

New Moons and Jerusalem Time

Introduction

Isaiah tells us the entire world will be honoring the new moons and the Sabbaths as they worship Yahweh in the coming Kingdom. As students of Yahweh's Word, we should be observing them now, becoming knowledgeable about new moons as well as the Sabbaths that we might be able to help others along the way. Both new moons and Sabbaths are to be observed in the Kingdom as we note in the following:

*"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 Yahweh, Isaiah 66:23 The **Authorized Version** (AV) 1769 edition, translated from the 1611 version, is used throughout, unless otherwise noted.*

Likewise the people of the land shall worship at the door of this gate before Yahweh in the Sabbaths and in the new moons, Ezekiel 46:3.

The time may come that we will be isolated from the body of Messiah, but we are still obligated to keep His set times as an act of obedience. We are also told in the New Testament they are prophetic (Col. 2:16-17), that is, they foreshadow future events. The greater our understanding the greater is our responsibility to walk in His ways.

Ancient New Moon Observances

In anticipation of the new moon, Jewish moon watchers anciently were stationed on high prominences around Israel. When the moon was sighted, they would light a bright fire signaling to waiting Temple priesthood the new moon had been seen and the new month has started. However, both the Samaritans and Botheans began lighting fires on other days to confuse the Jews. Runners were then used to bring moon sightings to the Temple in Jerusalem, until 70 CE. Today astronomers can easily trace the movement of the moon and stars with sophisticated instruments. Such calculations are available from almanacs, the *Naval Observatory* and the Internet.

In sighting the new moon, one faces the western sky at sunset, drawing an imaginary line from the zenith overhead toward the setting sun, seeking the thin scimitar of light on either side of this imaginary line. The faint new moon will bulge out to the right, with the horns pointing toward the left. However, in early spring the "Passover moon" will appear much like a saucer with both horns pointing upward. Variations of this new moon may be seen in springtime. Biblical months (new moons) are either 29 or 30 alternating days in length; at times two consecutive 30-day months may occur.

Jerusalem a Question

Over the years most Sacred Name groups have diligently researched the question, should we accept only the new moon that is first seen in Jerusalem and then comes to us? Does not Scripture say the Law will go forth from Jerusalem?

And many nations shall come, and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of Yahweh, and to the house of the Elohim of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of Yahweh from Jerusalem," Micah 4:2.

Initially it made sense to follow Jerusalem's example and declare or acknowledge the moon comes to Jerusalem first, then appears to us seven or more hours later. If the thin sliver of light of

scheduled new moon was not seen in Jerusalem, we would await the moon's appearance 24 hours later. However, this became a problem at times. For example, a new moon being 14 hours old from the conjunction (Hebrew: *molad*) would be considered most unlikely or even impossible to be seen at Jerusalem.

Problems

Seven hours later, at Boston, Massachusetts, the moon would be 21 hours old; (24 hours old as it reached the Mountain and Pacific time zones). This presented a problem, for a number of people in the U.S. would report having seen this new moon. In spite of their clear sighting of the moon, they were told that this sighting did not count for it had not been seen earlier in Jerusalem.

The response often was something like, "Well, why am I looking for the new moon when it does not count? Maybe the sunset on Friday night does not bring on the Sabbath either! I clearly see the thin and dim scimitar of light, but I am told I am in error. If it is overcast in Jerusalem, with no sunset visible there, do I still keep the Sabbath as the sun sets here on Friday? Maybe I should keep Sunday after all!"

Excitement for sighting of the new moon dropped off, and new moons were being ignored. The question was asked if we keep the sunset when it comes to us as the beginning of a day, why do we not keep the new moon as it comes to us as the beginning of the new month? Israel has the advantage of a country extending north and south in one time zone whereas the U.S. has four time zones.

To ensure that we observe the new moons each month, the majority of dedicated Sacred Name Assemblies have basically agreed to the following practice: Wherever in the world the new moon is first sighted, for that month and at that place will be the new moon day, the beginning of the month. The next new moon will start at the location wherever the thin scimitar of light is first spotted. Each month the new moon will likely begin at a new location, but the same moon will be observed around the world as it comes to them, just as the sunset comes around to each location. It may be possible that 1/4 of the time we will sight a new moon here in the U.S. before it will be seen in Jerusalem.

Present Practice

It is agreed that any sighting of the new moon, in a general land mass, should be confirmed by those on it, such as, the North American Region. This works well, since many brethren travel, for example, to the Feast of Tabernacles at a central location within the United States. If a couple were to travel across the Pacific to the Philippines or over the Atlantic ocean to Africa to keep the Feasts of Yahweh, they would then observe the local weekly Sabbath besides the designated time of the Feasts for those areas.

Experience has shown us here in the United States, that the southwestern United States (e.g., Arizona, New Mexico, southern California), with a clearer atmosphere, usually offers better opportunities for moon sightings.

This doesn't mean we ignore the brethren living on the small islands off of the Florida Coast, as they are still considered within the territory. Though, generally, we usually await reports from the Southwest for confirmation of difficult sightings.

Yahshua did not establish Jerusalem as the pivotal point in observing the new moons. In fact He did the opposite. He brought in the Melchizedek priesthood, which has superseded

the Levitical administration of the Old Testament. The spiritual aspect has supplanted the physical. We learn spiritual truth through physical acts.

Not in Jerusalem

Yahshua plainly said a change in worship was imminent. No longer would one look to Jerusalem as a place for guidance or worship. Obviously referring to Pentecost when the Holy Set-apart Spirit would be sent to earth to stay following His resurrection, Yahshua implied pure worship could take place anywhere. Worship in spirit and in truth means a complete surrender to Yahweh's will, independent of where one might be. Not only could one worship Yahweh at Mount Gerizim or Jerusalem, but by a river or ocean, or anywhere on earth; alone or with several others or a congregation:

Yahshua saith unto her, "Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeks such to worship Him. Elohim is Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth," John 4:21-24.

Spiritual Worship

Enlightened by Yahshua's words, we understand the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost in 31 CE, and now indwells the saints. Yahweh allowed the Temple to be destroyed in 70 CE, so animal sacrifices could no longer be offered. Humankind is to look to Yahshua as their complete sacrifice. The Levitical priesthood is now in abeyance. We no longer look to the Temple and Jerusalem, as we are now under the Melchizedek order and look to Yahshua as our High Priest, as the new and living way to bring us to the spiritual Jerusalem.

Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to Yahweh by Yahshua Messiah, 1 Peter 2:5.

The time is coming when Yahshua will return and take control of this earth. Now we are to worship Yahweh in spirit and in truth. We accept the new moons wherever Yahweh reveals them to us, just as He brings us the new day at sunset.

Worship in Spirit and in Truth

A little over 70 years ago, May 14, 1948, the nation of Israel was born. The world body known as the United Nations organization recognized Israel as a separate, independent nation. Scholars look forward to Israel's erecting a temple before the return of the Savior, for the "man of sin" is prophesied to seat himself in the holy place, which will begin the 3½ years of tribulation. This persecution of the saints begins when he breaks the seven-year covenant he had made and turns on the people and does so in the middle of the "week," (Dan. 9:27). For 3½ years the persecution continues until Yahshua returns. He is prophesied to plant Himself upon the Mount of Olives in an earth-shaking event.

And His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south, Zechariah 14:4.

Knowing the Savior is to return to the Holy Land, many Bible believers understand He will likely return on one of the Feast days of the seventh month, for none of these days has yet been

fulfilled. One interesting location that will assuredly be keeping the Feasts of the seventh month will be the Holy Land. Surely the Jews will be keeping the Feast days in the right month, for Yahweh has chosen to work through them. Due to their contrived postponements, however, they may be off a day or two, but will be in the right month and season.

It has been shown that Yahweh has honored the Jewish calendar since the Jews were recognized as a nation. When they have a 13th month (*Ve-adar*), the spring rains are cold and overcast skies delay the warm days of spring. Also, the maturing of the barley is slow.

We have carefully checked the various reports on Israel's crop conditions and noted when the spring is early, the maturing barley is available in various fields at a stage worthy of a wave sheaf. That was true in the year 2018, when sheaves of barley were identified in the fields of Israel by the third week of March. Passover was properly observed April 1st, two weeks later, after the new moon was confirmed on March 18th. Those who follow the unbiblical zodiac equinoxes will keep the Feasts a month later, even observing Feast of Tabernacles and the Eighth Day into November in some years, as in the year 2018.

Scripture tells us that Yahshua will intervene on behalf of the Jews when He returns:

Yahweh also shall save the tents of Judah first, that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem do not magnify themselves against Judah, Zechariah 12:7.

When these events begin occurring in the Holy Land, not all the people in Jerusalem will be believers in Yahshua. However, the tenor of events will instill a deep and awesome respect in the surviving remnant. It is here that Yahshua's power will be revealed. Many will be convinced He is indeed the promised Messiah.

Be a Participant

We publish a sacred calendar each year, listing the weekly Sabbaths and dates and times for the anticipated new moons as well as the seven "*moed*" or annual Sabbaths. These Sabbaths are contingent upon the sighting of the new moon for that month. The general knowledge of astronomy today is computerized and has grown, but we still seek the visible sighting of the moon to remind us this is Yahweh's doing and our mind carries us back to the days of the ancient worthies who sought the new moons just as we do today.

Take an active part in spotting the new moons throughout the year. Request our booklet *Biblical Holy Days* and learn the deeper meaning of these special days our Heavenly Father Yahweh has set aside to meet with His sons and daughters. It is a time of family fellowship where we meet with delegates of the soon-coming spiritual city of the New Jerusalem! The purpose of the annual calendar is to learn when the seven Feasts are to be observed during each year. Any group that ignores learning about the calendar is not putting into practice the keeping of the seven annual Holy days.

As a body, present-day Judaism does not keep Passover at the beginning of the 14th but as it is ending. Thus they end up partaking of the Passover on the 15th, yet Scripture says to keep it on the 14th. Neither do they have the proper understanding of Yahshua as the true Passover Lamb that takes away the sins of the world. In spite of the Jew's rejection of Yahshua, because of His love and compassion for mankind, He will rescue the Jews and save the tents of Judah first (Zech. 12:7).

It is also interesting that Rabbinic Judaism does not keep Pentecost on the correct date, but has it float during the week instead of always on a Sunday. Neither do they have a complete understanding of the Holy Spirit. Their desire is to return to the physical sacrifices and rebuild a temple, and restore the Levitical priesthood. Under Yahshua we follow the Melchizedek order of

spiritual sacrifices (Rom. 12:1-2). We must follow the truth of Yahweh who promises that He will protect those who are obedient.

Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation (trial), which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth, Revelation 3:10.

Join us as we seek the new moon each month in the western sky at sunset. Request the **YAIY Biblical Calendar** for our North American Region each year and arrange your scheduled activities so you can keep the seven annual Feasts throughout the year.

Please note, various continental regions can be a day early or later. Watch for the new moons wherever you are and notify us by fax, phone, e-mail, or visit us online at newmoonreport.org. Be a dedicated new moon spotter and help other believers in the process. We look forward to hearing from you.

A Final Question

How do we know the days of the week have not been tampered with? Is the Sabbath the correct Seventh day?

From time to time questions come in about the changes that have occurred in our present Gregorian calendar. It so happens that the Julian calendar was introduced in 46 BCE, and was off by 10 days. It was supplanted by the Gregorian calendar in 1582, CE., when Thursday the 5th day became Thursday the 15th. The days of the week were not changed, only the dates.

The calendar became a topic of deeper study. Interesting was the French calendar of 1793 in which a year comprised twelve months of 30 days each. The months were of three weeks of ten days and tenth day was the Sabbath. The five intercalary days were made into festival days. After 12 years of confusion, Napoleon abolished this calendar and in 1805 France resumed our present Gregorian calendar. The threat of losing the seven-day week passed and seventh day was again firmly established.

There is no evidence the days of the week have been changed. We have only to go back to Yahshua and He had no problem with the seventh day being the Sabbath. We are to observe Saturday (the 7th Day) as the weekly Sabbath and the seven annual Feasts, to keep holy the Sabbaths enjoined in the Fourth Commandment. In other words, all the Sabbaths are holy and are to be kept holy by each of us.

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