

OUR LORD'S MEMORIAL DATE FOR 2017

— *Sunday, April 09* —

*Methods for discovering the annual date for the Memorial differ among Bible Students.
We do not insist that ours is the only way, but we calculate it as explained below.*

Using astronomical tables, one needs to determine the following:

1. Date and time of the Vernal Equinox for the given year
2. Date and time of the New Moon *preceding* the Equinox
3. Date and time of the New Moon *following* the Equinox
4. Date and time of the New Moon which occurs *closest* to the Equinox

To find **Nisan 1**, an additional step is required:

5. Add *2h 21m* to account for the time difference at the meridian in Jerusalem

There are differences, on the order of seconds, between various data sources, but these are not significant in the overall calculations. Our data is from *Astronomical Tables of the Sun, Moon, and Planets*, by the Belgian astronomer, Jean Meeus, a recognised expert. Other sources consulted are identified in the **Sources**, at the end.

The data for **2017** follow. Times are in 24-hour Universal Time (UTC), expressed in hours and minutes (*ignoring seconds*), followed in parentheses by the 12-hour clock time (*a.m./p.m.*):

1. Date and time of the Vernal (Spring) Equinox
March 20 at 10h 30m (*10:30 a.m.*)
2. Date and time of the New Moon *preceding* the Equinox
February 26 at 14h 59m (*02:59 p.m.*)
3. Date and time of the New Moon *following* the Equinox
March 28 at 02h 58m (*02:58 a.m.*)

Therefore:

4. Date and time of the New Moon which occurs *closest* to the Equinox is
March 28 at 02h 58m (*02:58 a.m.*)
5. To this add the time difference of *2h 21m* at the meridian in Jerusalem

This results in **March 28 at 05h 19m** (*05:19 a.m.*)

Calculations required to arrive at Nisan 14 are counter-intuitive and one can get confused. Remember that the day of the Memorial corresponds to a Jewish day running from evening to evening, unlike the customary midnight to midnight. So, to determine the hour at which Nisan 1 *starts*, one must back up from the Jerusalem meridian time to the *nearest preceding* 6:00 p.m., then *add* 13 days to the result to get to the *start* of Nisan 14.

For **2017** the Jerusalem meridian time is **March 28 at 05h 19m** (05:19 a.m.)

Back up to the nearest preceding 6:00 p.m.

Thus Nisan 1 *starts* the previous day – that is, 6:00 p.m. on **March 27**

Count 14 days forward from and including **March 27**. This brings us to **April 09**

So Nisan 14 *starts* at 6:00 p.m. (1800) on **Sunday, April 09** your local time.

SOURCES

Print-only

Astronomical Tables of the Sun, Moon, and Planets, Jean Meeus (Willmann-Bell, Inc.; 1983), pp. 3-43, 4-19.

Online

Her Majesty's Nautical Almanac Office Astronomical Information. Sheets (PDF)

Equinox and Phases of Moon <<http://astro.ukho.gov.uk/data/ais/pdf/ais104.pdf>>

United States Naval Observatory

Equinox <<http://aa.usno.navy.mil/data/docs/EarthSeasons.php>>

Phases of Moon <http://aa.usno.navy.mil/cgi-bin/aa_moonphases.pl?year=2017&ZZZ=END>

OUR LORD'S MEMORIAL 2017

Counting from Nisan 1 to Nisan 14
All times local to you

APRIL

MARCH 27 28 29 30 31 01 02 03 04 05 06 07 08 09 10

NISAN • -1- • -2- • -3- • -4- • -5- • -6- • -7- • -8- • -9- • -10- • -11- • -12- • -13- • -14- •

Monday
Nisan 1 begins 1800
(6:00 p.m.)

Sunday
Nisan 14 begins 1800
(6:00 p.m.)

Nisan 14
ends 1800
(6:00 p.m.)