

MIQDASH BETHEL COVENANT ASSEMBLY

Pearl River, Louisiana | miqdashbethel@gmail.com | 985-250-9060 | miqdashbethel.org

TORAH LAW EDUCATIONAL COURSE

The 613 Mitzvot of Yahweh

Bereishit • Shemot • Vayikra • Bamidbar • Devarim | The Tanakh Writings

LESSON 19

Positive Law #53

Shemot (Exodus) 12:2 | Devarim (Deuteronomy) 16:1

הַחֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה לָכֶם רֹאשׁ חֳדָשִׁים
רִשׁוֹן הוּא לָכֶם לְחֹדְשֵׁי הַשָּׁנָה

HaChodesh hazeh lachem rosh chodashim; rishon hu lachem l'chadshei hashanah

"This month shall be for you the head of months; it shall be the first month of the year for you."

The Covenant Law of Rosh Chodesh: Sanctifying the New Month, Setting the Sacred Year, and the Authority of Yahweh's Calendar

Law #53 — To sanctify the New Month (Rosh Chodesh) — Shemot 12:2; Devarim 16:1

Four Spheres: Individual • Community • Nation • World

Authority: The Tanakh — The Word of Yahweh Alone

Standard: Devarim 19:15 — Two or Three Witnesses

April 2026 | 613Laws_Lesson19_RoshChodesh_Shemot12_2_Devarim16_1.docx

Course Framework & Methodology

Purpose of This Course: This educational course expounds the 613 Mitzvot (commandments) of Yahweh as revealed exclusively through the Written Torah and confirmed by the Tanakh Writings and Prophets. Each lesson examines a specific law or cluster of related laws in their original Hebrew, through lexical analysis, through the Two/Three Witness evidentiary standard of **Devarim (Deuteronomy) 19:15**, and

through application across four spheres: Individual, Community, Nation, and World. Every lesson is audited through the Three-Religion lens — reaching Judaism, Christianity, and Islam simultaneously. Torah alone is the authority. Talmud, Church councils, and hadith serve as historical reference only — never as binding authority above the Tanakh.

Why Lesson 19 Comes Before the Feast Lessons: Lesson 18 established the Shalosh Regalim — the three pilgrimage festivals. Lesson 19 is the engine that drives the entire sacred calendar. Without understanding **Rosh Chodesh** — the sanctification of the New Moon Month — one cannot correctly set the Passover, Shavuot, or Sukkot. This lesson must come before any detailed study of the individual feasts, because the month-count is the foundation upon which every feast is built. **Yahweh's** first commandment to Israel as a nation — before the Ten Words, before the Tabernacle, before the Sinai covenant — was this: sanctify the new month. The Sacred Calendar of **Yahweh** does not operate on a Roman solar calendar. It operates on the covenant calendar He established at the Exodus. This lesson explains that calendar from the Tanakh text, the Hebrew lexicon, the historical record, and the Miqdash Bethel research developed over decades of covenant study.

Note on Sources: This lesson draws on two primary Miqdash Bethel research documents authored by Elder Kepha Arcemont: "Addressing the Lunar Sabbath Theory and Declaration of the New Moon Day" and "New Moon Day and the Importance of Counting Correctly." These documents represent decades of original covenant research integrating the Tanakh, the Hebrew lexicons (BDB, HALOT, Gesenius, Davidson's Analytical Lexicon), the Encyclopedia Judaica, Maimonides' Treatise on the Sanctification of the New Moon, Edersheim's *The Temple: Its Ministry and Services*, and the McClintock and Strong Encyclopedia. All conclusions in this lesson are grounded in that research alongside the Tanakh primary texts.

SECTION I — THE HEBREW TEXTS

Primary Text — Shemot (Exodus) 12:1–2 — The First Commandment to the Nation

הַחֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה לְכֶם רֹאשׁ חֳדָשִׁים
רִאשׁוֹן הוּא לְכֶם לְחֹדֶשׁ הַשָּׁנָה

"And Yahweh spoke to Moshe and Aharon in the land of Egypt, saying: This month shall be for you the head of months; it shall be the first month of the year for you." — Shemot (Exodus) 12:1–2

This is the first commandment given to Israel as a nation. Not the Sabbath. Not circumcision. Not the prohibition of idolatry. The very first law **Yahweh** gave to the Hebrew nation — while they were still in Egypt, before the Exodus — was the commandment to sanctify the New Month. This positioning is not accidental. **Yahweh** establishes His calendar before He establishes His law code, because without the calendar, no feast, no Sabbath, and no covenant appointment can be set in its proper

time. The sanctification of the new month is the covenantal keystone of **Yahweh's** entire sacred year.

Companion Text — Devarim (Deuteronomy) 16:1 — "Observe This Moon"

שְׁמֹר אֶת-חֹדֶשׁ הָאָבִיב

"Observe the month of Aviv and keep the Passover to Yahweh your Elohim, for in the month of Aviv, Yahweh your Elohim brought you out of Egypt by night." — Devarim (Deuteronomy) 16:1

This verse names the specific moon — the moon of Aviv — as the first moon of the Sacred Year. The word translated "observe" here is the Hebrew **shamor** (שָׁמַר) — "to guard, preserve, watch over." It is not the verb for visual observation with the eyes alone. It is the verb for *guarding and preserving* the covenant institution of the first moon of the Sacred Year, so that the Passover and the entire feast circuit are kept in their appointed season. As Elder Kepha Arcemont established in his research: this word "is directing the children of Israel to preserve this month, since it was the beginning of months starting the feast cycle, the appointed times of **Yahweh**."

Supporting Text — Bamidbar (Numbers) 10:10 — The Trumpet Proclamation

"Also in the day of your gladness, and in your solemn days, and in the beginnings of your months, you shall blow with the trumpets over your burnt offerings and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings; that they may be to you for a memorial before your Elohim. I am Yahweh your Elohim." — Bamidbar (Numbers) 10:10

Supporting Text — Tehillim (Psalms) 81:3 — Blow the Trumpet at the New Moon

"Blow the trumpet at the new moon, at the full moon, on our feast day." — Tehillim (Psalms) 81:3

This verse is the Tanakh's own description of the New Moon Day proclamation. The word "full moon" here — **keseh** (כֶּסֶה) — does not mean a visually fully-lit moon. As confirmed by Gesenius (page 490), Davidson's Analytical Lexicon (page 386), and the Etymological Dictionary of Biblical Hebrew (page 120), **keseh** means: "full moon count" — the full lunar cycle count that marks the end of the old month and the beginning of the new. It is the *counting designation*, not a visual phase description. This confirms the covenant research position: New Moon Day was declared on the 30th day of the count, whether or not the crescent was visibly sighted.

SECTION II — PRIMARY LEXICAL ANALYSIS

שָׁמַר — Chodesh (H2320) — "New Moon / Month"

The central term of this law is **chodesh** (שָׁמַר) — **H2320**. BDB: "new moon, month." The word occurs 283 times in the Hebrew Bible. Of those 283 occurrences, approximately 20 are explicitly translated "new moon" — indicating the specific day of the lunar

crescent's appearance. The remainder are translated "month" — indicating the full 29–30 day period that the new moon inaugurates.

The root is **chadash** (שָׁדַשׁ) — **H2318** — "to renew, repair, restore." BDB and HALOT confirm: **chodesh** is the noun form of this verbal root. The month is the renewal. The new moon is the act of *restoration* — the moment when the moon returns from its dark phase into the light of the crescent. Every new month is, lexically and covenantally, a renewal. As the Miqdash Bethel research confirms: "the word chodesh derives from the Hebrew root word chadash which means to renew, repair, or restore. In this sense, Rosh Chodesh — the first of the month — also represents a repaired or restored beginning."

HALOT notes that **chodesh** is used interchangeably with **yareach** (יָרַח) — "moon" — in specific contexts (cf. 1 Melachim 6:1, 6:37, 6:38; 8:2). The month *is* the moon's cycle. The two are covenantally inseparable. **Yahweh** did not give Israel a solar calendar or a purely calculated astronomical system. He gave them a *lunisolar* covenant calendar, anchored in the visible renewal of the lesser light He placed in the night sky for exactly this purpose.

יָרַח — Rosh Chadashim — "Head of Months"

The phrase **Rosh Chadashim** (רֹאשׁ חֳדָשִׁים) — "head of months" — is the Torah's own name for the first month of the Sacred Year. **Rosh** (רֹאשׁ) — **H7218** — means: "head, beginning, chief, top." BDB: "head, top, summit, upper part, chief, total, sum, height, front, beginning." As Gesenius (page 911) confirms in his lexicon, the word "beginning" in Shemot 12:2 is used as "the first of months" — not as the first of weeks. The New Moon Month establishes the month-count for the sacred year, not the week-count for the Sabbath. These are two entirely independent counting systems, as the Miqdash Bethel research establishes exhaustively.

שָׁמַר — Shamor (H8104) — "Guard, Preserve, Watch Over"

The word "observe" in Devarim 16:1 is **shamor** (שָׁמַר) — **H8104** — "to keep, watch, observe; to guard." BDB: "to keep, have charge of, guard, protect, attend to." This word in Devarim 16:1 functions as an infinitive absolute — a verbal noun — not a verb commanding visual observation with the eyes. Gesenius (page 1036) shows this word in 3(a.) as: "observe, celebrate, accusative of the month of Abib." The Miqdash Bethel research position is confirmed: the word is directing Israel to **guard and preserve** the institution of the first month of the sacred year. Calculation was primary; visual observation was confirmatory. Both served the same covenant purpose: keeping the Feast in its appointed season.

יָרַח — Yareach (H3394) — "The Moon; Measurement of Time"

The word **yareach** (יָרַח) — **H3394** — means: "the moon, as a measurement of time." BDB: "moon." As the Miqdash Bethel research establishes: "the word moon is H3394 which means: the moon, as a measurement of time." The moon's covenantal function is not worship — it is measurement. **Yahweh** placed the lesser light in the night sky to serve as a covenant timepiece. The moment any community begins to treat the moon as an object of spiritual reverence or worship — rather than a functional covenant

instrument — it has crossed from covenant observance into the moon worship that **Yahweh** explicitly condemned throughout the Tanakh.

קְדוּשַׁ הַחֹדֶשׁ — Kiddush HaChodesh — "Sanctification of the Month"

The Hebrew technical term for Law #53 is **Kiddush HaChodesh** (קְדוּשַׁ הַחֹדֶשׁ) — "sanctification of the month." The root **kadosh** (קָדַשׁ) means: set apart, holy, consecrated. To sanctify the new month is to formally declare it as set apart — inaugurated — before **Yahweh** and the covenant community. This was not a private observance. It was a national covenant declaration, administered by the Sanhedrin High Court, confirmed by two or more reliable witnesses, and communicated through fire-signals and messengers to all of Israel including the diaspora. The sanctification of the month was a public, communal, legally adjudicated covenant act — not a private calculation done by each individual household.

SECTION III — THE COVENANT COUNTING SYSTEM: HOW THE NEW MOON DAY WAS SET

This section presents the established Miqdash Bethel position on the **New Moon Day** count, grounded in the Tanakh, the Miqdash Bethel research documents, **Maimonides' Treatise on the Sanctification of the New Moon**, **Edersheim's Temple study**, and the **Encyclopedia Judaica**. Understanding this system is prerequisite to setting any feast of **Yahweh** in its correct season.

A. Two Independent Counting Systems — Never Conflated

The Torah establishes two entirely independent systems of time-reckoning, and these must never be conflated. The **seven-day weekly cycle** — established at creation (Bereishit 2:2–3) and re-established at Sinai (Shemot 20:8–11) — is a *continuous, uninterrupted* count of six days of work followed by one day of rest. This count is the individual's responsibility. It has never been lost. It has no reference to the lunar moon. Dr. Hinkley (astronomer), Dr. Totten (Yale), Dr. Frank Jeffries (Royal Observatory Greenwich), James Robertson (U.S. Naval Observatory), and multiple other authorities confirm: no day has been lost in the seven-day weekly cycle since creation.

The **lunar monthly cycle** — established at creation (Bereishit 1:14–16) and commanded in Shemot 12:2 — is a *30-day count* that sets the months of the Sacred Year. This count was the *High Court's* responsibility — not each individual's. The Sanhedrin sat in the Hall of Polished Stones in Yerushalayim to receive testimony from reliable witnesses and declare the new month. As Maimonides states: "The authority over the observation of the crescent... was given not to everyone, unlike the Sabbath day, with respect to which everyone counts six days and rests on the 7th day — but only to the court."

The Lunar Sabbath theory — which claims the Sabbath day is counted from the New Moon and falls on the 8th, 15th, 22nd, and 29th days of every month — is not supported by any Tanakh text, any historical record, or any Hebrew lexical evidence. The Miqdash Bethel research documents establish this conclusion

exhaustively through the Encyclopedia Judaica, Maimonides' Treatise, Edersheim's Temple study, and the McClintock and Strong Encyclopedia. The two counting systems are independent. The Sabbath count is not reset by the New Moon.

B. The 30-Day Lunar Cycle — How the Ancients Counted

The lunar moon cycles at 29 days, 12 hours, 44 minutes, and 3 1/3 seconds — approximately 29.5 days. This is the astronomical synodic period of the moon, confirmed by modern science and known to the ancient Hebrew High Court through mathematical calculation. Because the cycle is 29.5 days, a full month was always either 29 or 30 days — never more. The Sanhedrin counted 29 days from the last declared New Moon Day and on the 30th day, set out reliable witnesses to look for the crescent moon.

Maimonides' Treatise (Chapter 3) states precisely: "From this day on, 29 days were counted, and if the new crescent appeared on the night of the 30th day, this 30th day was the 1st day of the new month. If however, it did not appear on that night, the 30th day would belong to the old month and the 31st day would be the 1st day of the new month. One thing that is certain in the count for the month was that a lunar month never lasted more than 30 days."

The 30th day was therefore simultaneously: (1) the last day of the old month, and (2) the first day of the new month — the same 24-hour day held both counts. This is why the New Moon Day celebration was sometimes two days: if the crescent was not sighted at sunset on the 30th day, the 31st day was automatically declared New Moon Day — an **embolismic moon** or "full moon count." The lunar month never exceeded 30 days. This is an astronomical, mathematical, and historical certainty.

C. Calculation First; Visual Observation Second

A critical point confirmed by both the Tanakh and the historical record: the New Moon Day was set primarily by calculation, with visual observation of the crescent serving as confirmation. Maimonides states: "Scripture made it incumbent upon the court to discover by *calculation* whether or not the new moon might be visible, to examine the witnesses, and then to sanctify the new moon." If the court's calculations showed the crescent could not possibly be visible, witnesses who claimed to have seen it were declared false — "that is how sure they were of their mathematical calculations."

The word **shamor** in Devarim 16:1 — "observe the moon of Abib" — confirms this: it is the verb of guarding and preserving the count, not of visual sighting alone. Visual observation (when possible on clear nights) confirmed the calculation. When clouds prevented sighting, calculation alone governed. **Yahweh** never intended His covenant calendar to be held hostage to weather.

D. The Crescent Moon — Light, Not Darkness

The Ancient Hebrews looked for the crescent moon — the first visible sliver of reflected sunlight — to confirm the New Moon Day count. They did not use the dark conjunction (the invisible moon) as their marker. As the Miqdash Bethel research establishes from Gesenius (page 490), Davidson's Analytical Lexicon (page 386), and the Etymological Dictionary of Biblical Hebrew (page 120): the word **keseh** in Tehillim 81:3 means "full moon count" — not a fully lit moon and not a dark moon. The crescent

is a sliver of light — the first light emerging from the darkness of the moon's dark phase. This is symbolically consistent with **Yahweh's** covenant character: He brings His people out of darkness into light. The crescent moon is the covenant signal of that emergence.

The dark moon / conjunction observance — declaring New Moon Day at the moment of the moon's invisible dark phase — has **no historical support in any Ancient Hebrew record**. No Tanakh text, no verified historical document, and no Hebrew lexical definition supports the dark moon as the New Moon Day marker. The Miqdash Bethel research documents establish this conclusion through multiple independent authoritative sources.

E. The Sanhedrin's Authority — Not the Individual's Decision

New Moon Day for the Sacred Feast Cycle was never a matter of individual determination. It was the exclusive covenant responsibility of the Sanhedrin High Court — the appointed assembly of judges who sat in **Yahweh's** name. Edersheim (*The Temple*, Chapter 10) describes the full procedure: the Sanhedrin sat in the Hall of Polished Stones on the 30th day; witnesses were received, examined, and cross-examined; if their testimony was credible, the head of the Sanhedrin proclaimed "Mekudash!" ("Sanctified!") and the assembly responded "Mekudash! Mekudash!"; beacon fires were lit on the Mount of Olives; the signal was carried hill to hill to the diaspora "beyond the river."

The Mishnah (Tractate Rosh Hashanah) records the full procedure. Only for the 1st moon (Nisan/Aviv) and the 7th moon (Tishri) were the crescent-sighting messengers dispatched — because these two moons governed the Sacred Feast Circuit. The other ten moons used calculation alone, since no festival hung on their precise timing for the covenant community's national gathering.

After the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE and the disbanding of the Sanhedrin, Hillel II (mid-4th century CE) established the fixed perpetual calendar to preserve the covenant calendar when no court could function. The Miqdash Bethel covenant position: those who follow the Hillel II fixed calendar today are following the last legitimate decision of the Sanhedrin — and are not in violation of the covenant for doing so. The ultimate restoration of the Sanhedrin and the crescent-based declaration of the new month is a covenant goal for the future era of covenant restoration.

SECTION IV — TWO/THREE WITNESS CORROBORATION

Reference	Teaching / Witness
Shemot (Ex.) 12:1–2	Primary text — Yahweh's first commandment to Israel as a nation, given in Egypt before the Exodus: "This month shall be for you the head of months; it shall be the first month of the year for you." The sanctification of the new month precedes every other national covenant law. First witness.
Devarim (Deut.) 16:1	Second primary text — Moshe's covenant renewal address: "Observe (guard/preserve) the month of Aviv and keep the Passover." The first moon of the sacred year sets the entire feast circuit. The word shamor confirms that the

	obligation is to guard the covenant institution of the month, not merely to visually sight it. Second witness.
Bereishit (Gen.) 1:14–16	The original covenant mandate for the luminaries: "Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark seasons, days, and years." Yahweh created the lesser light specifically to govern the months and sacred seasons. The moon's covenant function is measurement, not worship.
Bamidbar (Num.) 10:10	Third primary text — the trumpet proclamation: "In the day of your gladness, and in your solemn days, and in the beginnings of your months, you shall blow with the trumpets." The New Moon Day was formally announced to the nation through the priestly trumpet signal — a covenant declaration of the new month's beginning.
Tehillim (Ps.) 81:3	Corroborating witness: "Blow the trumpet at the new moon, at the full moon, on our feast day." The word keshet ("full moon") means "full moon count" — the culmination of the 30-day lunar cycle that marks New Moon Day. Confirmed by Gesenius (p.490), Davidson's Analytical Lexicon (p.386), and Etymological Dictionary of Biblical Hebrew (p.120).
Tehillim (Ps.) 104:19	Witness to the moon's covenant function: "He made the moon for sacred seasons." The word mo'ed (appointed time) here refers to the sacred feast seasons that the moon's cycle sets. The NEB correctly translates: "he made the moon to measure the (sacred) year." The moon sets the sacred seasons, not the weekly Sabbath.
Yeshayahu (Isa.) 66:23	Eschatological witness: "From new moon to new moon, and from Sabbath to Sabbath, all flesh shall come to worship before Me, says Yahweh." The two systems — monthly (new moon) and weekly (Sabbath) — are named together as distinct, separate cycles. The new moon and the Sabbath are not the same counting system. Both will be observed in the covenant's final restoration.
Yirmeyahu (Jer.) 31:35	Covenant permanence: "Thus says Yahweh, who gives the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and the stars for a light by night... Yahweh of hosts is His name." The ordinances of the moon — its function as covenant timekeeper — are as permanent as the ordinances of the sun. If these ordinances depart, Israel ceases to be a nation before Yahweh (v.36).
I Shmuel (I Sam.) 20:5, 18	Historical corroboration: David knew in advance that "tomorrow is the new moon" — because the New Moon Day was set by calculation and was already known. David's absence at the New Moon celebration would be noticed because the day was pre-determined. This confirms that New Moon Day was calculable in advance, not dependent on uncertain weather-based sighting alone.
I Divrei HaYamim (I Chr.) 27:1–15	Civil year witness: Military divisions were rotated on a monthly basis — "in charge of the division of the 1st moon... 2nd moon... 3rd moon..." The civil year was tracked by the 12 lunar months. The moon governed both the sacred feast cycle and the civil administrative year of the nation.
Maimonides — Treatise on the Sanctification of the New Moon	Primary historical corroboration: "The authority over the observation of the crescent... was given not to everyone, unlike the Sabbath day — but only to the court." "Scripture made it incumbent upon the court to discover by calculation whether or not the new moon might be visible." "A lunar month never lasted more than 30 days." Confirms calculation-primary, crescent-confirmatory method.

Edersheim — The Temple: Its Ministry and Services (Ch. 10)	Historical witness: Full description of the Sanhedrin procedure — Hall of Polished Stones, 30th-day assembly, witness examination, Mekudash proclamation, beacon fires on the Mount of Olives, diaspora communication. Confirms the national, communal, court-adjudicated nature of the New Moon sanctification.
Encyclopedia Judaica Vol. 12, p.1039	Historical corroboration: "Originally the new moon was not fixed by astronomical calculations. It was solemnly proclaimed after witnesses had testified to the reappearance of the crescent of the moon." The 30th day assembly procedure. If not seen on the 30th day, automatically declared on the 31st day (embolismic moon). Confirms the Miqdash Bethel research position.

SECTION V — FOUR-SPHERE COVENANT APPLICATION

Level	Sphere	Application	Torah Witness
INDIVIDUAL	Personal Calendar	The covenant person does not live by the Roman solar calendar alone. He marks the beginning of each month according to the lunar cycle established by Yahweh in Bereishit 1:14–16 and commanded in Shemot 12:2. He counts from one new moon to the next, knowing that each new month is a covenant renewal — the word chadash (to renew) embedded in chodesh (month). He does not confuse the monthly count with the weekly Sabbath count. Both are covenant obligations; neither governs the other.	Shemot 12:2; Bereishit 1:14–16
INDIVIDUAL	Counting Responsibility	The weekly Sabbath count is the individual's personal responsibility. Six days of labor, rest on the seventh — the continuous cycle established at creation. The monthly count for the sacred feast cycle is the covenant community's institutional responsibility. The individual learns the count and observes the month, but the authoritative declaration is a community function, not a private decision. No individual has authority to unilaterally declare the New Moon Day for the covenant assembly.	Bereishit 2:2–3; Shemot 20:8–11; Vayikra 23:37
INDIVIDUAL	Covenant Mercy	Yahweh's covenant mercy toward those who have been counting incorrectly — whether following a solar-only calendar, a dark-moon conjunction system, or a Lunar Sabbath scheme — is the same mercy He extends to all who turn toward truth. The ordinances of the moon are permanent (Yirmeyahu 31:35). The invitation to count correctly is always open. Yahweh desires that His people appear before Him at the right time — in His appointed seasons, not in seasons of human invention.	Yechezkel 18:21–23; Yirmeyahu 31:35

COMMUNITY	Assembly Responsibility	The covenant assembly is responsible for establishing reliable witnesses who observe the crescent moon and confirm the New Moon Day count for the 1st moon (Aviv/Nisan) and the 7th moon (Tishri), which govern the Sacred Feast Circuit. Until a restored Sanhedrin functions, the covenant assembly follows the best available count — the Hillel II perpetual calendar or a confirmed crescent-based count from two or more reliable witnesses — while actively working toward covenant unity on this question.	Vayikra 23:37; Shemot 12:2
COMMUNITY	New Moon Celebration	The New Moon Day was a national covenant holiday in Ancient Israel — not a Holy Convocation commanded by Yahweh (except for the Feast of Trumpets on the 7th moon), but an established custom that became a statute. Work was voluntarily suspended. The day was celebrated with trumpet blasts, family gatherings, and covenant acknowledgment of Yahweh's gift of the sacred calendar. This covenant custom is not pagan moon worship — it is the community's periodic acknowledgment that Yahweh governs time.	Bamidbar 10:10; Tehillim 81:3; 1 Shmuel 20:5
COMMUNITY	Two Independent Systems	The covenant assembly must teach clearly that the seven-day Sabbath count and the thirty-day lunar month count are independent systems. The Sabbath is never reset by the new moon. The new moon never falls on a fixed Sabbath position. When the Sabbath and the new moon happen to fall on the same day, it is a special covenant double celebration — Shabbat Rosh Chodesh — not proof that the two systems are synchronized.	Yeshayahu 66:23; Bamidbar 28:9–15
NATION	Covenant Calendar	A covenant nation structures its civic and religious life around Yahweh's lunar-solar calendar — not the Roman solar calendar alone. The Sacred Feast Circuit (Pesach, Shavuot, Sukkot) cannot be kept in its proper season without the lunar month count. A nation that abandons the covenant calendar abandons the covenant appointments that tie its history to Yahweh's redemptive acts. The calendar is not a neutral administrative tool — it is a covenant identity statement.	Shemot 12:2; Devarim 16:1
NATION	Hillel II and the Present Era	In the mid-4th century CE, facing the dissolution of the Sanhedrin under Roman persecution, Hillel II established the perpetual fixed calendar — mathematically calculating every future Rosh Chodesh so that Jews worldwide could keep the feasts without a functioning court. The Miqdash Bethel covenant position: Hillel II's calendar is the legitimate last decision of a properly constituted covenant authority. It is the best available covenant calendar until the Sanhedrin is restored.	Vayikra 23:37

		National restoration of the covenant calendar awaits the restoration of covenant governance.	
WORLD	Universal Sacred Time	Yahweh established the moon as a universal timekeeper from the beginning of creation — for all nations, not only Israel. The lunar calendar is the oldest and most universal calendar system in human history. The Islamic Hijri calendar is purely lunar. The Hebrew calendar is lunisolar. The Chinese calendar is lunisolar. The Hindu calendar is lunisolar. The worldwide persistence of lunar calendar systems is the covenant witness of Bereishit 1:14 — Yahweh placed the lesser light to govern time, and the nations have never fully forgotten it.	Bereishit 1:14–16; Yirmeyahu 31:35
WORLD	Eschatological Restoration	Yirmeyahu 31:35–36 declares that the covenant function of the moon's light is as permanent as the existence of Israel as a nation before Yahweh. Yeshayahu 66:23 foresees all flesh coming before Yahweh "from new moon to new moon." The Shalosh Regalim (Lesson 18) and Rosh Chodesh (Lesson 19) are not archaic Temple-era institutions. They are the covenant's living calendar — awaiting full restoration in the era when all nations will observe Yahweh's appointed times before His face.	Yirmeyahu 31:35–36; Yeshayahu 66:23; Zechariah 14:16

SECTION VI — THREE-RELIGION COVENANT AUDIT

Judaism — The Covenant Custodian

Upholds Torah — Original Practice: Judaism preserved the covenant New Moon calendar through millennia of exile and diaspora — first through the Sanhedrin's crescent-based declaration system, then through Hillel II's perpetual calendar (4th century CE). The monthly proclamation of Rosh Chodesh remains alive in Jewish practice: the blessing of the new moon (Birkat HaChodesh) announced in synagogue on the Shabbat preceding the new month; the Hallel psalms recited on Rosh Chodesh itself; special Torah readings and prayers. The covenant memory of **Yahweh's** appointed months is actively preserved.

Present Practice — The Hillel II Calendar: The modern Jewish calendar follows Hillel II's fixed perpetual calculation — no longer using crescent sighting or Sanhedrin testimony. The Miqdash Bethel covenant position affirms: this is the legitimate last decision of covenant authority, not a betrayal of the covenant. The Karaite movement within Judaism has continued crescent-based observation, sighting the moon from the land of Israel and declaring Rosh Chodesh accordingly. Both approaches represent sincere covenant attempts to honor Shemot 12:2 in the absence of a functioning Sanhedrin.

Lunar Sabbath Teaching — Covenant Departure: The Lunar Sabbath doctrine — circulated in parts of the Sacred Name movement and originating with Jonathan David

Brown's 1998 publication — has no basis in any established Jewish historical record, any Hebrew lexical evidence, or any Tanakh text. It is not a Jewish teaching. It is not supported by Maimonides, Edersheim, the Encyclopedia Judaica, or any recognized Hebrew scholarship. The Miqdash Bethel covenant assessment: it is a Christian-origin doctrinal error that conflates two independent covenant counting systems **Yahweh** established separately from the beginning.

Christianity — The Missing Calendar

Where Christianity Departed: The separation of the early Christian movement from its Hebrew covenant roots produced the abandonment of the lunar covenant calendar entirely. The Council of Nicea (325 CE) formally separated Easter from the Jewish Passover lunar calendar. The Roman solar calendar (Julian, later Gregorian) replaced the lunisolar covenant calendar for all Christian feast observance. The result: the three pilgrimage festivals of **Yahweh** were replaced by Christianized observances anchored in solar dates rather than Yahweh's appointed lunar months. The covenant calendar was not reformed — it was discarded.

First-Century Evidence — The Original Observance: Acts 2 records the outpouring at Shavuot occurring because the disciples were in Yerushalayim observing the pilgrimage festival — on the correct lunar calendar date. Acts 20:16 records Sha'ul (Paul) urgently sailing to reach Yerushalayim by Shavuot — demonstrating that the first-century covenant community was still counting by the lunar feast calendar. The abandonment of Rosh Chodesh and the lunar calendar is a post-Nicaean institutional departure, not a New Testament teaching.

Covenant Audit Verdict: No text in the New Testament cancels Shemot 12:2. No NT text replaces the lunar covenant calendar with a solar one. The Gregorian calendar is a human administrative tool. **Yahweh's** covenant calendar remains His appointed system. Where Christianity returns to counting the months and seasons of **Yahweh** according to the lunar covenant calendar, it moves toward Torah.

Islam — The Preserved Lunar Calendar

Upholds the Lunar Principle: Of the three Abrahamic traditions, Islam has most completely preserved the lunar calendar in active use. The Islamic Hijri calendar is a purely lunar calendar — 12 lunar months of 29 or 30 days each, totaling approximately 354 days per year. Each month begins with the sighting of the crescent moon. Ramadan, Eid al-Fitr, Eid al-Adha, and Hajj are all governed by the lunar month. The Islamic tradition of crescent-moon sighting to inaugurate each month mirrors the Ancient Hebrew practice described by Maimonides and Edersheim.

Where Islam Differs: The Islamic lunar calendar is purely lunar — with no solar correction — so it drifts through the solar year, and Islamic feasts do not remain anchored in the agricultural seasons. The Hebrew covenant calendar is *lunisolar* — using an intercalary 13th month every two to three years to keep Pesach in the spring barley harvest season (the month of Aviv). This is the covenant design: lunar months anchored in solar seasons through intercalation. The Islamic calendar preserves the lunar principle but lacks the solar-anchoring mechanism that **Yahweh** built into the Hebrew covenant calendar.

Covenant Audit Verdict: Islam's preservation of crescent-moon sighting as the inauguration of each month is the closest parallel in the three Abrahamic traditions to the ancient Hebrew covenant practice described in the Tanakh and the Miqdash Bethel research. The covenant witness acknowledges this convergence while noting that the Torah's lunisolar design — keeping Pesach in Aviv — requires the intercalary correction Islam's purely lunar calendar does not employ.

SECTION VII — THE COVENANT VERDICT

Yahweh's first commandment to the Hebrew nation was about time.

Before the Ten Words. Before the Tabernacle. Before the covenant code of Shemot 21–23. **Yahweh** said: ***"This month shall be for you the head of months; it shall be the first month of the year for you."*** That commandment is Law #53. It has never been cancelled. It has never been superseded. It has never been transferred to a solar calendar by any authority **Yahweh** Himself designated.

The moon is the lesser light — placed in the night sky on the fourth day of creation to govern the sacred seasons. It is **Yahweh's** covenant timepiece. Not an object of worship. Not a spiritual power. A timepiece — the crescent sliver of light that emerges from darkness to signal the beginning of a new covenant month.

The Sanhedrin once sat in the Hall of Polished Stones in Yerushalayim to receive the testimony of two reliable witnesses and cry out "Mekudash! Mekudash!" — "Sanctified! Sanctified!" — over the new month. Beacon fires answered from the Mount of Olives. Hill after hill carried the light to the diaspora. Every Hebrew family throughout the world knew: a new month had begun in **Yahweh's** covenant year.

That system awaits restoration. Until it is restored, the covenant community counts faithfully — by the perpetual calendar Hillel II preserved, by reliable crescent witnesses where available, and by the Tanakh's own teaching that the moon was created to mark the sacred seasons. **Yahweh's** months are His months. His feasts are His feasts. His calendar is His calendar. And He has never abandoned any of them.

***"He made the moon for sacred seasons;
the sun knows its time for setting."***

Tehillim (Psalms) 104:19

Witness: Yahweh assigned the moon its covenant function at creation. It has never been reassigned. The moon marks the sacred seasons — the feast circuit of Yahweh — and the sun marks the days. Each governs its own domain. Neither replaces the other.

STUDY REVIEW & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Individual Level

1. Shemot 12:2 is the first commandment given to Israel as a nation — before the Ten Words, before the Tabernacle, before the covenant law code. What does the positioning of this commandment tell us about the priority Yahweh places on the covenant calendar?
2. The root of chodesh (month) is chadash — to renew, repair, restore. What does it mean that every new month is, by its very name in Hebrew, a renewal? How does this reframe the way a covenant person should approach the beginning of each lunar month?
3. Maimonides established that the Sabbath count is every individual's personal responsibility — counted by each person from creation — while the New Moon Day for the feast cycle is the High Court's institutional responsibility. How does this distinction change the way you think about these two independent covenant counting systems?
4. The word shamor ("observe") in Devarim 16:1 is a verb of guarding and preserving — not of visual sighting alone. What does it mean to "guard" the month of Aviv? What happens to the feast circuit when the covenant community fails to guard the first month of the sacred year?

Community Level

5. The Sanhedrin's declaration of "Mekudash! Mekudash!" was a public, communal, legally adjudicated covenant act — not a private household decision. What does this tell us about the communal nature of the covenant calendar? What is the covenant assembly's responsibility regarding the New Moon count in the present era without a functioning Sanhedrin?
6. The Lunar Sabbath teaching — that the Sabbath falls on the 8th, 15th, 22nd, and 29th days of every month — has no support in any Ancient Hebrew historical record, any Hebrew lexical evidence, or any Tanakh text. The Miqdash Bethel research documents establish this from Maimonides, Edersheim, the Encyclopedia Judaica, and multiple Hebrew lexicons. How should the covenant assembly respond when this teaching circulates in covenant communities?
7. The New Moon Day was a national covenant holiday in Ancient Israel — celebrated by custom, not commanded as a Holy Convocation (except for the Feast of Trumpets). Does this mean the covenant community should ignore Rosh Chodesh today? What is the appropriate covenant posture toward the monthly new moon in the present era?

National Level

8. Hillel II established the perpetual fixed calendar in the 4th century CE to preserve the covenant feast cycle when the Sanhedrin could no longer function under Roman persecution. The Miqdash Bethel position is that this was the last legitimate decision of covenant authority. Do you agree with this assessment? What would it take to restore the crescent-based declaration system in the present era?
9. A nation that has abandoned Yahweh's lunisolar covenant calendar in favor of an entirely solar administrative calendar has lost a fundamental covenant identity

marker. What is lost — spiritually, historically, and communally — when a nation loses track of Yahweh's appointed months?

10. Yirmeyahu 31:35–36 declares that the ordinances of the moon are as permanent as Israel's existence as a nation before Yahweh. What does this permanence declaration tell us about attempts by any religious council or institution to permanently replace Yahweh's lunar covenant calendar with a solar one?

World Level

11. The lunar calendar is one of the oldest and most universal calendar systems in human history — preserved in the Islamic Hijri calendar, the Hebrew lunisolar calendar, the Chinese lunisolar calendar, and the Hindu lunisolar calendar. What does this universal persistence of lunar calendar systems testify about Bereishit 1:14–16?
12. Islam's preservation of crescent-moon sighting as the inauguration of each month is the closest parallel in the three Abrahamic traditions to the ancient Hebrew covenant practice. What does this convergence between the Torah's New Moon commandment and the Islamic crescent sighting practice reveal about the shared Abrahamic covenant heritage? Where does the difference between a purely lunar calendar (Islamic Hijri) and a lunisolar covenant calendar (Hebrew) matter covenantally?
13. Yeshayahu 66:23 foresees all flesh coming before Yahweh "from new moon to new moon, and from Sabbath to Sabbath." The covenant calendar — lunar months and seven-day weeks — is presented as the universal eschatological framework for all humanity's worship before Yahweh. What would it mean for the nations to begin learning Yahweh's calendar now, in preparation for that universal covenant gathering?

SCRIPTURE INDEX — LESSON 19

Reference	Teaching / Witness
Shemot (Ex.) 12:1–2	Primary text — Law #53. Yahweh's first commandment to the Hebrew nation: sanctify the New Month. The moon of Aviv/Nisan is declared the head of months, the beginning of the sacred year. Given in Egypt before the Exodus.
Devarim (Deut.) 16:1	Second primary text — "Observe (guard/preserve) the month of Aviv." The shamor commandment to guard the first month of the sacred year so that the feast circuit is kept in its appointed season.
Bereishit (Gen.) 1:14–16	The original covenant mandate: the lesser light governs the sacred seasons. The moon was created as Yahweh's covenant timepiece from the fourth day of creation.
Bereishit (Gen.) 2:2–3	The seven-day weekly cycle — the independent counting system established at creation, governed by the sun's daily cycle, not by the lunar month.

Shemot (Ex.) 20:8–11	The Sabbath commandment — six days of labor, rest on the seventh. The continuous, uninterrupted seven-day cycle that every individual counts independently of the lunar month.
Bamidbar (Num.) 10:10	Covenant trumpet proclamation: at the beginning of each month, blow the trumpets. The New Moon Day is formally announced to the covenant community.
Vayikra (Lev.) 23:24	Feast of Trumpets — the only New Moon Day commanded by Yahweh as a Holy Convocation and Sabbath rest. The 7th moon's new moon is the exception that proves the rule: the other new moons are not commanded Sabbaths.
Tehillim (Ps.) 81:3	"Blow the trumpet at the new moon, at the full moon, on our feast day." The keseh (full moon count) confirms the 30-day cycle declaration system. Confirmed by Gesenius, Davidson, and Etymological Dictionary of Biblical Hebrew.
Tehillim (Ps.) 104:19	"He made the moon for sacred seasons." The moon's covenant function is to mark Yahweh's appointed feast times — not the weekly Sabbath.
I Shmuel (I Sam.) 20:5, 18	David knew New Moon Day in advance by calculation. The New Moon Day was pre-determined, not dependent on uncertain visual sighting alone.
I Divrei HaYamim (I Chr.) 27:1–15	Military divisions rotated monthly by the civil lunar year. Both the sacred year (feasts) and the civil year (administration, agriculture, military rotation) were governed by the lunar month count.
Yeshayahu (Isa.) 66:23	Eschatological witness: "From new moon to new moon, and from Sabbath to Sabbath, all flesh shall come to worship before Me." The two independent systems — monthly and weekly — both preserved in the universal covenant restoration.
Yirmeyahu (Jer.) 31:35–36	Covenant permanence: the ordinances of the moon's light are as permanent as Israel's existence as a nation before Yahweh. The covenant calendar cannot be abolished by any human institution.
Yechezkel (Ezek.) 18:21–23	Covenant mercy: even those who have been counting incorrectly stand before the same Yahweh who desires that they turn back from error and live.

"Is it My desire that a wicked person shall die? — says Yahweh Elohim. It is rather that he shall turn back from his ways and live."

Yechezkel (Ezekiel) 18:23

Witness: The covenant person who has not been observing Yahweh's calendar correctly — counting by the wrong system, following a solar-only calendar, or confused by Lunar Sabbath teaching — stands before the same Yahweh who established the new moon as a covenant institution at creation. The invitation is not: "you failed." The invitation is: "Observe. Guard. Preserve. Count correctly. My feasts are waiting in their appointed seasons."

MIQDASH BETHEL COVENANT ASSEMBLY

Pearl River, Louisiana | miqdashbethel@gmail.com | 985-250-9060

Authority: *The Tanakh — The Word of Yahweh Alone*

Next: Lesson 20 — To be determined by course framework