OBSERVING THE MOON & SUN

How to Identify Time According to the Torah

Why the Sun and Moon Matter

Genesis 1:14

“Let there be lights in the firmament of heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years.”

Key Hebrew words:

• **Signs (Ototh)** markers
• **Seasons (Moedim)** appointed times
• **Days**
• **Years**

This tells us:

The sun and moon were created to measure:
• Days
• Months
• Years
• Appointed times (Feast Days)

The calendar begins in creation.

The Sun What It Determines

The sun determines:

• Day and night
• The length of the day
• The agricultural seasons
• The solar year

How to Identify a Day

Genesis 1
“Evening and morning were the first day.”

A biblical day:
• Begins at sunset
• Ends at the next sunset

So:

If the sun sets its a new day begins.

The Moon What It Determines

The moon determines:

• The beginning of months

The Hebrew word for month:
Chodesh
It also means “new moon.”

A month begins when the new moon is observed.

How to Identify the New Moon

There are two common understandings:

1. First visible crescent
2. Dark moon (conjunction)

For beginners teaching observance:

Most ancient Israelite practice is associated with:

→ First visible crescent after conjunction

That means:

When the moon reappears as a thin crescent after being dark.

This signals:

A new month has begun.

How This Connects to the Feasts

All feast days are counted from:

• The first month
• The 7th month

But you must first know when the year begins.

How to Physically Observe a New Moon

What you're looking for

The **new moon** (start of a new biblical month) is commonly observed as the **first visible crescent** after the moon has been dark.

Where to look

- Look **toward the western sky** (the direction the sun sets)
- Best time: **10–60 minutes after sunset**
- The crescent will be **low near the horizon**, thin like a "sliver"

What it looks like

- A **thin crescent**
- Not high overhead
- Visible for a short time, then it sets

How to do it step-by-step

1. **Check sunset time** for your area.
2. Go outside with a clear view of the western horizon.
3. Start looking about **10–20 minutes after sunset**.
4. Scan slowly left-to-right above the horizon.
5. If you see a thin crescent, that night begins:
   Day 1 of the new month.

Beginner tip

If it's cloudy, you may not see it even if it's there.
That's why people sometimes use:

- multiple witnesses in different locations, or
- a reliable moon-visibility report (as a backup)

Torah connection

The Torah doesn't give a "crescent formula," but it does show **months are counted** and **appointed times are set**, which requires month beginnings. (Genesis 1:14; Exodus 12:2; Leviticus 23)

Equinox & Spring Alignment

What is the equinox?

The **spring equinox** is when:

- day and night are about equal length
- it marks the shift into **spring season**

It usually happens around **March 19–21**.

Why it matters biblically

The Torah's first month is tied to:

- **spring**
- and the **ripening of barley (aviv)**

So the equinox is a **season marker**, not the New Year by itself.

Think of it like this:

Equinox = "Spring has arrived."
But **New Year = first month in spring**, confirmed by the season and the month.

The simple alignment

- Sun marks the **season change**
- Moon marks the **start of months**

- Spring/agriculture confirms the **right time for Month 1**

Step-by-Step Guide

How to Identify the First Month (Biblical New Year)

This is the beginner-friendly process to find **Month 1**, the month that contains **Passover**.

Step 1 — Start Watching in Early Spring

Around late winter into early spring (late Feb–April), begin watching.

Why?
Because Month 1 must happen in the **spring season**.

Exodus 12:2
"This month shall be the beginning of months…"

Exodus 13:4
"Today you are going out, in the month of Aviv."

Step 2 — Confirm Spring Has Arrived

Use simple nature markers:

- warmer weather trend
- trees budding
- longer daylight

The equinox helps you know you're in that seasonal window.

Step 3 — Watch for the New Moon

As spring begins, watch for the **first visible crescent** after sunset.

If you see the crescent:
That begins a new month.

Now the key question becomes:
Is this the right month to be Month 1?

Step 4 — Make Sure Passover Can Occur in Its Proper Season

Passover happens on the **14th day of Month 1**.

Leviticus 23:5
"On the fourteenth day of the first month at twilight is Passover."

So you count forward:

New Moon sighted = Day 1
Count to Day 14 = Passover

Step 5 — Confirm It's Still Spring When Day 14 Arrives

This is the "alignment" part:

Month 1 must be a spring month so that:

- Passover
- Unleavened Bread
  occur in their proper agricultural time.

If it's clearly **too early (winter conditions)**, some groups wait for the next new moon.

Month 1 begins with the new moon that starts the spring month in which Passover (day 14) can happen in the proper season.

"The sun shows us the season. The moon starts the months. Month 1 is the first new moon in spring that allows Passover to fall in its proper time."

Counting the Feast Days

Once Month 1 begins:

• Passover = 14th day of Month 1
• Unleavened Bread = 15th–21st
• Firstfruits = during Unleavened Bread
• Shavuot = count 7 weeks

Then:

• 7th month begins at the 7th new moon
• Trumpets = 1st day of Month 7

• Day of Atonement = 10th day
• Tabernacles = 15th–21st
• Eighth Day = 22nd

Everything depends on:

Correct new moon observation.

Simple Visual Teaching Line

Sun is Days and seasons
Moon is Months
Agriculture is Year marker
Counting is Feast timing

Beginner Warning

Do not:

• Depend only on Roman calendar
• Follow blindly without observation
• Overcomplicate it

The Torah calendar is observational and agricultural.

It is not abstract math.

The Creator gave the sun and moon to measure time.
The sun governs days and seasons.
The moon begins months.
The year begins in spring.
The feasts are counted from the first new moon of spring.