

PASSOVER—A MONTH LATER?

by Avram Yehoshua

[The Seed of Abraham](#)

Some years, like in 2018 and 2021, our Passover was about a month later than the Rabbinic and Messianic Passover. The reason for this centers around three questions and their answers:

1. *When* does a New Moon, which begins a new biblical month, begin?
2. *Which* New Moon becomes the New Moon for the biblical New Year?
3. *Why* is there a 13th Month?

When is the New Moon?

The biblical lunar calendar has New Moon sightings as *time markers*, which begin a biblical month (e.g. Gen. 1:14; Num. 10:10; 28:11).¹ The sighting of the first crescent (New Moon) in the western sky after sunset, begins the first day (night) of the biblical month as the ‘day’ begins in darkness. Most of the time, though, the traditional Jewish Rabbinic calendar (which Messianic Jews blindly follow)² is a day or two early for the biblical New Moons because it doesn’t follow the sighting of the new moons.

When Yeshua lived in Israel the Jewish people went by the sighting of the first crescent New Moon in the western sky after sunset to begin each biblical month. The Rabbis, though, haven’t done that for more than 1,000 years. About 350 AD they began using a calculated calendar (called the Hillel Calendar). For the first number of centuries it was accurate, but today it’s early, by a day or two, 78% of the time. That’s why the Rabbinic New Moon date for March 2018 is Friday night, March 16th, but the biblical date for that New Moon is actually Sunday night, March 18th, two days later. Sunday night is when the New Moon was seen in Israel, in the western sky just after sunset.

In other words, only 22% of the time does the Rabbinic New Moon actually coincide with the sighting of the New Moon over Israel. The Rabbis know this is wrong, but say they are helpless to change it because the calculated calendar was authorized by a Sanhedrin, and only a Sanhedrin³ with similar authority can alter it. So, they have to wait until it runs out. If they ever correct their calendar it still won’t solve which New Moon determines the first New Moon for the biblical year.

¹ There are some who think the astronomical conjunction determines the time of the New Moon, but this is a modern understanding of a ‘New Moon.’ Ancient man could not accurately determine the conjunction until about 300 BC, so we know that Israel did not go by that in the time of Moses, Joshua and King David.

² The Messianics follow the Rabbis in their calendar and other perverse practices, like the wearing of the kipa. See [The Kipa](#) for why the kipa or yarmulke is wrong to wear. For why the Messianic Community should not be following the Rabbis, see The Messianic Community on page 3.

³ *Sanhedrin* is the Hebrew name for the assembly or council, as many English Bibles translate it, that in the days of the Roman occupation of Israel, was the chief Jewish religious and political authority, under Roman authority. It was made up of 70 Elders of Israel (Priests, Pharisees and Scribes). It was a Sanhedrin that condemned Yeshua to death, but brought Him to Pilate because the Sanhedrin’s authority to kill a man had been taken away from them by Rome. Therefore, all Jews, represented in the High Priest of Israel, and all Gentiles, represented in Pontius Pilate, condemned and crucified the Prince of Life. All stand guilty before God and in need of the Savior.

When Does The Biblical Year Begin?

There's controversy, as with just about everything biblical, as to which New Moon constitutes the first New Moon for the biblical year, or how to know when the biblical year begins (Ex. 12:1-2). Some think that 'barley in Abib' (a Karaite concept)⁴ constitutes which New Moon begins the biblical year, but this isn't so.⁵ Others think a cow has to give birth to a chicken when the New Moon is seen in the proximity of Mars...no, I'm just kidding.⁶

Biblically and historically, the first month of the biblical year is determined by the New Moon (first crescent) that occurs *on or after* the Vernal (Spring) Equinox. In 2018 the Rabbinic New Moon began *before* the Vernal Equinox, and hence, why the Rabbinic and Messianic Passover was a month early. This was not the first time I personally witnessed the traditional Jewish and Messianic Communities begin their biblical year a month early. In my 35 years of walking in The Hebraic Perspective it's happened about four times. Whenever they, or any other religious organization, take the New Moon *before* the Vernal Equinox to be their first month of the biblical year, they're not biblically correct because the New Moon for the New Year is the 'spring' New Moon, but any new moon before the Vernal Equinox is in the winter. The Vernal Equinox determines when winter ends and spring begins.

The Jewish (Rabbinic and Messianic) Passover, and all their Feasts for 2018 and 2021, including Hanuka, were or will be a month earlier than they should be because all the Feasts, etc., spin off the first month. The difference of a month boils down to *which New Moon is* the first New Moon of the biblical year.

In 2018 the traditional Jewish Passover Meal began on Friday night, March 30th. Counting 14 days back from the Jewish Passover of March 30th you have a New Moon on March 16th⁷ which is four days *before* the Vernal Equinox (of March 20th):

1. March 30th minus 14 days for Passover, which is on the 14th day of the first biblical month of Aviv, now known in Judaism as Nisan, is March 16th.
2. March 16th is when the first 'day' (in the evening) began for the traditional Jewish first month of the biblical year. (Nisan 1 began on Friday evening, March 16th, 2018 for the Jewish community.)
3. March 16th, 2018 was four days before the Vernal Equinox, and so, that New Moon should have been the last month or 13th New Moon of the year, not the first New Moon of the biblical year.
4. Passover, 14 Aviv/Nisan, is when the Passover lamb is sacrificed. 15 Aviv/Nisan, in the evening, is when the Passover lamb is eaten at the Passover Meal.

The biblically correct date for the Passover Meal was on Tuesday night, May 1st, 2018.

⁴ Karaites are Jews who don't believe the Talmud is authoritative and so they don't follow the Rabbis. See p. 4 for why the Karaite concept of 'barley in Abib' is wrong. (Abib is an English way of speaking of the Hebrew Aviv.)

⁵ See [Barley in Aviv and the Ten Plagues](#).

⁶ According to Talmud, it's written that the *ripening* of the barley crop; the age of the kids, lambs, and doves; the ripeness of the fruit trees, and the relation of the date to the *tekufah* (in this case, the Vernal Equinox) determine the New Moon for the New Year. At least two of the four conditions must be met for a new moon to be the New Moon for the biblical year. See Talmud Sanhedrin 11b.

⁷ The New Moon sighting was not on Friday night, March 16th, 2018, but on Sunday night, March 18th, a full two days later. The Jewish community began their month too soon, with their calculated Hillel Calendar.

The 13th Month

Because the biblical New Year should not begin before the Vernal Equinox there is a 13th month in the biblical year, 7 times every 19 years (a little less than once every three years; about once every 2.7 years). This extra month is done in order to bring the lunar calendar year into synchronization with the solar year so that the first month always begins in the spring; not in the winter. The additional month is always *after* the 12th lunar month, and hence, why it's called the 13th month or Adar II (following Adar I).

The determination for the extra month should come when the New Moon after the 12th New Moon begins *before* the Vernal Equinox.⁸ If that New Moon begins before the Vernal Equinox it becomes the 13th month, but if it begins *on* or *after* the Vernal Equinox, it becomes the first month of the biblical New Year (Ex. 12:1-2). That's why in 2018 there was 13 months for us. The first New Moon of the biblical year fell on Tuesday night, April 17th, 2018, and so the Passover Meal was on Tuesday night, May 1st.

The solar Gregorian calendar, which always has 12 months, has an interesting aspect to it that parallels, in a smaller way, the lunar calendar's adjustment for the extra month (7 years out of every 19 years). It's the Gregorian calendar's *extra day* every four years, the so-called 'Leap Year,' when February, the shortest of the months by two or three days,⁹ is given an extra day. This is the Gregorian calendar's way of adjusting to the solar reality that the time it takes for the Earth to revolve around the sun is not exactly 365 days, but about 365.25 days. The lunar year has only about 354 days for its 12 months, and hence, the addition of the 13th month to compensate for the shortage.¹⁰ With the lunar 13th month every 7 years in a 19 year cycle, it works out fairly accurately.

The Messianic Community

It's a blatant sin, and grievous to God, that the Rabbis and Messianics continue to ordain the keeping of Passover (and all the other Feasts of Israel) on the wrong dates almost 80% of the time. In this the Jewish people are sinning against God and don't even realize it, as most Jews don't realize that their dates for Passover and the other Feasts are wrong. They just follow the Rabbis, but it's a greater sin for the Messianic community because they were told by Yeshua not to follow the Rabbis in their teachings. They have chosen to disregard the voice of their Master and to follow the Rabbis instead of Yeshua, *The Rabbi*. Yeshua said to His Apostles, about the Pharisees and Scribes (the spiritual Fathers of the Rabbis), to beware of their doctrines/teachings and not to follow them:

“Then the Scribes and Pharisees who were from Jerusalem came to Yeshua, saying, ‘Why do Your disciples transgress the Tradition of the Elders?’ (This was the Oral Law and later would become the written Talmud.) ‘For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread’ (with the Pharisaic understanding that they must say the Pharisaic blessing, which if not said would make their hands ‘unclean,’ and therefore, in Pharisaic eyes, any and all biblically kosher food that they might eat.)¹¹ ‘Yeshua answered and said to them, ‘Why

⁸ The Vernal Equinox is usually March 20th in the Northern Hemisphere, which Israel is in. Israel is where God brought the Hebrews to keep His Torah and His Feasts, which are all determined by which New Moon begins the biblical New Year.

⁹ Every Gregorian month has 30 or 31 days except February, which only has 28 days. In a Leap Year February has 29 days.

¹⁰ Actually, a Jewish lunar year can have 353, 354 or 355 days. A leap year is always 30 days longer, and so can have 383, 384, or 385 days.

do you also *transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition?*..Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying: ‘These people draw near to Me with their mouth and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. In vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men!’” (Matthew 15:1-3, 7-9)

Yeshua also said of the Scribes and Pharisees:

“Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees—hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, *you make him twice as much a son of Hell as yourselves!*” (Matthew 23:15)

Yeshua spoke to His Apostles, saying:

“‘Take heed and *beware of the leaven* of the Pharisees and the Sadducees!’ And they reasoned among themselves, saying, ‘It is because we have taken no bread.’ But Yeshua, aware of it, said to them, ‘Oh you of little faith! Why do you reason among yourselves because you have brought no bread?!...How is it you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread?—but to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.’ Then **they understood** that He did not tell them to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the **teaching** of the Pharisees and Sadducees.” (Matthew 16:6-8, 11-12)

In too many things like the dating of Passover, Messianic Judaism wrongly follows the Rabbis and causes its people to sin against the Lord by keeping Passover and all the other Feasts of Israel on the wrong dates. With Messiah Yeshua’s specific warnings about the teachings of the Pharisees and Scribes it is inexcusable that the leaders of Messianic Judaism continue to sin by following the Rabbis in this, and other areas (e.g. the wearing of the kipa/yarmulke, and the teaching of Kabbalah, etc.).¹²

The Karaite Concept

The Karaites are a Jewish sect that rebelled against the Rabbis and their Talmud in the 8th century, in what is today northern Iran, and while they do follow the biblical sighting of the new moon over Israel to determine the biblical months, unfortunately for their new moon for the biblical year, they, like the Rabbis, sometimes use the new moon *before* the Vernal Equinox. This makes the Karaite Passover, in the years that they do this, a month earlier than it should be. They don’t always begin a month early, though. This depends on their ‘barley in Abib.’

Barley goes through a number of stages before it’s ripe for harvest. Abib (Hebrew Aviv) is one of them. The Karaite understanding is that when the barley is in the Aviv stage for the new moon, either before or after the Vernal Equinox, that new moon becomes their first month.¹³

The Karaite concept is flawed for several reasons.¹⁴ Because the Karaites use an agricultural factor (barley

¹¹ For a greater understanding on what the Pharisees were actually wanting of the disciples, see [Law 102](#), page 6, *Jesus and the Pig*.

¹² See [G-d: The Missing ‘o’](#), [Kabbalah](#), [Kosher—Biblical vs Jewish](#), [Talmud and Authority](#), [Tefillin—To Wear or Not to Wear?](#), [The Kipa](#), and [The Star of David](#), for a number of sins the Rabbis and Messianics condone.

¹³ When the Karaites announce their New Moon after the Vernal Equinox, it’ll be the right date, as they follow the new moon sightings, but any New Moon of theirs before the Vernal Equinox that they declare to be the New Moon for the New Year is wrong.

¹⁴ If you’d like to know why the Karaite ‘Barley in Abib’ is not the correct way to determine which month is the biblical month for the first month of the biblical year, see [Barley in Aviv and the Ten Plagues](#).

in the stage of *aviv/abib*) to determine their new moon for the New Year, it seems rather strange that there's no mention in Scripture of what percentage of Israel needs to have barley in that stage of Aviv at the New Moon before or after the Vernal Equinox. The Karaites, realizing this, say that barley only has to be found in one or two places in all Israel, for that new moon to be the first of the year, but this means that most all of Israel wouldn't have the barley in that stage, and it's an arbitrary way of determining it. Why not three or four places? Or ten places?

It would seem reasonable that all of Israel would have to have the barley in the *Aviv* stage so that all Israel could take their tithe and offering of ripe and harvested barley to Jerusalem 14 days later (after the New Moon) for Passover in Jerusalem, but that's something the Karaites don't speak about,¹⁵ even though it's biblical law (Lev. 23:9-10f.). Nor the fact that even if all Israel had barley in the *Aviv* stage for their New Moon before the Vernal Equinox, it wouldn't give the barley enough time to ripen **and** be harvested, **and** for all Israel to make their journey to Jerusalem¹⁶ on foot, in order for all of them to be there for the start of Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread on the 14th of the first biblical month, when the Passover lambs would be sacrificed and the Feast of Unleavened Bread would begin.¹⁷

It's Really Simple

Why we sometimes keep Pesach a month later than the traditional Jewish and Messianic communities is really simple. Also, many times we keep Passover a day or two later than those two groups. That's simple, too. We need to know two things:

1. Which New Moon begins the biblical New Year. This is done by the New Moon on or after the Vernal (Spring) Equinox, and
2. When does a New Moon begin a biblical month (by the sighting of the New Moon over Israel).

¹⁵ There are also Gentile Christian groups that use the New Moon which is *closest* to the Vernal Equinox as their New Moon for the biblical year. It doesn't matter to them which side of the Vernal Equinox the New Moon is on, just as long as it's the closest one to the Vernal Equinox (in days to it or from it.) This concept fails for ancient Israel because when a New Moon would be 12 to 15 days before the Vernal Equinox, it would have been next to impossible for them to know if *that* New Moon was the closest New Moon to the Vernal Equinox, or the New Moon after it would be.

As an aside, Easter isn't calculated like the biblical Passover. In 325 AD the Council of Nicaea established that Easter would be held on the **first Sunday after the first full moon** occurring *on or after* the Vernal Equinox. Sometimes Passover and Easter coincide, while at many other times they are separated by days or weeks or even a month. It's interesting to see that the Church of Rome, which took Easter from paganism, has its first full moon *on or after the Vernal Equinox*, having taken that 'on or after' from Israel's way to know which new moon became the first new moon of the biblical year. For why Easter is pagan, and why Catholicism took it to replace God's Passover, see Alexander Hislop's, Christian classic, [The Two Babylons—The Full Hislop](#). It reals that all pagan religions originated in Babylon and spread throughout the Earth. Hislop then proves that the Roman Catholic Church is Revelation's New Testament Babylon (Rev. 14:8; 16:19; 17:5; 18:2, 10, etc.); its teachings and ceremonies, etc., coming straight from ancient Babylon. For Easter see p. 80f.

¹⁶ Three times a year, for the three major Feasts of Passover/Unleavened Bread, Pentecost and Tabernacles, does God require all the Hebrew men living in the Land of Israel to attend His Feasts in 'the place where He chose to have His Name' (Ex. 23:14-17; 34:23-24; Dt. 16:16). All the men, of course, would come with their wives and children for the Feasts.

¹⁷ For an authoritative study on why the New Moon on or after the Vernal Equinox is the biblical standard, see Herb Solinsky's, [The Biblical Calendar](#). There are a number of studies you can download. You might want to begin with the *Concise Biblical Calendar* or *Barley and the Calendar*, or the *Historical Departure from the Biblical Calendar*, or whatever you're led to.

Everyone who kept the Jewish, non-biblically dated Passover on March 27, 2021, used the New Moon of March 13th as their New Moon for the beginning of the biblical year, but this New Moon was *before* the Vernal Equinox of March 20th. Therefore, their New Moon of March 13th should have been the 13th New Moon of the year, not the 1st New Moon of the New Year. That accounts for the month difference. They started a month early, and so their Passover wasn't on the biblical date of 15 Aviv (Nisan today in the Jewish calendar), but in the middle of the 13th month.

The Rabbis are one or two days early 78% of the time for with their New Moons for any month. They do not determine New Moons the way Joshua, King David and the Priests in the days of Yeshua did, by sighting the new moon over Israel. The Rabbis have an old calculated calendar that is wrong for them new moons most of the time. Ask most any rabbi and he will tell you. They can't change/update it because they don't have the authority to change it. They say they need the same authority that the Sanhedrin had, which implemented it about 350 AD. It's called The Hillel Calendar (not to be confused with the great Jewish Sage, 'Hillel,' who lived a generation before Yeshua, but the Hillel who lived about 300 AD. "Hillel" was, and still is, a popular Jewish name, just as 'Michael' is a popular English and French (Michel) name.

This is why you'll look on a Jewish or Messianic calendar and see, 78% of the time, their 'New Moons' for the beginning of the months will be early by a day or two days, according to when the actual first crescent New Moon is seen over Israel.

All that to say that the Rabbis and the Messianics have false dates for Passover and all the other Feasts, most every year. Some years they will have the right date, but that's few and far between.¹⁸

Be all that as it may, this is why you'll look on any Jewish calendar and see, juxtaposed against our New Moon/Holy Days Calendar,¹⁹ that 78% of the time their 'New Moons' for the beginning of the months will be early by a day or two.

Glory to Messiah Yeshua for opening us to us His Way in this and many other areas.²⁰

¹⁸ You can read more about this calendar issue from [Herb Solinsky](#).

In 2021 the biblical Passover meal was eaten on the night of April 27th, which began the Feast of Unleavened Bread and was 15 Aviv.

Yeshua's resurrection was celebrated on the Sunday during Passover Week, which was May 2nd, which was First Fruits/Sheaf (cf. 1st Cor. 15:20, 23 and see [First Sheaf](#)).

¹⁹ See our [Holy Days Calendar](#), which has holy days (Feasts of the Lord) and also, Israeli days of note, as well as the New Moons for the year.

²⁰ Last revised on Saturday, May 1, 2021.