

NEW MOONS

Are They Commanded Observances?



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Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture is from
the *King James Version* or
The Holy Bible in Its Original Order.

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“And it shall come to pass *that* from one New Moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, all flesh shall come to worship before Me,” says the LORD.—Isaiah 66:23

PREFACE

Many have pondered new moon observances mentioned throughout the Bible. There is no question that they were a significant part of the lives of the ancient Israelites. But are they days that God requires His people to keep and observe? The holydays portray God’s plan of salvation for mankind. If new moons are also holydays, then what do they portray of God’s plan of salvation? Whether they are or not, what would be the purpose and meaning of the new moons? The Bible is clear that buying and selling was prohibited on those days but does that indicate they are a commanded feast of God? If not, why was buying and selling forbidden? Hopefully, this booklet will answer all those questions and more.

CHAPTER 1

Definitions

In the Bible, the Hebrew word *chodesh* (H2320) means *new moon* but it can also correctly be translated *month*. In fact, most of the time *chodesh* is translated *month* as found in:

LEVITICUS 23:24 “Speak to the children of Israel, saying: ‘In the seventh **month [Heb. = chodesh]**, on the first *day* of the **month [Heb. = chodesh]**, you shall have a sabbath-rest, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, a holy convocation.

Literally this states, “In the seventh **new moon**, on the first *day* of the **new moon** ...” Clearly, *new moon* and the first day of a month are one and the same day. The English word *month* corroborates this because it refers specifically to the cycle of the moon as it progresses from new (dark) to full (fully lit) and back to new. In Scripture, *chodesh* is translated *month* when context refers to a specific day, a duration of days, or multiple new moons (months). When simply referring to the first day of a month, *chodesh* is sometimes translated *new moon*. In all regards, *new moon* could always be written but *month* generally makes for easier reading.

Feasts of God

Each of God’s months begin on the day when there is a new moon. There are a number of events tied to new moons in the Scripture; however, it is important to understand that new moons themselves are NOT feasts (appointed times) or holy convocations. Leviticus 23 lists ALL of the appointed times or feasts of God:

LEVITICUS 23:1-2 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 “Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘**The feasts of the LORD, which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, these are My feasts.**’

The rest of the chapter lists God’s holydays which consist of the weekly Sabbath, Passover, Unleavened Bread, Firstfruits

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(Wavesheaf), Weeks (Pentecost), Trumpets, Atonement, and Tabernacles. It also specifies the duration and dates for each:

- The Sabbath is the seventh day of each week.
- Passover is Nisan 14 (first month).
- Unleavened Bread begins on Nisan 15 and lasts seven days.
- Firstfruits (Wavesheaf) is first day of the week during Unleavened Bread.
- Weeks (Pentecost) is seven weeks after the Wavesheaf.
- Trumpets is Tishri 1 (seventh month).
- Atonement is Tishri 10.
- Tabernacles begins on Tishri 15 and lasts eight days.

All are called a ‘feast’ (H4150 = Heb. *mow`ed*), which means an ‘appointed time’ because each is observed on a specific date for a specified number of days. With the exception of Passover, each is also a holy convocation (H4744 = Heb. *miqra`*) or mandatory assembly (H6116 = Heb. *`atsarah*) in which no work (H4399 = Heb. *mla'kah*) or no servile work (H4399 = Heb. *mla'kah* + H5656 = Heb. *`abodah*) is allowed.

Noticeably absent from Leviticus 23 are new moons except when referring to Trumpets on Tishri 1 (a new moon). Nowhere else in the chapter or the remainder of the Bible are *new moons* specifically designated as appointed times, holy convocations, or mandatory assemblies. Therefore, **new moons are not one of God’s commanded holydays.**

Required New Moon Offerings

The Levites were dedicated to help the priests, i.e., the sons of Aaron, by doing much of the physical work for the Tabernacle and, later, the Temple:

1 CHRONICLES 23:27-31a For by the last words of David **the Levites** were numbered from twenty years old and above; 28 because **their duty was to help the sons of**

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Aaron in the service of the house of the LORD, in the courts and in the chambers, in the purifying of all holy things and the work of the service of the house of God, 29 both with the showbread and the fine flour for the grain offering, with the unleavened cakes and *what is baked in the pan*, with what is mixed and with all kinds of measures and sizes; 30 to stand every morning to thank and praise the LORD, and likewise at evening; 31 and at every presentation of a burnt offering to the LORD ...

The priests and Levites were responsible for “the service of the house of God,” which included blowing trumpets, burning incense, sacrificing offerings, making the showbread, etc. as well as thanksgiving and praise to God. But this service was not just for the appointed times of the seventh-day Sabbaths and holydays; they had duties that were performed morning and evening on a daily basis as well as on the new moons. Even though new moons are not holydays, God required sacrificial offerings on the first day of each month. All of this was according to the Law of God:

1 CHRONICLES 23:31 and at every presentation of a burnt offering to the LORD on the Sabbaths and on the **new moons [Heb. = chodesh]** and on the set feasts, by number **according to the ordinance governing them**, regularly before the LORD;

2 CHRONICLES 2:4 Behold, I am building a temple for the name of the LORD my God, to dedicate *it* to Him, to burn before Him sweet incense, for the continual showbread, for the burnt offerings morning and evening, on the Sabbaths, on the **new moons [Heb. = chodesh]**, and on the set feasts of the LORD our God. **This is an ordinance forever** to Israel.

2 CHRONICLES 8:12-13 Then Solomon offered burnt offerings to the LORD on the altar of the LORD which he had built before the vestibule, 13 according to the daily rate, offering **according to the commandment of Moses**, for the Sabbaths, the **new moons [Heb. = chodesh]**, and the three appointed yearly feasts—the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Weeks, and the Feast of Tabernacles.

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2 CHRONICLES 31:2-3 And Hezekiah appointed the divisions of the priests and the Levites according to their divisions, each man according to his service, the priests and Levites for burnt offerings and peace offerings, to serve, to give thanks, and to praise in the gates of the camp of the LORD. 3 The king also *appointed* a portion of his possessions for the burnt offerings: for the morning and evening burnt offerings, the burnt offerings for the Sabbaths and the **new moons [Heb. = chodesh]** and the set feasts, **as it is written in the Law of the LORD.**

EZRA 3:2-6 Then Jeshua the son of Jozadak and his brethren the priests, and Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and his brethren, arose and built the altar of the God of Israel, to offer burnt offerings on it, as *it is written* in the Law of Moses the man of God. 3 Though fear *had come* upon them because of the people of those countries, they set the altar on its bases; and they offered burnt offerings on it to the LORD, *both* the morning and evening burnt offerings. 4 They also kept the Feast of Tabernacles, as *it is written*, and *offered* the daily burnt offerings in the number **required by ordinance** for each day. 5 Afterwards *they offered* the regular burnt offering, and *those* for **new moons [Heb. = chodesh]** and for all the appointed feasts of the LORD that were consecrated, and *those* of everyone who willingly offered a freewill offering to the LORD. 6 From the first day of the seventh month [Heb. = chodesh] they began to offer burnt offerings to the LORD, although the foundation of the temple of the LORD had not been laid.

Beyond the duties of the priests and Levites, God did not require any observance or participation of the ancient Israelites except on holydays—the appointed times that were the holy convocations or mandatory assemblies on the seventh-day Sabbaths and holydays. The people had no REQUIRED participation in the daily and new moon sacrificial offerings at the Tabernacle or Temple.

The Law of God, however, required two services of the priests and Levites for new moons—offerings and blowing of trumpets:

NUMBERS 28:11-15 **'At the beginnings of your months [Heb. = chodesh] you shall present a burnt offering** to the

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LORD: two young bulls, one ram, and seven lambs in their first year, without blemish; 12 'three-tenths *of an ephah* of fine flour as a grain offering, mixed with oil, for each bull; two-tenths *of an ephah* of fine flour as a grain offering, mixed with oil, for the one ram; 13 'and one-tenth *of an ephah* of fine flour, mixed with oil, as a grain offering for each lamb, as a burnt offering of sweet aroma, an offering made by fire to the LORD. 14 'Their **drink offering** shall be half a hin of wine for a bull, one-third of a hin for a ram, and one-fourth of a hin for a lamb; this *is* the burnt offering for each month throughout the months of the year. 15 'Also one kid of the goats as a **sin offering** to the LORD shall be offered, besides the regular **burnt offering** and its **drink offering**.

NUMBERS 10:8, 10 "**The sons of Aaron, the priests, shall blow the trumpets;** and these shall be to you as **an ordinance forever** throughout your generations. ... 10 "Also in the day of your gladness, in your appointed feasts, and **at the beginning of your months [Heb. = chodesh],** you shall **blow the trumpets over your burnt offerings and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings;** and they shall be a memorial for you before your God: I *am* the LORD your God."

PSALM 81:3 Blow the trumpet in the **new moon [Heb. = chodesh], in the time appointed, on our solemn feast day [Day of Trumpets].**

Each new moon required a **burnt offering** consisting of two young bulls, one ram (male sheep), and seven male lambs (yearlings) over which **trumpets** were blown. The seven lambs required a *grain offering* made up of an *ephah* of flour and oil. In addition, all included a **drink offering** of wine. One-half *hin* was required for each of the bulls, one-third *hin* for the ram, and one-fourth *hin* for each of the seven lambs. The sacrificial offerings were completed with a **sin offering** of one male kid of the goats.

Work Permitted on New Moons

Except for the first day of the seventh month (Trumpets), new moons are not appointed times, holy convocations, or mandatory assemblies. If they were, then work would also be prohibited. This

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is substantiated by biblical examples of work that occurred during new moons. One example is the when God commanded the priests and Levites to erect the Tabernacle after it was constructed on Nisan 1, the new moon of the first month:

EXODUS 40:1-2 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 2 **“On the first day of the first month you shall set up the tabernacle of the tent of meeting.”**

This involved an enormous amount of work and effort as is recorded in the verses that follow:

EXODUS 40:3-31 “You shall put in it the ark of the Testimony, and partition off the ark with the veil. 4 “You shall bring in the table and arrange the things that are to be set in order on it; and you shall bring in the lampstand and light its lamps. 5 “You shall also set the altar of gold for the incense before the ark of the Testimony, and put up the screen for the door of the tabernacle. 6 “Then you shall set the altar of the burnt offering before the door of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting. 7 “And you shall set the laver between the tabernacle of meeting and the altar, and put water in it. 8 “You shall set up the court all around, and hang up the screen at the court gate. 9 “And you shall take the anointing oil, and anoint the tabernacle and all that *is* in it; and you shall hallow it and all its utensils, and it shall be holy. 10 “You shall anoint the altar of the burnt offering and all its utensils, and consecrate the altar. The altar shall be most holy. 11 “And you shall anoint the laver and its base, and consecrate it. 12 “Then you shall bring Aaron and his sons to the door of the tabernacle of meeting and wash them with water. 13 “You shall put the holy garments on Aaron, and anoint him and consecrate him, that he may minister to Me as priest. 14 “And you shall bring his sons and clothe them with tunics. 15 “You shall anoint them, as you anointed their father, that they may minister to Me as priests; for their anointing shall surely be an everlasting priesthood throughout their generations.” 16 Thus Moses did; according to all that the LORD had commanded him, so he did. 17 And it came to pass in the first month of the second year, on the first *day* of the month, *that* the tabernacle was raised up. 18 So Moses raised up the tabernacle, fastened its sockets, set up its boards, put in its bars, and

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raised up its pillars. 19 And he spread out the tent over the tabernacle and put the covering of the tent on top of it, as the LORD had commanded Moses. 20 He took the Testimony and put *it* into the ark, inserted the poles through the rings of the ark, and put the mercy seat on top of the ark. 21 And he brought the ark into the tabernacle, hung up the veil of the covering, and partitioned off the ark of the Testimony, as the LORD had commanded Moses. 22 He put the table in the tabernacle of meeting, on the north side of the tabernacle, outside the veil; 23 and he set the bread in order upon it before the LORD, as the LORD had commanded Moses. 24 He put the lampstand in the tabernacle of meeting, across from the table, on the south side of the tabernacle; 25 and he lit the lamps before the LORD, as the LORD had commanded Moses. 26 He put the gold altar in the tabernacle of meeting in front of the veil; 27 and he burned sweet incense on it, as the LORD had commanded Moses. 28 He hung up the screen *at* the door of the tabernacle. 29 And he put the altar of burnt offering *before* the door of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting, and offered upon it the burnt offering and the grain offering, as the LORD had commanded Moses. 30 He set the laver between the tabernacle of meeting and the altar, and put water there for washing; 31 and Moses, Aaron, and his sons would wash their hands and their feet *with water* from it.

Erecting and setting up the Tabernacle required the priests and Levites to perform work on the first day of the first month, which was a new moon and obviously heavy labor.

Lest anyone claim that the priests and Levites are an exception because they were required to work on Sabbaths and holydays, notice another example when God later commanded a census of the children of Israel. He specifically named men from each tribe who were not priests or Levites to do the work.

NUMBERS 1:1-19 Now the LORD spoke to Moses in the Wilderness of Sinai, in the tabernacle of meeting, **on the first day of the second month**, in the second year after they had come out of the land of Egypt, saying: 2 **“Take a census of all the congregation of the children of Israel**, by their families, by their fathers’ houses, according to the number of

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names, every male individually, 3 “from twenty years old and above—all who *are able to go to war* in Israel. You and Aaron shall number them by their armies. 4 “And with you there shall be a man from every tribe, each one the head of his father’s house. 5 “These are the names of the men who shall stand with you: from Reuben, Elizur the son of Shedeur; 6 “from Simeon, Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai; 7 “from Judah, Nahshon the son of Amminadab; 8 “from Issachar, Nethanel the son of Zuar; 9 “from Zebulun, Eliab the son of Helon; 10 “from the sons of Joseph: from Ephraim, Elishama the son of Ammihud; from Manasseh, Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur; 11 “from Benjamin, Abidan the son of Gideoni; 12 “from Dan, Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai; 13 “from Asher, Pagiel the son of Ocran; 14 “from Gad, Eliasaph the son of Deuel; 15 “from Naphtali, Ahira the son of Enan.” 16 These *were* chosen from the congregation, leaders of their fathers’ tribes, heads of the divisions in Israel. 17 Then Moses and Aaron took these men who had been mentioned by name, 18 and they assembled all the congregation together **on the first day of the second month; and they recited their ancestry** by families, by their fathers’ houses, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and above, each one individually. 19 **As the LORD commanded Moses, so he numbered them** in the Wilderness of Sinai.

Another example where work was performed on new moons is the journey of Ezra from Babylon to Jerusalem during the reign of King Artaxerxes. Ezra brought along Israelites, priests, Levites, temple singers, porters, and temple servants (Nethinims). The journey lasted four months and was an enormous undertaking to transport all the food, water, supplies, gold and silver for the temple, animals, etc. as described in verses Ezra 7:14-20. It began on the first day of the first month Nisan, a new moon, and ended on the first day of the fifth month Av, another new moon.

EZRA 7:7-9 *Some of the children of Israel, the priests, the Levites, the singers, the gatekeepers, and the Nethinim came up to Jerusalem in the seventh year of King Artaxerxes. 8 And Ezra came to Jerusalem in the fifth month, which was in the seventh year of the king. 9 **On the first day of the first month he began his journey from Babylon, and on the***

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first day of the fifth month he came to Jerusalem,
according to the good hand of his God upon him.

Traveling such a distance was incredibly labor-intensive so, this is another example that new moons were not appointed times, holy convocations, or mandatory assemblies. In other words, they are not holydays when work is prohibited or restricted.

One final example that work was allowed on new moons is when Ezra held a court of judgment on the new moon to discuss the pagan wives among the ancient Israelites:

EZRA 10:16-17 Then the descendants of the captivity did so. And **Ezra the priest, with certain heads of the fathers' households,** were set apart by the fathers' *households*, each of them by name; and **they sat down on the first day of the tenth month to examine the matter. 17 By the first day of the first month they finished questioning all the men** who had taken pagan wives.

Matters that required councils for judgments were never held on holydays. This is clear in Matthew 26:3-5 where the Sanhedrin intentionally held court to try Jesus Christ on Passover instead of the first day of Unleavened Bread, which is a holyday. Likewise, Ezra would not have held a council to judge the matter of pagan wives on a new moon if it was an appointed time, holy convocation, or mandatory assembly. Moreover, the council lasted three months. It began on the first day of the tenth month Tevet and ended on the first day of the first month Nisan, so it continued over several new moons.

CHAPTER 2

New Moons Are Celebrations

The Bible mentions celebrations being held on new moons. One example was that of King Saul who held regular feasts on new moons that lasted three days. It was also a recurring event so it likely occurred on the first day of every month.

At one point, David had become concerned by Saul's behavior toward himself and had told his close friend Jonathan of a plan to expose the king's plot against him. This involved David hiding in a field until after the new moon celebration, an obvious violation if it was an appointed time, holy convocation, or mandatory assembly. The plan was successful because Saul unintentionally revealed his murderous intentions toward David.

In the story, there are a couple of points of interest. The first is it was a recurring celebration on first day of each month and the second is the fact that those who were invited to Saul's celebration had to be ritually clean to offer sacrifices:

1 SAMUEL 20:5-27 And David said to Jonathan, "Indeed tomorrow is the new moon, and I should not fail to sit with the king to eat. But let me go, that I may hide in the field until the third day at evening." 6 "If your father misses me at all, then say, 'David earnestly asked *permission* of me that he might run over to Bethlehem, his city, for there is a yearly sacrifice there for all the family.'" 7 "If he says thus: '*It is well,*' your servant will be safe. But if he is very angry, be sure that evil is determined by him." 8 "Therefore you shall deal kindly with your servant, for you have brought your servant into a covenant of the LORD with you. Nevertheless, if there is iniquity in me, kill me yourself, for why should you bring me to your father?" 9 But Jonathan said, "Far be it from you! For if I knew certainly that evil was determined by my father to come upon you, then would I not tell you?" 10 Then David said to Jonathan, "Who will tell me, or what *if* your father answers you roughly?" 11 And Jonathan said to David, "Come, let us go out into the field." So both of them went out

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into the field. 12 Then Jonathan said to David: "The LORD God of Israel *is witness!* When I have sounded out my father sometime tomorrow, *or* the third *day*, and indeed *there is* good toward David, and I do not send to you and tell you, 13 "may the LORD do so and much more to Jonathan. But if it pleases my father *to do* you evil, then I will report it to you and send you away, that you may go in safety. And the LORD be with you as He has been with my father. 14 "And you shall not only show me the kindness of the LORD while I still live, that I may not die; 15 "but you shall not cut off your kindness from my house forever, no, not when the LORD has cut off every one of the enemies of David from the face of the earth." 16 So Jonathan made *a covenant* with the house of David, *saying*, "Let the LORD require *it* at the hand of David's enemies." 17 Now Jonathan again caused David to vow, because he loved him; for he loved him as he loved his own soul. 18 Then Jonathan said to David, "**Tomorrow is the new moon;** and you will be missed, because your seat will be empty. 19 "And **when you have stayed three days,** go down quickly and come to the place where you hid on the day of the deed; and remain by the stone Ezel. 20 "Then I will shoot three arrows to the side, as though I shot at a target; 21 "and there I will send a lad, *saying*, 'Go, find the arrows.' If I expressly say to the lad, 'Look, the arrows *are* on this side of you; get them and come'—then, as the LORD lives, *there is* safety for you and no harm. 22 "But if I say thus to the young man, 'Look, the arrows *are* beyond you'—go your way, for the LORD has sent you away. 23 "And as for the matter which you and I have spoken of, indeed the LORD *be* between you and me forever." 24 Then David hid in the field. And **when the new moon had come, the king sat down to eat the feast.** 25 Now the king sat on his seat, as at other times, on a seat by the wall. And Jonathan arose, and Abner sat by Saul's side, but David's place was empty. 26 Nevertheless Saul did not say anything that day, for he thought, "Something has happened to him; **he [David] is unclean, surely he is unclean.**" 27 And it happened the next day, the second *day* of the month, that David's place was empty. And Saul said to Jonathan his son, "Why has the son of Jesse not come to eat, either yesterday or today?"

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It has already been established that new moons are NOT appointed times, holy convocations, or mandatory assemblies. The story corroborates this because David failed to keep the new moon with King Saul because he was hiding in a field.

In all regards, new moon celebrations were common celebratory events in ancient Israel as is brought out when God condemned the new moon celebrations during the times of Hosea and Isaiah:

HOSEA 2:11 I will also cause all her mirth to cease, Her feast days, **Her new moons [Heb. = chodesh]**, Her Sabbaths— All her appointed feasts.

ISAIAH 1:13-14 Bring no more futile sacrifices; Incense is an abomination to Me. The **new moons**, the Sabbaths, and the calling of assemblies—I cannot endure iniquity and the sacred meeting. 14 Your **new moons** and your appointed feasts My soul hates; They are a trouble to Me, I am weary of bearing *them*.

Now regarding the matter of being clean, new moons certainly required burnt, grain, drink, and sin offerings at the Temple. That is the minimum established in the Law; however, new moons were times that people in Israel also gave sacrificial offerings on those days. Notice the reason David gave to King Saul (using Jonathan as the messenger) for not attending with him:

1 SAMUEL 20:28-29 So Jonathan answered Saul, “David earnestly asked *permission* of me *to go* to Bethlehem. 29 “And he said, ‘**Please let me go, for our family has a sacrifice** in the city, and my brother has commanded me *to be there*. And now, if I have found favor in your eyes, please let me get away and see my brothers.’ Therefore he has not come to the king’s table.”

No excuse would pass muster with the king unless there was some legitimacy to it. It is apparent that David’s family celebrated the new moons with personal sacrificial offerings. David must not have normally attended because he usually kept it with King Saul.

What were these personal sacrifices? Likely they were voluntary peace offerings on the new moons:

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LEVITICUS 7:15-17 **'The flesh of the sacrifice of his peace offering** for thanksgiving shall be eaten the same day it is offered. He shall not leave any of it until morning. 16 **'But if the sacrifice of his offering is a vow or a voluntary offering, it shall be eaten the same day that he offers his sacrifice; but on the next day the remainder of it also may be eaten; 17 'the remainder of the flesh of the sacrifice on the third day must be burned with fire.**

Voluntary peace offerings were sacrificed to give thanks to God and symbolized the offerer's desire for peace with Him. But the Law required *voluntary* peace offerings to be eaten within two days, which fits with Saul's celebrations that lasted three days. Of particular note is every voluntary peace offering required the offerer to be ritually clean (Lev. 7:20-21), unlike the burnt, trespass, and sin offerings. Those sacrificial offerings were done for the purpose of cleansing the offerer whereas the voluntary peace offering required the offerer to be cleansed beforehand.

Even though people gathered together for a meal to celebrate on the new moons, there is no command of God in the Bible for their observance. Aside from the Temple sacrifices and offerings on the new moons, these celebrations were, then, completely voluntary as were voluntary peace offerings. It is likely that the celebrations were established during times when Israel truly rejoiced before God for all His blessings and new moon celebrations were a national tradition or holiday.

New Moon Celebrations Restored

Scripture also prophesies that new moon sacrificial offerings and observances will be restored in the future. After the Day of the LORD, new moons and Sabbaths will be times when people gather before God to worship Him:

ISAIAH 66:15-16, 22-23 For behold, **the LORD will come** with fire And with His chariots, like a whirlwind, To render His anger with fury, And His rebuke with flames of fire. 16 For by fire and by His sword **The LORD will judge all flesh**; And the slain of the LORD shall be many. ... 22 "For as the new

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heavens and the new earth Which I will make shall remain before Me," says the LORD, "So shall your descendants and your name remain. 23 And it shall come to pass *That from one new moon to another*, And from one Sabbath to another, **All flesh shall come to worship before Me,**" says the LORD.

After Israel is rescued from captivity (Ezek. 39:21-29) there will be a new Temple, the priests and Levites will be restored, land will be apportioned (Ezek. 40-45), and the prince will be responsible for providing the animals for the sacrificial offerings:

EZEKIEL 45:15-17 "And one lamb shall be given from a flock of two hundred [0.5%], from the rich pastures of Israel. These shall be for grain offerings, burnt offerings, and peace offerings, to make atonement for them," says the Lord GOD. 16 "All the people of the land shall give this offering for the prince in Israel. 17 "Then it shall be the prince's part *to give* burnt offerings, grain offerings, and drink offerings, at the feasts, the **new moons**, the Sabbaths, and at all the appointed seasons of the house of Israel. He shall prepare the sin offering, the grain offering, the burnt offering, and the peace offerings to make atonement for the house of Israel."

EZEKIEL 46:1-7 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "The gateway of the inner court that faces toward the east shall be shut the six working days; but on the Sabbath it shall be opened, and on the day of the **new moon** it shall be opened. 2 "The prince shall enter by way of the vestibule of the gateway from the outside, and stand by the gatepost. The priests shall prepare his burnt offering and his peace offerings. He shall worship at the threshold of the gate. Then he shall go out, but the gate shall not be shut until evening. 3 "Likewise **the people of the land shall worship at the entrance to this gateway before the LORD on** the Sabbaths and the **new moons**. 4 "The burnt offering that the prince offers to the LORD on the Sabbath day *shall be* six lambs without blemish, and a ram without blemish; 5 "and the grain offering *shall be* one ephah for a ram, and the grain offering for the lambs, as much as he wants to give, as well as a hin of oil with every ephah. 6 "**On the day of the new moon** *it shall be* a young bull without blemish, six lambs, and a ram; they shall be without blemish.

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7 “He shall prepare a grain offering of an ephah for a bull, an ephah for a ram, as much as he wants to give for the lambs, and a hin of oil with every ephah.

However, this still does not establish new moons as appointed times, holy convocations, or mandatory assemblies. It merely shows that the hearts of the people are turned back to God and the new moons will once again be joyous times to worship Him. When the veil of blindness is lifted from their eyes, they will earnestly desire to be in the PRESENCE of the God as often as possible!

But the Bible has examples of other days that will be restored during the Millennium that also were *never* feasts of God:

ZECHARIAH 8:18-23 Then the word of the LORD of hosts came to me, saying, 19 “Thus says the LORD of hosts: ‘**The fast of the fourth month, The fast of the fifth, The fast of the seventh, And the fast of the tenth, Shall be joy and gladness and cheerful feasts** For the house of Judah. Therefore love truth and peace.’ 20 “Thus says the LORD of hosts: ‘**Peoples shall yet come**, Inhabitants of many cities; 21 The inhabitants of one *city* shall go to another, saying, “Let us continue to **go and pray before the LORD, And seek the LORD of hosts**. I myself will go also.” 22 Yes, **many peoples and strong nations Shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem, And to pray before the LORD.**’ 23 “Thus says the LORD of hosts: ‘In those days ten men from every language of the nations shall grasp the sleeve of a Jewish man, saying, “Let us go with you, for we have heard *that* God is with you.” ‘

Fasts of the fourth, fifth, seventh (not Atonement), and tenth months were *never* required by God. The fast in the tenth month (Tevet 10) was a result of the siege against Jerusalem by King Nebuchadnezzar (Jer. 52:4-5). The fourth month (Tammuz 17) was when the Babylonians entered Jerusalem after a siege of 16 months (Jer. 52:6-7). It was in the fifth month (Av 9) that Nebuzaradan, captain of the Babylonian guard, burned the Temple and Jerusalem, plundered the contents of the Temple, and took the people captive to Babylon (Jer. 52:12-28). Finally, the fast of the

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seventh month (Tishri 3) is a memorial of the murder of Gedaliah and his band at Mizpah by Ishmael (Jer. 41:1-3).

None of these were ever commanded observances of God and, yet, they will be restored by GOD, along with new moon observances, during the millennial rule of Jesus Christ. There is no question that God approved of days set aside to worship Him that were never commanded by Him and this includes new moons.

Prohibition of Buying & Selling on New Moons

There is one particular Scripture regarding new moon observance that has been a source of confusion:

AMOS 8:5 Saying: "**When will the new moon be past, That we may sell grain?** And the Sabbath, That we may trade wheat? ...

There is no question that God was very angry with ancient Israel during the days of Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah. Their attitude had degraded to the point that people despised observance of both new moons *and* seventh-day Sabbaths. They turned those days into greed for wealth and riches. This even occurred in the days of Jesus Christ who expelled moneychangers from the Temple (Matt. 21:12-13). Obviously, buying and selling are forbidden work on the weekly Sabbaths but what about new moons? They are not appointed times, holy convocations, or mandatory assemblies so work is not prohibited.

There are two possible explanations. The first is that 'new moon' is *singular* in Amos 8:5 and refers to the day of Trumpets, which is obviously a holyday and no work is permitted.

The second, and more likely, possibility is that the priests established an ordinance against buying or selling on new moons to encourage people to keep the original purpose for the new moon celebrations. Instead of coming together to worship God, people perverted them into days of buying and selling to satisfy their lust and greed for wealth. A modern example of this is the national holiday of Thanksgiving. Originally it was to give thanks to God

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for the blessings of abundance. Over time it became perverted into a day of buying and selling and getting drunk. Even the next day is called Black Friday and it is nothing less than a day to buy things.

Decrees of Men

It was also not unheard of that the priests and leaders established ordinances aside from the Law of God. At the time when Ezra held his council to discuss pagan wives, Nehemiah was also in Jerusalem and they passed an ordinance to tax the people to pay for the showbread and offerings:

NEHEMIAH 10:31-33 *if the peoples of the land brought wares or any grain to sell on the Sabbath day, we would not buy it from them on the Sabbath, or on a holy day; and we would forego the seventh year's produce and the exacting of every debt. 32 Also **we made ordinances for ourselves, to exact from ourselves yearly one-third of a shekel for the service of the house of our God**: 33 for the showbread, for the regular grain offering, for the regular burnt offering of the Sabbaths, the **new moons**, and the set feasts; for the holy things, for the sin offerings to make atonement for Israel, and all the work of the house of our God.*

This tax was never instituted by God but Nehemiah thought it necessary to ensure that the sacrificial offerings required by God would continue. He did this by establishing an “ordinance” (H4687 = Heb. *mitzvah* = commandment) requiring people pay a tax.

New moons are not holydays commanded by God so they could only have been established by decree of men. Ordinances of men were not only allowed but acceptable to God (such as the fasts in the fourth, fifth, seventh, and tenth months). An ordinance establishing new moon celebrations is the only possibility since they are not holydays of God.

Colossians 2:16

When it comes to new moon celebrations, they continued even during the time of Paul:

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COLOSSIANS 2:16 So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths,

Most of the Colossians were Greeks although there must have been converted Jews among the believers. The Jews would have had some influence because Paul addressed circumcision in his epistle:

COLOSSIANS 3:9-11 Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, 10 and have put on the new *man* who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, 11 where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.

There are several cases in the Bible where the circumcised Jews tried to enforce the traditions of Judaism upon the Greeks. Wherever this occurred, Paul had to address those matters. His mention of new moons in Colossians 2:16 was likely one of those cases. Notice what he wrote a few verses prior:

COLOSSIANS 2:11 In Him [*Jesus*] you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ,

Again Paul dismissed physical circumcision in the Old Covenant and pointed to the spiritual circumcision of the New Covenant. The only reason for him to mention this is if the Jews were insisting the Greeks be physically circumcised. One thing is clear in Colossians 2:16—Paul plainly told the Greeks not to allow themselves to be judged in certain matters:

COLOSSIANS 2:16 So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths,

Who would be judging the Greeks? The Jews in Colosse. Perhaps they were insisting that the Greeks also celebrate new moons, which were a national tradition of Israel, as well as other traditions of Judaism pertaining to Sabbaths and holydays. Paul's response was they should not to allow the Jews to judge them for not following traditions of the scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees.

CONCLUSION

New moon celebrations could only have been voluntary because they were never commanded by God apart from the sacrificial offerings. They are NOT appointed times, holy convocations, or mandatory assemblies because only God can command such observances. Therefore, they could only have been an ordinance of men as a time to worship and give thanks to God. While they were days in which work was eventually prohibited, again that had to be by decree of men, not God.

If God had intended otherwise, new moon celebrations would have to be included with the other feasts mentioned in Leviticus 23. The fact that they are absent would be a glaring omission indeed if Moses failed to include them in the Law that he so faithfully recorded. The only exception is the day of Trumpets, which occurs on the new moon or first day of the seventh month Tishri. But even that it is a day to observe the holyday of Trumpets; it is not a new moon celebration.

God never commanded new moons to be observed beyond the required sacrificial offerings, which no longer exist since the Temple was destroyed. New moons were celebratory days instituted by decree of men as voluntary days to worship and give thanks to God along with voluntary peace offerings. In all regards, they are an optional observance, but it is one that God was obviously pleased with because they will be restored during the Millennial rule of Jesus Christ.

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