

## WHEN DO WE CELEBRATE THE BIBLICAL FEASTS?

The dates of the feasts are set according to the instructions Yahweh gave to Moses and are recorded in Leviticus chapter 23. These dates are based on the Biblical definition of **day**<sup>i</sup>.

The year was to begin with the month that the Children of Israel came out of Egypt. (Exodus 12:2 & 13:4) All months begin on the day in which a “**New Moon**”<sup>ii</sup> occurs. The first month of the year (Abib) begins with the first new moon after the **Vernal equinox**<sup>iii</sup>

### **Sabbath:**

This is the seventh day of each week lasting from sunset to sunset. (Friday evening to Saturday evening) (Lev 23:3)

### **Passover & Unleavened bread:**

The Passover meal is prepared on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the first month (Lev 23:5) and eaten as the 15<sup>th</sup> day begins. This is then followed by 7 days of ‘unleavened bread’ from the 15<sup>th</sup>- 21<sup>st</sup> day. (Lev. 23:6)

### **Feast of Weeks, Shavu’ot, Pentecost:**

This feast is kept on the first day of the week, 50 days after the sabbath day that occurs during the feast of unleavened bread. (Lev 23:16)

### **Trumpets:**

This feast is celebrated on the first day of the seventh month (Lev 23:24)

### **Atonement:**

This is observed on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the seventh month (Lev 23:26)

### **Tabernacles, Booths:**

This is the final festival of the year beginning on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the seventh month and lasting for 8 days. Some consider that it lasts for seven days with a separate celebration on the eighth day. (Lev 23:34-36)

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#### <sup>i</sup> **Day**

Each day begins at sunset and ends at the following sunset. We use local time to determine the sunrise and sunset times. The Sabbath will therefore begin and end at different times in different geographical locations and at different times of the year. e.g. Sabbath may begin at 16:34 in Jerusalem, 15:55 in London and 19:50 in Sydney, Australia.

#### <sup>ii</sup> **New Moon**

This is the time when the moon is in conjunction with the sun, when it is not visible from the earth. This moment can be calculated and is listed in many diaries and almanacs. Knowing this time enables us to set dates for the feasts well in advance.

#### <sup>iii</sup> **Vernal Equinox**

There are 2 times in a year when the centre of the visible Sun is directly above the Equator. The vernal (spring) equinox falls around the 20th March in the northern hemisphere. On the day of an equinox, daytime and night-time are of approximately equal duration all over the planet. The actual day and time of this can be calculated in advance and is shown in many diaries.