The above mentioned series of time units can be extended by another three,

[5] every seven years (Sabbath Year, 7 year cycle)

[6] every nineteen years (Calendar, 19 year cycle)

[7] every fifty years (Jubilee Year, 50 year cycle)

Thus coming to seven (the number of perfection) time units. The latter three will be universally applied in the Messianic Kingdom.

The eighth and last of God's created time periods mentioned in the Bible is,

[8] every 1,000 years (with the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day)

Thus completing a perfect circle as both the first and the eighth are the same - a day - either a day of 24 hours or a day of 1,000 years. The cycle starts again, like the seven day week; like the first and eighth day of the Feast of Tabernacles. Eight stands for salvation. There are Eight Appointed Feasts picturing salvation (Lev 23). Eight souls were saved on Noah's Ark, circumcision was on the eighth day and there are also eight time units created by God,

1) day

2) week

3) month

4) year

5) 7 year cycle

6) 19 year cycle

7) 50 year cycle

8) 1,000 year day

All these time periods are marked by either the sun or by both the sun and the moon. On the fourth day God created the sun and moon, to mark seasons, days and years.

Solomon

King Solomon followed in the footsteps of his father David in celebrating the New Moon Festival, II Chronicles 2:3-4,

"Solomon sent this message to Hiram king of Tyre: 'Send me cedar logs as you did for my father David when you sent him cedar to build a palace to live in. Now I am to build a temple for the Name of the Lord my God and to dedicate it to him for burning fragrant incense before him, for setting out the consecrated bread regularly, and for making burnt offerings [1] every morning and evening [2] and on the Sabbaths [3] and New Moons and [4] at the appointed feasts of the Lord our God. This is a LASTING ORDINANCE for Israel."

The keeping of the New Moon is hereby declared 'a lasting ordinance for Israel'. When the ceremonial offerings and sacrifices disappear, the spiritual worshipping of the Eternal on a [1] daily (morning and evening prayer), [2] weekly (Sabbath), [3] monthly (New Moon) and [4] annual (God's Holy Days) basis remains for New Testament Israel, the Church of God. It is a lasting ordinance for Israel.

Another verse concerning Solomon and the New Moon Festival, II Chronicles 8:12-13,

"... Solomon sacrificed burnt offerings to the Lord, according to the [1] daily requirement for offerings commanded by Moses for [2] Sabbaths, [3] New Moons and [4] the three annual feasts - the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Weeks and the Feast of Tabernacles."

Solomon celebrated the New Moon like his father David, king Saul, Jonathan, Joshua and Moses, and even perhaps his ancestor Abraham, did before him. God said He would give Solomon a wise and discerning heart.

Elisha (Prophet in Israel)

Once Israel had been divided into two kingdoms, God fearing people still celebrated the New Moon in both societies. Spreading idolatry did not replace God's Law everywhere at once.

The story of a well-to-do woman in Shunem, in the territory of Issachar (Issachar's emblem is the sun and moon!), shows this. The Shunammite had a guest room made, especially for Elisha. As she had no children and both she and her husband were old, Elisha promised they would have a son. She did conceive and had a son the following year, however the child died in infancy, II Kings 4:21-23,

"She went up and laid him on the bed of the man of God, then shut the door and went out. She called her husband and said, 'Please send me one of the servants and a donkey so that I can go to the man of God quickly and return.' 'Why go to him today?' he asked. 'It's not the New Moon or the Sabbath.' 'It's all right,' she said."

The 'NIV Study Bible' about this verse, page 518, "Why go to him today? The question suggests that ... on this occasion the timing of her visit was unusual. It's not the New Moon or the Sabbath. The Sabbath and the New Moon were observed by cessation from work (see notes on Ge 2:3; Ex 16:23; 20:9-10; I Sa 20:5; see also Lev 23:3)."

The Shunammite woman apparently had the habit of going to see Elisha on either the New Moon or the Sabbath. Elisha was a prophet in the northern House of Israel, not involved really in the Temple service of Judah. Why go and see him, if it were not to be taught by the prophet, from the word of God, on these important days!

Hezekiah (King of Judah)

After the Passover of Repentance (II Chr 29 and 30) Hezekiah, king of the House of Judah, reinstated, among other things, the observance of the New Moon, II Chronicles 31:3,

"The king contributed from his own possessions for the [1] morning and evening burnt offerings and for the burnt offerings on the [2] Sabbaths, [3] New Moons and [4] appointed feasts as written in the Law of the Lord."

Whenever God's religion was restored, the commemorating of the New Moon - more often than not - was part of it.

Ezra and Nehemiah

Ezra, another restorer of God's true religion, reinstated the New Moon as well, Ezra 3:5-6,

"After that, they presented the regular burnt offerings, the New Moon sacrifices and the sacrifices for all the appointed feasts of the Lord, as well as those brought as freewill offerings to the Lord. On the first day of the seventh month [New Moon!] they began to offer burnt offerings to the Lord, though the foundation of the Lord's temple had not yet been laid."

Quite a while later the keeping of the New Moon is reaffirmed in Nehemiah 10:32-33,

"We assume the responsibility for carrying out the commands to give ... each year for the service of the house of God: ... for the [1] regular grain offerings and burnt offerings; for the offerings on the [2] Sabbaths, [3] New Moon festivals and [4] appointed feasts ... to make atonement for Israel; ..."

Another element is revealed here, 'to make atonement for Israel'. Israel had to be atoned for, not just daily, weekly and annually, but also monthly.

The Prophets

A number of times the New Moon seemed to be addressed in a negative manner by certain prophets, Isaiah 1:13-14,

"Stop bringing meaningless offerings! Your incense is detestable to me. New Moons, Sabbaths and convocations - I cannot bear your evil assemblies. Your New Moon festivals and your appointed feasts my soul hates. They have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them."

What does this verse not say? It does not say not to keep God's Sabbaths, God's New Moons and God's Festivals! It only expresses God's anger about Israel's sins and

transgressions and their evil attitude. Their evil deeds on their working days, Sabbaths, New Moons and Festivals were an abomination to God.

God created all time periods, 1) the day, 2) the week, 3) the month and 4) the year. The very first sabbath was a New Moon (Rosh HaShanah), according to Jewish Tradition. The New Moon preceded the Covenant at Mount Horeb; it played a role at the Flood and at the Exodus. The New Moon became a day of rejoicing. Were the prophets Isaiah and Amos negative about the New Moon?

A number of times the New Moon seemed to have been addressed in a negative manner by certain of the prophets, Isaiah 1:13-14,

"Stop bringing meaningless offerings! Your incense is detestable to me. New Moons, Sabbaths and convocations - I cannot bear your evil assemblies. Your New Moon festivals and your appointed feasts my soul hates. They have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them."

What does this verse not say? It does not say not to keep God's Sabbaths, God's New Moons and God's Festivals! It only expresses God's anger about Israel's sins and transgressions and their evil attitude. Their evil deeds on their working days, Sabbaths, New Moons and Festivals were an abomination to God.

When man keeps God's Sabbath in his own way it stops being God's Sabbath and becomes man's Sabbath.

The last chapter of Isaiah prophesies that the New Moon will be reinstated in the Millennium, so the prophet Isaiah is not negative about the New Moon at all (Is 66:22-23).

Man's Festivals

Hosea's prophecies are mainly directed to Israel in the endtime, first and foremost to the Anglo-Saxon world and secondly to the other Israelite nations, Hosea 2:11,

"I will stop ALL her celebrations [birthdays; Bank holidays; student-parties]
her yearly festivals [Christmas; Easter; Whitsun; Carnival]
her New Moons [New Year's Day; April Fool's Day; Labour Day]
her Sabbath Days [Sundays; 25th December; 1st January]
ALL her appointed feasts [Valentine's Day; Halloween; 4th July; Epiphany;
Saint Nicolas; All Saints Day; Mother's Day; Father's Day; 14th July; etc]"

God says He will do away with all these celebrations. Many are sinful and most are redundant. God has provided enough feast days for man, about eighty,

Sabbaths	52
New Moons	12/13
Feast Days:	
Passover & Unleavened Bread	8
Pentecost	1
Trumpets	1
Atonement	1
Tabernacles & Last Great Day	8
<u>Subtotal</u>	<u>19</u>
Total days of rejoicing	83/84

As some Sabbaths coincide with New Moons or Feast days, there are roughly 80 days appointed by God for feasting (Le 23:1-3) and rejoicing (Nu 10:10). Deducted from 360 days in a year this leaves about 280 days for work. Forty weeks or 280 days is also the length of an average human pregnancy. God is the supreme Creator of time and the eternal Lawgiver of how it is to be spent.

Amos

Ancient and modern Israel spent God's time the wrong way. God accused Israel of desecrating His Holy time, Amos 8: 4-5,

"Hear this, you who trample the needy and do away with the poor of the land, saying, 'When will the New Moon be over that we may sell grain, and the Sabbath be ended that we may market wheat?' - skimping the measure, boosting the price and cheating with dishonest scales."

Although this prophecy is dual, and even if this verse does not command commemorating the New Moon the way Psalm 81 does, it still indicates that the New Moon was kept as a Sabbath at the time of Amos, and furthermore it encourages the keeping of God's Sabbaths and New Moons with a contrite, repentant heart, combined with a God fearing life-style.

Jesus Christ

The Pharisees accused Jesus of many things including; eating and drinking, not demanding his disciples to fast, keeping the wrong kind of company (sinners and tax-collectors), healing on the Sabbath and picking wheat on the Sabbath.

However, He was not attacked for regarding the Annual Festivals, the New Moons and the Sabbaths as working days. Christ therefore must have kept the New Moons He Himself had created. He refused to abstain from doing good, from healing, on the Sabbaths and festivals, which attracted the main criticism from the Scribes and Pharisees. They saw healing as work, instead of seeing it as doing good.

The Apostle Paul

The apostle Paul admonished the early Church to follow him, the way he followed Christ. Christ commemorated the New Moon and consequently Paul did as well.

Circumcision for the gentiles and sacrifices were no longer mandatory and therefore became issues that Paul had to address. The fact that neither the Sabbath, nor God's Festivals were ever dealt with in the epistles proves that the New Testament Church of God kept both the Sabbath and the seven Annual Festivals.

God's Church

That line of reasoning is also valid for the New Moon; it was not an issue, not a problem, for the simple reason that it was kept, commemorated. It had to be! To know when the Feasts would be! There were no computer print-outs available showing on the Roman Calendar when all of God's Festivals would be. The fact the early Church kept the Festivals proves that they carefully kept and counted all the New Moons!

The enumeration in the epistle to the Colossians (2:16-17) suggests that the New Moons were kept, like the Sabbaths and the Holy Days were! Paul exhorts the Colossians to let the Church (Body of Christ) teach them how to keep Feastdays, New Moons and Sabbaths, and not to let themselves be judged in these matters by outsiders, neither Gentiles nor Jews, Colossians 2:16-17,

"Let no man therefore judge you in [1] meat, or in [1] drink [daily], or in respect of [4] an holyday, or of the [3] new moon, or of the [2] sabbath (days): Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body (is) of Christ." (KJV)

All four elements of 1) daily, 2) weekly, 3) monthly and 4) annual worship of the Eternal are included again. This verse neither does away with the New Moon, nor with the Feasts, nor with the Sabbath! It confirms all three of them.

In the past 1900 years there have been Sabbath keeping people from time to time, who not only kept God's Annual Festivals, but also the New Moons. These people were most probably part of God's true Church.

Crescendo of Truth

God often restores knowledge to His people in a long, slow process. The General Conference of the Churches of God and the Church of God, Seventh Day, kept the Sabbath in the 1930's. And so did all their shoot-offs.

Since 1934 the Radio Church of God (1968 - Worldwide Church of God) has kept both the weekly Sabbath and God's appointed Feasts. All the shoot-offs of this Church have kept both the Sabbath and the annual Festivals.

New Moon - AD 1994

Some have moved on and keep both the Sabbaths and God's appointed Feasts on the one hand, and the New Moon on the other. New Moons are kept or commemorated by the Biblical Church of God and the Christian Biblical Church of God in the United States of America and by the Church of God in the Netherlands, (New Moon - Seventh Day). Many individuals (about 50) in the Netherlands, who are lay-members of the Worldwide Church of God, the Global Church of God and the Philadelphia Church of God, keep the New Moon on an individual basis, in spite of the fact their Churches do not teach the New Moon.

Apparently there are also groups of Messianic Jews in the United States of America, which teach and celebrate the New Moon.

New Moon in the Millennium

In the Millennium the New Moon will be celebrated by both Israelites and gentiles. All of mankind will worship God both on the Sabbath and on the New Moon, Isaiah 66:22-23,

"'As the new heavens and the new earth that I make will endure before me,' declares the Lord, 'so will your name and descendants endure. From one New Moon to another and from one Sabbath to another, ALL mankind will come and bow down before me,' says the Lord."

The prophet Ezekiel makes clear that the New Moons will be as much part of God's appointed Feasts as the weekly and the annual Sabbaths are, Ezekiel 45:17,

"It will be the duty of the prince to provide the burnt offerings, grain offerings and drink offerings at the [4] festivals, the [3] New Moons and the [2] Sabbaths - at all the appointed feasts of the house of Israel. He will provide the sin offerings, grain offerings, burnt offerings and fellowship offerings to make atonement for the house of Israel."

The New Testament Church of God is spiritual Israel and therefore obliged to keep these festivals in a spiritual manner, with spiritual food and drink (meditation and Bible Study), spiritual blowing of trumpets (letting the Word of the Lord come to them) and spiritual sacrifices (prayer).

Day of Worship

Although the New Moon Festival is not a Sabbath day, a day of rest at the moment, God states through the prophet Ezekiel that it will be in the Millennium. Scripture is very clear about the fact that the New Moon will not be a working day in the World Tomorrow, in the Millennium, Ezekiel 46:1,

"This is what the Sovereign Lord says: 'The gate of the inner court facing east is to be shut on six working days, but on the Sabbath day [both weekly and annual Sabbaths (Ezk 46:12)] and on the day of the New Moon it is to be opened.'"

The clear contrast between working days on the one hand and Sabbaths and New Moons on the other, is very plain. What is to be done then on the New Moon? Ezekiel 46:3,

"On the Sabbaths and New Moons, the people of the land are to worship in the presence of the Lord at the entrance to that gateway."

The New Moon will not just be a day to commemorate, but a day of worship, like the Sabbath, in the coming World Tomorrow. Furthermore the sacrifices of the Ezekiel Temple in the Millennium are described, again on a 1) daily (Ezk 46:13), 2) weekly (v.4), 3) monthly (v.6) and 4) annual (v.9) basis, thus recognising God as the Creator of the 1) day, 2) week, 3) month and 4) year.

First and Last, Beginning and End

Many scriptures mention the Sabbath and the New Moon together, the Sabbath is more often mentioned with the New Moon than with any other feast, festival, or time unit. Those verses of Sabbaths and New Moons betray the nature of Jesus Christ, He is the first and the last, the end and the beginning, the Alpha and the Omega. The Sabbath is celebrated weekly and the New Moon is commemorated monthly; the Sabbath is the last day of the week, and the New Moon is the first day of the month. Jesus Christ, the Logos, our Creator, is the First and the Last. No wonder He wants to be worshipped on the first day of the month and on the last day of the week (Isaiah 66:23!).

No wonder He gave both days a place in the Bible, before the covenants with Noah, Abraham and Israel. The two main narrative events in the Bible before Abraham are, Creation and the Flood. Creation is completed with the Sabbath and during the Flood the first New Moon of the Bible is mentioned.

As God apparently finds the New Moon important, he has seen to it that many important historic events occurred on His New Moons.

God created all time periods, 1) the day, 2) the week, 3) the month and 4) the year. The very first sabbath was a New Moon, according to Jewish Tradition. New Moon and Sabbath portray that YHWH was First and Last in the Old Testament and that Jesus (YHWH =Jesus) will be First and Last in the Messianic Kingdom (Is 66:23). God caused many historical events to occur on New Moons.

As God apparently finds the New Moon important, He has seen to it that many important historic events occurred on His New Moons.

Historical Events on the New Moon

God's love and appreciation for the New Moon is shown by the many important events He made happen on the New Moon.

Whenever the Bible talks about the first day of a certain month, then that day is by definition the day of the New Moon festival, in the same way that the fifteenth day of God's month will always be Full Moon. The first day of the Hebrew Calendar will inevitably be 1 day after the astronomical new moon half the months, as the lunar month is 29 1/2 days: months of 30 and 29 days alternating.

The 1st of the 1st month (Abib)

- The Tabernacle was set up on the 1st of the 1st month in 1442 BC (Ex 40:2,17).
- Hezekiah's Temple Purification. They began the consecration on the 1st day of the 1st month (II Chr 29:17).
- Ezra left Babylon on the 1st of the 1st month (Ezr 7:8-9).
- Ezra finished dealing with the men who had married foreign women after 3 months, so the people were purified on the 1st of the 1st month (Ezr 10:16-17).
- The word of the Lord came to Ezekiel on the 1st of the 1st month (Ezk 29:17).
- The sanctuary in the Millennium is to be purified on the 1st of the 1st month (Ezk 45:18).

The main theme of the 1st Nisan, of the 1st of the 1st month, is therefore purification.

According to the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs, Levi was also born on the 1st Nisan. Meaningful again, as the priests and Levites were to purify the people, to make atonement for Israel, through the sacrifices and the office of High Priest.

The New Moon of purification of Abib/Nisan, is also meaningful for the christian, as this should be the time of his preparation for the New Testament Passover.

The 1st of the 2nd month (Iyyar)

- Israel was numbered on the 1st day of the 2nd month 1442 BC (Nu 1:1,18).

The 1st of the 3rd month (Sivan)

- The word of the Lord came to Ezekiel on the 1st of the 3rd month (Ezk 31: 1).
- According to Jewish Tradition Israel arrived at the foot of Mount Sinai on the 1st of the 3rd month (Ex 19: 1 NIV Study Bible).

The 1st of the 4th month (Tammuz)

- The tops of the mountains became visible on the 1st of the 10th month which was to become the 4th month after the Exodus (Gn 8:5; see Ex 12:1 and Josephus' Antiquities of the Jews, Book I, Ch III, v3 for the change of the year).

The 1st of the 5th month (Av)

- Aaron died on the 1st of the 5th month (Nu 33:38).
- Israel started mourning for 30 days, on the 1st of the 5th month (Nu 33:38).
- Ezra the priest, who left Babylon on the 1st Nisan, arrived in Jerusalem on the 1st of the 5th month (Ezr 7:8-9).

The 1st of the 6th month (Elul)

- The word of the Lord came through the prophet Haggai to Zerubabel and Joshua on the 1st of the 6th month; it is the first date mentioned in the books of the two prophets Haggai and Zechariah (Hag 1:1).
- After 30 days of fasting, the national mourning for Aaron's death stopped on the 1st day of the 6th month (Nu 33:38).

The 1st day of the 7th month (Tishri)

The theme of the 1st of the 1st month is purification, whereas the theme of the 1st of the 7th month is a new start.

- According to Jewish Tradition the very first Sabbath fell on the 1st Tishri (Gn 2:2); it was a new start in God's Plan, the start of the first world, the Pre-Flood World.
- On the 1st Tishri the waters had dried up from the earth (Gn 8:13), a new start for the second world, the Present Day Evil World.
- Jesus Christ will most likely return and the saints will be resurrected on the 1st Tishri (1 Cor 15:52; Rev 11:15) which would consequently be a new start, the start of the third world (or age), the wonderful World Tomorrow.
- Joshua and Zerubbabel began the offerings on the 1st Tishri, although the foundation of the Temple had not yet been laid (Ezk 3:6), a new start for the Jews since the return from exile.
- Ezra read the Law on the 1st Tishri from daybreak till noon (Ne 8:2), a new start, a restoration of true religion.
- Jesus Christ was possibly born on the 1st Tishri 4 B.C., if so a new start in the life of the Logos, the Word.
- The glorification on the Mount happened before the Feast of Tabernacles A.D.30, possibly on the New Moon of Tishri, showing the glorified Christ with Moses and Elijah, surely a prophesied new start for these two individuals.
- According to the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs two of Jacob's twelve sons were born on a New Moon; Levi on the 1st of the 1st month and Joseph on the 1st of the 7th month. These two months for these two individuals are significant as the 1st month is the beginning of God's Sacred Calendar and as the 7th month is the beginning of the Secular Calendar of Israel. Levi is connected with the religious calendar of course through the highpriest, priests and Levites, whereas Joseph as vice-roy, pictures Jesus Christ as king of kings, on the secular calendar. The birthdays of Levi and Joseph on those New Moon are

significant. With the births of Judah, Levi and Joseph a new start was made in the fulfilment of God's promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, concerning the Scepter, Sacrificial and Birthright Promises.

- Through Herbert Armstrong the keeping of the 1st Tishri, the New Moon of the Seventh Month, the Feast of Trumpets, was reinstated (around 1934-1941), a new start in the sabbathkeeping Churches of God.

The 1st of the 10th month (Tevet)

- Investigation of all the cases regarding marriages with foreigners was started on the 1st of the 10th month (Ezr 10:16-17).

The 1st of the 11th month (Shevat)

- On the 1st of the 11th month Moses proclaimed ... all that the Lord had commanded (Dt 1:3) and consequently all of Deuteronomy follows.

The 1st of the 12th month (Adar)

- This was another New Moon on which the word of the Lord came to Ezekiel, on the 1st of the 12th month (Ezk 32:1).

- According to Josephus Moses died on the New Moon of the last month.

Ezekiel

There is another occasion on which the word of the Lord came to Ezekiel although the month is not mentioned.

"In the 11th year on the 1st day of the month, the word of the Lord came to me." (Ezk 26:1). Another clear sign that God finds the New Moon important; it is one of His favourite days for conveying messages to His servants, the prophets.

Recent Historical New Moon

Although they were not aware of this at the time, the very first congregation of what was to become the Radio Church of God, came into effect on the first day of the Hebrew month. On Saturday 21st October 1933 this new congregation of the Oregon Church of God was organised on the first day of the eighth month, the New Moon of Heshvan. Autobiography of Herbert Armstrong, Vol.I, page 533,

"Then, on October 21st [1933 - New Moon of Heshvan, Encyclopedia Judaica], at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Ed Smith, just across the road from the Jeans school, 4 miles west of Firbutte, a new Church of God was organized, with Mr. E. E. Fisher as deacon, and myself as pastor...."

Mr. Armstrong's first public speech was held on Sunday night, 21st December 1930 (Autobiography, Vol.I, p.413). The 21st December 1930 was a New Moon, the 1st of the 10th month, so the final preparations for that first speech fell on the New Moon of Tevet, the 1st of the 10th month.

Conclusion

The New Moon was celebrated by (Abraham?), Moses, Joshua, Saul, Jonathan, David, Solomon, the Shunammite woman, Elisha, Hezekiah, Ezra, Nehemiah, Jesus Christ, Paul and the New Testament Church of God.

The New Moon is often mentioned, throughout the Bible (Cf. Annual Festivals; NTBMO; footwashing ceremony); moreover many recorded biblical dates happened on the first of a certain month. Together there are 46 mentions of the New Moon and the first of the ... month.

The New Moon of Tishri (Trumpets) is the key festival of the seven Annual Holy Days; still a shadow of things to come (Col 2:16-17).

In Psalm 81 the New Moon is commanded to be kept and described as 'a statute', 'a law of God' and 'a testimony'.

Psalm 81 proves the New Moon was instituted by God at the Exodus, before the arrival at Mount Sinai, before the institution of the ritualistic Mosaic law.

Though not commanded to be kept as a day of rest, people generally refrained from working on the New Moon at the time of Elisha and at the time of Amos.

The New Moon is a 'time of rejoicing' appointed by God (Nu 10:10). By commemorating the New Moon God is worshipped on a monthly basis as well, and not just on a daily, weekly and annual basis.

Jesus Christ must have honoured the New Moon. Christians are to follow Christ's example.

In the Messianic Kingdom the New Moon will NOT be a working day, but a day to bow down before God.

Colossians 2:16-17 states that it is not for outsiders to judge the brethren on 1) eating and drinking (daily), on 2) sabbaths (weekly), on 3) New Moons (monthly) and on 4) feastdays (annually), but for the Body of Christ, Colossians 2:16-17,

"Let no man ... judge you ... in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath ... but the body () of Christ."(KJV).

This important verse of the Bible is mistranslated in most Bible versions. Logically, as most often, Bibles have been translated by people who do not commemorate sabbaths, feastdays and New Moons.

The verb 'to be' (... but the body [is] of Christ ...) is not there in the Greek, and is only indicated by the English King James Version, which has it in brackets.

All four - or none

It is therefore most logical that these verses either do away with all four categories, or enforce all four.

Either Catholics and Protestants are right in saying that 1. unclean foods (Lev 11), 2. sabbaths (Ex 20; Dt 5), 3. New Moons (Nu 10; Ps 81; Col 2) and 4. God's Feasts (Lev 23) are a case of the past and these verses indicate so, or one has to admit that these verses prove and enforce all four 'decrees' (Ps 81; 19; 119) Christians are to live by.

To pick one (e.g. sabbath, like the Seventh-Day Baptists), or two (e.g. sabbath and unclean food, like the Seventh-Day Adventists), or even three (e.g. sabbath, unclean food, God's Festivals, like the Global, Philadelphia and International Churches of God), is illogical and humanly speaking shoddy - if it were not for God's predestined path of increase in knowledge (Dan 12), also for the Churches of God.

WHAT ARE THE "POSTPONEMENTS"?

by Raymond F. McNair

Are "postponements" to God's Calendar mentioned anywhere in the Bible? If not, why do we use a calendar that sometimes postpones the beginning of months - and even years?

Some brethren are being confused concerning whether to continue using the Hebrew calendar that God's people have followed for many years. Their main objection concerns whether the postponements used in that calendar are in some way contrary to the scanty information on the calendar contained in the Bible.

Answers to Postponement Questions

In order to better understand the postponements incorporated in the Jewish calendar, we need to ask and answer the following questions:

1) When speaking of God's Calendar, exactly what is being postponed? Do the postponements delay God's Holy Days, or simply postpone the starting point from which they are reckoned? In other words, does the Hebrew calendar merely postpone the beginning of the first day of Tishri?

The present permanent Jewish calendar employs various postponements - all of which merely delay the commencement of the first day of Tishri, which begins the civil year used in both ancient and modern times. Once Tishri 1 is established, all of the other months of the Sacred Calendar are easy to calculate. So the postponements merely delay -by either one or two days the beginning of the first day of Tishri, which is the seventh month of the ecclesiastical year.

In actuality, the postponements don't really delay the Holy Days themselves, since those days (established by Scripture) are still observed on the same biblically commanded days of the months, according to God's directions in Leviticus 23.

2) Exactly when did the postponements originate?

The origin of the postponements is not revealed - either in the Bible or by secular history. In fact, this word "postponement" (or its modern Hebrew equivalent, *dehia*) is not found anywhere in the Bible. But, as will be demonstrated later, from the very beginning certain postponements had to be incorporated in the Sacred Calendar - simply because it is not possible to construct it without them!

In order to observe a complete 24-hour Feast of Trumpets, it was sometimes absolutely necessary to delay the beginning of Tishri 1 by a whole day. Further, in order to be able to offer the "wave sheaf" (Heb. *omer*) of ripened barley during the Days of Unleavened Bread, it was sometimes mandatory that the high priest in ancient Israel postpone the beginning of Nisan 1 by a whole month. Such a postponement would, of course, delay all of the seven annual Feasts by 30 days!

3) Did the calendar used by the Jews in the time of Christ and His apostles include any postponements?

Postponements were certainly used by the Jews in the first century A.D. Secular history shows that the two major religious parties (the Sadducees and the Pharisees) used

essentially the same basic calendar. The Sadducees, as successors to the priesthood from the line of Aaron, used the same calendar information that had been passed on to them from Aaron and Moses. This included the requirement that the Feast of Unleavened Bread fall in the spring (thereby necessitating certain one-month postponements to the beginning of the sacred year). There is no record of Christ and His apostles objecting to the calendar or instituting a different one.

Whom did God Authorize to Preserve His Calendar?

4) Did God give His people the Sacred Calendar, including postponements that would facilitate the observance of His Feasts?

Firstly, as mentioned earlier, it is utterly impossible to have an accurate, viable sacred calendar without incorporating certain adjustments or postponements. That's to say, the essentially lunar months of the Hebrew calendar would not remain within their proper seasons - which are determined by the solar year unless the calendar is periodically adjusted.

Secondly, it is totally inconsistent with the Bible to believe that God would have commanded the Israelites to keep the seven annual "Feasts of the LORD" mentioned in Leviticus 23 - yet would not have revealed to them an accurate calendar showing the proper days for their observance!

God began to reveal His Calendar to the Israelites even before they left Egypt: "Now the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, "This month shall be your beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you" (Ex. 12:1-2). Further, the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread were always to be observed in that first month of Abib/Nisan (Ex. 13:4; Esther 3:7), the month in which the barley became ripe enough to offer a "wave sheaf" (Heb. omer) to God, on the Sunday during this Feast (Lev. 23:9-15).

When the Lord revealed His seven annual Festivals to Moses, He commanded him to proclaim (Heb. qara, announce officially) those Feasts to Israel (Lev. 23:1-2). God chose the entire tribe of Levi to be His ministers (Num. 18:20-22); however only Aaron and his sons were chosen to serve in the top ministerial positions as priests (Num. 17:1-13; 18:1-7, 25-32).

But the Northern Ten Tribes of Israel lost the knowledge of God's Sacred Calendar. When they seceded from the House of David (c. 930 B.C.), their first king, Jeroboam, rejected God's law and His Feasts and devised a festival to be observed in the "eighth month" (1 Kings 12:19-33). Because of Jeroboam's apostasy, many of the Levites living among the Ten Tribes in the north moved south into Judah.

From then on, the tribes of Judah, Benjamin and most of the Levites composed the kingdom of Judah. After the Jews' Babylonian captivity in the 6th century B.C., some of them returned to their ancient homeland and formed a nation, which later became known as Judea. The New Testament Scriptures plainly reveal that the Jews were responsible for preserving the Hebrew Scriptures, including preservation of certain "oral" calendar instructions given by God to Moses and Aaron. "What advantage then has the Jew...? Much in every way! Chiefly because to them [the Jews] were committed the oracles [Gk. logion, words of God]" (Rom. 3:1-2; cf. Acts 7:38).

How do we know the oracles include how to reckon God's Calendar? Since the Bible does not tell us how to construct the Sacred Calendar, and since it is essential that we have it in order to properly observe God's Feasts, therefore we know God has seen to it that all essential information about the calendar was communicated to His servants.

The Four Postponements

5) How many postponements are now incorporated in the Hebrew calendar? Today's permanent Jewish calendar (established by Hillel 11 in 358 A.D.) utilizes four postponements. God Almighty gave Moses certain necessary oral instructions regarding His calendar that are not recorded in the Bible. And, through the centuries, God must have inspired the Jews in such a way as to utilize the postponements. We are specifically told that God's Spirit can impart physical knowledge (Ex. 35:30-35; 36:1-4) as well as spiritual understanding (Job 28:28).

The Bible itself says absolutely nothing about postponements. So, if God's Word does not condemn postponements, then who are we to say that the Jews, the custodians of God's Word and His Calendar, are wrong in including them - especially so, since those postponements enable God's people to avoid certain problems when the weekly Sabbath immediately precedes or follows an annual Sabbath, thereby producing two back-to-back (tandem) Sabbaths?

Though the vast majority of the members of the true Church of God today follow the Hebrew calendar, nonetheless there are numerous small groups that believe in keeping God's Feasts, yet totally reject the Jewish calendar. They claim that the Jews had no authority to introduce the postponements into God's Calendar. But is that what really happened?

Let us briefly examine the purpose of the postponements to see if they do in some way run counter to the plain teaching of God's Word. As we show in the companion article on God's Calendar, the Jews do not believe the months must always begin on what is called the astronomical conjunction. Rather, the Jews (as well as the Muslims) believe that each lunar Month begins on the day of the approximate New Moon!

What is a conjunction? "The conjunction of the moon with the sun is the point in time at which the moon is directly between the earth and the sun (but not on the same plane) and is thus invisible. This is known as the molad (birth)" (Judaica, "Calendar," vol. 5).

We are, also told that, according to the Hebrew calendar, "every month must begin on a day close to the molad. For the beginning of the year, the first day of Tishri, the calendar follows this rule: Rosh Hashanah, the first day of Tishri, must be on the day of the Molad. [But] there are exceptions, the so-called Dehioth [postponements], which take place in four specific cases" (Arthur Spier, *The Comprehensive Hebrew Calendar*, p. 219).

Spier then says, "Note: In more than 60% of all years Rosh Hashanah [Tishri 1] does not occur on the day of the Molad (the actual conjunction) but is postponed according to one of the Dehioth [rules governing postponements]. Therefore the Dehioth are actually not the exceptions to the rule but the rule."

6) What, then, are the four postponements included in the permanent Hebrew calendar?

POSTPONEMENT 1: "When the Molad Tishri occurs on a Sunday, Wednesday, or Friday, Rosh Hashanah [Tishri 1] is postponed to the following day" (p. 218).

What purpose does this postponement serve? Spier says postponement 1 "mainly fulfills the following three religious requirements: Yom Kippur [the Day of Atonement] shall not occur on the day before or after the Sabbath and Hoshanah Rabba [the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles] shall not occur on a [weekly] Sabbath" (p. 219).

Why does postponement 1 prevent Tishri 1 from occurring on a Sunday, Wednesday or Friday? If Tishri 1 did occur on a Sunday, this would result in four consecutive Holy Day/Sabbath combinations during that particular year. If the first day of Tishri occurred

on a Wednesday, this would necessitate two consecutive combinations. And if Tishri 1 occurred on a Friday, this would once again result in four consecutive Holy Day/Sabbaths.

The Jewish calendar permits Tishri 1 to fall on a Monday, Tuesday, Thursday or Saturday. When Tishri 1 falls on these permitted days there are only two possibilities for tandem Sabbaths (not including the true Pentecost, which always involves this combination). The first permitted tandem Sabbath combination occurs when the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread falls on a Sunday, as in 1994. The second permitted tandem Sabbath combination occurs when the last day of Unleavened Bread occurs on a Friday, as in 1998. But these tandem Sabbaths occur rather infrequently.

Modern Jews don't observe Pentecost (Shavout) on a Sunday. Instead they observe it on Sivan 6. However the early New Testament Church of God (like the Sadducees) followed the biblical command to observe Pentecost by counting 50 days from the Sunday (the "morrow after the Sabbath") that occurs during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. This means that when Pentecost is counted correctly, it always falls on a Sunday-thus creating tandem Sabbaths.

Why did the Jewish religious authorities conclude that the fast day (Yom Kippur) should never occur on the day before or after the weekly Sabbath? Clearly, this would have made it very difficult for the Israelite women to properly prepare for the weekly Sabbath-a feast day! Remember, anyone who did not properly observe the Day of Atonement, by refraining from all work, would be "cut off" from his people (Lev. 23:28)!

And why did the Jewish religious authorities conclude that the last day (seventh day) of the Feast of Tabernacles (called Hoshana Rabba) should never fall on a weekly Sabbath? Simply because if Hoshana Rabba did fall on the weekly Sabbath, this would be followed immediately by another Sabbath, the annual Sabbath called the "eighth day" (Lev. 23:39-44). This tandem Sabbath would work undue hardship on the women who, in such cases, would have to prepare food on Friday for both the weekly Sabbath and the following day, the eighth day, which would be an annual Sabbath (v. 39).

Another benefit of the postponements is the matter of avoiding Sabbath burials. If someone died shortly before a back-to-back Sabbath combination occurred, this would make it difficult for mourners, since the burial could not take place on either the annual or weekly Sabbaths.

POSTPONEMENT 2: "When Molad Tishri occurs at noon [the approximate 18th hour of a 24-hour day from sunset to sunset] or later, Rosh Hashanah is postponed to the next day. (Or if this day is a Sunday, Wednesday or Friday, [it is then postponed] to Monday, Thursday or Sabbath because of Dehiah)" (p. 219).

The New Moon (molad) can happen at any time during a 24-hour day. Postponement 2 ensures that "when Molad Tishri occurs at noon... or later," then Rosh Hashanah is postponed to the next day, or if circumstances demand, it is postponed another whole day. In ancient times, duly authorized religious authorities always went by "visual observation" (though they used calculations as a further check) in determining exactly when the New Moon had occurred. But if the New Moon did not appear until noon (or later), this meant that three-fourths of the 24-hour day had already elapsed-with less than six hours remaining. Since the religious authorities had to get the word out to the people throughout the land of Israel, there would have been no way the people could have learned when the first day of Tishri was in time to properly observe the Feast of Trumpets. It thus became necessary to postpone Tishri 1 by one day, in order to allow the messengers enough time to inform the Israelites so they could observe the Feast.

POSTPONEMENT 3: "When the Molad Tishri of a common year falls on Tuesday, [about 12 minutes] after 3 a.m... or later, Rosh Hashanah [Tishri 1] is postponed to Wednesday, and, because of Dehia, further postponed to Thursday" (p. 219).

Why was postponement 3 made? The Jewish calendar, being luni-solar, is based on the fact that 19-year astronomical time cycles regularly occur in nature. During each such time cycle, the Sacred Calendar incorporates twelve common years (having 353, 354 or 355 days), and seven leap years (having 383, 384 or 385 days). Since the decision of Hillel II in 358 A.D., the leap years are always positioned to occur in years 3, 6, 8, 11, 14, 17 and 19 of the time cycle. This postponement was made for purely astronomical reasons-to make certain that the "common year" was kept to its proper, pre-ordained length of 353, 354 or 355 days.

POSTPONEMENT 4: "When, in a common year succeeding a leap year, the Molad Tishri occurs on Monday morning [about 35 minutes] after 9 a.m... Rosh Hashanah [Tishri 1] is postponed to the next day" (p. 219).

Postponement 4 was also made for astronomical reasons-to ensure that each "common year succeeding a leap year" would always fall within the required length of all "common years," that is 353, 354 or 355 days.

The four postponements that the Jews incorporate in the Hebrew calendar were put there for specific purposes, the chief purpose being to avoid certain Sabbath observance problems that otherwise would have resulted when two successive Sabbaths (i.e. tandem Sabbaths) occurred.

Preventing or Minimizing Tandem Sabbaths?

7) Doesn't the fact that tandem Sabbaths occur annually at Pentecost (which is always preceded by the weekly Sabbath) prove that we don't need to be concerned about having Sabbaths back-to-back?

We must remember that during most of the history of mankind, the masses lived in an agriculturally based society, and did not have modern electrical appliances, running water, refrigeration, etc. Consequently, they could not have prepared food and kept it for several days without it spoiling.

The four postponements in the Hebrew calendar reduce the "tandem Sabbath" problem to a bare minimum. They were never intended to totally prevent, but merely to minimize, the number of tandem Sabbaths that could occur in any one year! Therefore the Jewish religious authorities deliberately included the postponements.

Now, there are modern "Pharisees" who think it was not proper for the Jewish religious authorities to include any postponements in the calendar; but they utterly fail to understand that God is far more concerned with the avoidance of undue human hardship on His Sabbaths (Mark 2:27-28), than in making sure the Jews always observe the beginning of their months precisely on the very day on which the new crescent moon first appears!

8) Is there further proof that God did not intend for the months to always begin at some "mathematically precise" moment?

When, for instance, the weather was cloudy at the time of the New Moon, it was sometimes impossible for anyone to see the crescent moon on the first day of its appearance. In such cases, the Jewish religious authorities then automatically counted that day as the "thirtieth day" of the month (the months of the Sacred Calendar never

had more than 30 days!), and then postponed the beginning of the first day of their next month until the following day.

Clearly, if that day hadn't been cloudy, and if the observers had seen a new crescent moon on the "thirtieth day:' they would have proclaimed that particular month to be a 29-day month. Consequently, they would have begun the first day of the next month on that very day when they first sighted the new crescent moon (cf. *Judaica*, "Calendar," vol. 8).

Reconciling Astronomy and Religion

9) How did the priests determine when to intercalate a thirteenth month?

The *Comprehensive Hebrew Calendar* explains: "Astronomical calculation was not the only basis for intercalation of a thirteenth month. The delay of the actual arrival of spring was another decisive factor. The Talmudic sources report that the [Calendar] Council intercalated a year when the barley in the fields had not yet ripened [enough to provide the omer, Lev. 23:11]...The Council on intercalation considered the astronomical facts together with the religious requirements of Passover and the natural conditions of the country" (p. 1).

The Jewish high priests and their courts had authority to add a thirteenth month when agricultural conditions in the Holy Land indicated that, if a thirteenth month was not intercalated (thereby delaying the beginning of the new year by one whole month), the barley would not have been mature enough to present the required wave offering (Lev. 23:9-14)!

This agricultural requirement is corroborated by *The Illustrated Bible Dictionary*: "Pentecost...marks the completion of the barley harvest, which began when the sickle was first put to the grain (Deut. 16:9), and when the sheaf (Heb. omer] was waved 'the morrow after the Sabbath' (Lev. 23:11)" (1994, vol. 3).

The *Encyclopaedia Judaica* states, "The required adjustment [postponing the beginning of the year] is realized by the addition of an extra month (Adar 2) in each of seven out of the 19 years that constitute the small (or lunar) cycle of the moon (mahazor katan or mahazor ha-levanah). In 19 years the solar cycle exceeds the lunar cycle (of 235 lunations) by about 209 days, which are approximately 7 months.... In Temple times this intercalation was decided upon in the individual years according to agricultural conditions... later, however, it was fixed to be in the years 3, 6, 8, 11, 14, 17, and 19 of the cycle" ("Calendar," vol. 5).

As long as the Temple stood, that is, up until 70 A.D., the Jewish religious authorities sometimes had to intercalate a thirteenth month in order to ensure that the barley would be ripe enough for the omer offering. Thus, it is clear that the Jews not only sometimes postponed the beginning of Tishri by a day or two, but they sometimes postponed the beginning of the ecclesiastical year (Nisan 1) by a whole month - thereby postponing all the Holy Days for that year! After 70 A.D., the Temple was no more. Therefore, the priests could no longer offer the required omer during the Days of Unleavened Bread.

Compelling Evidence

What is the very best evidence proving decisively that it is not only permissible to use postponements, but is impossible not to use them if we are to have a viable calendar for observing God's Festivals?

Clearly, as we have seen, it is sometimes necessary to postpone Tishri 1 by a day or two. Likewise, it is indisputable that the entire year must be postponed by a whole month from time to time. These steps are necessary to synchronize the lunar and solar years.

Moreover, those who object to the postponements, which are built into the permanent Hebrew calendar, should carefully consider that when the New Moon appeared late in the day (12 noon or later), it was absolutely necessary to delay the beginning of Tishri 1 - otherwise it would not have been possible to have informed God's people (by officially proclaiming that day as Tishri 1), and consequently there would have been insufficient time in which to properly observe the Feast of Trumpets. If the New Moon appeared immediately after 12 noon, less than six hours would remain in that day, therefore one could at most only observe one-quarter of the day - not a complete day of Trumpets - that is, unless Tishri 1 was postponed. Presumably, a six-hour minimum would have given just enough time in which to notify God's people, so they could assemble in a "holy convocation" as commanded on the Feast of Trumpets (Lev. 23:24-26).

Today, there are "legalists" who object to the postponements. They would - in Christ's words - strain out a gnat [a one- or two-day postponement] and swallow a camel [a 30-day postponement]" (Matt. 23:24)! They would disallow a one- or two-day postponement at the beginning of Tishri, but would be forced to acknowledge that the Jewish religious authorities had the authority to intercalate a whole month (Ve-Adar or Adar 2), in order to make certain that the barley would be ripe enough for the omer, as demanded by God's law (Lev. 23:11).

One further question may come to mind regarding the observance of Pentecost. If we believe the Jews have accurately preserved God's Calendar, why do we differ with them on when to observe this Holy Day? The answer lies in the Jews' interpretation of the date from which to begin "counting fifty."

An Inescapable Conclusion

What is the inescapable conclusion the foregoing facts lead us to? God authorized the "Jews" (primarily the priests and Levites) to preserve the knowledge of His Sacred Calendar-now known as the Hebrew calendar. The Lord gave certain instructions regarding the calendar to Moses to give to Aaron and his sons so they could pass them down to future generations (Lev. 23:1-2). Later, God may have given further oral instructions regarding His Calendar to His holy prophets. If God has not preserved His Calendar through the Jews, then no one today has God-given authority to devise his own calendar. Why not? Simply because the Scriptures do not give sufficient information for anyone to properly reconstruct the Sacred Calendar!

Furthermore, no biblical or historical sources indicate that Christ and His apostles had any calendar disputes with the Jews (the Sadducees were then in control of the calendar and the Temple ritual until a short time before the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D!) regarding the calendar that they were using in New Testament times.

When we consider all the scriptures pertaining to the calendar, it becomes clear that God's people ought to follow the example of Jesus Christ and His New Testament Church by using the Hebrew calendar (Rom. 3:2) - rather than groping around trying to devise their own unauthorized calendars! (Judges 21:25).

Astronomical Calculations and the Postponements

Some say that by using certain astronomical calculations we can actually determine the exact position of the phases of the moon for past years - including the year of Jesus Christ's crucifixion. Others, however, don't believe astronomical calculations are totally reliable. They claim there are too many imponderables in regard to the use of

astronomical tables to know precisely the time of day on which the astronomical New Moon. (the molad) occurred in 30 A.D., the year of Christ's crucifixion – or the precise hour when the new crescent moon appeared on either Tishri 1 or Nisan 1 of that same year. Such astronomical calculations, intended to prove the use of postponements in Christ's time, appear to be unreliable!

In any case, there is insufficient evidence for anyone to construct an accurate, viable "Sacred Calendar" from the Bible alone! But God Almighty did not leave us in the dark. He saw to it that important knowledge of His calendar was preserved through the Jews. Of all the people of Israel, only the Jews continued keeping God's Holy Days, and only they preserved the knowledge of His Sacred Calendar!

WHICH CALENDAR HAS GOD AUTHORIZED?

by Raymond F. McNair

Does God approve of any of the numerous "sacred calendars" now existing? Since God commanded Israel to keep His weekly Sabbath (Ex. 20:8-11), and His seven annual Holy Days (Lev. 23; Ezek. 20:12-24), of necessity He would also have given His people a reliable calendar showing when to observe those Sabbaths.

According to the Anchor Bible Dictionary, although the Bible gives numerous references to what might be called "God's Calendar," the Scriptures simply do not give adequate information for anyone to know how to make an accurate sacred calendar. "No part of the Bible or even the Bible as a whole presents a full calendar" ("Calendars:" vol. 1).

We are also informed that "modern students of the Bible should realize that it is not possible to speak of a [strictly] biblical calendar" (The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, "Calendar," vol. 1).

What are some of the problems confronting anyone who would seek to reconstruct the Sacred Calendar solely from the Bible?

PROBLEM 1: The Bible does not tell us precisely when to begin each month in the Sacred Calendar. Scripture reveals that each month must begin at the time of the "New Moon," but God's Word never sufficiently defines this term to tell us exactly when it occurs! Does the biblical New Moon refer to the astronomical New Moon (also called "conjunction" or "dark moon")? Or does New Moon refer to the new crescent moon, which always lasts "a few days"? If, for instance, the New Moon observers in ancient Israel sighted the new crescent moon above the western horizon a few minutes before the sun went down, did they declare that day - which was just ending - to be the first day of the next month? Or did they proclaim the following day the first day of the new month?

PROBLEM 2: The Scriptures never tell us how many days each month of God's Sacred Calendar should contain. Are there 29? Are there 30? Even more? We must go outside the Bible for this information.

PROBLEM 3: The Hebrew Scriptures don't even tell us how many months should be in a calendar year. Since the solar year (about 365 1/4 days) is roughly 11 days longer than the lunar year (about 354 1/4 days), how can the lunar and solar years be harmonized? By what means can the months of God's Sacred Calendar be kept in their proper seasons - so that the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread always occur in the spring, while the Feast of Tabernacles always occurs in the autumn? (all mention of the seasons refers to the Northern Hemisphere).

The answer is to add an "intercalary" month (a thirteenth month) seven times each 19-year lunar time cycle - which always contains 235 lunations or lunar months. But the Hebrew Bible does not tell us how many months the year is to have, or how long the sacred year is to be! The Bible mentions a twelfth month (Esther 3:7) - never a thirteenth month. Yet, from careful study of the time periods mentioned in the first eight chapters of Ezekiel (1:1-2; 3:15; 4:5-6; 8:1), we can deduce that a thirteenth month was definitely being used by the Jews when Ezekiel wrote in the early part of the 6th century B.C. And since the Bible doesn't even specify this intercalary month, it certainly does not say when to add it!

PROBLEM 4: The Bible does not indicate exactly when to begin the ecclesiastical year or sacred year. Though Scripture plainly reveals that the sacred year must begin around the time we call the vernal equinox [Heb. tekufahl (Ex. 12:2; 23:16; 34:22), it does not give exact instructions.

PROBLEM 5: Most insurmountable of all the problems facing those who would rely solely on the Bible to construct a sacred calendar is the undeniable fact that the lunar and solar years cannot be precisely aligned - a biblical requirement - without periodically adjusting, or "postponing," the beginning of certain months and years. The calendar must also be adjusted by one or two days under certain conditions. Otherwise, the lunar and solar years would eventually diverge.

None of the five problems mentioned above are resolved in the Bible! Since neither the Hebrew nor the Greek Scriptures give us sufficient information to know how to reconstruct the Sacred Calendar, where can we find exactly when to observe God's seven annual Holy Days?

How God Imparted the Calendar to His People

Who, if anyone, was divinely authorized to produce a sacred calendar and communicate it to God's people? In the year of Israel's Exodus from Egypt (c. 1446 B.C.), God began revealing to the Israelites certain important features of His Calendar - a calendar that made it possible for His people to observe the annual Holy Days in their proper seasons (Ex. 12; Lev. 23).

"Now the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, 'This month shall be your beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you'" (Ex. 12:1-2). Notice that God gave those important instructions to both "Moses and Aaron." Aaron would later be ordained as God's high priest. Only his sons could succeed him in that office (Num. 16,17).

To whom did God reveal His Holy Days? Leviticus 23 lists seven annual Holy Days that God commanded His people to observe "forever" (vv. 14, 21, 31, 41). Notice, however, that God revealed them to Moses and commanded him to give them to Israel. "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'The feasts of the LORD which you shall proclaim [Heb. qara, to make known officially] to be holy convocations, these are My feasts'" (vv. 1-2). Verse 4 tells us that the Feasts were to be proclaimed in their "appointed times [Heb. moedim, "appointed seasons" JPS]." Israel's religious authorities were to declare, announce or officially proclaim the beginnings of the months and the precise days on which God's Feasts were to be observed.

What did God mean when He commanded Israel's spiritual leader, Moses, to proclaim (qara) His Festivals? Moses was in fact "summoning" God's people to keep those days. "When convocations are 'proclaimed' the sense of qara is 'summon'" (The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, vol. 3). In other words, God's spiritual leaders in Israel had the authority to summon God's people when they, under God's guidance, determined the days on which God's Feasts would fall.

How did Israel's religious leaders proclaim God's Feasts in later times? The Encyclopaedia Judaica mentions that the...sanctification of the thirtieth [day] as the New Moon [was] subject to witnesses' reports of the time and circumstances of their sighting of the new crescent scrutinized by a court competent to check them, and only accepted if tallying with each other and not contrary to astronomical prediction, with the further proviso of agreement by the court and formal declaration of 'sanctification' before night set in" ("Calendar," vol. 8). Note that a special calendar court first had to sanctify or set apart

the day of the new crescent moon, then had to make a "formal declaration" of sanctification before nightfall.

Both biblical and secular history reveal that the Jewish religious leaders (the priests) had a solemn duty, as well as divine authority, to make binding decisions concerning the Hebrew calendar. It was they alone who sanctified the New Moons (the first day of each month), and it was they who decided if or when to intercalate (add) a thirteenth month. "The beginnings of the months were determined by direct observation of the moon. The new months were sanctified and their beginnings announced [proclaimed] by the Sanhedrin" (Arthur Spier, *The Comprehensive Hebrew Calendar*, 1952, p. 1).

Detailed knowledge of God's Calendar was closely guarded by the Jewish priesthood. But, as Jews migrated farther and farther from Jerusalem, it became more difficult to pass along decisions on the calendar to outlying areas. This situation led to a significant change.

"Because of the serious condition of the communities of...Israel [in the 400s A.D.] and the deterioration of the Galilaean center, Hillel II agreed in principle to limit the authority of the nasi [the top Jewish authority] and his functions in connection with [1] the proclamation of the new moon; [2] the fixing of the festivals; and [3] the intercalation of the year. He thereupon published *Sod ha-Ibbur* (The Secret of Intercalation)... This took place in 358 C.E." (Judaica, "Hillel II" vol. 8). The *Judaica* goes on to say that before the time of Hillel II, "the Sanhedrin fixed the calendar together with the court by proclaiming the new month and intercalating the year."

When Does the Month Begin?

There is considerable confusion concerning exactly when to begin God's sacred months and years. The Bible clearly reveals that each month begins with a New Moon (Ps. 81:3; Is. 66:23; Ezek. 46: 1), or to be more exact, with the approximate New Moon. The Jews, and also the Muslims, correctly begin their months this way: "The Islamic Year is lunar and each month begins at the approximate New Moon" (Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 10th ed., p. 755).

Arthur Spier says, "Since biblical times the months and years of the Jewish calendar have been established by the cycles of the moon and sun. The traditional law prescribes that the months shall follow closely the course of the moon, from its Molad (birth, conjunction) to the next moon" (p. 1). Anyone who is familiar with the Hebrew calendar will realize that quite often there are what many believe to be valid reasons for postponing the beginning of the months by one day, or in some cases even two days. In fact, in the Hebrew calendar the months begin with the observable New Moon only 40 percent of the time, and with the approximate New Moon 60 percent.

Those who object to these "postponements" need to realize that it is utterly impossible for any lunar-solar calendar to be devised that does not require various adjustments or postponements! All who are familiar with the Jewish calendar also know that from ancient times, the Jews always began each month with the observable new crescent moon – not with the astronomical New Moon (also called "dark moon"). The visible crescent can be called a "New Moon" for about three days.

Let us briefly look at some of the serious problems confronting those who assume they must use the astronomical New Moon (the conjunction, molad or dark moon), in order to know when to observe God's Holy Days in their divinely appointed seasons.

Today, there is confusion in the minds of some regarding exactly what constitutes a New Moon. "New Moon... 1: the moon's phase when it is in conjunction with the sun so that its dark side is toward the earth: also: the thin crescent moon seen shortly after sunset

for a few days after the actual occurrence of the new moon phase; 2: the first day of each Jewish month marked by a special liturgy" (Webster, 10th ed.).

Notice! The thin crescent moon can actually be seen for a few days. As we already noted, the biblical months always begin with the New Moon, but the Bible does not say that each month must always begin either on the molad (astronomical conjunction) or on the first day the crescent moon appears!

In fact, "to see the moon when it is less than 2 days old [less than 2 days after the conjunction or molad] is a challenge for any observer because of its nearness to the sun. The French astronomer Andre Danjon (1890-1967) apparently holds the record for sighting the moon in 1931 when it was only 16 hours, 13 minutes from new phase" (Burrus & Spiegel, *Earth in Crisis*, pp. 408-409).

Expert Hebrew Calendar Testimony

The *Comprehensive Hebrew Calendar* by Arthur Spier notes, "Lunar months must always correspond to the seasons of the year which are governed by the sun. The month of Nisan with the Passover Festival, for instance, must occur in the spring and the month of Tishri with the harvest festival of Succoth [Feast of Tabernacles] in fall" (1952, p.1). This author and Jewish scholars in general do not believe that the months must begin precisely on the day of the astronomical conjunction, which often occurs a day or so before the crescent moon is visible! Rather, the months must "follow closely the course of the moon."

Spier adds, "The Jewish calendar must meet two requirements, both solar and lunar. This accounts for its relatively complicated structure. Since the solar year of about 365 days is approximately 11 days longer than 12 lunar months [one lunar year], the Jewish calendar is faced with the problem of balancing the solar with the lunar years" (p. 1). Some mistakenly think it is a simple matter to reconcile the solar and lunar calendars.

Bear in mind that God set both the sun and the moon in the heavens to govern all calendar calculations. "Then God said, 'Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons [Heb. moedim, appointed festivals], and for days and years... (Gen. 1:14). The Moffatt translation says, "Let them be lights...to mark out the sacred seasons, the days and the years".

If one uses a purely solar calendar, then it is not possible to know when God's annual Holy Days are to be observed. The Gregorian calendar, widely used by the Christian world today, is in no way tied to the New Moons, and therefore cannot reveal when God's seven annual Holy Days are to be kept! But if one uses a purely lunar calendar (like the Islamic calendar), then in about 33 years, God's Feasts will retrogress through all 12 calendar months.

Spier continues, "In the early times of our history the solution [to balancing the solar and lunar years] was found by the following practical procedure: The beginnings of the months were determined by direct observation of the moon. The new months were sanctified [by God's duly appointed priests] and their beginnings announced [Heb. qara] 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 Jewish communities were notified of the beginning of the months (Rosh Hodesh) in earlier times by kindling of night fires on the mountains, and later on by messengers" (p. 1).

Biblical Reasons for a 30-day Postponement

Did the Jewish priests have authority to delay (postpone) the beginning of the year by a whole month? Spier says, "A special committee of the Sanhedrin, with its president as chairman, had the mandate to regulate and balance the solar with the lunar years. This so-called Calendar Council (Heb. Sod Haibbur) calculated the beginning of the seasons (tekuJah) on the basis of astronomical figures which had been handed down as a tradition of old. Whenever, after two or three years, the annual excess of 11 days had accumulated to approximately 30 days, a thirteenth month Adar II was inserted before Nisan in order to assure that Nisan and Passover would occur in spring and not retrogress toward winter" (p. 1).

An unbroken succession of priests had received from Moses and Aaron vital information concerning how to calculate God's Sacred Calendar. And though they still relied on visual observation, they always confirmed any eyewitness accounts of those who professed to have seen the new crescent moon with their own rough astronomical calculations.

The Jewish high priests and their courts had authority to add a thirteenth month when agricultural conditions in the Holy Land indicated that if such a month was not added (thereby delaying the beginning of the new year), the barley would not be mature enough to present the required wave offering (Heb. omer) on the Sunday that fell during the Days of Unleavened Bread (Lev. 23:9-14).

This agricultural consideration is corroborated by the Encyclopaedia Judaica: "The solar year is 365 days, 48 minutes, and 46 seconds, which means that a solar year exceeds a lunar one (of 12 months) by about 11 days. The cycles of 12 lunar months must therefore be adjusted to the solar year, because although the Jewish festivals are fixed according to dates in months, they must also be in specific [agricultural] seasons of the year which depend on the tropical solar year. Without any adjustment the festivals would 'wander' through the seasons and the 'spring' festival [Passover, for example], would be celebrated eventually in winter, and later in summer. The required adjustment is realized by the addition of an extra month (Adar In Temple times [until about 70 A.D.] this intercalation was decided upon in the individual years according to agricultural conditions...later, however, it was fixed to be in the years 3, 6, 8, 11, 14, 17, and 19 of the cycle" ("Calendar," vol. 5).

Fixing Festival Dates

Spier says, "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 [c. 358 A.D.], 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" (p. 2).

No one can say, authoritatively, when astronomical calculations were first used in conjunction with actual visual observation. They appear to have been used from the very beginning-from the time God revealed His Sacred Calendar to His people (Ex. 12; Lev. 23; 1 Sam. 20:5, 24-27). "Although it is obvious from numerous OT passages that the ancient Hebrews possessed at least a roughly calculated calendar [see 1 Sam. 20:5-27]... they have nowhere given us a complete account of their [calendar] system" (The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, "Calendar," vol. 1).

Hillel II's extraordinary action has had far-reaching consequences for more than 16 centuries. His calendar calculations are still being used by the Jews and most of the

members of God's Church scattered throughout the world. Hillel II's 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. Like the former system of observation, it is based on the Lunar-solar principle. It also applies certain rules by which the astronomical facts are combined with the religious requirements into an admirable calendar system" (The Comprehensive Hebrew Calendar, p. 2).

The Encyclopaedia Judaica adds: "The gradual regularizing of the intervals of intercalation had to be in the terms of the seven-year-Sabbath sun, and -each month begins with sabbatical cycle as none of the styles of the 19-year Metonic Cycle would have been compatible with the rule not to intercalate in sabbatical and post-sabbatical years."

Some have assumed that Hillel II's permanent Hebrew calendar somehow sets God's Holy Days on vastly different days of the month than would a Calendar Council if one were in place today. But this is not necessarily so. According to Spier, Hillel's fixed Jewish calendar incorporates essentially the same days that would now be sanctified and observed by the Jews if they had a Calendar Council to decide all Holy Day dates. It is possible that a functioning Calendar Council might adjust when to add the extra intercalated month. Such a Council's judgment of agricultural conditions could override the fixed intercalations of Hillel mentioned above (years 3, 6, 8, 11, 14, 17 and 19). Nevertheless, the Holy Days would still fall on the same days within each month. In any case, Hillel did not set out to establish the Holy Days strictly according to the astronomical conjunctions.

"It is obviously not the intention of the calendar calculation [of Hillel II to establish Rosh Hashanah [first day of Tishri] and the beginning of the [subsequent] months on the day of the conjunction. It would rather appear that [in the permanent Hebrew calendar] the beginnings of the years and the months are generally adjusted to the days on which the Sanhedrin would have sanctified them on the basis of observation of the new crescent" (p. 219)!

When Does God Begin the Sacred Year?

According to God's Word, each day begins at sunset, each week begins immediately after the setting of the the New Moon - the crescent moon! But when does God begin the religious year?

Exodus 12:2 says, "This month [Abib or Nisan] shall be... the first month of the year to you." But the Bible does not tell us exactly when to begin that first month. Some think the first month of the sacred year begins with the New Moon that immediately precedes the vernal equinox. Other, believe it begins with the first New Moon that immediately follows that equinox. Still others think the starting point is the New Moon nearest the spring equinox.

How do the Jews, who alone have preserved God's Calendar. begin the first day of the first month of their religious year? Arthur Spier says, "The month of Nisan [or Abib with the Passover Festival, for instance, must occur in the spring" (p. 1). The fact that the Hebrew, word for the first month meaning "green ears," reveals that that particular month occurs in the spring when the green ears appear everywhere. The first month of the Hebrew calendar is also called Nisan, meaning "to start." The month of Abib or Nisan starts the ecclesiastical year (Ex. 12:2).

The Comprehensive Hebrew Calendar lists all of the Jewish Holy Days for the entire 20th century, from September 1899 through September 2000 A.D. It shows that for each year

during this century according to the Jewish calendar the Passover always falls in the spring of the year - never in the winter. However, although the first day of Nisan usually begins after the vernal equinox, it does not always do so! In 1994, for example, the first day of Nisan fell on March 13, but spring didn't arrive until March 21.

The Bible reveals that the Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread must always fall within the "first month" (Ex. 12; Lev. 23). In actual practice, they always occur after the spring equinox as well.

Tabernacles Never Occurs Wholly in Summer

Does the Bible demand that the Feast of Tabernacles must always occur around the time of the autumnal equinox? "And you shall observe... the Feast of Ingathering [Feast of Tabernacles] at the year's end" (Ex. 34:22). The JPS translation reads, "And you shall observe...the feast of ingathering at the turn of the year [tekufah, autumnal equinox]." What was the "year's end" or the "turn of the year"? This Hebrew word (tekufah or tekufot in the plural) means "a revolution, i.e [of the sun] course, [of time] lapse" (Strong's Exhaustive Concordance). The Jews have traditionally understood this to mean that the autumnal equinox is to fall on or before the Feast of Tabernacles - never after!

Only the spring and autumnal tekufot (equinoxes) are mentioned in the Hebrew Bible (cf. 2 Chron. 24:23; Ex. 34:22).

"Tekufot ("Seasons"). As stated, the four seasons in the Jewish year are called tekufot... (literally "circuit... to go round"), the tekufah of Nisan denoting the mean sun at the vernal [equinox], that of Tammuz denoting it at the summer [solstice], that of Tishri, at the autumnal [equinox], and that of Tevet, at the winter [solstice]" (Judaica, "Calendar," vol. 5).

Today, our Gregorian calendar uses two words (equinox and solstice) to mark out the beginnings of the four seasons. There are two equinoxes - vernal or spring (about March 21), and autumnal (about September 23). The Gregorian calendar also has two solstices: summer (about June 21), and winter (about December 22). But the Hebrew calendar only has one word, tekufah, to refer to these four recurring phenomena.

The Jews realized there was both a spring and a fall equinox - a time when day and night were equal, when the year had made one complete revolution (from spring to spring, or from fall to fall). Psalm 19:6 further explains the meaning of tekufah. "Its [the Sun's] rising is from one end of heaven, and its circuit [tekufah] to the other end."

What, then, does Exodus 34:22 really say and mean? It reveals that the "Feast of Ingathering" was to occur at or after the turn of the year (NASB) - i.e. the time when the autumnal sun completes its yearly circuit as it passes southward over the earth's equator, thereby ushering in what we call autumn or fall.

The Feast of Tabernacles, according to the permanent Hebrew calendar, always occurs at or after that time of year, Even though the beginning of the Feast sometimes occurs a few days before the autumnal equinox, the latter half of the Feast of Tabernacles always falls after the autumnal equinox thus fulfilling the biblical requirement of Exodus 23:16 and 34:22. Tabernacles must never end before the fall equinox (tekufah Tishri), which, in the Northern Hemisphere, usually occurs on September 23. That Feast must never occur wholly in summer!

Who Controlled the Calendar in Christ's Time?

Chambers Encyclopedia says, "Since the chief priests were in close alliance with them [Sadducees] it would seem natural that the ritual of the Temple should be considered on lines approved by the Sadducees" ("Sadducees:" vol. 12).

The Illustrated Bible Dictionary agrees: "Many, but not all, priests were Sadducees; nearly all Sadducees, however, appear to have been priests, especially of the most powerful priestly families...Under the Herods and Romans the Sadducees predominated in the Sanhedrin [and] their reckoning regulated the public observance so long as the Temple stood" ("Sadducees," vol. 3).

"In general, the Jewish calendar in N.T times (at least before A.D. 70) followed the Sadducean reckoning, since it was by that reckoning that the Temple services were regulated" ('Calendar," vol. 1).

Reject Unbiblical Teachings!

As "sacred calendars" proliferate is there a way to make sense of it all?

Never before have there been so many sacred-calendar "experts" " Consequently, some brethren have become confused over the resultant proliferation of contradictory "sacred calendars. " Has God seen to it that His "authorized" Sacred Calendar has been made available to His people?

Ever since God gave ancient Israel His Holy Days and His Calendar, there have been those who did not want to follow the calendar He provided His people through His priests. After the Ten Tribes of Israel seceded from the throne of David in about 930 B.C., Northern Israel's King Jeroboam introduced his own humanly devised festival-along with his counterfeit calendar which he ordained to be held in the "eighth month" instead of the seventh (I Kings 12:31-33).

Secular historians of ancient biblical times tell us that, even among the Jews, numerous sects refused to follow the official Jewish calendar - published by the priesthood - and instead devised their own sectarian calendars. "There is evidence that the authority of the normative calendar was never universally accepted, but that always there were individuals or groups who were promoting their own special calendars" (The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, "Calendar," vol. 1, p. 487). We should not, therefore, be surprised to learn that, from time immemorial, this "calendar problem" has plagued God's people.

Which calendar did the early New Testament Christians use? Some wrongly think that Gentile Christians in the New Testament Church used only Greco-Roman calendars: "It may be understood that Jews and Jewish Christians, even when far from Palestine, continued to employ the official calendar of Jewish orthodoxy, particularly for observing the religious festivals (cf. Acts 20:6, 16)" (p. 483). And we know that the Apostle Paul taught Gentiles to observe God's Holy Days just as he did the Jews (Acts 20:6; 1 Cor 5:7-8; 16:8). Therefore, the Gentile Christians could not have properly observed God's Festivals without also using the Hebrew calendar!

But what about God's Church in modern times? In the early 1930s, Almighty God raised up a remarkable man, Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong, to restore the knowledge of the Holy Days to His people. Satan, however, immediately began muddying the waters by introducing confusion over the calendar among some of the brethren.

When confronted with such a potentially divisive "calendar problem" in early 1940, Mr. Armstrong wrote the brethren saying, "In conclusion, unless God has preserved His Sacred Calendar through the Jews, then we do not know how to figure Passover or any of the Holy Days this year. For there is no authority for any other way. There is no Bible

authority whatsoever for figuring the first day of the first month from the new moon nearest the spring equinox" (Good News Letter).

We have concluded, as did Mr. Armstrong and the brethren in 1940, that the Hebrew calendar is indeed the only calendar that God's people should follow in observing His Holy Days today!

When we rightly understand the Hebrew Scriptures, we see that God gave His Calendar to "Moses and Aaron" (brothers of the tribe of Levi). Aaron and his descendants were later chosen to be God's priestly family (all the high priests were from Aaron's family). It was solely to them that the Lord committed the "oracles of God" for safekeeping - including the preservation of His true Calendar. Without such a calendar, God's people would not know when to observe His seven annual Holy Days in their proper seasons, as required by the Hebrew Scriptures.

Regrettably, some of God's people are being confused by false teachings concerning God's Sacred Calendar. **Today, at least half a dozen different calendars are being circulated - all of them purporting to be "God's Calendar" - yet no two of them agree!** Some who have devised their own calendars say you must observe the Passover on the fourteenth day of the first month that falls on or after the spring equinox. Yet those who go by that rule sometimes end up keeping the entire seven days of the Feast of Tabernacles, as well as the "eighth day" that follows (Lev. 23:36), in the summer, rather than in the autumn season as demanded by Exodus 34:22!

People sometimes cite Ambassador College's booklet, How Often Should We Partake of the Lord's Supper? to support their claim that "the first day of the new year always begins with the day nearest the spring equinox when the New Moon is first visible to the naked eye at Jerusalem" (1952, p. 6). That statement is generally true - but not always! If that rule had been in effect during the following years of this century - 1905, 1932, 1943, 1951, 1970, 1989, 2000 - then the entire Feast of Tabernacles would have occurred in late summer, which we've just seen must never happen!

Consequently, those who follow the rule that the Passover must always fall on the first full moon after the spring equinox - or who say that the new year always begins with the day nearest the spring equinox when the New Moon is first visible to the naked eye at Jerusalem - will find themselves in quite a dilemma.

What does this all add up to? God has preserved His Sacred Calendar (commonly called the Hebrew or Jewish calendar) through the Jews (Rom. 3:2) - among whom are included Levites, as well as many priests - the latter being descendants of Aaron. God committed to them the preservation and teaching of His "oracles" - His Word, the Hebrew Bible - as well as the preservation of His Calendar, which is necessary to properly keep God's commanded Festivals in their appointed seasons.

Any man who would appoint himself to devise his own calendar rejecting the Jews to whom God entrusted the oracles-would do well. to remember what God thinks of those who arrogate to themselves the office or function of God's priests, when God has not called them to that office (cf. Num. 16,17)!

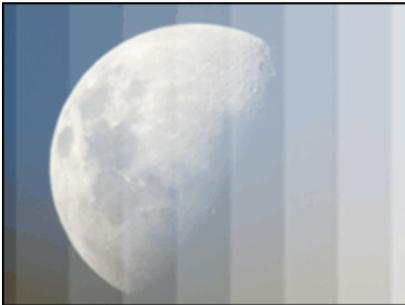
God's people ought to use the calendar that He caused the Jews to preserve for the benefit of all who wish to obey Him and keep His commanded Festivals. That was basically the same calendar used by Christ and His disciples in New Testament times!

THE MYSTERY OF THE MOON

By Becky McCall

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BBC NEWS / MAGAZINE

No-one knows exactly when the new Moon appears as it changes in different parts of the world - particularly important if you want to know when Ramadan starts. So this month, scientists are asking the public to help refine the lunar calendar.



For thousands of years, man has looked to the heavens for spiritual solace. Many religions also rely on celestial bodies to determine the timings of their most important annual festivals.

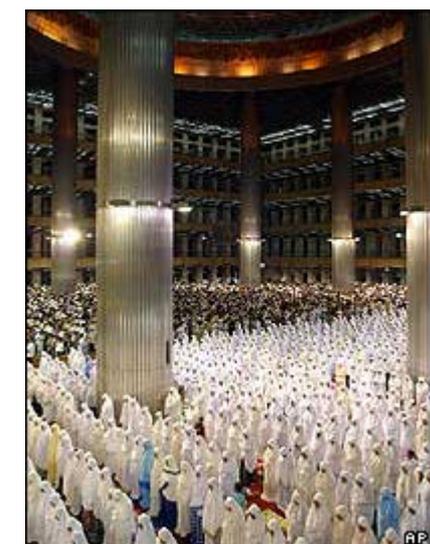
None more so than the Islamic holy month of Ramadan, which begins with the first sighting of the new crescent Moon. But for years it has been beset with debate over whether this first sighting can be accurately measured on Tuesday night, for others

- and so for some it began Wednesday.

Ramadan involves fasting, giving to charity. Its end, 29 next new Moon is seen, is celebration as people reflect Dr Usama Hasan, of the says: "I look forward to fasting as a time to get rid of bad habits and concentrate my mind through prayer. As soon as the new Moon becomes visible about 20 minutes after sunset, it signals that fasting begins in the early hours of the next morning.



spiritual contemplation and or 30 days later when the the festival of Eid, a time of on their faith and lives.



Muslim Council of Britain, says: "The Koran says: 'Begin fasting when you see the new crescent Moon; end fasting when you see it again'. The new Moon only becomes visible when it is the correct distance from the Sun to reflect enough light."

Sky at night
But exactly when this new Moon first appears is the subject of annual controversy - so much so that families split by the continents find themselves divided over when to start the holy month.

While the Ramadan cue in the West tends to come from Muslim nations in the East, in astronomical terms, the moon appears differently around the world. Secondly, the very faint new Moon can be hard to spot in the UK and northern Europe because of the weather conditions and light pollution in cities.

Does this matter? For many, no. They follow Islam's holiest site, Mecca in Saudi Arabia. But for others it does. Dr Khalil Roberts, of the Islamic Astronomical Society,

said that some British Muslims have stopped taking the cue from the East. "Islamic teachings encourage the use of technology to help establish Islamic dates, hence British Muslims feel it is important to reconcile the two and not feel pressured into following inaccurate decisions made in other parts of the world."

This may sound like an arcane theological discussion to some, but it has financial implications. Ramadan, like Christmas for Christians, is a time of holiday. Like any major festival, it affects the economy.

This is where the Moon Watch scientists come in - and the public, whose help they need. On Wednesday the Institute of Physics (IoP) and HM Nautical Almanac Office (HMNAO) are launching a nationwide study to work out if sightings of the new Moon match predictions. This Einstein Year project coincides with Ramadan, so the team hope Muslims will help supply the data.

"Tropical latitudes, such as those in Saudi Arabia or South East Asia, will see the new crescent Moon earlier than elsewhere"

Dr Steve Bell

Project leader Dr Steve Bell, of the HMNAO at the Rutherford Appleton Laboratory in Oxfordshire, says the aim is to find out when the naked eye can spot the new Moon.

"We know exactly where the Moon is in the sky - the question is can we see it with our eyes or with an optical aid?"

The new Moon occurs after sunset within three days of the new lunar month - but the timing depends on the relative positions of the Sun, the Moon and the observer.



Data on the Moon's visibility mostly comes from sightings at more southerly latitudes, including the US. But these predictions are not accurate for Europe, hence the project.

Wax and wane

As the Moon passes through the lunar month, some 29 and a half days, its visibility varies according to the amount of its surface illuminated by direct sunlight, and where it sits in the sky relative to Earth's position to the Sun. Click [here](#) for the phases of the Moon.

The Moon is not visible at the start of each lunar month. The first sighting is a crescent, which thickens through to first quarter to a full Moon, and then wanes until it can be seen no more.

Models used to predict its location are accepted as accurate - but it's the visibility that is in doubt. In the Tropics, the Moon appears higher than locations further north. The further north the observer, the more likely it is to be low in the sky - and therefore obscured by the twilight.

"Over its 19-year cycle, the Moon ranges from -28.5 degrees to +28.5 degrees in its angle to the Earth's equator," says Dr Bell.

"This has a direct bearing on how easy it is to spot the new crescent Moon. Couple this with the relative positions of the Sun and the Moon, and it can be shown that tropical latitudes, such as those in Saudi Arabia or South East Asia, will see the new crescent Moon earlier than elsewhere."

He hopes that the project will allow scientists to check observations against current predictions, providing information to improve the models where necessary.

Those keen to take part can submit their postcode, weather conditions, date, time and orientation of the crescent to the Moon Watch website (see Internet links on right). The team will then incorporate this information into existing astronomical models, which are used to generate dates for the Islamic calendar.

- 1. new Moon: not visible as unilluminated side faces Earth
- 2. waxing crescent: an increasing fraction - but less than half - lit by direct sunlight
- 3. first quarter: half of the Moon lit by direct sunlight, with fraction visible increasing
- 4. waxing gibbous: more than half illuminated
- 5. full Moon: whole illuminated side faces Earth
- 6. waning gibbous: more than half illuminated, but fraction visible decreasing
- 7. last quarter: half of the Moon lit by direct sunlight

- 8. waning crescent: a decreasing sliver visible

