

Rosh Chodesh (New Moon) in Scripture

In Hebrew, *Rosh Chodesh* literally means "head of the month." *Chodesh* is derived from the root *chadesh*, meaning "new" or "to make new/renew", and the word *rosh* basically means "head" or "beginning." *Rosh Chodesh* is the first day of any new month.

The crescent moon is called *chodesh* because it is the first time the moon is seen anew after being concealed for several days at the end of the lunar cycle. One evening shortly after sunset the moon can be sighted after being invisible for 1.5-3.5 days; therefore, the ancients called it a new moon or *chodesh*.

In ancient times, *Rosh Chodesh* was a significant festival day. At that time the new months were determined by observation. Each month began when the first sliver of moon became visible after the dark of the moon. Observers would watch the sky at night and if they saw the moon, they would report their sightings to the Sanhedrin. If two independent, reliable eyewitnesses confirmed that the new moon had appeared and described it consistently, the Sanhedrin would send out messengers to declare that the new month had begun.

The day after the moon appeared was a festival, announced with the sounding of the shofar, commemorated with solemn convocations and special sacrifices. The importance of this holiday in ancient times should not be underestimated. The entire calendar was dependent upon these declarations; without them, they would not know when God's appointments were to occur.

The following are some Scripture references that mention the moon and the new moon:

Genesis 1:14-19	Serve as signs	6,000 years ago
Numbers 10:10	Sound the trumpet	1400 B.C.E.
Numbers 28:11-15	Additional sacrifices	1400 B.C.E.
1 Samuel 20:1-43	David and Jonathan	1020 B.C.E.
1 Chronicles 23:25-32	Levites praise	1000 B.C.E.
2 Chronicles 2:1-6	Temple offerings	950 B.C.E.
2 Kings 4:8-37	Elisha and boy	850 B.C.E.
Isaiah 66:15-24	Future worship	780 B.C.E.
Amos 8:4-5	No buying or selling	770 B.C.E.
2 Chronicles 31:2-10	Hezekiah	727 B.C.E.
Ezekiel 46:1-7	Future worship	570 B.C.E.
Ezra 3:1-6	1st day of 7th month	460 B.C.E.
Nehemiah 8:1-15	Weeping and joy	445 B.C.E.

"If this fixed order (the sun, moon and stars) departs From before Me," declares the Lord, "Then the offspring of Israel also shall cease From being a nation before Me forever" - Jeremiah 31:36