

# Easter finds origins from Hebrew lunar calendar

Determining Easter has always been an exercise and the best place to begin is with the Jewish calendar.

Contrary to any beliefs Christians hold to their highest day, it does not find its roots in the Bible.

In the Lunar calendar, the New Moon is the first day of the new month while the Full Moon is at middle or 14th day of the month.

Therefore, the Israelites followed the Old Testament instruction to celebrate the Passover on the Full Moon of the first month as per Deuteronomy 16:1. "Observe the month of Abib, and keep the Passover unto the Lord thy God: for in the month of *Abib* the Lord thy God brought thee forth out of Egypt by night."

*Abib* means sprouting/budding and is the first month of spring better known today as March or April. *Abib* is the only month of the year named by God in the books of Moses.

For centuries, the Jewish calendar has been based on 235 cycles of the moon's phases which is nearly equal to 19 solar years. This means that every 19 years, the moon's phases will recur on the same dates of the solar year.

Today, most are not aware the Lunar cycle is directly associated in celebrating the Easter long weekend, yet the spring season (in the Northern Hemisphere) that accompanies it resonates directly with the new life offered in the holiday meaning.

## Sky watch for the next month:

- Daylight Savings here — Set your clock ahead at 2 a.m. Sunday, March 13.
- Spring Equinox and Venus/Neptune sunrise — On Sunday, March 20 spring arrives at 5:02 a.m. and at sunrise look SEE to catch Venus next to Neptune coming up before sunrise at 6:30 a.m.
- Penumbral Lunar Eclipse — Wednesday, March 23 starting 3:39 a.m. in the S.W. until it sets around 6:30 a.m.
- Zodiacal Lights — Did you catch this last month? It's a faint, roughly triangular, whitish glow seen in the night sky extended up from the vicinity of the sun along the ecliptic or zodiac. Best time is from Friday, March 25 for two weeks in the west after evening



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twilight.

## Public events for the next month:

Monthly Public Stargazing at the Trek Center. Check out our stargazing event courtesy of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada (Calgary) starting at 7:30 p.m. Friday, March 11. Brief indoor presentation on "Easter and Astronomy" followed by observing through our resident 11-inch Celestron telescope. All welcome, no charge and refreshments provided. Come early as space fills up by show time. Experts on hand the second Friday monthly to explain the heavens, teach scoping skills and help you develop your knowledge of our sky. For further information, contact the Trek Center

at 403-485-2994 or online at: [www.vulcantourism.com](http://www.vulcantourism.com).

Happy Easter and longer days.

*Neel Roberts is a member of the Calgary chapter of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada—the nation's leading astronomy club founded in 1849 with more than 4,000 members and 29 centres across Canada. Neel welcomes your questions and comments at (403)560-6574, [Neel\\_Roberts@ptccanada.com](mailto:Neel_Roberts@ptccanada.com). The members meet the second Friday monthly at the Trek Center at 7:30 p.m. and you can find out about membership at: <http://calgary.rasc.ca/vulcan2016.htm>.*



Photos by Neel Roberts

Attendees from left, Maggie Sevilla and Dave Watterson of Calgary and Norm and Rosemarie Baum gather for the presentation which starts the evening. At left, Roland Dechesne has been the main presenter at the monthly Friday night meetings in Vulcan.



Astronomy co-ordinator Neel Roberts peers through the 11-inch Celestron telescope while Karl Ivanson Jr. and Maggie Sevilla point up.



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