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The New Moon Offerings

28: 11-15

The New Moon offerings DIG: How does the Lunar calendar differ from the Gregorian calendar? What were New Moon festivals like? Why was the New Moon important for women? Why was there a purification offering in all the feasts except Shabbat? How were the goats used to provide atonement?

REFLECT: When do you reset your devotion for God? Daily, once a week, once a month, yearly? Can this become merely routine rather than real? How does Yeshua provide atonement for those sins that you inadvertently commit? How did He split time in two, and how will He reset time again when He returns?

ADONAI is a God of multiple new beginnings, new seasons, and fresh starts.

The New Moon is an appointed time. Because the biblical calendar is a lunar calendar, most of **the appointed times** (see the commentary on **Leviticus**, **to see link click Dw - God's Appointed Times**) are reckoned according to **the New Moon**. The first day of the biblical month is called **Rosh-Chodesh**, which literally means "a new head" and is understood to mean "the first of the New Month," and celebrated as a minor holiday. A **Rosh-Chodesh** occurs when the first crescent of **the New Moon** appears in the sky. Note that the biblical **Rosh-Chodesh** is not the same as the English "new moon." Rather, **the Rosh-Chodesh moon** is ordinarily the first visible crescent of the new lunar moon cycle as seen below. **The Jewish** calendar is different from the Gregorian calendar in that it is regulated more by **the moon** than the sun. The middle of the biblical month is **a full moon**. The end of the biblical month is when the moon disappears completely from the sky.⁶⁴⁵



The New Moon (28:11-14): The festival begins with this statement: **At the beginning of each of your months (Rosh-Chodesh), you shall present . . . (28:11a).** The Moon's unilluminated side is facing the Earth during a **New Moon**. **The Moon** itself is not visible (except during a solar eclipse). From any location on the Earth, **the Moon** appears to be a circular disk which, at any specific time, is illuminated to some degree by direct sunlight. Like the Earth, **the Moon** is a sphere which is always half illuminated by the Sun, but as **the Moon** orbits the Earth we get to see more or less of the illuminated half. During each lunar orbit (a lunar month), we see **the Moon's** appearance change from not visibly illuminated through partially illuminated to fully illuminated, then back through partially illuminated to not illuminated again. Although this cycle is a continuous process, there are eight distinct, traditionally recognized stages, called phases. The phases designate both the degree to which **the Moon** is illuminated and the geometric appearance of the illuminated part.⁶⁴⁶

Although **the New Moon** is an appointed time, it is not a **Sabbath** (see [Ey - The Sabbath Offerings](#)), nor is there a specific commandment to gather for a sacred assembly. However, we know from **First Samuel** that **King Sha'ul** used to hold a two-day banquet on **the New Moon (First Samuel 20:18 and 24)**, that the prophets taught on **the Sabbath and New Moons (Second Kings 4:23)**. **New Moon** festivals were marked by sacrifices, the blowing of shofars over the sacrifices (**Numbers 10:10**), the suspension of all labor and trade (**Nehemiah 10:31**), and social or family feasts (**First Samuel 20:5**). And in the Messianic Kingdom to come: **it shall be from New Moon to New Moon and from Sabbath to Sabbath, all mankind will come to bow down before Me, says YHVH (Isaiah 66:23).**

According to some Jewish traditions, the New Moon is a holiday for women. The Jerusalem Talmud reports that women were given the extra holiday on which they were to be free from their usual duties as a reward for not contributing their

jewelry to the golden calf project (j.Tannit64c). Fathers and husbands may be wise to take on an extra load of duties on the New Moon to give their wives and daughters a break.⁶⁴⁷

Each **month** is a marker of **His** blessing, a time for special rejoicing. In the Temple, **the New Moon** festival was to be celebrated with the additional (Hebrew: *mussaf*) sacrifice of a **Olah Offering** (see the commentary on **Leviticus Ao** - **The Olah Offering: Providing Access to God**) to **ADONAI** consisting of two young bulls, one ram and seven male lambs in their first year and without defect; with six quarts of fine flour mixed with olive oil as a grain offering for the one ram; and two quarts of fine flour mixed with olive oil as a grain offering (see **Leviticus Aj** - **The Grain Offerings: Dedicated to God**) for each lamb. This will be the Olah Offering giving a pleasing aroma, an offering made by fire for **ADONAI**. Their drink offerings will be two quarts of wine for a bull, one-and-one-third quarts for the ram, and one quart for each lamb. This is the Olah Offering for every Rosh-Chodesh throughout the months of the year.

In the past, the arrival of the Rosh-Chodesh was announced in the synagogue on the Shabbat before it occurred. This tradition arose in ancient times as a means of keeping the community informed about the biblical calendar. Today, the Jewish calendar is fixed and tracks the New Moon without the need for announcements. A special congregational prayer, petitioning God for a good month, accompanies the announcement of the day on which the New Moon will occur. The prayer is thus given, "May it be Your will, our God and the God of our fathers that You make new this month upon us for goodness and for blessing. May You give us long life - a life of peace; a life of goodness; a life of blessing a life of sustenance; a life of physical health; a life in which there is fear of heaven and fear of sin; a life of wealth and honor; a life in which we will have love of Torah, fear of God; a life in which the LORD fulfills our heartfelt requests for the good." Amen, Selah.

As mentioned at the beginning of this file, **Rosh-Chodesh** does not literally mean "**New Moon**," but **the new moon** is supposed to be the first day of the month. But this is not always the case anymore. Discrepancies between the lunar cycle and the fixed version of the biblical calendar sometimes offset **the new moon** by as much as a day. Some Messianic communities have opted to discard the traditional Gregorian calendar and return to a lunar calendar determined by observation. To some, this would seem to be a more biblical approach, but to do so one sacrifices continuity with all those who love **the God of Abraham, Isaa, and Jacob**. Whether or not individual people and individual communities have the authority to determine their own calendars is a matter of debate. The traditional

answer is that they do not. If they did, everyone would be on a different calendar.

As with any religious ritual, there was a danger of observing **the New Moon** festivals without a true heart to follow **God**. Later in **their** history, **the Israelites** continued to observe **the New Moon** festivals outwardly, even after **their** hearts had turned cold toward **ADONAI**. **They** readily sacrificed **their bulls** and **lambs** and **goats**, but **they** would not give up **their** sins. **They** relied on the outward observations to cleanse **them**, even though there was still evil in **their** hearts. **The LORD** had severe words for such hypocrisy: **Stop bringing meaningless offerings! Your incense is detestable to me. New Moons, Sabbaths and convocations - I cannot bear your worthless assemblies. Your New Moon feasts and your appointed festivals I hate with all my being. They have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them (Isaiah 1:13-14)**. Sin is hateful to **God**, and no amount of ritual or ceremony or sacrament can make up for a sinful heart. **Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being (Psalm 51:6; Hosea 6:6)**.⁶⁴⁸

Our **God** is a **God** of multiple new beginnings, new seasons, and fresh starts. Instead of celebrating once a year, **God** asks that **the beginning of each of your months**, each **New Moon**, be celebrated - that's twelve new beginnings instead of one! **On the day of your gladness also, and at your appointed feasts and at the beginning of your months, you shall blow the trumpets over your burnt offerings and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings. They shall be a reminder of you before your God: I am the LORD your God (Numbers 10:10)**. The **Jewish** year is supposed to reflect the number of years since creation, although this is obviously difficult to prove. The standard Gregorian calendar used across the world is uncomfortable for those who do not believe in **Yeshua**. It's a constant reminder of **His** coming. Instead of saying "BC" (Before Christ) or "AD" (Anno Domini - the year of our Lord), secular **Jews** say "before the counting" and "after the counting," and it is now common for unbelievers worldwide who do not want to acknowledge **Him** to write "BCE" (Before the Current Era) and "CE" (Current Era). The awkward truth of **Yeshua's** central importance that all this counting and era-dividing points toward, is thus avoided for those who would rather deny **the One** who split time in two. But the truth is that time was dramatically reset by **His First Coming** (see [Ew - God's Ordering of Space and Time](#)), whom we proclaim every time we write the date. Then time will be reset once again by **His Second Coming** (see the commentary on [Isaiah Kg - The Second Coming of Jesus Christ to Bozrah](#)). Thus, there will be a day when **every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Yeshua Messiah is Lord (Philippians 2:10-11)**. But for now, we will continue to dedicate our lives to **Him** as living sacrifices, day by day, week by week, month by month, and year by year.⁶⁴⁹

The obligatory purification offering (28:15): Also a male goat is to be offered as a purification offering to ADONAI (see Leviticus [Aq](#) - The Chatta'th Offering: Communicating God's Forgiveness), in addition to the regular Olah Offering and its drink offering. The goat was required for every festival other than the Shabbat. What is the meaning of this single goat? The purpose of the Chatta'th Offering goat of the festivals and the New Moons is explained in the tractate Shavu'ot of the Mishnah (see the commentary on [The Life of Christ Ei](#) - The Oral Law). **The goats were a fail safe measure. They were meant to provide atonement for those who inadvertently desecrated the Tabernacle by coming near to God in a condition of ritual impurity.**

Inevitably, some among the mass of worshippers, either celebrating a New Moon in the wilderness, or later entering the holy courts of the Temple, would inadvertently be ritually **unclean** (see the commentary on Leviticus [Bk](#) - Ritually Clean and Unclean Animals). For example, a person might have unknowingly been in the same building with a corpse before a festival, or they might have unwittingly walked over a grave on their way up to the Temple. Assuming that they were still in a state of ritual impurity, they entered the Temple courts and thereby **unclean (Numbers 19:13 and 20)**. That same person might eat the sacrifices while still unclean, a thing expressly forbidden. **The single goat offered on the New Moons and festivals to atone for all those inadvertent ritual sins. His mercy endures forever (Psalm 136).**

The sacrifice of **the Master** works in a similar manner. We understand that **His** death and resurrection atone for our sin which brings us near to **the Father**. But we probably don't even suspect the scope of our sin and separation, which **His** sacrifice has overcome. We are barely aware of our inadequacies. We can't even begin to guess the distance between us and **the Divine**. Yet, the single **Chatta'th Offering** of **Yeshua** is adequate to atone even for the things of which we are ignorant.⁶⁵⁰

*Dear Heavenly **Father**, Praise **You** for **Your** love and omniscience. **You** don't look at people's outward deeds, but **You** see their heart attitude. **For man looks at the outward appearance, but Adonai looks into the heart (First Samuel 16:7c)**. What **You** desire is **a heart** that truly loves **You** and wants to follow **You**. It is such a comfort to know that you do not count up who has the most good deeds or whose good deed is the biggest. You so wisely discern the heart attitude and allow entrance into heaven on the basis of their heart loving and seeking to follow you. **Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord!' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, didn't we prophesy in Your name, and drive out demons in Your name, and perform many miracles in Your name?' Then I will***

declare to them, 'I never knew you. Get away from Me, you workers of lawlessness (Matthew 7:21-23)!

You will give rewards to **Your** children when they are serving **You** with loving **hearts** seeking to honor **You**, and not when they do good deeds out of their own selfish pride. **For no one can lay any other foundation than what is already laid - which is Yeshua the Messiah. Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear. For the Day will show it, because it is to be revealed by fire; and the fire itself will test each one's work - what sort it is. If anyone's work built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss - he himself will be saved, but as through fire (First Corinthians 3:11-15).**

It is a privilege to offer **You the sacrifice** of my loving **heart** that delights in serving **You** and in praising **You**. **Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge His name (Hebrews 13:5 ESV).** In **Messiah Yeshua's** holy Name and power of **His** resurrection. Amen