

WHEN IS THE BIBLICAL NEW MOON?

Statement from the Israeli New Moon Society :

"The commandment (mitzvah) of sanctifying the month is the first one which the Children of Israel were commanded on leaving Egypt. This commandment is of great importance because the dates of the festivals, including over 60 commandments, depend on it. In addition to sanctifying months according to the appearance of the New Moon, the Hebrew calendar depends on leap years (extended by an extra month) that depend on the position of the Sun, ripeness of grains, etc.

For over a thousand years the Hebrew calendar has been fixed by calculation. Today, the Hebrew calendar does not match that fixed by observing the Moon. Even though the gap between the two calendars continues to increase, we do not have the authority to alter the calendar until a new Sanhedrin (religious high court) is re-established. While sanctification of the month according to observation is not practised today, it is important to carry out calculations and practise observing the New Moon, in order to be ready for when the Sanhedrin is re-established. Likewise, there is increasing involvement in the Temple, red heifer, etc. Of course, we are not intending to change the current calendar (without the permission of an authorized Sanhedrin), but just to increase involvement in and embellish the Torah.

In recent years, a number of individuals and groups have begun to observe the Moon each month to practise for the commandment of observing the Moon and for determining criteria for the limits of visibility. There is still plenty of room to improve on the existing criteria, using observations and analyzing them in relation to meteorological and physical parameters. We, the Israeli New Moon Society, are asking the public at large to join us by trying to observe the New Moon at the beginning of each month. The Israeli New Moon Society was founded for this purpose by Rabbi Dr. Nachum Rabinovitch, head of Yeshivat Birkat Moshe, Maale Adumim. The Society works with the Institute for Kiddush Hachodesh Studies and includes scientists and rabbis from Universities, Yeshivot and elsewhere."

The following article is by Roy Hoffman, a professor at Hebrew University and representative of the Israeli New Moon Society, with whom we have jointly watched for the new moon over Jerusalem.

The Sanhedrin : Its History and Reinstatement

"If this or some other Sanhedrin achieves widespread recognition in the future, then a likely scenario for the calendar would be as follows. They would form a committee to discuss the calendar. They would use the information gathered by, amongst others, the Israeli New Moon Society. Members of the society would be invited to advise them. If they came to a decision to renew the determination of the calendar by observation, then members of the society would be amongst those who would testify upon seeing the Moon. The observers' testimony would be checked, using techniques developed by the society and others."

It is significant that the Rabbinical Jews are planning to return to establishing their calendar by observation. The convoluted and sometimes strange theories of men are simply a diversion. All we need is the Bible and the example of Jesus Christ.

"For even hereunto were you called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps." (1 Peter 2:21)

By following the instructions in the Bible, we reveal their simplicity, as well as the errors in the Hebrew calendar. For example, we keep the Day of Trumpets, the first day of the seventh month (Lev.23:24), on the day of the first appearance of the new moon (Genesis 1:14-18).

In 2006, 1st Tishri (Day of Trumpets) in the Hebrew Calendar fell on 23rd September. The new moon should therefore have been visible to the naked eye on the evening of 22nd September. Her Majesty's Nautical Almanac Office's Websurf gives the following Visibility Predictions for the New Crescent Moon over Jerusalem at that time:

Friday	evening,	22nd	September	-	code	F
Saturday	evening,	23rd	September	-	code	F
Sunday evening, 24th September - code A						

A	-	-	Easily	visible						
B	-	Visible	under	perfect	conditions					
C	-	May	need	optical	aid	to	find	the	crescent	Moon
D	-	Will	need	optical	aid	to	find	the	crescent	Moon
E	-	Not	visible	with	a	telescope				
F - Not visible, below the Danjon limit										

According to Websurf, the next year that 1st Tishri in the Hebrew Calendar will begin on the same evening that the new moon will first become visible to the naked eye over Jerusalem will be 2016 (plus a possibility of 2011 - code C)!

What are the Bible's instructions? At the end of the 12th month you look to see if the barley in Israel, which grows wild there like a weed, is abib. If it is, then the next new moon in Israel starts the year, for the barley will be ripe for the Wave Sheaf Offering during the Festival of Unleavened Bread.

Yes brethren, that is all there is to God's calendar. That is how the calendar was determined at the time of Christ, as you can easily prove by historical research and by the gospels. Remember, Christ died on 14th Abib, the day the Jews call the preparation day (John 19:31,42), which we call Passover. The day on which Christ died had to be the correct day for Passover in order to fulfil the Plan of God, developed before the foundation of the world (Revelation 13:8).

Three hundred years later the Jews departed from the true calendar. However, when Jesus provided our example, the Jews still looked for the abib at the end of the twelfth month. They still had the wave sheaf offering. They still required several witnesses of each new moon to start the new month.

The rabbis know that they need to return to the scriptural calendar. They admit that the current Hebrew calendar is in error, but they cannot change it without the permission of an authorized Sanhedrin.

As we approach the end of the age, and Christ is refining His church, it is time to return to what we find in the Bible. We don't need to wait for the re-establishment of the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem. Let's follow the example set by Jesus Christ, rather than the traditions of men.