

How to Keep Time

by

Yahweh's Calendar

in the

Heavens

by

Jacob O. Meyer

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How to Keep Time by Yahweh's Calendar in the Heavens

From the many questions that we have received over the past years concerning the reason why the Assemblies of Yahweh occasionally observes the Holy Days of Leviticus, chapter 23, on different days than do the Jews, it is apparent that these questions present an opportunity for the author to write an in-depth article on this timely subject.

Many of the people who have arrived at the threshold of the Assemblies of Yahweh have never questioned why they do things as they have always done them. In the Assemblies of Yahweh we seek to delve deeply into what the Bible teaches so that we may live our lives well pleasing to Yahweh, in close harmony with His Word. Unquestionably, this concept of sincere worship and reverence for the Almighty Father in heaven will yield a life which differs in many points from what is found in Judaism or in the churches of nominal Christianity (even though some of these Christian groups in some respects do seek to restore the narrow way which was lost after Apostolic days). Nor can we shrink from humble, submissive obedience to the directives of the Most High when YAHWEH'S commandments are brought to our attention or we shall soon discover that He will deny blessings to us. The Father in heaven, who looks upon our hearts, knows if we are not being obedient to a truth which He has revealed to us.

The only method of Bible study



by
Jacob O. Meyer

which will ever bring doctrinal order out of the obvious confusion existing presently upon the religious spectrum in understanding the Scriptures is to completely HARMONIZE all of the passages on a certain subject and allow them to mold the doctrines which we believe. Such scriptural harmony is indeed possible. Both Old and New Testament Scriptures complement each other and will say the same thing if we allow them to do so. There are no unexplainable discrepancies, but unifying truth will emerge only through consistency in research into the writings that were transmitted to us. The Holy Spirit of Yahweh will direct our sincere efforts.

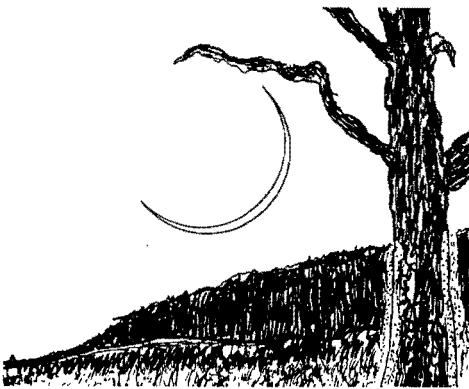
Some, having failed in their attempts to find a scriptural basis for reckoning time, have turned to the Jews and accepted their calen-

dar *in toto*. They have attempted to justify this stand by quoting Romans 3:2. But there is a scriptural answer to the calendar question and calendar arranging is NOT an "oracle" that has been committed to the Jews. The sacred Scriptures is the oracle, the Word.

The Jewish Calendar

However, since we observe the Holy Days of Leviticus chapter 23, some people have assumed that the Assemblies of Yahweh would look to the Jews to set the scriptural calendar since they also observe these identical Holy Days. However, upon obtaining a Jewish calendar one might be surprised to learn that the orthodox Jews observe TWO DAYS CONSECUTIVELY rather than the SINGLE DAY which is legislated in the inspired Scriptures. The only exception is in observance of several holidays which the rabbis have inaugurated under their own authority and volition (for example, Chanuka), and of course in the scriptural fast of the Day of Atonement (which certainly no one wishes to extend unnecessarily).

There is, to be sure, a reason for everything, and the reason why the Jews have set TWO feast days to commemorate the ONE enjoined and legislated by the Scriptures in Leviticus chapter 23 is because of the dispersion of the Jewish people into all of the nations of the earth. Not wishing for their observance to be in error, the Jews have specified two days so that they would be certain to be correct in keeping **one of their**



days.

This concept of being overly righteous is condemned by Solomon in Ecclesiastes 7:16. In too many cases the Jews have made void the law of Yahweh by their traditions of men, binding upon the people heavy burdens, which are beyond what was intended by the law of Yahweh. This practice has caused the Law of Yahweh to be viewed as a yoke of bondage—which it is not, nor was it ever intended to be. The Torah law was given by a loving Heavenly Father and He intended it for our good, Deuteronomy 6:24.

Watching for the Signs

It is also true that because of the dispersion, the Jews have no longer followed an observable calendar. Scholarship abounds with substantial and irrefutable evidence that, during the days of the Messiah, it was the Sanhedrin which set the calendar. This august body of elders in Israel fixed the months by sending out observers to the higher elevations of terrain around the city of Jerusalem so that they could VISUALLY OBSERVE the actual new crescent which marked the new or rebuilding moon.

Seeds that germinated into the calculated calendar, which is presently in use in Judaism, were most likely originally planted while Judah was in Babylonian captivity. But, it took the dispersion into very distant lands to bring their seeds into total fruition. Babylon had long been the

center of the scientific study of the heavens. Doctor H. C. Leupold, in offering his analysis of Genesis 11:3-4, has said that the tower of Babel was built to touch or reach into (discover the secrets of) heaven. Doctor Bullinger in **The Companion Bible** suggests that the zodiac was depicted on the top of this tower so that the movement of the heavenly bodies could be studied and recorded. You will find that the astrologers are mentioned prominently among the wise men of Babylon in Daniel's time (Daniel 2:2). Please give some attention to Isaiah 47:13. *"You are wearied in the multitude of your counsels: let now the astrologers, the star-gazers, the monthly prognosticators, stand up, and save you from the things that shall come upon you."*

Equinox Complicates Matters

Nevertheless, allow us to reiterate once more for emphasis that **advance calculation as a system of calendar compilation cannot be supported from the Scriptures**. As Christianity sees it, calculation of the calendar in advance depends primarily upon the vernal equinox as its starting point, while using an astronomical conjunction of the new moon rather than sighting a visible moon. The Jews employ an astronomical conjunction of the moon.

Basically, this method is intended to remove the comprehension of the progression of time from the common man. If the method expressed so simply in the sacred Scriptures is rejected, the calendar arrangement is placed in the hands of a few learned men who usually intend to use their knowledge to gain and hold position. For example, in past years I have sat through lectures by noted scholars and educators who presented quite a formidable array of scientific research on the phases of the moon and how to calculate the holy days. Without fail these men always reverted back to

the vernal equinox as their starting point for fixing the time of the first scriptural month. I cannot insist too forcefully that this term (vernal equinox, the spring day when nights are the equal length) is not found in the inspired Scriptures, nor is it even alluded to in the Word of Yahweh.

When Almighty Yahweh gave His directions to Israel He gave them as a father would to a child, speaking in simple, explicit, candid language, not in veiled technical terms. Such straight talk, forthrightly delivered, is a universally consistent characteristic of the message of the Bible. Would a little shepherd lad, such as was David, living constantly out in the open fields tending flocks, be able to determine an astronomical conjunction of the new moon? Would it not be more simple for Almighty Yahweh to allow the movement of this great sign in heaven to determine a division of time? The renewal of the moon each month would be so obvious that no one could mistake what was happening. Therefore, each one who reads the Bible can comprehend the simple directions.

The Scriptural Method

Almighty Yahweh has explained in Genesis 1:14-18, *"And Elohim said, Let there be lights in the firmament of heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years: and let them be for lights in the firmament of heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. And Elohim made the two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also. And Elohim set them in the firmament of heaven to give light upon the earth, and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from darkness: and Elohim saw that it was good."*

Yahweh's method of reckoning

time is good (perfect)! So why change it?

Let us analyze this passage thoroughly. It is the lights which are to rule over the day and over the night, to divide the darkness from the light. The sun is to rule the day or to delineate the bounds of the day. Therefore, the lesser light, the moon, is directed to rule over and shine by the night. **Evening or sundown begins the scriptural day (Mark 1:32)**, as we can also see from this first chapter of Genesis.

Notice in verse 14 that the lights serve to mark the SEASONS. The Hebrew word is **moedim**. In Psalm 104:19 we read, "**He appointed the moon for seasons** (moedim in Hebrew): The sun knows his going down." **Moed** in Hebrew means "an assembly." It is from a root word which means, "an appointment, a fixed time, a festival, a year, an assembly, or a signal."

As a consequence of these definitions we can readily note that the moon is the heavenly body Yahweh designated to set the fixed times during which we shall gather to worship Almighty Yahweh in a convocation. Readily perceptible also is the candid fact that the moon is the heavenly body whose movements will punctuate the old year, and begin the new year, while the earth's orbit around the sun marks the yearly cycle. The seasons change with this annual earthly passage through space, while it tilts on its axis to allow rising and falling of solar activity, but the shorter time period is a luna-tion—one new moon crescent to another—29 days, 12 hours, 44 minutes, 2.8 seconds in length.

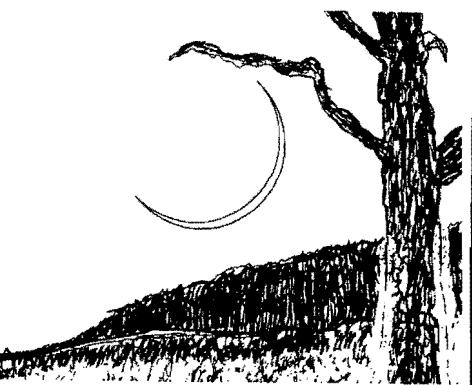
In order to comprehend more accurately which moon we should utilize to begin a new year, let us concentrate on the Hebrew words for moon. The word **yareach** #3394 in **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible** is the Hebrew word for moon. This word is from a root, #3391, **yerach**, meaning "a luna-tion,

and by extension a month." Did you notice the implication here? It could not be a **moon** or new moon unless there is **lumination or light emanating from the moon**. Consequently the month begins with the first light emitted from the lunar crescent.

Let us prove that fact more conclusively. In the **Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language, Second College Edition**, under the term **luna**, Latin for moon, the seeker is directed to check the word **light**. The following is presented in the etymology: Light, "[ME. *liht*] OE. *leohrt*, akin to G. *licht* IE. base **leuk-*, to shine, bright, whence Gr. *leukos*, white, L. *lux* & *lumen*, light *lucere*, to shine *luna*, moon, W. *llug*, gleam]. Consequently, the word for moon in the Indo-European languages, from which comes our term luna-tion is based on the term luna-moon, which in turn relates to light. There cannot be a moon without light in the sphere.

The same is also true of the spectrum of Semitic cognates as shown in **The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius' Hebrew and English Lexicon**. The term **yerach** is associated with the shining objects—the sun and stars. Gesenius specifies the root word **yarach** as meaning "to be yellow."

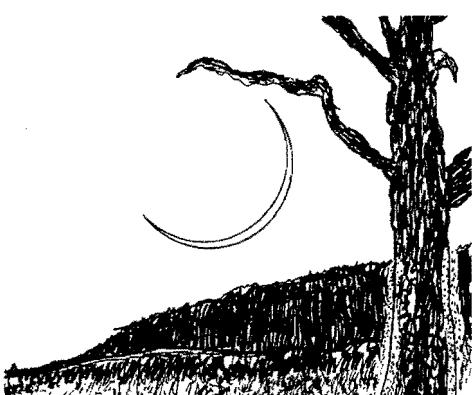
The second word in the Hebrew for moon is **chodesh**. It is from a prime root meaning "to be new or cause to rebuild." There you have it precisely! Unless there is a lumination from a rebuilding moon, there cannot be a new month, a luna-tion! In fact, the English word **month** is derived from **mona**, the Anglo-Saxon word meaning "moon." The Greek word for moon is **selaynay** and means **brilliance**. Again the word implies or directly means **light** or **lumination**. There cannot be a month without a visible moon. The two words are synonymous! Incidentally, Gesenius indicates that the root for **chodesh** (**chadash**), when



used in the Kal verbal formation, future tense, means to be new and then, "also to polish a sword." Etymologists have well observed that its primary sense is that of cutting or polishing. It is from the same word family as **chadar**, **chadaq**, and the signification of newness of the moon appears to proceed from that of a sharp, polished, splendid sword, as is the appearance of the new crescent moon.

How perfectly clear when we do not seek to support the concept of a humanly-invented calendar such as the Christians have adopted and placed in general use, and as the Jews have adopted since their dispersion. The root of the word **chodesh** is a burnished sword or first slice (crescent) of the new moon, which appears like a burnished sword in the heavens. This means something that is visible and not an astronomically calculated phenomenon when nothing is visible in the heavens.

After the moon has ended its decrease in emitting light, it turns dark for several nights, with no light visible. Then once more it begins to emit light, as a new crescent appears (like a burnished sword) in the evening heavens soon after sundown. This lunar light increases each night. Such an unmistakable sign in the heavens could not be misread by even the most humble and uneducated shepherd boy, who upon seeing this **new sword-shaped crescent** would immediately know that a new moon (or a new month)



had begun.

Starting Point of Scriptural New Year

Perhaps you have previously failed to recognize the fact that all of the feast days of Yahweh which He has legislated in Leviticus chapter 23 are closely attached to the agricultural season of Israel. The Bible recognizes an agrarian system. Ancient Israel was an agrarian nation.

This seasonal observance of the holy days of Yahweh is a perfect allegorical type of His plan of salvation. Yahshua the Messiah especially, in His parables has informed His people that the agricultural season in Israel was the way that Almighty Yahweh wished to portray how He would cultivate His human crop (which is the human family), until at the end of the season (the age of man) there would be a great harvest of souls. Yahweh would begin His plan of salvation with the Messiah Himself, who was depicted as the firstfruits or wave sheaf offering, offered just like the omer of barley. He was typical of the Passover lamb which was offered from the firstlings of the animal sacrifices. The 144,000 of the chosen body of True Worshipers, that select group who follow the Lamb wherever He goes, comprise the firstfruits of all the harvest of planted crops. Thanksgiving is offered for these people at the Feast of Weeks (7 x 7 weeks, the number of perfection),

and this harvest will be brought forth through the rain of sound doctrine accompanied by the Holy Spirit which fell on this New Testament day. Let us see then how this agricultural season of Israel will pinpoint the time when Almighty Yahweh begins His new year, which determines the datings of all His annual feast days.

The Plain Statement

Possibly the most candid Scripture in the entire Bible on this subject, which encapsulates the directive by our Heavenly Father Yahweh concerning how we should begin our new year, is Deuteronomy 16:1. **"OBSERVE THE MONTH OF ABIB, AND KEEP THE PASSOVER TO YAHWEH YOUR ELOHIM; FOR IN THE MONTH OF ABIB YAHWEH YOUR ELOHIM BROUGHT YOU FORTH OUT OF EGYPT BY NIGHT."**

Let us obtain a literal translation of the Hebrew words in this passage. The term *observe* is translated from the Hebrew word *shamor* and means "to watch for, as with alertness." *Month* is from the Hebrew word *chodesh* and means "new moon" as we have seen previously. *Abib* is defined in the Hebrew lexicons as "green ears," also meaning spring-time. They give the following definitions: **Young's Analytical Concordance**, "sprouting, budding, new moon of April or March"; **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible**, "to be tender, green, a young ear of grain;" **Gesenius' Hebrew Lexicon**, "from a root meaning to produce fruit, especially early fruit."

Now we may readily comprehend which month we are to choose in which to keep the Passover to Yahweh! This same month of Abib (green ears of first fruits) is to be the first month of the year for us, Exodus 12:2. Please see also Exodus 13:4 and 23:15, 17, also 34:18. In each case Yahweh's Word names the month for us and we find that it is called **Abib or green ears**. The

modern Hebrew dictionary defines it as "spring" and in current Hebrew writing it is spelled *Aviv*, as in Tel Aviv, the city by that name. The Assemblies of Yahweh members do not use the name *Nisan*, since *Nisan* is the name of the pagan Babylonian mighty one of spring (but spring specified in a different, pagan way), which the Jews carried back to Judea with them after the captivity.

Let us now read Deuteronomy 16:1 again, inserting the literal translation of the Hebrew words.

"Watch for the new moon of green ears, and keep the passover unto Yahweh...." How truly enlightening! The passover month must be observed in the spring, when green heads of grain appear at the time when a new moon is visible. Essentially, what we find commanded in this verse which harmonizes entirely with the remainder of the Scriptures, is that the calendar will always be set **VISIBLY, BY OBSERVATION**, rather than by calculation as is common today by most groups who attempt to keep the law of Yahweh.

Do you see for yourself how plainly Yahweh has spoken?

Green Ears of What?

The next question periodically encountered asks which grain could be ripening at the time of the spring new moon. Which grain crop could it be which must be in green ears or heads at the time of the new moon in spring? Must it be grain? Couldn't it be flowers—crocuses perhaps? This question is forthrightly answered by several passages of Scripture.

Deuteronomy 16:6 informs us that Israel was to sacrifice the passover at the season that they came forth from Egypt. Reference is made to Exodus 23:15 and 34:18, among other passages. When we return to Exodus chapter 9, we find in verses 13-35 the account of the plague of hail upon Egypt. The devastation upon vegetation was total from this plague. Doctor Immanuel

Velikovsky, in his books **Ages in Chaos** and **Worlds in Collision**, points out that he believed the hail was stones rather than ice. However, it could have been a violent hail of ice balls. Let us concentrate on Exodus 9:31-32. Since the plague of hail occurred just a short time prior to the final plague which was the death of the Egyptian firstborn, we can ascertain at which time of year the Passover occurred. **"And the flax and the barley were destroyed, for THE BARLEY WAS IN THE EAR, and the flax was in bloom. But the WHEAT and the SPELT were not destroyed: for THEY HAD NOT GROWN UP."** How perfectly plain and clear! The barley was in the GREEN EARS STAGE at the season when Israel came out of Egypt! It is the BARLEY which is the FIRST RIPE GRAIN ready for cutting during the days of unleavened bread that is offered as the omer to Yahweh, Leviticus 23:9-14.

Beginning with this **wave sheaf day** the seven weeks are counted toward the 50th day, Shavuoth, Pentecost, or the Feast of Weeks. If you have not as yet seen this amazing truth made plain and simple so you can understand it, write in to our offices immediately and request this enlightening item of literature on the Feast of Weeks.

While Israel was in the wilderness it would have been impossible for them to cut a wave sheaf of first ripe grain because they did not plant crops in that barren, uncultivated, waste-howling wilderness. Nevertheless, it is important that we understand that **they did observe the holy days** in the wilderness. The ritual of cutting the wave sheaf could not take place in the wilderness, consequently the first opportunity for Israel to perform this ceremony was upon their entry into the Holy Land.

Yahshua chapter 5 is a memorable passage since it accurately establishes precedent for a number

of sound doctrines, for example, setting aside physical circumcision as a requirement in this present New Testament era. Since none of the Israelites had been physically circumcised during their wilderness journey, apparently the Apostolic convention at Jerusalem in Acts chapter 15, saw fit to set it aside for those gentile converts who had not been circumcised previously, but who were willing to learn to live by the commandments of Yahweh. In fact, Yahshua the Israelite leader of the Old Testament is a type of Yahshua the Messiah, who will render the circumcision not made with hands, Colossians 2:11 and Romans 2:28-29. The circumcision ritual at Gilgal took place in preparation for the first Passover to be observed in the Holy Land. One of the prerequisites in the law for observing the Passover is circumcision, Exodus 12:43-49, (in the New Testament era circumcision of the heart is the prerequisite).

After preparation by circumcision, Israel celebrated their first Passover in the Holy Land. They used old grain of the land to bake unleavened cakes for the memorial, and then they took of the new grain of the Promised Land on the day following Passover and following the omer offering they ate parched grain also.

Once more we may observe the illustrative content of the Holy Scriptures. Israel cut the wave sheaf ON THE DAY FOLLOWING PASSOVER DAY (the 15th day of Abib), and then they began to harvest some of the agricultural crops which they did not plant, Yahshua 5:11 and Deuteronomy 6:10-11. **Evidently this first Passover in the Holy Land fell on a weekly Sabbath.** The wave sheaf was offered on the first day of the week, the day following the Passover, which was the 15th of Abib, the feast day. This plainly reveals to us on which day Israel cut the wave sheaf offering. Remember, Israel cut the wave sheaf offering on



the 15th of Abib, which was the First High Day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, **not on the 16th of Abib as the Jews do today.** Incidentally, if you have never seen the importance of keeping the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread in this New Testament era, please read 1 Corinthians 5:6-8. Then, write in to Assemblies of Yahweh, P.O. Box C, Bethel, PA 19507, and request some of our free literature on the subject of Yahweh's feast days. If you are sincere, you will begin to keep Yahweh's feasts.

Visible or Calculated New Moon?

Now for some additional scholarship which will support the visible new moon over the astronomically calculated new moon. When Yahshua our Messiah was living on this earth He observed the feasts of Yahweh with His Jewish brethren. However, at that time (as we saw previously), the new moons were fixed in Jerusalem by the Sanhedrin.

The following quote is taken from **The Jewish Encyclopedia** article "New Moon." "The Sanhedrin was assembled in the courtyard of the Temple in Jerusalem on the 30th of each month from morning to evening, waiting for the reports of those appointed to observe the new moon."

In Hastings' **Dictionary of the Bible** we find the following comment in the article "New Moon." "There was NO FIXED CALENDAR TILL THE 14TH CENTURY [C.E.] and



THE NEW MOON WAS DECLARED FROM ACTUAL OBSERVATION. The eye-witnesses were carefully examined on the 30th day of each month (especially of the months of Nisan [Abib], Ab, Elul, Tishri, Chislev, and Adar), and, if the testimony of the witnesses was accepted, that day was declared 'sanctified' by fiat of the Sanhedrin," (emphasis ours).

From the same article on the new moon in the Hastings' Bible dictionary we find the following two passages, "The New Moon was announced in Judea till the year 225, when the declaration was made in Tiberias. . . . After the 4th century, the new moon was no longer fixed by observation, but the Karaites restored the older custom." A most enlightening comment is made in the bibliography at the end of this article. It reads, "Epstein, Althermer, Poznanski, JQR, x.p. 152ff (This writer holds that the new moon was also fixed empirically [by observation] by some Rabbinates as late as the 10th century)." In the above quote from Hastings' Bible dictionary, the "older custom" obviously means observation.

An additional authoritarian quote from Hastings' Bible dictionary under the article "Passover" reads, "The day of celebration was determined by the condition of the harvest. If this did not promise in the 12th month to be ready to be gathered in four weeks, and the animals were not yet grown sufficiently for sacrifice, then the month

was declared intercalary, and a thirteenth was added. This question was settled by the Sanhedrin, and there were certain regulations laid down to guide their decision. The opening of the month of [Abib] was also proclaimed by them. This took place when messengers came who had actually seen the new moon. *It was not until the time of the Messiah that there came to be a fixed calendar.*"

The Thirteenth Month

Since the question of the thirteenth month has now arisen, it might be well to discuss this feature of the scriptural calendar. The solar year is composed of 365 days, 5 hours, 48 minutes, and 46 seconds, while the lunar month is 29 days, 12 hours, 44 minutes, and 2.8 seconds. This means that the lunar month is not divisible equally into a solar year. The 12-month year of the strictly lunar calendar is approximately 11 days shorter than the solar year. Therefore, the feasts of Yahweh would float around the year *out of their accurate seasons* if it were not for the addition of the intercalary month every several years to adjust the calendar to keep the feasts in their season. The Moslems do not use an intercalary month; therefore, their feasts circulate around the seasons of the year. Yahweh has commanded us to keep His feasts in their season, Deuteronomy 16:6.

Not understanding that the past ages have ended in indescribable cataclysms, some people feel that there should be no thirteenth month added to each year since the creation should have been perfect. It is true that the Bible does not speak of a 13th month in the scriptural year, but by the same token it is not required to deal with such a subject. The plain and concise directives have been given to us by Almighty Yahweh concerning how to begin the scriptural year. These directives are so specific that the 13th month will

be added to the year *automatically each time it becomes necessary to keep the feasts within their seasons according to the agricultural harvest in Palestine.*

New Moon Messengers

In the Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature authored by John McClintock and James Strong, we find some further interesting information in their article under the heading "New Moon." "As the festivals, according to the Mosaic law, are always to be celebrated on the same day of the month, it was incumbent upon *the spiritual guides of the nation to fix the commencement of the month*, which was determined by the APPEARANCE of the *new moon*. Hence the authorities at Jerusalem, from remotest times, ordered messengers to occupy the commanding heights around the metropolis, on the 30th day of the month, to watch the sky; these, as soon as they observed the moon, hastened to communicate it to the synod; for the sake of speed, they were even allowed, during the existence of the Temple, to travel on the Sabbath and profane the sacred day (Mishna Rosh ha-Shanah, i, 4)," (emphasis ours).

The Switch to Calculation

Perhaps this following quote is one of the most interesting comments in this McClintock and Strong's article: "According to Maimonides, the Rabbinists ALTERED their method when the Sanhedrin ceased to exist, and have ever since determined the month by ASTRONOMICAL CALCULATION, while the KARAITES have retained the OLD CUSTOM of depending on the APPEARANCE of the MOON," (emphasis ours). Apparently this statement by Maimonides prompted the clear statement in the Hastings Bible dictionary that the various Jewish congregations set their own feast

days until the 10th century, which would bring us to about the time of Maimonides. Maimonides wrote a treatise on the calendar from which this quote is taken. This statement by Rabbi Moses Maimonides should cast a great amount of adverse reflection upon the rules of Hillel.

Much has been written about the rabbinical practice of changing days so that the holy days would fall on certain, specific days of the week and not on others—a weekly Sabbath, a Tuesday and Thursday.

Doctor Solomon Zeitlin in his article called "The Judean Calendar During the Second Commonwealth, and the Scrolls" published by the **Jewish Quarterly Review**, July 1966, states, "During the Second Commonwealth down to the fourth century C.E. the festival of Passover could fall on any day of the week including Friday." So we can see that the practice currently in vogue of selecting certain days on which the feasts should fall (as we may observe that the Jewish calendar does today) is foreign to the Bible and to the religious practice in the Temple during the time of the Messiah. Therefore, we may be assured that the Messiah regulated His observances by the very same calendar in use by the Assemblies of Yahweh today, since it follows the commandments of the sacred Scriptures.

In **The Jewish Encyclopedia** article entitled "Calendar," we find this comment: "There were times of persecution when the president and Sanhedrin could not exercise their authority: times of trouble and war when neither witnesses nor messengers could travel in safety. On such occasions calculation had to be relied upon. The substitution of calculation for observation became gradually permanent, helping to maintain the religious unity of the nation, and insuring the uniform celebration of "the seasons of [Yahweh]," independently of the vicissitudes of the times, as well as the distance of

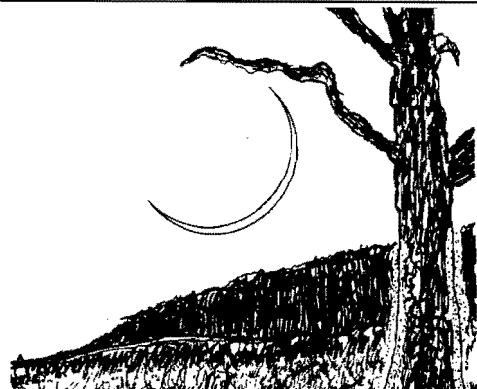
Jewish settlements from Palestine. A **permanent calendar**, still in force, was introduced by Hillel II, nasi of the Sanhedrin about 360 [C.E.J. It is uncertain what the calendar of Hillel originally contained when it was generally adopted. In the Talmud there is no trace of it," (emphasis ours).

Although various scholars claim to be following the calendar of Hillel, there is no evidence that any of the rules he formulated remain extant today. As a consequence we can only surmise that somewhere along the way the rules were lost, if they existed as such, consequently no one can claim to be using the calendar of Hillel even though they are today using a calculated calendar to set their holy days. Actually, some scholars doubt that the calendar of Hillel was anywhere near as rigid as are the rules for setting the modern Jewish calendar. Apparently his prominent name was attached to the calculated calendar merely to lend it credibility.

When New Moon Becomes Visible

Someone has at one time originated the idea that the new moon cannot be observed visually until at least 22 hours after the astronomical conjunction. In my possession is a letter from the U.S. Naval Observatory which states that a new moon can be observed visually 18 hours after the astronomical conjunction, depending on the point of observation and climatical conditions. But, such a sighting has been seriously questioned and it is our belief that the new moon can rarely be seen less than 24 hours after the conjunction. Especially around the time of the spring equinoctial points, the length of time between conjunction to possible observation is greatly reduced. However, in the summer and fall of the year the length from the conjunction to the sighting of the moon is greatly lengthened.

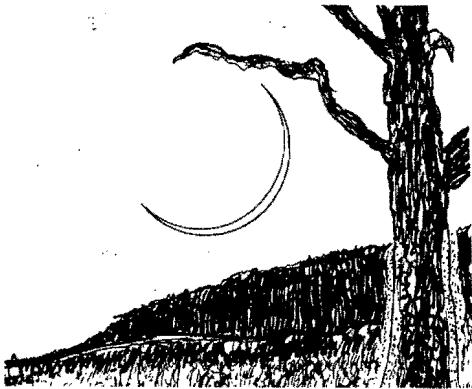
For a number of years we have



been using a computer program to predict the days on which the new moon can be sighted. In this way the brethren will be alert to watching for the new crescent. The brethren are also instructed to look for the new moon on the previous evening to ensure the correctness of the date. Many factors enter into the subject of new moon visibility—hence the use of the computer. Here are a few: There must be sufficient light in the moon to mark its visibility as a crescent, the necessary length of time after sunset, with satisfactory twilight (darkness), and distance from the earth, etc. ***Pinpointing the correct day when the new crescent visibility should occur is no easy matter and each year requires several days of work on the part of the directing elder and some of his staff.***

From Where to Watch for New Moon

Another question which arises periodically concerns the place from which the new moon should be reckoned, and the place from which the feasts are to be set. Various arguments could be advanced that the feasts should be announced only from Jerusalem, since this is the place from which the law shall go forth to all the earth. But that will occur in the days of the Messiah, Isaiah 2:3 and Micah 4:2. Some misguided individuals even attempt to do away with the feasts, predicated upon the concept that the feasts cannot be properly set from Jerusalem since there is no sitting



Sanhedrin.

However, to the Samaritan woman of Shechem, Yahshua our Messiah explains, "...the hour comes, when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall you worship the Father... But the hour comes, and now is, when the true worshiper shall worship the Father in spirit and truth: for such does the Father seek to be his worshipers. Yahweh is Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth," John 4:21, 23-24.

Today the "Israel of Yahweh" is worshiping just as did our forefathers in the wilderness when they came up out of Egypt, in a temporary tabernacle. The Holy Spirit of Yahweh directs Yahweh's ordained elders to choose a place for an encampment convocation for worship at the feast days. Israel observed the Passover in Egypt under the direction of Almighty Yahweh and so we today should observe His holy days in the land of our sojourn, in congregation with other believers, of course, Hebrews 10:25. (Yahshua said: "**neither in this mountain [Gerizim] nor in Jerusalem**"). In setting the dates for the scriptural holy days, the Assemblies of Yahweh seeks to use as our starting point an observable new moon, as the Word of Yahweh directs us. Since the major land areas of the earth are situated roughly on one side of the globe, we accept the visible moon as sighted from somewhere on the continents

and reported to the headquarters **Yahweh has selected for today—Bethel**. This visible new moon will normally fall on one of the two days which has been specified by the Jews of the dispersion on their common calculated calendar. Thus Assemblies of Yahweh can know, where the Jews and those who imitate them cannot, which one of these days to observe.

When Ears Are Green

The question has been asked relative to the development of the green ears of barley, just how well developed they must be at the spring new moon. Doctor Alfred Eidersheim in his highly esteemed work, **The Temple, Its Ministry and Service**, describes how a common plot of ground was set aside for the raising of the barley for Yahweh's wave sheaf. As pointed out previously in this article, the meaning of the word **Abib** indicates that the green ears must be fully developed by the time the new moon crescent appears in the sky. When we turn to Leviticus 2:14-16, we find that the firstfruits offering could be dried by parching so that it could be milled into fine flour. In addition, parching of the grain creates tasty food, almost like eating roasted peanuts. Please see Ruth 2:14.

The Sanhedrin had decreed that the green ears would have to be sufficiently developed so that they could be beaten out with a flail, but they could be pasty, which would allow them to be dried so that they could be milled into flour. Therefore the grain could have been in varying stages of ripeness, but it had to be in fully developed ears at the time of the new moon so that it could be threshed out during the feast.

Calculation in the Bible

Attempts have been made at various times to prove from the Bible that the Jewish calendar was calculated as early as the time of the Messiah's mission on earth.

Some people point to 1 Samuel 20:18, 24, to prove that during the time of David the calendar was calculated. However, from actual personal experience with many years of observation of the moon phases, the author knows that it is possible to predict from **observation** with a fair degree of accuracy, the time that a visible new moon will appear. Obviously Israel was an agrarian people, a people who lived in the open air, farming and tending flocks and herds after their entry into the Holy Land. They were concerned with the weather and climatic conditions because their existence depended upon fruitful crops. From a small child they would be taught by learned elders how to watch for the new moon, just as was the author when he was a boy. Our family watched the phases of the moon because we were farmers.

In the library here at Bethel we have amassed a wealth of scholarship which would be too tedious reading for the average individual. Consequently, we shall not quote more than we have already given at this time. Should some reader be interested in reading more of this research material, we invite you to come to Bethel and spend a day perusing our library.

Briefly in summary, it is unquestionable but that **the Scriptures** declare that the new year of Yahweh begins in the spring, with the first visible light of the moon. The new year moon must occur at the time of ripening barley so that a wave sheaf could be cut.

The question now for you is: Will you be obedient to the Word? Will you WATCH FOR the new moon of green ears this coming year? To aid you in doing so, a free calendar setting forth the feast days is available from Assemblies of Yahweh upon request. Write to our address on the inside front cover. Then you will be aware of the time when the new moon should be visible.

The First Day of the Scriptural Month

In the Assemblies of Yahweh, we observe the first day of each scriptural month (which is the new moon day), as a time of assembly for special sacred worship. While we do not find that these days are commanded to be observed as Holy Sabbaths, special offerings were made on these days during the era of the animal sacrifice law. See Numbers 28:11-15. The new moon offerings correspond in number to the feast offerings, showing the importance of these days. From this knowledge we find that during the new covenant era, we would be obligated to gather together for worship, to offer special sacrifices to Almighty Yahweh of the praises of our lips, Hebrews 13:15-16. While the worldly churches hold prayer meetings on a day of their own choosing, the Bible Studies and prayer sessions of the Assemblies of Yahweh are held on the days which have been chosen and ordained by our Heavenly Father.

While preparing a Bible study for our recent new moon services here at Bethel, I could not help but note the obvious importance the inspired Scriptures attach to the first day of the scriptural month. After giving the Bible study it was suggested to me that I write up this study in article form so that the entire brotherhood could benefit from it.

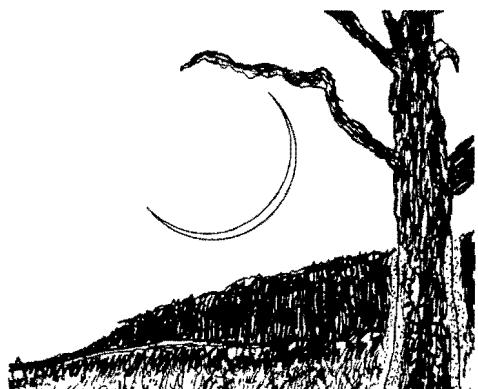
The first day of the scriptural month is mentioned repeatedly throughout the Bible and the significance which is attached to it will teach us a special spiritual lesson. Let us look at these things prayerfully and gain the lessons which have been placed in the Word for us.

Frequently we read over various terms in the sacred Scriptures without fully comprehending them. So it is with the new moons. You may have read over this term without recognizing its significance.

They are mentioned as days of worship, along with the Sabbaths, in Isaiah 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, says Yahweh."* They are mentioned in the same verse with other applicable laws in Colossians 2:16. *"Let no man judge you therefore in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a feast day, or a new moon, or a sabbath."* Paul informed us here that they are shadows of things to come. A shadow, you will remember, is a protection cast by a larger object.

In Ezekiel 46:3, the people who will live on this earth during the time of Yahweh's Kingdom are commanded to worship on the Sabbaths and also on the new moons, according to the prophecy. *"And the people of the land shall worship at the door of the gate before Yahweh on the sabbaths and on the new moons."* If the new moons will be days of worship in the Millennium, they are already days of worship now! We must learn their importance now.

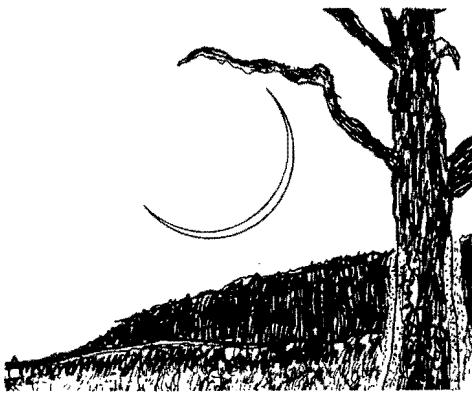
The initial mention of the first day of the first scriptural month is found in Genesis chapter 8. Noah had believed Almighty Yahweh. As Yahweh had instructed, Noah prepared the ark to shelter himself and his family during the deluge. Having been saved from Yahweh's judgment, Noah sent out a raven and a dove as the waters receded and the ark came to rest on Mount Ararat. It was on the first day of the tenth scriptural month that the tops of the mountains were seen, verse 5. When the dove did not return to the ark after having brought back the olive leaf, the sign of dry land, it was on the first day of the *first month* that Noah removed the covering from the ark and saw the face of the dry ground, verse 13. The significance of this event could mean that on a new moon day we should look above the cares of this life for the salvation of



Yahweh. On the scriptural New Year day, we may look about us to find a new beginning after Almighty Yahweh has miraculously spared His people during the previous year. It might be well to recall that Noah was in the ark for one full year and 10 days, until Almighty Yahweh commanded him to depart from the ark, quite a long time actually.

In Exodus 12:2, we find that Almighty Yahweh has instructed Israel that the first day of the first scriptural month (Abib) was to be the first month of the year to them. Today the Jews observe the first day of the seventh month as Rosh Hashana (head of the year). Interestingly, in the *Israel Magazine*, an issue of 1972, in the possession of the author, a rabbi authored an article which pointed out some of the inconsistencies between what the Bible teaches and what is actually taught by modern Judaism. Among these traditions which he indicated as unscriptural was their new year. He also explained that the keeping of the new moons is commanded in the Bible and suggested that the new moons be set aside as a national holiday each month. Others have suggested the same, but to no avail.

One of the most outstanding examples of power from on High being manifested at a new moon meeting was at the construction and dedication of Israel's tabernacle in the wilderness. You may read of this incident in Exodus chapter 40. It



was after Moses had completed construction of the tabernacle and had sanctified the priests to serve, that the glory of Yahweh filled the tent of meeting so that Moses could not enter because of the mighty power from on High which rested upon this symbol of the pure worship. Notice that it was on the scriptural New Year day (the first day of the first month of the second year of the journey of Israel from Egypt) when Moses erected the tabernacle and arranged the pure worship. Having accurately completed his job, the glory of Yahweh filled the house. Please note especially verses 2, 17, and 34.

Another new moon meeting was held according to the record of Numbers 1:1. Just one month after Israel had erected the tabernacle, Yahweh told Moses to number Israel and he conducted the census of the camp. The primary lesson which I feel that the Heavenly Father has for us here would be that it is imperative for us to gather together in the congregations to study the Word on the new moon day. If we are not faithful in doing this, we may eventually be omitted from the final census of Israel when Yahshua returns.

It is imperative that True Worshipers gather in the congregation on the weekly Sabbaths and the feast days, Hebrew 10:25. In these last days we are offered protection

by our Father in heaven and very possibly some of the judgments from Yahweh could be poured out upon this wicked world during the feast days, while the people of Yahweh are gathered together in congregation. Recall that the new moon visible on certain days regulates the feast days. Representatives of the Assemblies of Yahweh conduct meetings on the new moons in their areas and the people should assemble with the man of El on those days, 2 Kings 4:22-24. Sermons on cassette tape are always available for the scattered brethren. Contact the Home Offices for further information on this program.

Numbers chapter 9 appears to backtrack in time sequence before chapter 1. It was on a new moon day, the same day that the tabernacle was erected, that Almighty Yahweh ordered that the Passover was to be observed by Israel in the wilderness. This same chapter contains the law of the second Passover observance, which Israel was to keep if they were unable to keep the observance in the first month, should anyone be ritually defiled because of a death in the immediate family, or if they had to be away on a distant journey. All Israelites were required to observe the Passover on the 14th day of the first month if they were ritually clean to do so. The first part of this 9th chapter of Numbers appears to be a restatement of the law of the Passover as recorded in Exodus chapter 12. On the new year new moon day, it should be our intention to examine ourselves spiritually so that we will be ritually clean to be accepted by Yahweh and our hearts prepared to observe His Memorial Supper two weeks later.

Deuteronomy 1:3 holds the information that it was on a new moon occasion, the first day of the 11th month, that Moses preached the sermon to Israel which became the scriptural book of Deuteronomy. Those who were in attendance at the

various Assemblies of Yahweh Feasts of Tabernacles when this book was read will recall that this book requires approximately three hours to read. This book could have been preached during the evening hours of the new moon day. The historic event which occurred later that day was the viewing by Moses of the promised land from Mount Nebo and his death and burial. Please see Deuteronomy chapter 34.

Notice that Israel mourned Moses for 30 days (verse 8), which would have brought them right up to the new moon marking the 12th month. Aaron the priest, the brother of Moses, had died exactly six months previously, on the first day (new moon) of the fifth month, Numbers 33:38. It is interesting to note that the number five in scriptural numerology represents "grace." Consequently, we can note that for Aaron, the end of his grace period for disobedience to the command of Yahweh had arrived. Numbers 20:12-13.

Our next contact with the new moon comes in 2 Chronicles 29:17. Hezekiah, the great reformer king of Judah, had given command for the pure worship to be restored. Subsequently, the priests began to cleanse the house of Yahweh. The cleansing was begun on the first day of the first scriptural month. Time was insufficient to cleanse the Temple of Yahweh thoroughly in advance of the Passover observance in the first month, so Hezekiah the king ordered that the memorial be observed in the second month.

It is imperative that the brethren in the Messiah come before Yahweh with pure hearts at the Passover season. Should repentance and cleansing take additional time so that when the 14th day of the first month arrives the introspection has not been completed, then self examination must be continued and the Passover observed in the second month. Yahshua may have had this in mind when He instructed us

according to Matthew 5:23-24. Again we should find significance in the fact that the cleansing of the Temple began on the first day of the first month, indicating that the self-examination and cleansing of our spiritual house should begin on that day also, each year prior to the Memorial Supper.

Another interesting fact emerges from a study of the new moon day in the Scriptures wherein Ezra the scribe departed from Babylon on the first day of the first month and arrived in Jerusalem on the first day of the fifth month (both new moon days—remember). Therefore, he and his party obviously observed the Passover on the pilgrimage, not in pagan Babylon. You may read this account in Ezra 7.

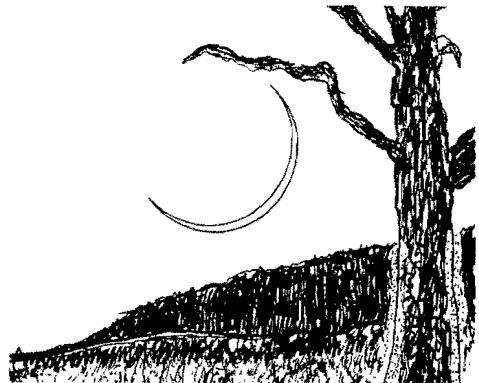
Notice the concept expressed in verse 10 which follows the account of his journey. ***"For Ezra had set his heart to seek the law of Yahweh, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and ordinances."*** The meaning of Babylon, as you know, can be spiritualized, as can Jerusalem. Consequently, the journey of Ezra from **pagan worship** to **pure worship** required a full four months. But starting his journey on the first day of the first scriptural month Ezra indeed taught us that he wanted to depart from Babylon to keep the Passover in a pure place, just as Israel had desired to depart from Egypt.

Ezra was a teacher of the law, having been granted this authority as a priest of Yahweh. In order to teach, a close study of the law is necessary. Ezra had been made aware of some rather startling requirements in the law as he was studying, among them was a prohibition against the people of Yahweh marrying wives of other nationalities (Deuteronomy 7:3-5). The men of Judah had married women of eight different pagan nations and there were even some children of these marriages involved. However, we find that the teaching of Ezra

had made an indelible impression upon the people of Judah. They respected the authority of Almighty Yahweh which he represented. They trembled at the law of Yahweh, Ezra 9:4. What was Ezra to advise these people when he was informed of the illegitimate marriages? Was it not cruel to separate men and women who were married, but in the sight of Yahweh not legally, especially when children were involved? Ezra prayed and confessed the sin of Judah before Yahweh. The hearts of the people became convicted by his teaching. They determined to obey Yahweh!

In the tenth chapter the account continues how Ezra spoke to the elders of Israel, urging them to separate from their illegal wives. The Holy Spirit of Yahweh had moved convicting the hearts of those people and they with one accord separated from the illegal wives which they had taken and the children they had begotten. Sometimes great willpower and determination are required to undo a wrong done in our past lives. But, foremost in our thoughts we must always carry a vision of the goal of **seeking first the Kingdom of Yahweh and His righteousness**. True repentance brings about conversion and conversion means facilitating a **COMPLETE CHANGE** in the lives of sincere people.

In Nehemiah chapter 8, we observe that Ezra and the Levites read and interpreted the law of Yahweh on another new moon day, the first day of the month, this time the **seventh month** which is the **Feast of Trumpets**, verse 3. Israel had been in Babylonian bondage and had to relearn the law of Yahweh, accepting the teaching of the priests whom Almighty Yahweh had placed in charge of the congregation. In Haggai 1:1, we notice yet another new moon observance that relates to this era of the return from Babylonian captivity. Please review what happened by reading Ezra 4:5.



Ezekiel the prophet had been sent to captive Israel residing by the river Chebar. Ezekiel was a priest who had been sent to instruct the remnant of the 10 northern tribes who were by them released from Assyrian captivity. Ezekiel was to call for repentance among the Israelite captives and present, as one of the signs of his anointing from Yahweh, predictions of the imminent destruction of Jerusalem by Babylon, which occurred in 586 B.C.E. While studying the significance of the new moons, the author was amazed at how often Ezekiel had received prophecies from Yahweh on the first day (new moon day) of the month. Notice Ezekiel chapter 13:1; 26:1; 29:17. In addition, in chapter 45, verse 18, we find the instruction to cleanse the Temple on the first day of the first month.

You will certainly find some deep significance in these references which we have perused, and when you meditate on them, many additional thoughts will emerge. Since the Bethel Assembly of Yahweh began to observe the new moon days, we have indeed received rich blessings from Yahweh. The author hopes that this study will give you greater determination to serve our Heavenly Father on the days which He has ordained and set apart for this purpose, times when He descends upon us through His Holy Spirit to meet with His people.