

**WHOSE CALENDAR--YAHWEH'S
OR THE JEWS?**

by

John W. Trescott

A thorough study of the material contained in this booklet should provide the reader with positive information. The reader's faith and peace of mind should increase, in the truth provided herein. May Yahweh help you understand, as you prayerfully approach the subject at hand.

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WHOSE CALENDAR--YAHWEH'S OR THE JEWS'?

The great auto pioneer, Henry Ford I, put it very succinctly when he wrote: "The truth frequently seems unreasonable; the truth frequently is depressing; the truth sometimes seems to be evil; but it has the eternal advantage, it is the truth, and what is built thereon neither brings nor yields to confusion."

Well-known TV and radio commentator Garner Ted Armstrong puts it another way: "To believe that we could be wrong about something--almost anything--is unfortunately a very ego-shattering experience for some (if not most) human beings. The exposure of.. .myths and biases can be so psychologically disruptive that it is tantamount to complete ego destruction."

"When the... .security blanket is gone, so is the particular niche of comfort into which we can conveniently creep when some challenging new thought comes along to disturb our mental processes. We do have our first line of defenses against truth, and they are far more effective than any radar set or military advance-early-warning missile system. They unfailingly tell us that we are not wrong, but right after all!

Most people **stubbornly resist any new truth** with a whole series of first-line defenses and several back-up systems to boot! But when truth finally exhausts all their defenses, **they are forced to resort to that one-and-only tired old excuse**: 'Just who do you think you are? Where did you get your authority from?' If all else fails, people tend to fall back on this 'put-down' (Good News Magazine, October 1975).

Question: Since Romans 3:2 says that unto the Jews "were committed the oracles of Yahweh", does this mean that the Jewish calendar is the authority we all should follow in determining when to observe the festivals of Yahweh? Does the Church of God have authority to use the Jewish calendar and make it "binding" upon the Believers?

Answer: The "oracles" of Yahweh simply means the "Word" of Yahweh, the Kodesh Scriptures. The Hebrew Scriptures were preserved by the Jews and for us today. (Acts 7:38) It is clearly stated in II Timothy 3:15"...from a child you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise unto salvation." The only Scriptures Timothy knew were the Hebrew Scriptures from Genesis to Malachi and all of them are for the Believers today. But should a New Testament Believer be expected to follow the Pharisees, who rejected the only Saviour, and who twist Scripture, and are therefore without Yahweh in the world? Let the apostle John tell us: I John 2:22-26, NIV, says "Who is the liar? It is the man who **denies** that Yahshua is the Messiah. Such a man is the anti-messiah (in opposition to Messiah)--he **denies** the Father and the Son. **NO ONE WHO DENIES** the Son has the Father; whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father also. I am writing these things to you (N.T. Believers) **ABOUT THOSE WHO ARE TRYING TO LEAD YOU ASTRAY.**" Amazing! John said those who are without

Yahshua are trying to **LEAD BELIEVERS ASTRAY**; and yet, prominent Christian leaders teach people to blindly follow the Jews' misleading errors.

The word "oracles" in **NO WAY** refers to the calendar of the Jews today. The Jewish calendar is **NOT** the authority we should follow today. The Church of God has **NO AUTHORITY** to make it "binding" upon anyone, because that calendar is in **ERROR**. The following information should make it obviously clear that the Jewish calendar of today is incorrect, **was not in any way in use during the days of Yahshua Messiah**, and does not determine the new months correctly, thereby often causing error as to the time of the observance of Yahweh's annual Kodesh Days. (Emphasis ours throughout.)

No governing body of Jews, nor the Church of God, can bind on people a decision contrary to the Scriptures. That expanded principle is found in Deuteronomy 17:8-12. The Jewish calendar, used by most of the leadership of the Church of God to determine the time of festival observance, is in error. The largest single organization of the Church of God, the Worldwide Church of God, has admitted some of that error in their own publications, from which we have quotes on file.

JEWISH CALENDAR

In the Jewish calendar, there are postponement rules, 19-year cycles, full and defective months, and intercalated years. Because the Day of Atonement was **not permitted** to fall on certain week days, such as a Friday or Sunday, the beginning of the month could not be accurate with the visible new crescent of the moon. They try to find the first of the seventh month, Tishri, postpone it to fit their ideas, and then figure backward to Passover time. This is contrary to Exodus 12:1-2 which shows ABIB, fully in the spring of the year, was to be the first month, and the starting point for figuring the festivals as they come in succeeding months.

In the book MENAHOTH, Chapter VI, of the Talmud (Soncino Edition) regarding the omer of the wave sheaf offering, we read... "MISHNAH R. Ishmael says, on the Sabbath the omer was taken out of three se'ahs (of barley), and on a weekday out of five, i.e., if the second day of Passover, which is the sixteenth day of Nisan, fell on a Sabbath." Here we see the 15th of Nisan (Abib), an annual High Day or Sabbath could fall on a Friday before a weekly Sabbath.

In the book KERITHOTH within the Talmud (Soncino edition) dealing with unlawful work on the Sabbath or High Sabbath, we can read... "if Sabbath and the Day of Atonement (followed each other)...i.e., when the Day of Atonement fell upon **Friday** or **Sunday**..."

The significance is that from old times the kodesh days could fall on any day of the week. Yahweh never authorized anyone to change His law regarding His 4 Holy Days. But let's consider more evidence that in the days of Yahshua, and in the Talmudic period, the Jewish calendar of today was NOT in use.

NEW MOON

In the Introduction (by Julian Obermann) to the SANCTIFICATION OF THE NEW MOON (by Rabbi Maimonides) we find.... "(Rabbi) Ibn Ezra goes even further and states **explicitly**...that the names of the months and their order of succession from Misan to Adar are of 'Chaldean' origin.. he also holds that the rule whereby the year was made to start with Tishri--the month of the autumnal Equinox--was of **Babylonian provenience** (sources)..." Amazing! The Jewish calendar of today originated with Jewish scholars who were living in Babylon! What is Yahweh's instruction to the true Assembly today? Read it in Revelation 18:4: "**Come out** of her (Babylon), my people, so that you will **NOT** share in her sins, so that you will **NOT** receive any of her plagues; for her sins are piled up to heaven, and Yahweh has remembered her crimes". (NIV) But there is much more. In the same introduction we read... "The plain fact is that, as seen by recent scholars, the system of fixed calendar **was not developed** until three to four centuries **after** the close of the Talmudic period, about A.D. 485.. **Nor can anything be found** in the Talmud about such weighty calendar matters as the regulated succession of full and defective months within the year, the four "postponements" of New Year's Day, the 19-year cycle, or the number and succession of intercalated years in this or any other cycle." In a 1961 article "How to prove the crucifixion was Not on Friday," by Dr. Herman L. Hoeh of the Worldwide Church of God, Dr. Hoeh states..."This Hebrew calendar has continued to be used by God's true Assembly ever since apostolic times..." That statement simply is not true, for the "Hebrew" calendar of today was not even in existence during the time of the apostles! How much more evidence do we need? The fixed, calculated Jewish calendar in use today uses the astronomical new moon to begin the months. This is NOT Biblical at all. In the Introduction to SANCTIFICATION OF THE NEW MOON, previously mentioned, we read... "Rejecting the fixed calendar as a heretic innovation, the Karaites held that by the law of Scripture the beginning of the months **MUST BE DETERMINED BY THE APPEARING OF THE NEW CRESCENT AND NOT OTHER MEANS**, and that this had been the **practice of ancient Israel at all times.**"

In the book entitled Studies in Hebrew Astronomy and Mathematics, under the heading THE PROBLEM OF THE MOLAD, we read... "The reappearance of the new moon was celebrated everywhere as the New Moon Festival which determined the beginning of the new month. The **original meaning** of the Hebrew term 'Chodesh' is 'the glittering new moon', the new crescent as it first became **VISIBLE**. ..The **old and primitive** way of determining the inception of the lunar month with the phases, the reappearance of the visible new crescent is the...method based on observation."

In Gesenius' Hebrew/Chaldee Lexicon we find that the term "Kodesh" (2320) came from #2318 which means to be new, or to polish a sword. Etymologists have well observed that its **primary** sense is that of cutting and polishing.. .and the signification of newness appears to proceed from that of a sharp polished splendid sword. We see that a new moon cannot mean a full moon. A full moon in no way appears as a polished sword. In the case of a true new moon, it appears as a scimitar, or curved sword.

In the Encyclopedia Britannica, 15th edition, page 599, under JEWISH CALENDAR, we read.. "Because the year exceeds 12 lunar months by about 11 days, a 13th month of 30 days is intercalated in the 3rd, 6th, 8th, 11th, 14th, 17th and 19th years of a 19 year cycle. Arrangements akin to this procedure are well attested in **ancient BABYLON**. The calendar, thus, is schematic and independent of the true New Moon."

Let us consider more evidence. From the Jewish Quarterly Review, July, 1966. From discussion by Solomon Zeitlin, Dropsie College, on "The Judean Calendar during the Second Commonwealth and the Scrolls." Page 32 and 33.. .On page 324 (of the Judean Scrolls: The Problem and a solution by Professor D. R. Driver), Professor Driver makes the following assertion. "The Pharisees claimed the right to adjust the times and dates of the recurring feasts and fasts for reasons of **expediency** or **convenience**. For example, if New Year's Day (1 Tishri) was due to fall on Sunday or Wednesday or Friday, it was postponed to the following day if that was a **dies licita** or advanced to the preceding day if it was not such; similarly the Day of Atonement (10 Tishri) if due on Sunday or Tuesday or Friday and the Passover if due on Monday or Wednesday or Friday were similarly **shifted to a suitable day**." THIS IS NOT SO. During the Second Commonwealth down to the fourth century C. E. the **festival** of Passover could fall on any day of the week including Friday. "Again the statement that if the Day of Atonement falls on Friday it was shifted to a suitable day..." IS NOT TRUE. There are many references in the tannaitic literature to the fact that the Day of Atonement fell on a Sunday or on a Friday. As was said before during the Second Commonwealth there were no set days of the week for Passover and the Day of Atonement, they were on **DEFINITE DATES OF THE MONTH**.

The Jewish Encyclopedia. page 498 of Vol. 3, under Calendar. , History of, states... "The history of the Jewish calendar may be divided into three periods--the **Biblical**, the Talmudic, and the Post Talmudic. The **FIRST RESTED PURELY ON THE OBSERVATION OF THE SUN AND THE MOON**, the second on observation and reckoning, the third entirely on reckoning." Page 503..."It is uncertain what the calendar of Hillel originally contained, and when it was generally adopted. In the Talmud **THERE IS NO TRACE OF IT**."

The Talmud was written between the years 200 A.D. and 500 A.D., but many of its opinions date from before 200 AD. In the Talmud there is no trace of what is termed the "Hebrew" calendar in use today. The Talmud (KER, page 147, and MEN, page 425),

has **explicit evidence** that the postponement rules were not in effect during some of the Talmudic period. Explicit evidence **against** the use of an orderly succession of intercalated years within a known 19-year cycle is found in the Talmud (SAN page 53), where views are expressed **against** intercalating during a land sabbath year. Without some proof that the historical evidence is not true it must be admitted that the fixed calculated calendar was NOT IN USE in Yahshua's day.

Page 50, Vol. 5, of the Encyclopedia Judaica, 1951, states, "By the **tenth** century the Jewish calendar was exactly the same as today." Even at that late date an extra rule was added!! Candidly now, could the calendar known today as the "Hebrew" calendar be remotely part of the living word that Moses received to give to us? No, in NO WAY!

Yahshua condemned the Oral Law in Mark 7:1-13. The Jews consider their calendar part of the Oral law despite the fact that Jewish scholars admit that the fixed calendar **can not** represent an unbroken tradition from the time of Moses. Should a Believer pick what he likes from the Oral Laws, such as the fixed calendar, when it VIOLATES the Bible concerning beginning a month with a visible new moon?

QUESTIONS IMPLY FALSE ANSWERS

In the June-July, 1983, issue of INTERNATIONAL NEWS, published by the Church of God, International, of Tyler, Texas, Ronald Dart posed some questions to the reader on page 7, column 4.

"Is there any logical reason to dispute the fact that the Sanhedrin's determination of the calendar was one of these duties legitimately carried out by those who sat 'in Moses' seat'? When Hillel II formally sanctified the calendar in the fourth century, was he acting outside of his authority? Or was he simply doing what God's law authorized him to do as the latest in a long line of legitimate successors to 'Moses' seat'?

"We can, of course, reject his authority, but what do we do then? Do we take on the awesome responsibility of assuming that authority for ourselves?"

It is interesting to note that Mr. Dart does not answer these questions. It is also noteworthy that the questions are misleading. The **implied answer** to the first question is NO. The second question also implies a "NO" answer. But that implied answer is false. Hillel II was acting outside of his authority, if indeed he truly had any. How can you **KNOW**? Simply this. The **WORD** of Yahweh, which is going to judge you, says the Kodesh Days fall on **SPECIFIC** days of the month, regardless of the day of the week.. .except the Feast of Weeks, which always falls on a Sunday. The postponement rules of Hillel II calendar **disallow** the pure and clear Word of Yahweh. Thus, the postponement rules are **UNAUTHORIZED** according to Deuteronomy 4:2... "You shall **NOT ADD** unto the word which I command you, neither shall you diminish ought from it, that you

may keep the commandments of Yahweh your Almighty which I command you.” The reason for not **adding to**, is so you may KEEP Yahweh’s commandments, and not the commandments of men. The postponement rules, which also disallow the Biblical visible crescent for the beginning of months, are ADDING to Yahweh’s word with the false implication that such is authorized. These rules have **NO authority**.

Since “an administrative structure existed to make decisions on matters **NOT** defined in the Law...”, then the decision **contrary to** the Law is **UNAUTHORIZED**. (The quote with our emphasis is also from Ronald Dart’s article THE HEBREW CALENDAR, page 13, of the above mentioned INTERNATIONAL NEWS.)

The third question posed by Ron Dart, which was not answered, **implies** the answer that Hillel II **was** authorized by Yahweh’s law to impose postponement rules and use an astronomical new moon. That implication is **false** and has been shown to be. Yahweh’s Law authorized **NO ONE** to change the day of the month upon which His Kodesh Days occur by rules not allowing kodesh days to fall on certain days of the week (Monday, Wednesday, or Friday). It is reasoning in circles for men to determine the beginning of a new month by what day of the week a holy day will fall. It is not authorized by **anyone**, and most assuredly not by Yahweh Himself or Yahshua Messiah.

Mr. Dart’s fourth question again **implies** Hillel II did have such authority. Yahweh’s Word says NO! He did not.

[Write for our free taped message: WHAT DO YOU MEAN MOSES’ SEAT?]

The fifth question **implies** we would be assuming authority not rightly ours. But that implied answer is also **false**. Is the Assembly of Yah under the Levitical priesthood or a system of judges? NO! Your Bible says the priesthood has been **changed!** (Hebrew 7:12) We are now living under the Melchisedec priesthood, and Yahshua said of His called out ones, “The HOLY SPIRIT will guide you into all truth.” (John 16:33) All truth includes the truth of how to determine the calendar by Yahweh’s SIMPLISTIC method. He never hinted that now, with the change of the priesthood, we would have to submit to a Sanhedrin decision based on the reasoning of men. The Kodesh Spirit inspired, “...the Assembly of the living Yahweh, (is) the pillar and ground of truth.” (I Timothy 3:15). Read Hebrews 12:22-25 and see if the Assembly is come to the Sanhedrin in our day? Or to the heavenly court?

But Mr. Dart’s most damaging admission of all is that the calendar was not sanctioned by Hillel H **UNTIL** the fourth century. Hillel II was without Messiah and, therefore, without Yahshua in the world. John wrote (I John. 2:26): “I am writing these things to you (N.T. Believers) about those who (Jews who rejected Yahshua) are trying to **LEAD YOU ASTRAY.**”

Is the Assembly to accept the false assumption that the Sanhedrin, nearly 400 years after Messiah, has authority over the calendar, to determine when Yahweh's festivals are to occur? Then **WHY** does the Assembly **REJECT** this same "authority" when it determines times we disagree with for observing of Passover or Feast of Weeks (Pentecost)? Where does the Assembly have authority to accept only the part they want to accept and reject the other parts? **DO** the leaders who say they must abide by the Jewish calendar really believe what they are saying... .that the authority rests in **THE** Sanhedrin? Perhaps they will say that those parts with which they disagree do not conform to Scripture, thus they are in error. That's nice. That is precisely what we do say. That there is **ERROR** and the Bible does not authorize error, regardless of who it is from, or promulgated by. The Kodesh Spirit leads out of error!

Can anyone observe the weekly Sabbath day on Sunday? **NO!** Can anyone observe an annual Kodesh Day on any day other than the **TRUE** Kodesh Day? **NO!** Since we are zealous for the weekly Sabbath, why are we not as zealous for the annual Sabbaths? The evidence presented here proves the Jewish calendar to be in gross error! For the Church of God to **KNOW**, and go on blindly following the traditions of men is a dangerous stance to take with Yahweh Almighty. That attitude proceeds from a lukewarm consideration for observing Yahweh's holy days on the exact day. It is a rejection of the continual growth in grace and knowledge our Saviour wants. Every minister and leader of the Assembly of Yah who has this knowledge is responsible to admit the error, repent, and teach the flock of Yahweh and bring them out of that error! We pray that the ministers of Yahweh's true Assembly will humble themselves and not remain in error as if their favorite song were, "I shall not be moved." It takes strong Believer **character** to admit error and change.

YAHWEH'S TRUE CALENDAR IS SIMPLE

The true calendar of the Bible is so utterly simplistic, even a child can understand. In the past, the ministry has been looked upon as those with the "secrets" of the calendar, that they were some "elite" or privileged ones above the sheep. In the Babylonian system of religion that is true. It should not be so in Yahweh's Assembly. The leaders are to grow in truth, and teach the flock **ALL THINGS** concerning the truth, The Light of Truth Ministry endeavors to do just that, and we hope all the ministries of the Assembly of Yahweh will do the same. Paul mentions the simplicity that is in Yahshua. Yes He did, so that we would not misunderstand the true times for the kodesh days.

In Genesis 1:14 it states the sun and moon are to determine the seasons. The word "seasons" is moed or appointed times.. .festival days. The sun and moon are both used to determine the time. The sun determines the year. A year is divided into 4 seasons...spring, summer, fall and winter. The Creator marked those seasons with the Spring Equinox, Summer Solstice, Fall Equinox, and Winter Solstice. A year **CANNOT**

BEGIN IN THE WINTER! There is no way the first month of a year can fall partly in winter of the previous year, and partly in the spring of the new year. All the month of Abib **must** be in the spring. Is this Scriptural? Yes, and while we are at it, green, un-ripe grains of barley do not have anything to do with determining **when** the beginning of Abib is. Exodus 12:2 states in the KJV... “This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: It shall be the first month **of the year** to you.” In the Modern Language Bible, “..the month **with which your year begins.**” RSV states, “...This month shall be for you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month **of the year** for you.” How plain can the Creator be? Abib cannot partly be in the previous year.

HORNS OF THE NEW MOON

Some have thought the horns, or points, of a new moon crescent have to be perfectly straight up and level to begin the first day of Abib. There is absolutely nothing in the Bible to justify this idea, thus making the very idea an idol.

As for 1991, the SKY AND TELESCOPE magazine stated that the horns would be level in April, not March, in the 40 degree Latitude. Thus, the middle of March, 1991, new crescent could not lawfully (Bible law) begin the month of Abib. To restate one more time...Abib cannot be partly in the spring of a new year, and partly in the winter of the previous year. The spring starts at the vernal Spring Equinox, not prior to it. That is precisely the way our Creator set it up.

RIPE BARLEY

Some groups insist that the barley must be used to determine the month of Abib. The idea promulgated is that it must be green ears, or grain not yet ripe for harvest. They insist that these not ripe ears are for the wave sheaf offering which occurs during the days of unleavened bread. Is this true? Does it fit the Scripture? No, it does not.

Let us look at Lev. 23:10 which speaks of the wave sheaf. “Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, when you be come into the land which I give unto you, and **shall reap the harvest** thereof, then you shall bring a **sheaf** of the first fruits **of your harvest** unto the priest.” This clearly shows the wave sheaf has to be of harvestable grain, not un-ripe grain. It has to come from the harvest. The sheaf must be of the first fruits of the harvest itself. It must be harvestable.

What does “green” mean? In Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance, it is #3418, yeh’rek, (in the sense of **vacuity** of color). What does vacuity mean in relation to the color green? It means empty or devoid of color green. The term “green” can mean that which is NOT ripe, or it can mean that which is fully ready for harvest. In this case, being devoid of green color would indicate it was becoming the yellowish, fully mature grain ready for harvest.

Does this fit the symbology? Yes, Yahshua was the wave sheaf, the first fruit of the harvest. He was fully grown and mature, and ready for harvest. In fact, so much so, that He suffered and paid the penalty for our sins all alone, forsaken of the Father in heaven. His character had been perfected and He was ready to be offered.

When Yahshua was on His way to be crucified, He spoke of Himself as being a green tree. This green has nothing to do with color, but with the idea of being filled with sap, a type of Kodesh Spirit.

Green, unripe, grains of barley, do NOT help determine the beginning of Abib. The wave sheaf must be ready for harvest.

Now... for the most important truth of all so far presented.. .When did the death of your Saviour, Yahshua Messiah, occur? Yahshua died at the age of 33 1/2 on Wednesday, the 14th of Abib in 31 C.E. The visible new moon of that month occurred AFTER the vernal Equinox and was NOT the nearest new moon to the Equinox. His death occurred on April 25, 31 C.E., similar to the calendar sequence in 1983. The Jewish calendar uses an inexact 19-year cycle that was one month off in 1983 and 1991. Our MASTER did not observe the holy days in accordance with the Jewish Calendar of today. Let us all follow His perfect example.

May Yahweh Almighty bless everyone in their pursuit of truth and the courage to hold fast to it.

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