



January 5, 2024

New Moons

Warm hellos once again friends, brethren, fellow laborers, spiritual family, and scattered children of God from here on the Gulf Coast. My wife and I pray and hope this finds you doing well, and that again your week has been blessed.

Here in lower Alabama we've had cooler temperatures for this week.

Throughout the northern parts of the U.S. and Canada cold air descends quite regularly at this time of year. Record low temperatures are often recorded in a number of locations. I remember not only living in but when traveling back to Wisconsin we often held well below zero for several days. With the wind blowing it was dangerous to even be outside, and we were always glad to return to the warmer parts where we lived in the Carolinas where it was in the upper 30's F for a low. I remember one January, I think it was back in 2014, it was even worse in some parts of New England. The nor'easter had brought falling snow in some locations for nearly 36 hours by the time the last flakes fell. There was a huge range of final snowfall totals from around 6 inches in some areas north and west of Interstate 495, to closer to 12-to-14 inches near the Massachusetts coastline, and to a whopping 18-to-30 inches up in Essex County north of Boston, Massachusetts! I remember the temperature forecast was -8 deg. F for the football game time in Green Bay on the Sunday evening playoff game between the Packers and the 49ers. Over the years I saw part of a Packer's game on TV showing a fan wearing a cheese-head foam hat with icicles hanging from it, and the words, "Frozen Tundra" on it! At times like this I would wish the cold weather was on the wane, but we always had the two coldest months of the year ahead of us yet! As I still do, I would pray for safe traveling for brethren in the Northern hemisphere and also the wisdom to know when to stay home and not take unnecessary chances in traveling in dangerous conditions.

Regarding waning, let's continue our look at the subject of new moons. The terminology of "to wax and to wane" as applied to the phases of the moon is interesting.

One dictionary defined wax: *to increase in extent, quantity, intensity, power, etc. * (of the moon) to increase in the extent of its illuminated portion before the full moon. The dictionary defined wane: *to decrease gradually in size, strength, power, etc. *to show a gradually decreasing portion of illuminated surface, between full moon and new moon. Another dictionary defined crescent as "Waxing, as the moon; increasing. The figure of the moon as it appears in its first or last quarter."

When something waxes (or increases) we associate this action with being renewed and increasing in power and intensity. When something wanes (or decreases) we associate this action with aging and being reduced in power and diminishing. There's actually no direct mention of the moon waxing or waning in Scripture. The Hebrew word for moon is *yareach* and occurs 26 times. However there are only references to the moon shining and to the moon being obscured because of atmospheric conditions that also obscure the light of the sun and stars. One interesting mention of the moon's condition is found in Joel 2:31. "*The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord.*" These conditions may be caused by the effects of war and/or drought and fires that will send obscuring particles into the atmosphere. Some speculate that this is describing a total eclipse of the moon and there is a reddish appearance to the moon as the eclipse approaches and then recedes.

The phrase "new moon" is found 9 times in the OT of the KJV, but the Hebrew word *yareach* referring to the moon orb is not part of this expression. The Hebrew word translated "new moon" is *chodesh* (Strong's # 02320) Most of the time *chodesh* is translated "month." The Online Bible Hebrew Lexicon states that the word *chodesh* is from the Hebrew primitive root word *chadash* (Strong's # 02318). Comments on the use of the word *chadash* are: "to be new, renew, repair." This

seems to correspond to the meaning of "wax" we had examined above.

The question often arises, "At what exact condition of the moon is it renewing and is new?"

Some would say "it is at the exact lunar conjunction when there is 0% illumination of the moon". Others say "it is when the first visible crescent appears". Questions then arise as to where this sighting would take place and what defines first visibility? There is much confusion and discussion.

So, is the "full moon" condition mentioned specifically in the Scriptures?

Interestingly, the phrase "full moon" does not appear in the KJV translation. Other translations (NKJV, BBE, and ASV) do translate the Hebrew word *kece'* as "full moon" as in Psalms 81:3: "*blow the trumpet at the time of the New Moon, at the full moon, on our solemn feast day.*" (NKJV) Here's how the AV or KJV translates this verse: "*Blow up the trumpet in the new moon, in the time appointed, on our solemn feast day.*" The phrase "new moon" is translated from the Hebrew word *chodesh* as we have discussed above.

The phrase "in the time appointed" is translated from the Hebrew word *kece'* mentioned above. The Online Bible Hebrew Lexicon says the Hebrew word *kece'* (Strong's #03677) is "apparently from 03680" and is translated "appointed" 2 times. The Hebrew word *kacah* (Strong's #03680) refers to: "1) to cover, conceal, hide, 1b) (Niphal) to be covered" I'm convinced that the KJV translation makes the most sense.

The shofar was sounded to announce the new moon and the beginning of the lunar month. It was blown extensively on the appointed day of the Feast of Trumpets which took place on the first day of the seventh month. On the first day of the month the moon was covered and concealed by the shadow of the earth falling on it. The earth blocks the rays of the sun from shining on the moon at that time. The moment of zero illumination of the moon is technically called *the lunar*

conjunction. It seems to make sense that the Hebrew words that apply to the "new moon" are associated with a condition of its illumination being covered or concealed to some degree.

Now, I realize this is a somewhat speculative observation and the Psalm 81:3 verse does not specifically explain the terms used. But for many who are "exact type people" I am hoping to at least present some food for thought. Next time we will look at celebrations associated with the new moon or the beginning of the month.

Arms up friends! Our sincere prayers and thoughts are with you daily. Thanks in advance for your heartfelt prayers for us.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'S. Hoefker', written in a cursive style.

Scott Hoefker

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