

# Lunar Months and “New Year” Explanations’

## Using the Bible & SDA Bible Commentary

**The Feast of Trumpets: Leviticus 23:23-24** (NKJV) <sup>23</sup> Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>24</sup> “Speak to the children of Israel, saying: ‘In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall have a sabbath-rest, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, a holy convocation. <sup>25</sup> You shall do no customary work *on it*; and you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD.’”

**Offerings at the Feast of Trumpets: Numbers 29:1-6** <sup>1</sup> ‘And in the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall have a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work. For you it is a day of blowing the trumpets. <sup>2</sup> You shall offer a burnt offering as a sweet aroma to the LORD: one young bull, one ram, and seven lambs in their first year, without blemish. <sup>3</sup> Their grain offering shall be fine flour mixed with oil: three-tenths of an ephah for the bull, two-tenths for the ram, <sup>4</sup> and one-tenth for each of the seven lambs; <sup>5</sup> also one kid of the goats as a sin offering, to make atonement for you; <sup>6</sup> besides the burnt offering with its grain offering for the New Moon, the regular burnt offering with its grain offering, and their drink offerings, according to their ordinance, as a sweet aroma, an offering made by fire to the LORD.

**Leviticus 25:3-12** <sup>3</sup> Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard, and gather its fruit; <sup>4</sup> but in the seventh year there shall be a sabbath of solemn rest for the land, a sabbath to the LORD. You shall neither sow your field nor prune your vineyard. <sup>5</sup> What grows of its own accord of your harvest you shall not reap, nor gather the grapes of your untended vine, *for it is a year of rest for the land.* <sup>6</sup> And the sabbath produce of the land shall be food for you: for you, your male and female servants, your hired man, and the stranger who dwells with you, <sup>7</sup> for your livestock and the beasts that are in your land—all its produce shall be for food. <sup>8</sup> ‘And you shall count seven sabbaths of years for yourself, seven times seven years; *and the time of the seven sabbaths of years shall be to you forty-nine years.* <sup>9</sup> *Then you shall cause the trumpet of the Jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the Day of Atonement you shall make the trumpet to sound throughout all your land.* <sup>10</sup> And you shall consecrate the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a Jubilee for you; and each of you shall return to his possession, and each of you shall return to his family. <sup>11</sup> That fiftieth year shall be a Jubilee to you; in it you shall neither sow nor reap what grows of its own accord, nor gather the grapes of your untended vine. <sup>12</sup> For it is the Jubilee; it shall be holy to you; you shall eat its produce from the field.

**Exodus 23:16** <sup>16</sup> and the Feast of Harvest, the first fruits of your labors which you have sown in the field; and **the Feast of Ingathering at the end of the year**, when you have gathered in the fruit of your labors from the field.

**Exodus 34:21-23** <sup>21</sup> “Six days you shall work, but on the seventh day you shall rest; in plowing time and in harvest you shall rest.

<sup>22</sup> “And you shall observe the Feast of Weeks, of the firstfruits of wheat harvest, **and the Feast of Ingathering at the year’s end.**

<sup>23</sup> “Three times in the year all your men shall appear before the Lord, the LORD God of Israel.

**Vol. 1 SDA Bible Commentary, pp 805 Leviticus 23:24:** Blowing the trumpets. On the first day of the seventh month was a Sabbath: “an holy convocation” was to be held. On that day the trumpets were blown, for the Day of Atonement was near at hand, and the first nine days of the month were to be days of preparation for it. The first **day of the seventh month of the religious calendar was New Year’s Day, the first day of the civil calendar year.**

**Vol. 2 SDA Bible Com., pp 106, 4<sup>th</sup> par.:** Blowing of Trumpets: the New Year (Modern Rosh Hashanah). Six months after the Passover the **series of autumn festivals began with the Blowing of Trumpets on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the 7<sup>th</sup> month (Tishri).** The day, later called Rosh Hashanah, the “beginning of the year,” was a festival Sabbath (Lev. 23:24, 25; Num. 29:1). It celebrated the beginning of the civil year. This New Year’s Day was marked not only by the blowing of the trumpets but also by special sacrifices, almost double in number compared with the regular new-moon sacrifices. Please see also pp. 117 par. 2 and pp. 144 #1.

**Vol. 1 SDA Bible Com., pp 175, The Month Governed by the Moon.** ---Just as one complete rotation of the globe on its axis, from sunset on to sunset again, marks off one day on this earth, so the time required for the moon to go once around the earth---that is, to pass through its visible phases, as from crescent to full moon and to crescent again---constituted the original month. The ancient lunar month did not begin at the astronomical new moon, when that body stands between the earth and the sun---with its unlighted side toward us, and hence invisible---but one or more days later, with the appearance of the new crescent. Now, however, most of the world uses artificial calendar months that disregard the moon.

**Vol. 2 SDA Bible Com., pp 102, 103 Length of the Month.**----Nothing is said of the number of days in a month. In later times the lengths of the months and the intervals between the 13-month year were calculated by astronomical rules and fixed in a systematized calendar. But in the beginning the months must have been determined by the direct observation of the moon. Since the phases of the moon repeat themselves every **29 ½ days**, approximately, the crescent would reappear in the evening at the close of the 29<sup>th</sup> or 30<sup>th</sup> of the month. Ordinarily the months would alternate **30 and 29 days**, but this was not always true. There are not only minor variations in the motion of the moon that affect the uniformity of the intervals, but also weather conditions that sometimes prevent the visibility of the crescent. We are told in later Jewish writings that it was the custom to look for the moon then at the close of the 29<sup>th</sup>.....**2<sup>nd</sup> par. pp 103:** In later times, certainly in the revised for of the calendar instituted some centuries after the time of Christ, the 6 months from **Nisan through Elul ran 30 and 29 days alternately....**

## HEBREW MONTHS, FESTIVALS, AND SEASONS

LUNAR MONTHS	BEGIN AT NEW MOON OF	DAYS OF LUNAR MONTHS	FESTIVALS	APPROXIMATE AGRICULTURAL SEASONS
1. Abib (Nisan)* Ex. 23:15 (Neh. 2:1)	March or April	1	New Moon	Latter rains (Joel 2:23)
		10 14	Passover lamb selected. Ex. 12:3 PASSOVER killed "in the evening"; eaten "that night," beginning of 15th. Ex. 12:6-8	
		15†	UNLEAVENED BREAD begins. Lev. 23:6, 7	
		16	Wave sheaf offered. Lev. 23:10-14	Barley harvest: new crop may be eaten
		21	Last day of Unleavened Bread. Lev. 23:8	Dry season be- gins
2. Zif [Tyar] 1 Kings 6:1	April or May	1	New Moon	
		14	Passover for those unclean in 1st month. Num. 9:10, 11	Wheat ripe in lowlands
3. (Sivan) (Esther 8:9)	May or June	1	New Moon	Early figs
		6	PENTECOST, or Feast of Weeks. Wave loaves offered, 50th day from Nisan 16. Lev. 23:15-21	Hot weather Wheat harvest, general
4. [Tammuz]	June or July	1	New Moon	Wheat harvest in mountains
5. [Ab]	July or Aug.	1	New Moon	First grapes Olives in low- lands
6. (Elul) (Neh. 6:15)	Aug. or Sept.	1	New Moon	Dates, figs Vintage
7. Ethanim [Tishri] 1 Kings 8:2	Sept. or Oct.	1	BLOWING OF TRUMPETS, Rosh Hashana, or New Year. Lev. 23: 24, 25	
		10	DAY OF ATONEMENT, or Yom Kippur. Lev. 23:27-32; Lev. 16	
		15-21	FEAST OF INGATHERING or Tabernacles. Lev. 23:34-43	End of harvest
		22	Holy convocation. Lev. 23:36, 39; Num. 29:12, 35	Former or early rains
8. Bul [Marhesh- van or Heshvan] 1 Kings 6:38	Oct. or Nov.	1	New Moon	Plowing begins Barley and wheat sown
9. (Chisleu or Kislev) (Neh. 1:1)	Nov. or Dec.	1	New Moon	Winter rains
10. (Tebeth) (Esther 2:16)	Dec. or Jan.	1	New Moon	Lowlands green
11. (Shebat) (Zech. 1:7)	Jan. or Feb.	1	New Moon	
12. (Adar) (Esther 3:7)	Feb. or March	1 (14, 15)	New Moon Purim. Esther 9:21-28)	Oranges ripe in lowlands Barley ripe at Jericho
[13. Second Adar 7 times in 19 years.]	March	[14, 15]	Purim in 7 out of 19 years.]	

\* The first day of Abib always came in our March or April, and coincided with the new moon. Similarly, the month of Zif began in April or May. The other months of the Hebrew calendar follow the same pattern.

† Annual ceremonial sabbaths (cf. Col. 2:16, 17) in italics.

{ } Postexilic month names or festivals.

[ ] Postexilic months not mentioned in the Bible.