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THE JEWISH CALENDAR: A BIRD WITH SCALES

Most people, including me, have by now had enough calendar articles to last them a lifetime. Most people have made up their minds either for or against the present Jewish calendar. And further calendar articles are unlikely to change anything for most people. The thought of writing another calendar article is enough to put me into a bad mood, because it is going to take up an enormous amount of my time, and it will achieve very little. So I am extremely reluctant to get involved in another "calendar article".

However, I know with absolute certainty, without the slightest doubts or reservations of any kind, that the present Jewish calendar is NOT OF GOD, that it does not have God's approval, that it is in fact an insult to God's intelligence, that its astronomical calculations are a joke as far as calculating REAL CONJUNCTIONS are concerned, that it violates biblical instructions and principles, that its postponement rules are ungodly "traditions of men", and that its origin certainly does not precede the 200's AD. Therefore I will not hesitate to strip naked and expose the errors, and to utterly demolish and to smash into oblivion and to grind into dust any arguments that are presented in defense of this Jewish calendar, even as Moses ground the golden calf into powder (Exodus 32:20), because there are no redeeming attributes of any kind inherent in the present Jewish calendar, NONE WHATSOEVER! This is not some kind of empty threat. If you choose to read the almost 190 pages of this article, you will know that you have read an extensive demolition of the present Jewish calendar.

Yes, the present Jewish calendar SOMETIMES even gets the dates right, even as the Jewish customs SOMETIMES get Pentecost on the correct day, but "sometimes" isn't good enough, and "sometimes" isn't what God is looking for in His people. And reaching "the right dates" from the WRONG MOTIVATIONS is also not acceptable to God! God expects us to keep the right dates for the right reasons; it is no good to reach a wrong date and to then sometimes, coincidentally, postpone that wrong date to the right date. The actual date itself is not nearly as important to God as our motivation for keeping that right date.

God is looking for obedience with UNDERSTANDING; He is not looking for BLIND obedience, and He never has looked for blind obedience. And when it comes to our attention that something is a tradition that stands in opposition to God, then God EXPECTS us to disassociate ourselves from that ungodly tradition. The present Jewish calendar is precisely such an ungodly tradition!

It is extremely frustrating for me to find that people will try any number of approaches to "justify away" the Scriptures and the astronomical facts that clearly expose the flaws in the present Jewish calendar.

Typically people will attempt to "prove" that a specific Scripture DOESN'T MEAN SOMETHING, without the slightest effort to show what that same Scripture DOES MEAN! They are not interested in what that Scripture actually DOES mean; their only goal is to try to show that it doesn't (supposedly) have any application to the calendar question. And people will blatantly ignore any and all problems with the Jewish calendar.

Those who defend the present Jewish calendar are not even willing to acknowledge things about that calendar that THE JEWS THEMSELVES ARE QUITE WILLING TO ACKNOWLEDGE! Those who defend the present Jewish calendar inevitably make far, far, FAR greater claims for that calendar than

ANY JEWS (I don't mean those who are now members of God's Church; I mean those Jews who basically accept the Jewish religion and who write factual books or articles about their own calendar in reputable publications) are prepared to make! And they make such claims without even the slightest proof for their claims. Any number of RIDICULOUS arguments are presented to supposedly "prove" that the present Jewish calendar has God's approval. And it is frustrating to even have to address such ridiculous arguments.

And yes, there are a very few Jewish authors who have attempted to find astronomical justifications for some unbiblical and ungodly things like the postponement rules, but those claims for astronomical justifications are readily contradicted by other Jewish authors who are more honest, and they are SO EASILY DISPROVED by the scientific facts that are involved, that I find appeals to such clearly biased statements pathetic! Does anyone honestly, in the integrity of their heart, believe that such claims can somehow do away with the astronomical REALITIES that are involved? What's the point of quoting Moses Maimonides regarding the reasons for the postponement rules when THE ASTRONOMICAL FACTS RIGHT NOW irrefutably prove that Maimonides was WRONG in the claims he made for the postponement rules?

Where is the fear of God? Where is THE FEAR to even try to "explain away" scriptural statements that should so obviously be applied to the calendar? Where is THE FEAR to willingly ignore and overlook OBVIOUS PRINCIPLES that apply to the calendar? Where is THE FEAR to attempt to limit any discussion to the mere LETTER OF THE LAW? Where is THE FEAR to try to DISCREDIT the application of obvious principles? And above all:

WHERE IS THE FEAR OF ATTEMPTING TO IMPLY A RATHER LOW INTELLIGENCE QUOTIENT TO THE ALMIGHTY CREATOR GOD WITH ARGUMENTS INTENDED TO REMOVE ANY POSSIBLE MEANING FROM BIBLICAL STATEMENTS AND PRINCIPLES??

Some of the arguments presented to support the Jewish calendar are undisguised insults to the intelligence of the Almighty God. The "god" who would accept some of those absurd arguments as "sound reasoning" would have to be a moron! And it upsets me that I even have to address such ridiculous arguments, having to point out the lengths people will go to in order to justify their unbiblical traditions, with a total disregard for the supreme intelligence of the great Creator God, expecting us to believe that God will be impressed by some Mickey Mouse arguments. THE BOTTOM LINE is that they have no REAL evidence of any kind to support the present Jewish calendar and THEREFORE they come up with totally ridiculous arguments to uphold their traditional belief. The Jews back in Jesus Christ's time were not the only ones who rejected the commandments of God in order to hold fast to their traditions.

So while I feel a responsibility to expose foolish arguments that are presented in defense of the present Jewish calendar for what they are, perhaps you can understand why I "squirm at the thought of writing further articles about the calendar". They inevitably take up a lot of my time, they inevitably have to address hypocritical arguments, and they are unlikely to convince anyone who has set his mind to support the Jewish calendar. The only thing they can achieve is help some people, who were made insecure by some "clever" arguments, to banish any insecurities such arguments may have created. However, I don't really believe that my exposing of errors in the arguments presented in support of the Jewish calendar will somehow "make a believer" out of a committed supporter of the present Jewish calendar. It just doesn't work that way because FACTUAL TRUTH has got nothing to do with why people cling to the Jewish calendar.

For some time now a number of people have brought Mr. Franklin's article "The Calendar of Christ and the Apostles" to me and requested me to respond in some way. They point out to me that Mr. Franklin

has even devoted TWO chapters to me specifically ... chapters 7 and 8. I am honoured. And I am told that to not respond seems to imply that Mr. Franklin really has it correct and that his article "makes a strong case" for the present Jewish calendar. The thinking is apparently that if the things I have said about the calendar can be discredited, then that all by itself is interpreted as proof for the validity of the present Jewish calendar?

And so I have reluctantly decided that I should address the calendar issue in general once again, and also to respond to Mr. Franklin's two articles about the calendar.

I have before me two different articles by Mr. Franklin. The one article, "The Calendar of Christ and the Apostles", used to be available for downloading from the web, and it is also available in a hard copy print-out. The page numbering varies slightly in the two versions. When quoting from this article, I will give the page numbers as they apply to the printed copy I have before me. This may vary slightly from the copy you might download from the worldwide web.

I also have an earlier article entitled "The Feast of Trumpets 2000 AD", which Mr. Franklin co-authored with Dwight Blevins. I will also quote extensively from this article. The "Preface" of the "Calendar of Christ" article repeats, word for word and sentence for sentence, many of the premises that Mr. Franklin presented in his "Trumpets 2000 AD" article, with a few changes that are also of interest. So a careful examination of this earlier article clearly reveals Mr. Franklin's premises to us.

Let's start by taking a look at his "Calendar of Christ" article.

One comment is appropriate at this point: In all the quotations I will present from various books and authors throughout this entire article, unless explicitly stated as otherwise, all emphasis (by use of CAPITAL LETTERS) is my own and not that of the author of the quotation.

MR. FRANKLIN HAS IDENTIFIED THE REAL ISSUE

At the start of his article Mr. Franklin clearly identifies the real issues. In the third paragraph on page 1 he has clearly identified the crux of the whole calendar question. It is a very clear and direct statement.

He writes:

"IF IT IS POSSIBLE TO SHOW THAT IT (i.e. the present Jewish calendar) IS IN COMPLETE HARMONY WITH THE ASTRONOMICAL CYCLES THAT GOD HAS ORDAINED, AND THAT IT FULFILLS EVERY SCRIPTURAL REQUIREMENT FOR DETERMINING HIS APPOINTED TIMES, THE SUPPOSED NEED TO MODIFY THE CALCULATED CALENDAR WILL BE ELIMINATED."

A beautiful and clear statement! He has clearly spelled out his "S.P.S", the "specific purpose statement" for his entire article. I am in full agreement with this statement. He has told us that there are only two questions which need to be answered in the affirmative. They are:

- 1) It must be PROVED that the present Jewish calendar is "IN COMPLETE HARMONY" with the astronomical cycles that we find in existence today.
- 2) It must be PROVED that the present Jewish calendar fulfills "EVERY SCRIPTURAL REQUIREMENT" that God has established for determining the annual Feasts and Holy Days.

Do you agree with what Mr. Franklin has presented here? I here agree whole heartedly with him. His approach here cuts through all the red herrings and the distractions and the peripheral side issues that so many other people have thrown up in their efforts to prop up the present Jewish calendar. Mr.

Franklin's statement focuses on the real issues.

So this opening statement tells us that we should EXPECT his article to provide us with THE PROOF to these two questions he himself has posed. He has clearly focused our expectations on these two key issues. Thus, all we need to see is: does the Bible actually express support for the use of this calendar, and is it in complete harmony with the astronomical data available to us?

Mr. Franklin's approach immediately cuts out any appeals to "the oracles of God" as supposed proof for the Jewish calendar. It also cuts out any disputes as to whether Jesus Christ was crucified in 30 AD or in 31 AD, since neither 30 AD nor 31 AD expresses any scriptural requirement for the calendar, nor do 30 AD or 31 AD have anything to do with astronomical accuracy. Astronomical accuracy is very easily determined by a comparison of the data used in the calculations of the Jewish calendar with the very precise data that astronomy today makes available to us.

Note! "Astronomical accuracy" is NOT established by examining the actual data for any given year, since that can very easily be due to the "hit and miss" results achieved by the Jewish calendar. The actual data for any given year, if it agrees with astronomical facts, actually PROVES NOTHING AT ALL! The only way to substantiate "astronomical accuracy" is to compare the data used in the calculations of the Jewish calendar with the data on which an astronomically accurate calendar is based. In this way THE PREMISES for both calculations can be compared. Astronomical accuracy for the present Jewish calendar would be proved by that calendar ALWAYS, FOR EVERY YEAR, achieving the astronomically accurate results. The occasional year being correct proves nothing.

Note further! The fulfillment of "every scriptural requirement" is NEVER PROVED by making inferences from the data for any specific year in history! Again that can very easily be due to the "hit and miss" nature of the results achieved by the present Jewish calendar, in addition to invariably involving an enormous amount of speculation. It is not questioned that the present Jewish calendar SOMETIMES gets it right, because it does sometimes get it right. But to be acceptable, it would have to CONSISTENTLY get it right, and this it does not do. The only way to PROVE that scriptural requirements are met by the Jewish calendar is to do two things:

FIRST, we need to clearly spell out what ALL those scriptural requirements are, and SECOND, it must be proved that ALL these requirements are CONSISTENTLY met by the Jewish calendar.

So we should expect to see Mr. Franklin in his article clearly spell out for us "EVERY scriptural requirement" for a correct calendar, which requirements he has alluded to. Reasoning from supposed BC dates for specific events mentioned in the Bible is NEVER the same as "biblical APPROVAL" for the present Jewish calendar. Biblical approval requires direct positive statements in the Bible about the calendar, not inferences! Without CLEAR AND UNAMBIGUOUS statements expressing support for the present Jewish calendar you simply CANNOT claim "biblical approval". God simply does not give ANYONE the right to INFER His approval for the Jewish calendar simply because it is alleged that something or other supposedly happened during the time of Ezra, or during the time of anyone else in the Bible!

Now you tell me if the following is a logical approach or not, because that is the way I understand this calendar issue. It is the corollary of Mr. Franklin's statement which I have quoted above.

IF it can be shown that the calculations employed by the Jewish calendar are NOT "in complete harmony" with the astronomical facts that confront us today, or if it can be shown that the present Jewish calendar does NOT fulfill SOME biblical requirements, THEN it is utterly, totally, and

absolutely useless to appeal to historical calendar references for years like 538 BC, 515 BC, 30 AD, 31 AD, 5 BC, 66 AD, 69 AD, 70 AD, etc.

Does that make sense or does that not make sense?

I mean, why do we need to be distracted by a Gordian knot of technicalities with gigantic speculations about specific years in history IF it can be shown that RIGHT NOW the calculations of the Jewish calendar are NOT "in complete harmony" with the facts of astronomy? Similarly, if it can be shown that some biblical requirements are NOT met by the Jewish calendar, then why should we be distracted from this fact by mountains of technical data applied to questionable years in biblical times?

To be quite clear about this!

The technical data for any one specific year can prove that the Jewish calendar is IN CONFLICT WITH astronomical facts! But the technical data for any one specific year can NEVER prove that the Jewish calendar is astronomically accurate; THAT can only be proved by being willing to look at the data for EVERY YEAR IN HUMAN HISTORY!

I have nothing at all against "technical data". In fact, I am a firm believer in technical data. BUT technical data is ONLY of value if it can be demonstrated that it is in fact in harmony with the astronomical facts. Technical data can NEVER be used to get around demonstrable conflicts with astronomical facts. We should never allow volumes of technical data to impress us. It is easy to create confusion around streams of technical data and calculations. We should always ask ourselves: Does this technical information actually PROVE anything? Or is it intended to inundate us, like the incredibly huge "Iraqi Report about its Weapons of Mass Destruction"?

AN OVERVIEW OF MR. FRANKLIN'S ARTICLE

The article starts with a 15 page "PREFACE", which is followed by an "INTRODUCTION" of 5 pages, and this is followed by 19 chapters and a Conclusion, an Appendix and a Glossary of Terms, which together take up close to another 100 pages.

Now the entire article is built on THE FOUNDATION PRESENTED IN THIS "PREFACE"! Everything else in the following 100 pages is based on THE ASSUMPTION that the assertions presented in this Preface are correct and accurate. If we compare Mr. Franklin's article to the plans for a magnificent auditorium, like the Opera House in Sydney, Australia, then "THE PREFACE" represents THE FOUNDATION on which Mr. Franklin builds this awesome auditorium.

With any structure the most important feature is the foundation. IF the foundation is flawed, then it is immaterial how good the plans for the rest of the structure are. At best a flawed foundation will give us "a leaning tower of Pisa"; at worst a flawed foundation will bring the whole structure crashing down.

It was Jesus Christ Himself who gave us the comparison between a house that was built on a foundation of rock, and a house that was built on a foundation of sand (see Matthew 7:24-27). A house built on a foundation of sand is doomed to come crashing down, and a house built on a foundation of quicksand will crash down QUICKLY!

I mention these things because it is easy to become distracted by what Mr. Franklin presents to us in the 19 chapters of his article. We must never forget that those 19 chapters can ONLY be of value to his cause IF the foundation on which he has built those 19 chapters is accurate and true. IF we can clearly establish from his Preface that his assumed premises are flawed, then it becomes a waste of time to get involved in the subsequent 19 chapters; and that will save me at least 200 ADDITIONAL pages that I

would otherwise have to write, examining those 19 chapters in detail.

I will show in this article that Mr. Franklin's foundational PREMISES are terribly flawed! And therefore I see no point in presenting a thorough and detailed analysis of what he presents in the subsequent 19 chapters. To put this into Mr. Armstrong's terms, IF we can saw down THE TRUNK OF THE TREE of his whole argument, THEN it is pointless to get involved in squabbling over the small branches and the twigs and the leaves and the buds and the pollen attached to his argument. We need to focus on the heart and core of the real issue and avoid getting entangled in peripheral points.

However, let me make clear that this does not mean that this will therefore be a brief discussion of his points. To utterly demolish his claims will result in this article being about 180 pages in length. But sticking to the most basic premises of his position will at least mean not going up to 350 pages or more in length, which I know would be inevitable if I were to examine every single sentence in his 19 chapters. Such a thorough critique would not add to an already thorough critique of his Preface. When you can show that some position is THOROUGHLY wrong, that should be sufficient.

So I will show how and why Mr. Franklin's position is built on a foundation of quicksand. The foundation determines the soundness of his arguments or lack thereof. Any subsequent arguments, no matter how beautifully and how clearly they are presented, can never erase or plaster over FLAWS that are contained IN THE FOUNDATION.

SOME BASIC ASTRONOMICAL FACTS THAT APPLY TO THE CALENDAR

Before we examine some of the premises Mr. Franklin presents in his Preface, we should refresh some basic FACTS of astronomy that pertain to the calendar question. Here they are:

1) There is no such thing as "19-year time cycles"! What has been referred to as "19-year cycles" since the time of Meton ("metonic cycles") is in fact nothing more than AN APPROXIMATION! This is an irrefutable fact!

2) For every 19 years in the Jewish calendar, when compared with 19 solar years, there is an error of 2 hours 6 minutes 29,3 seconds. In other words, the Jewish calendar calculations assign 2 hours 6 minutes 29,3 seconds TOO MUCH to every 19 solar years. This amounts to AN ERROR of one full day for every 216,3 years. This is an astronomical fact!

3) It is also A FACT that over the past 1650 years (i.e. from the time of Hillel II to the present) the start of EVERY YEAR in the Jewish "19-year cycle" has moved to from 7 to 8 days LATER in the solar year (i.e. in relation to the seasons). This shifting to later in the year is an ongoing process, and the present Jewish calendar has no mechanism of any kind to deal with this shifting to later dates. I have previously supplied data to prove this fact and can easily do so again.

4) To illustrate this problem: The Gregorian calendar, while not perfect, is the most accurate one in existence for keeping the equinox on a fixed date in the year, thereby keeping the seasons constant in the year. Most people understand that the JULIAN calendar had an error which allowed the equinox to move to a constantly later date in the year. So starting in 1582 AD the more accurate Gregorian calendar came to replace the Julian calendar.

The JEWISH calendar has exactly the same problem and the same error that the Julian calendar has, but, in terms of time, only approximately 59,26% of the error of the Julian calendar when compared to true solar years. So the error of the Jewish calendar is just over half of the error of the Julian calendar. And so use of the Jewish calendar results in exactly the same problems that use of the Julian calendar produces, but only at just over half of the rate at which the Julian calendar creates its problems. It is

EXACTLY THE SAME PROBLEM and this is an astronomically irrefutable fact.

5) It is also A FACT that the Postponement Rules of the Jewish calendar do not in any way influence the calculation of "the molad" for any given year. The Postponement Rules NEVER feature in any calculations; they are simply APPENDED once the calculations have been completed. But the calculations for the molads of subsequent years then totally ignore any "postponements" that may have been applied to previous years. ALL the calculations of the Jewish calendar work from the premise that in all preceding years NO POSTPONEMENTS HAVE EVER BEEN IMPLEMENTED; only the data that was obtained BEFORE any postponements were added is used for calculating subsequent molads. So the postponements have no impact on the astronomy involved in the calendar computations. Anyone who claims otherwise is simply not stating the truth!

6) It is A FACT that the postponement rules have NOTHING AT ALL to do with astronomy. They have to do totally and exclusively with "days of the week". But "days of the week" have no impact and no significance on astronomy. Whether a molad calculation results in a time that is BEFORE the actual conjunction, or whether it is close to the actual conjunction, or whether it is AFTER the actual conjunction has nothing at all to do with "the day of the week" which that happens to be. The postponement rules of the Jewish calendar deal EXCLUSIVELY with what day of the week the molad happens to fall on, in total disregard of any ASTRONOMICAL facts that may apply to that specific molad.

7) To help us understand that the postponements have no astronomical influence of any kind, we need to only consider the following fact. EVERY "19-year cycle" in the Jewish calendar is based on calculations that assume that there were EXACTLY 235 consecutive lunar months, making up 19 years (i.e. the error of over 2 hours is ignored), WITHOUT ANY POSTPONEMENTS being applied to any of those 19 years. There may in fact have been as many as "ten or more days of postponements" during those 19 years, but none of those "ten days of postponements" are reflected in any of the calculations that follow. The FOLLOWING "19-year cycle" is calculated as though NONE of the previous 19 years were postponed by even one single day, let alone that there were "ten days of postponements" throughout the previous 19 years.

To put this another way: For a period of time that has an astronomical error of a few seconds over two hours and six minutes (i.e. a period of 19 years) THERE WERE OVER TEN DAYS OF POSTPONEMENTS! How can TEN DAYS of postponements possibly be in any way related to an astronomical error of only slightly over TWO HOURS? In the course of 190 years (i.e. 10 "19-year cycles") the Jewish calendar will have over ONE HUNDRED DAYS OF POSTPONEMENTS, when the total astronomical error is only a few minutes over TWENTY TWO HOURS!! Between 1934 (when Mr. Armstrong started the Radio Church of God) and 2002 the Jewish calendar has postponed the start of the year away from the day of the molad by OVER 60 DAYS!! Now IF the postponements really did have some impact on the calculations involved, THEN they would obviously produce STAGGERINGLY HUGE ERRORS; an error of one month for every approximately 35 years would be a staggering error indeed.

And how could postponements possibly ever have any effect on the astronomical realities that are involved? Look, THE MOON in its monthly orbit around the earth doesn't know that in the past 19 years it was actually POSTPONED by over 10 days. How could the moon POSSIBLY respond to new moon dates being postponed by a day or two? Do we somehow expect the moon to "lag behind in its orbit by a day or two" every so often? There is no way that the moon has of responding to the instruction to "postpone the new moon"; the moon is stuck in its circuit around the earth and can NEVER respond to being "postponed". The only possibility is to have accurate data for the length of every lunar cycle. The moon cannot "wait" every time the Jewish calendar says "you're too fast again, so hold back for a day or two"!

This explanation should suffice to illustrate conclusively that IT IS IMPOSSIBLE for the postponements

to have any kind of impact on the astronomy underlying the calendar. And the truth is that they do not in any way feature in the Jewish calculations, they are only appended after all the calculations have been completed. And that is why they don't produce the staggering error their inclusion in the calculations would have produced. But this also means that THEREFORE they cannot have any kind of astronomical justification! And they CERTAINLY do not have any effect of any kind on this steady error of one full day for every 216 years.

To substantiate these astronomical facts, here are some quotations from highly reputable reference works.

SOME QUOTATIONS ABOUT THE JEWISH CALENDAR

1) The ENCYCLOPEDIA BRITANNICA, 9th edition, volume 4, page 678, article "Calendar" states that the Jewish years will move away from the equinox by ONE DAY IN 216 YEARS.

2) The 1911 ENCYCLOPEDIA BRITANNICA, 11th edition, volume 4, page 1001, column 1, article "Calendar" states the same point in the section of the article devoted to the Jewish calendar. It states:

"Such difference may also in part be accounted for by THE FACT that the assumed duration of the solar year is 6 minutes 39,43 seconds in excess of the true astronomical value, WHICH WILL CAUSE THE DATES OF COMMENCEMENT OF FUTURE JEWISH YEARS, SO CALCULATED, TO ADVANCE FORWARD FROM THE EQUINOX A DAY IN ERROR IN 216 YEARS."

3) The JEWISH ENCYCLOPEDIA, copyright 1903, 1912, volume 3, page 500, article "Calendar, History of" makes exactly the same point. It states:

"The assumed duration of the solar year is 6 minutes, 39,43 seconds in excess of the true astronomical value, which will cause the dates of the commencement of future Jewish years, which are so calculated, to advance from the equinox A DAY IN ERROR IN 216 YEARS."

A few pages further in the article "Calendar" this same encyclopedia states:

"The cycle of nineteen lunar years (the cycle of Meton) determines the sequence of common years and leap years in the Jewish calendar, because nineteen lunar years with seven extra months of seven leap years APPROXIMATELY equal nineteen solar years." (page 505)

So note carefully! Here is an authoritative JEWISH reference work which freely acknowledges that their own calendar contains an inherent ERROR of one day for every 216 years. Yet there are people in the Church of God who attempt to "justify away" this error. Note also that the above quotations thereby acknowledge that the Jewish calendar has exactly the same TYPE of error that is inherent in the Julian calendar, except that the error of the Julian calendar is greater; it is one day for every approximately 128 years.

4) In 1886 A.D. ISIDORE LOEB, a Jewish author, published in Paris that the Jewish cycle in 19 years exceeds 19 Gregorian years by 2 hours, 8 minutes and 15,3 seconds. This makes a difference in 1900 years (i.e. in 100 cycles) of 8 days, 21 hours, 45 minutes and 5 seconds (as published in "Tables du Calendrier Juif, page 6, Paris 1886).

[COMMENT: The correct figure per 19 year cycle is actually 1 hour, 58 minutes and 15,3 seconds,

exactly 10 minutes less (based on a 400 year Gregorian cycle and not on a 4000 year Gregorian cycle) than what Loeb stated.]

The point is that FOR OVER 100 YEARS IT HAS BEEN KNOWN that the Jewish calendar has exactly the same problem that the Julian calendar has, just to a somewhat lesser degree. It is an irrefutable fact that the Jewish calendar is astronomically inaccurate!

To make this quite clear: We freely recognize that the Julian calendar has an inherent flaw. Therefore it was replaced by the Gregorian calendar, which is far more accurate in keeping the seasons constant in the year. The problem of the Jewish calendar is identical to the problem with the Julian calendar; it only differs in the degree of the problem; the problem of the Jewish calendar is only 59,26% of the problem with the Julian calendar.

So where by the year 2002 AD the Julian calendar (starting from 325 AD) had gained 13 days, the Jewish calendar had during the same period of time gained only from 7 to 8 days. And that matches up exactly with the facts. 59,26% of 13 days is 7,7 days. Thus some years in every "19-year cycle" of the Jewish calendar have gained only 7 days while others have already gained 8 days.

NOW JUST SUPPOSE THAT SOMEONE HAD TRIED TO FIX THE PROBLEM WITH THE JULIAN CALENDAR BY APPLYING "POSTPONEMENTS" WHENEVER JANUARY 1st FELL ON CERTAIN DAYS OF THE WEEK!

Would that have worked? Could it have worked? Not really. But it could perhaps have had SOME effect in dealing with the problem ... BUT ONLY IF (note!) those postponements were INCLUDED IN THE CALCULATIONS of all future Julian years! It obviously would NOT have produced correct results, because tying postponements to certain "days of the week" has nothing to do with astronomical realities. And IF those postponements were going to be totally ignored in the calculations, IF they were in fact going to be DROPPED for the calculations of future Julian years, THEN postponements also could obviously never have begun to solve the problems with the Julian calendar. Postponements were simply NOT a suitable solution for the Julian calendar's problems.

DITTO FOR THE JEWISH CALENDAR!

5) The ENCYCLOPEDIA BRITANNICA, 1964 edition, Volume 4, Article "CALENDAR", section "Jewish Calendar, Origin, pages 624-625 states the following:

"The Jewish calendar is the result of LONG DEVELOPMENT; ITS PRESENT FORM IS NOT OF GREAT ANTIQUITY."

"Intercalation, already evident from Ezekiel ... (chapter and verse references), WAS AT FIRST EMPIRICAL, an intercalary month being added FOR VARIOUS REASONS AT IRREGULAR INTERVALS. The length of each month was determined FROM THE OBSERVATION OF WITNESSES, who reported having seen the new crescent moon and who were carefully questioned by the authorities ..."

"GRADUALLY OBSERVATION GAVE PLACE TO CALCULATION, with the right to adjust the calendar reserved to the patriarchate."

"However, a great calendric controversy arose in A.D. 921. Ben Meir, claiming the old Palestinian prerogative as a descendant of the patriarchs (whose office had been abolished by the Romans in the 5th century A.D.), maintained that new year was not to be deferred unless the molad occurred 642/1080 of an hour after noon. The controversy ended, mainly through the championship of Saadia (892-942),

with COMPLETE BABYLONIAN VICTORY. Since then the Jewish calendar has remained unchanged. The sole difference between Babylon on the one hand and Palestine (with Italy and France) on the other, AS TO WHETHER THE YEAR SHOULD BEGIN WITH TISHRI OR NISAN, was settled about 1250 IN FAVOUR OF BABYLON; i.e. commencement with Tishri."

"This easily disproved THE THEORY of their (i.e. of the Karaites) great Rabbanite opponent Saadia that CALCULATION PRECEDED OBSERVATION, A THEORY WHICH WAS ALSO REJECTED BY NOTABLE RABBANITES ; e.g. MAIMONIDES (1135-1204)." (all the above quotations are from pages 624-625)

Here the Encyclopedia Britannica adds several other points of interest.

Notice that the patriarch in Palestine wanted the year to start with Nisan, but he was defeated by the patriarch of BABYLON, who ruled that the year should start with Tishri. But GOD says that the year should start with Nisan (i.e. Exodus 12:2). Now we can argue that "it doesn't really make a difference", but in fact this (starting the year in Tishri) is JUST ONE MORE FORM OF REBELLION AGAINST GOD! And it was BABYLON that overruled PALESTINE in this rebellion!

EVERY SUPPORTER of the present Jewish calendar system TURNS A BLIND EYE TO THIS SCRIPTURAL REQUIREMENT!!

It doesn't matter to them that GOD wants the year to start with Nisan, but THE JEWS decided that the year will start six months later! People don't care about Exodus 12:2, and just kid themselves that "even if the Jews do start their years with Tishri, WE know better and we start THEIR YEAR with Nisan". They will go to enormous lengths to justify why the Jews start the year in Tishri in opposition to God.

But the very simple fact remains: THE JEWISH YEAR that calls "the 1st Day of the 7th Month" the start of a new year DOES NOT MEET THE SCRIPTURAL REQUIREMENT OF EXODUS 12:2!

The term "Rosh Hashanah" literally means "THE HEAD OF THE YEAR". Now in Exodus 12:2 God Himself tells us that the first month (i.e. Nisan) is to be "ROSH HASHANAH", it is to be "the head of the year"! But the Jews have rebelled against this, and in THEIR calendar they call the first day of the seventh month (i.e. Tishri) "Rosh Hashanah". It is irrefutable that GOD expects us to view Nisan as "Rosh Hashanah".

You simply CANNOT call the 1st Day of the 7th Month "NEW YEAR" and then kid yourself that you are meeting "all scriptural requirements". Calling the Day of Trumpets "the HEAD of the year" is open rebellion towards God, and this rebellion was forced upon the Jews in Palestine by the Jews in BABYLON! Notice just how many things about the Jewish calendar actually point to BABYLON!

Notice one other point from the above quotations: Simply because we can deduce intercalation (i.e. adding a 13th month) from the Book of Ezekiel, that does NOT in any way mean that therefore the present Jewish calendar must be "of great antiquity"! The (very likely Jewish) author of this Britannica article makes quite clear that evidence of intercalation proves NOTHING, as far as the age of the present Jewish calendar is concerned.

Ezekiel wrote before 500 BC, but the author acknowledges that the Jewish calendar underwent changes until as late as 900 AD, over 1400 years later. So appeals to Ezekiel's comments really prove NOTHING AT ALL, as far as the present format of the Jewish calendar is concerned. Similarly, evidence of intercalation at Ezekiel's time does not in any way infer "A CALCULATED CALENDAR"!

I say this because the supporters of the Jewish calendar LOVE to draw totally unwarranted conclusions from the fact that some years had 13 months as long ago as the time of Ezekiel. Big deal! A calendar with 13 months in some years does NOT even remotely prove that the present Jewish calendar had to be "it"! Nor does it prove that "calculations" had to be employed to allow some years to have 13 months.

Note also that as late as 1200 AD the Jewish scholar of the calendar, Maimonides, rejected the idea that "calculation preceded observation"! Maimonides understood that the Jewish calendar was FIRST based on "observation", with reliable witnesses reporting having seen the new crescent; and that "calculation" was only employed LATER! So people will quote Saadia to claim that calculation supposedly preceded observation, but they will not tell you that Maimonides disagreed with Saadia, as did also other "NOTABLE Rabbanites"!

Jewish scholars of the calendar today are agreed in rejecting Saadia's theory and in accepting Maimonides' statements that "observation preceded calculation", as witnessed by the various quotations at which we are looking.

The above quotations clearly expose the astronomical flaws in the Jewish calendar, though you in all likelihood already understood this, didn't you? After all, these facts are well known.

Let's now look at some more quotations to show WHAT THE JEWS THEMSELVES SAY ABOUT THEIR CALENDAR. They have no axe to grind. If anything, you might expect the Jews to attempt to hide, or at least to justify, the weaknesses inherent in their calendar. And there are indeed a very few instances of this being the case. But when the Jews themselves openly acknowledge certain things about their calendar and about the meanings of Hebrew words that impact on the calendar, then there is no reason to not accept their comments as valid. Here are some more quotations.

QUOTATIONS FROM JEWISH SCHOLARS

To preface the first quotation, let me ask a question:

WHO IS GOING TO KNOW BETTER WHAT THE HISTORY OF THE JEWISH CALENDAR IS: THE JEWS THEMSELVES, OR MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH OF GOD WHO HAVE THE EXPLICIT GOAL OF WANTING TO CLAIM "GOD'S AUTHORITY" FOR THIS JEWISH CALENDAR?

In other words, can we expect the Jews to KNOW what the history of their own calendar is, or are people in the Church of God, who knew NOTHING AT ALL about any "Jewish" calendar before coming into the Church, likely to have a better and more correct understanding of the Jewish calendar?

I mean, it is not as if people in the Church of God can say: "THIS SCRIPTURE OR THAT SCRIPTURE defines the present Jewish calendar for us". The information ABOUT the calendar is not recorded in the Bible. But THE JEWS are the ones who have preserved their calendar. Yet there are people in the Church of God today who will argue with what the Jews themselves say about their own calendar. Such disagreements with the people who have actually preserved the knowledge of what is being argued about is clear evidence of vested interests and unsubstantiated bias.

So now let me give you a rather lengthy quotation from THE UNIVERSAL JEWISH ENCYCLOPEDIA, VOLUME 2, ARTICLE "CALENDAR", starting on page 630. It was published in the USA, and the copyright date is 1939. This was written by JEWS!

START OF QUOTATION:

"Some time toward the end of the period of the Kings there was A REFORMATION OF THE ISRAELITE CALENDAR. The names of the months were dropped, and ordinal numerals were substituted (first, second, third month, etc.) ... This method of reckoning appears in Kings, Jeremiah and the later books of the Bible. Kings, whenever it gives the old name of the month, carefully adds the equivalent month in its own calendar; thus Ziv is indicated as the second month (6:1).

"NOTHING FURTHER IS KNOWN OF THE CALENDAR UNTIL TOWARDS THE END OF THE PERIOD OF THE SECOND TEMPLE. By that time the months had again received names, the same names that have survived to the present day. These names are BABYLONIAN and were probably adopted shortly after the Babylonian Exile. They are Tishri ... etc. ...

"LITTLE IS KNOWN OF THE PROCEDURE OF DETERMINING THE CALENDAR up to the 2nd cent. C.E. [i.e. A.D.], WHEN A DESCRIPTION IS GIVEN OF THE TRADITIONAL PRACTICE. It ran as follows: On the thirtieth day of the month a council would meet to receive the testimony of witnesses that they had seen the new moon. If two trustworthy witnesses had made deposition to that effect on that day, the council proclaimed a new month to begin on that day, that is, the day on which the testimony was given became the first day of the new month instead of the thirtieth day of the old month. If no witnesses appeared, however, the new moon was considered as beginning on the day following the thirtieth. Once the council had proclaimed the new month, announcement was made far and wide by means of fire signals to inform the communities outside of Jerusalem. ...

"This method of determining the new moon had its defects. During certain periods of the year continuous rainfall might prevent the new moon from being seen at all until several days after the month should have begun. Witnesses might be overzealous and imagine they had seen the new moon too soon; or malicious witnesses might purposely give false testimony. The leaders of the community, therefore, had to study astronomy, in order to ascertain by means of calculation when the new moon should appear, and thus check up on the testimony of witnesses. AN EARLY RULE WAS that a year could not have less than four or more than eight months of thirty days each. Rabban Gamaliel II (2nd cent. C.E.) would test the witnesses by showing them pictures of the various phases of the moon and asking them which appearance they had seen. Disputes arose between those who depended on witnesses and those who relied on calculation; a noted instance of such a dispute between Gamaliel and Joshua is recorded in the Mishnah (R.H. 2:8 9). EVENTUALLY THE CALENDAR WAS DETERMINED ENTIRELY ON THE BASIS OF ASTRONOMICAL CALCULATIONS, and the hearing of the evidence of witnesses was merely retained to encourage individuals to perform their religious duties.

"ASTRONOMIC LEARNING was also applied in determining leap years. In 432 B.C.E. [i.e. B.C.] the Athenian astronomer Meton had reformed the Athenian calendar on the basis of a cycle of nineteen years, consisting of 235 lunar months, adding one month seven times in the cycle to take care of the excess (235 is 7 more than 19 times 12). THIS CALENDAR WAS WIDELY ADOPTED, AND WAS EVENTUALLY FOLLOWED BY THE JEWISH TEACHERS, who made seven out of every group of nineteen years leap years (embolismic years) of thirteen months.

"UP TO THE MIDDLE OF THE 4TH CENT. C.E. [i.e. A.D.] the Palestinian patriarchate retained the prerogative of determining the calendar, and guarded the secrets of its calculation against the attempts of the rapidly advancing communities in Babylonia to have a voice in its determination. It was not until after Christianity had become dominant in the Roman Empire, and the Christian rulers forbade the Jewish religious leadership to proclaim leap years or to communicate with the Jews outside of the empire, that it was determined to abandon the method of official proclamation of months and years AND TO FIX THE CALENDAR IN PERMANENT FORM. The patriarch Hillel II, in 359, decided to publish the rules for the calculation of the calendar, so that all Jews everywhere might be able to determine it for themselves and to observe the festivals on the same day. FROM THAT TIME ON THE JEWISH CALENDAR HAS BEEN STABILIZED." (pages 631-632, my emphasis throughout)

END OF QUOTATION.

Now let's examine this quotation more closely.

Here we have the testimony of JEWS about their own calendar. And then we also have CHRISTIANS, members of God's Church, who disagree with this testimony of the Jews and think that THEY KNOW BETTER than the Jews what the true history of the present Jewish calendar is. On what basis do they "know better than the Jews" what the history of the Jewish calendar is?

That's very simple!

If they accepted this evidence of the Jews themselves, then they would OBVIOUSLY not be able to claim God's approval for, let alone God's inspiration of, the present Jewish calendar. THEREFORE THEY MUST ON PRINCIPLE DISAGREE WITH THE ABOVE JEWISH EVIDENCE! They must find a way to DISCREDIT THAT EVIDENCE! They don't want to look at the evidence Jewish authorities like this present; it is immaterial to them what that evidence actually reveals; it is simply a matter of PRINCIPLE to reject Jewish evidence about the Jewish calendar that contradicts their beliefs.

So let's note the following points about the above quotation:

1) The information presented in this quotation is based on HISTORICAL RECORDS that have been preserved by the Jews. Christians, who dogmatically support the present Jewish calendar, reject this historical evidence by DRAWING UNJUSTIFIED CONCLUSIONS FROM CERTAIN SCRIPTURAL STATEMENTS.

In other words, they JUSTIFY rejecting the historical records as "false" because they themselves have drawn some conclusions from some biblical statements, where those conclusions are in conflict with the historical records. So they assert that their questionable deductions must be right, and the historical records must obviously be wrong. They use reasoning to do away with historical records.

2) But they cannot show any kind of MOTIVE as to why the Jews would possibly have historical records that are wrong. There is no possible gain in any way for the Jews to have falsified their historical records about the calendar.

3) This Jewish testimony makes absolutely clear, beyond any shadow of doubt, that the Jews do NOT ATTRIBUTE THEIR CALENDAR TO GOD! God does not in any way feature in this Jewish history of the calendar. This calendar actually has nothing to do with God! And the Jews themselves do not believe that their calendar has anything to do with "the oracles of God". Why is it that all those who try to appeal to "the oracles of God" NEVER tell their followers that the Jews themselves VERY CLEARLY do not include the calendar in "the oracles" they have preserved? Are the Jews mixed up about what "oracles" have been preserved by them?

4) The quotation acknowledges that their calendar underwent CHANGES in the course of their history. That's what they mean by "a reformation of the calendar".

5) The Jews freely acknowledge that they got the idea of "19-year cycles" (remember, such "19-year cycles" are only half as wrong as the Julian calendar!) from the Greek astronomer Meton. Before they accepted this concept of "19-year cycles" from the Greeks, they OBVIOUSLY did not employ A CALCULATED 19-YEAR CYCLE, even when in practical terms every year had started on the same day, in relation to the spring equinox, as the year 19 years previously had started (though sometimes there is a one day shift). [It would have been extremely difficult to recognize this 19-year pattern because there was no absolute calendar in existence by which these repeating patterns could have been measured. It

required careful study by an astronomer to detect this pattern.]

This Jewish testimony acknowledges that they themselves had NEVER RECOGNIZED THIS PATTERN until it was pointed out by Meton. Therefore the Jews CERTAINLY could not have used a calculated calendar based on "19-year cycles" before the time of the Greek astronomer Meton! And no Jewish astronomer has made such a claim for the supposed existence of "19-year cycles" before the time of Meton.

Every Jewish testimony today freely acknowledges that they got the idea of "19-year cycles" from the Greek astronomer Meton. It is IMPOSSIBLE for the Jews to have employed a calculated calendar based on "19-year cycles" BEFORE 432 BC! Any arguments based on specific years before 432 BC (e.g. 538 BC, 515 BC, etc.) that attempt to prove the existence of a calculated calendar based on "19-year cycles" are UTTER FOOLISHNESS! And EVERY Jewish astronomer will readily acknowledge this!

6) The Jews admit THE FACT that ... "little is known of the procedure of determining the calendar up to the 2nd cent. C.E. [i.e. A.D.]". WHY do they say this? Because there is NO EVIDENCE for a calculated calendar during that period! Yet there are people in God's Church, those who on principle dogmatically endorse the Jewish calendar, who make BOLD ASSERTIONS about what the Jewish calendar during that period supposedly was! Yet they have no evidence to support their claims; THE JEWS would be the only ones to have that evidence about THEIR calendar. But the Jews freely admit a lack of any real evidence.

7) The above statement covers THE ENTIRE PERIOD OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH, going into the "2nd century A.D.". This statement shows there is not one shred of evidence for "a calculated calendar" during the time of the early N.T. Church! And so dogmatic supporters of the Jewish calendar have come up with UTTERLY ABSURD arguments about the supposed year of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ somehow "PROVING" that the present calculated Jewish calendar must have been in use. That kind of reasoning is totally ridiculous! It is because people have NO REAL EVIDENCE to support their position that they resort to ridiculous reasoning about "the year of the crucifixion". The fact is that the year of the crucifixion proves NOTHING AT ALL, as far as the calendar is concerned. The conclusions that are drawn from such reasoning are TOTALLY UNJUSTIFIED! [I will comment some more on this later.]

8) The quotation admits that "the traditional practice" depended on reliable witnesses having seen the new moon. THIS REFERS TO THE ENTIRE PERIOD OF THE EARLY NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH! The "dispute" recorded in the Mishnah took place in the 2nd century AD. It was only then that calculations came to gradually replace reliable witnesses.

Now consider:

IF calculations had been the final authority for determining the calendar ALL ALONG, for the past 100 years and more, then it would have been IMPOSSIBLE TO HAVE HAD THIS DISPUTE THAT IS RECORDED IN THE MISHNAH! The very fact that two Jewish leaders in the 2nd century AD had a "dispute" over whether to rely on calculations or whether to rely on witnesses, shows quite clearly that PREVIOUSLY the start of each month had indeed been determined by "witnesses" and not by calculations.

9) So throughout the 1st century AD the present calculated Jewish calendar was obviously NOT being used by the Jews!

10) The quotation shows that the present Jewish calendar has only been "stabilized" since the time of Hillel II. The whole quotation makes VERY CLEAR that the Jews themselves do NOT believe that their

calendar in its present form goes back to the 1st century AD, let alone to the 5th century BC, to the time of Ezra.

So on what authority can some people in God's Church POSSIBLY have a better knowledge of the history of the Jewish calendar than the Jews themselves? By making INFERENCES from a biblical statement here or there, or by making INFERENCES from the supposed year of the crucifixion, or the supposed year of any other historical event?

Understand that no amount of INFERENCES from "the new moon" at the time of David and Jonathan and King Saul can do away with THE HISTORICAL FACTS that during the entire 1st century AD the Jews pronounced the start of each new month based on the reports of reliable eye witnesses. No amount of reasoning about King Saul having some kind of festive meal at the new moon can remove THE FACT that at the time of the early NT Church the Jews proclaimed the start of each month by relying on eye witnesses. The early NT Church could not possibly have used the present calculated calendar, because Jewish evidence makes clear that it was not yet being used by the Jews.

Now let's look at another quotation from a Jewish author.

"STUDIES IN HEBREW ASTRONOMY AND MATHEMATICS" by SOLOMON GANDZ. The INTRODUCTION to this book is written by SHLOMO STERNBERG. It was published in 1970 in New York by KTAV Publishing House Inc. Here are some quotations from the lengthy Introduction by Shlomo Sternberg.

"The second Hillel and his court ENACTED THE FIXED CALENDAR which is still enforced today. The only problem of a legal nature which we have in regard to this calendar, is a theoretical one, namely, on what basis was the enactment of this calendar valid? It is a generally accepted legal principle that the central court, being representative of the people, had the right to determine the years, months, and therefore the festivals. The question is whether the court is empowered to determine the months and years far into the future or not. ACCORDING TO THE OPINION OF MAIMONIDES, the legal basis of the court's power is not so much judicial or legislative as it is that the court acts as the instrument representing the community as a whole. AS SUCH, IT IS NOT EMPOWERED TO ENACT CALENDRIAL DECISIONS INTO THE FUTURE. Our current calendar is based legally on the fact that all Jewish residents of Israel, in fact, follow this calendar in practice." (pages XXV-XXVI)

My comments on this quotation:

This Jewish author here admits that Hillel II did NOT have the right to make calendrical decisions into the future! The only reason Hillel's calendar is still "legal" for use by the Jews is BECAUSE the Jewish residents of Israel have chosen to use it, and not because anything Hillel II decided is still binding on them today.

Note also the following sentence: "It is a generally accepted legal principle that the central court, being representative of the people, had the right to determine the years, months, and therefore the festivals". Do you realize what this is saying? GOD HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THIS CALENDAR! THE COURT, composed of Pharisees, has the right (supposedly!) to determine when the months and the years are to start. This is not the same as saying that the court was BOUND to stick to the REAL new moons, which would have given the court NO POWERS AT ALL about deciding when the festivals are to be observed; they would have had no choice of any kind but to abide by the real new moons.

Understand that the statement "it is generally accepted legal principle that the court can determine when the festivals are to be kept" is a very clear allusion to ascribing to the court the right to POSTPONE THE FESTIVALS AWAY FROM "INCONVENIENT" DAYS!

After referring to the "Maimonides Code", where chapters six through nine are devoted to the structure and working details of the calendar, Shlomo Sternberg continues to say:

"THE ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS ARE the nineteen year cycle, the mean motion of the moon, and the various regulations arranged TO POSTPONE THE NEW YEAR SHOULD IT OCCUR ON AN INCONVENIENT DAY." (page XXVI)

My comments:

It is THE JEWS THEMSELVES who freely acknowledge that the purpose of the postponement rules is to avoid "INCONVENIENT DAYS"! The postponements have nothing to do with astronomy! Sternberg had already alluded to this matter of postponing away from inconvenient days in the previous statement, and here he has now stated it very openly.

Let's continue with Shlomo Sternberg's explanation. He then discusses the three postponement rules. He then states:

"As to rule 1 the Babylonian Talmud (R.H. 20a and Succah 54b) mentions that THE CALENDAR IS TO BE ADJUSTED SO AS TO AVOID Yom Kippur falling on Friday or Sunday BECAUSE OF THE INCONVENIENCE THIS MIGHT CAUSE. This means that Rosh Hashana must not fall on Wednesday or Friday. The Jerusalem Talmud (Succah Ch. IV, H.I.) also mentions that THE CALENDAR MUST BE ADJUSTED so that the seventh day of Succoth does not fall on the Sabbath. Thus Rosh Hashana may not fall on Sunday. (The implication from the Babylonian Talmud Rosh Hashana 20a is that the Babylonian Talmud did not have any such rule.) R. Nissim, in his commentary to Alfasi, Succah noticed this discrepancy and observed that 'WHOEVER FORMULATED OUR FIXED CALENDAR chose to follow the Jerusalem rather than the Babylonian Talmud in this matter.' IN ANY EVENT, the source we have in the Talmud for rule 1 INDICATES A UTILITARIAN REASON FOR THE RULE." (pages XXVII-XXVIII)

My comments:

Keep in mind that this was written by AN ASTRONOMER, an authority on everything about the calendar that could POSSIBLY have some kind of "astronomical justification"! Yet here we have a Jewish scholar who freely acknowledges that the postponement rules serve A UTILITARIAN REASON ... TO AVOID INCONVENIENT DAYS! And this agrees with information found in the Talmud. The postponements have nothing to do with astronomical reasons.

So note very carefully:

Here we have what may well be the most authoritative work on "HEBREW ASTRONOMY AND MATHEMATICS", and the author tells us VERY PLAINLY that the postponement rules serve no other purpose than to avoid INCONVENIENT days. He tells us VERY PLAINLY that these rules have A UTILITARIAN REASON! Here is a TOP Jewish astronomer and an expert on the Jewish calendar, and he tells us that the postponement rules DO NOT HAVE ANY KIND OF ASTRONOMICAL JUSTIFICATION WHATSOEVER!

And then we have people in God's Church who are neither astronomers nor great authorities on the Jewish calendar, and THEY BOLDLY CLAIM that the postponement rules serve an astronomical purpose. Such people are obviously claiming the diametric opposite of what a top Jewish astronomer is saying. Such people TOTALLY IGNORE all the facts of astronomy of which the Jewish astronomer is so completely aware, and instead try to reason from a few Scriptures here or there, with the intention of claiming the opposite of the facts that astronomy can so clearly demonstrate.

I think it is utterly pathetic when some people in the Church attempt to use a few Scriptures here or there (which Scriptures have nothing at all to do with the conclusions such people attempt to extract from those Scriptures!) in order to argue against the clearly demonstrable facts of astronomy, as if their illogical deductions from those Scriptures can somehow negate the astronomical realities that apply to the heavens right now.

Let's continue the quotation.

"Maimonides, in Chapter VII, H. 7 gives a different explanation ... APPARENTLY, Maimonides meant that there are astronomical reasons for postponing the New Moon Day in the Fall." (page XXVIII)

My comments:

It is true that Maimonides apparently attempted to find astronomical justifications for the postponement rules. BUT MAIMONIDES, WHO DIED ALMOST 800 YEARS AGO, IN 1204 A.D., WAS CLEARLY WRONG!!

Simply because Maimonides CLAIMED astronomical justifications for the postponement rules, that doesn't make his claim correct! Modern astronomical data in fact clearly contradicts Maimonides' claim in this regard. COUNTLESS EXAMPLES can be cited to prove Maimonides' claim to be false! And Shlomo Sternberg tacitly acknowledges this in the way he has presented Maimonides' comments in this regard, without wanting to be seen as being too critical of someone who is as highly regarded amongst the Jews as Moses Maimonides.

Notice how the astronomer Sternberg said: "APPARENTLY Maimonides meant that there are astronomical reasons ..."! Sternberg, himself a highly qualified astronomer, CLEARLY did not align himself with Maimonides' line of reasoning! Had Sternberg himself agreed with Maimonides on this point, then Sternberg would have worded this whole comment completely differently. And he would most certainly not have said that the postponement rules "IN ANY EVENT indicate a utilitarian reason". The fact is that Sternberg KNEW FULL WELL that there is no astronomical justification of any kind for the postponement rules, and he simply presented Maimonides' comment in a diplomatic way without voicing any direct criticism, in deference to Maimonides' stature in the Jewish community.

Furthermore, anyone who appeals to Maimonides' claims regarding the postponement rules needs to acknowledge that the same Maimonides ALSO stated that "observation preceded calculation"!

Even though Maimonides tried to provide an astronomical justification for the postponement rules, he certainly did NOT mean to imply that those rules already existed when the calendar was still determined based on observation. The fact that Maimonides believed that observation preceded calculation puts his comments about the postponement rules into the correct perspective, meaning that Maimonides did not claim "great antiquity" for either the postponement rules or for the whole calculated calendar.

Let's look at one more quotation from Shlomo Sternberg.

"Historical evidence seems to indicate that THE TIME IS SET IN BABYLONIA and NOT AT JERUSALEM. In any event, IT COMES AS NO SURPRISE THAT THE MEAN TIME OF CONJUNCTION GIVEN BY MAIMONIDES IN THE ASTRONOMICAL SECTION OF HIS 'LAWS OF SANCTIFICATION OF THE NEW MOON' DIFFERS BY OVER AN HOUR FROM THE MOLAD AS COMPUTED FROM THE CALENDRIAL RULES." (page XXIX)

There are several things to notice from this quotation:

1) The Jewish molad calculations are not even based on "Jerusalem time". Jewish astronomers themselves admit that the molad is based on BABYLON TIME! Isn't there something about us "coming out of Babylon" somewhere in the Bible? How can people in God's Church today POSSIBLY "know better" than this JEWISH ASTRONOMER on what time zone the molad calculations are based?

2) 800 years ago Maimonides didn't even use the identical data that is used today for calculating the Jewish calendar. We know that he used some data that is different from the data which is used today, BECAUSE he arrived at different times for the supposed conjunctions. So again there is no unbroken continuity in the use of the data used by the Jews to determine their calendar! Something CHANGED in the calculations between 1200 AD and today!

3) Sternberg's statement also makes quite clear that the molad calculations are supposed to arrive at the mean (or average) time of "CONJUNCTION". But when the actual conjunction and the molad calculations FREQUENTLY end up being on DIFFERENT DAYS, then it OBVIOUSLY shows that using averages is a BAD thing when it comes to the calendar. The molad calculations produce results that fluctuate from being 4 hours before the actual conjunction to being over 15 hours after the actual conjunction.

The molad calculations are FLAWED, pure and simple, because the time of AVERAGE conjunctions produces FALSE RESULTS!

A 19 hour fluctuation of the Jewish molads (i.e. from 4 hours before the real conjunction to 15 hours after the real conjunction) ensures that now and then the molad actually gets to be fairly close to the real conjunction. But THAT is not what a correct calendar should be like! That's not something for which God shows unqualified approval!

A 15 hour error in astronomical calculations is simply not acceptable. Let's now examine some quotations from another Jewish author.

"THE COMPREHENSIVE HEBREW CALENDAR, ITS STRUCTURE, HISTORY, AND ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF CORRESPONDING DATES" by Arthur Spier. This was published in 1952 in New York by Behrman House Inc. Publishers. Let's look at our first quotation from this author.

"Furthermore, the lunar months must always correspond to the seasons of the year which are governed by the sun. THE MONTH OF NISAN with the Passover Festival, for instance, MUST OCCUR IN THE SPRING and THE MONTH OF TISHRI with the harvest festival Succoth IN FALL." (page 1)

My comments:

Arthur Spier, another highly qualified Jewish astronomer, acknowledges that "the month of Nisan MUST occur in the spring". This means it must NOT occur in the winter! But spring only starts on March 21st, and the first 20 days of the month of March are still a part of winter! So the month of Nisan must not start before March 21st.

Let's continue with Spier's comments.

"In the early times of our history the solution was found by the following practical procedure: The beginnings of the months were determined BY DIRECT OBSERVATION OF THE MOON. The new months were sanctified and their beginnings announced by the Sanhedrin, the Supreme Court in Jerusalem, AFTER WITNESSES HAD TESTIFIED that they had seen the new crescent and after their testimony had been thoroughly examined, confirmed by calculation and duly accepted." (page 1)

My comments:

Again, we see that the Jewish calendar was originally determined by visual observations, and not by calculations. Spier has condensed a long period of history into this statement, and his comment "confirmed by calculation" only applies from the 2nd century AD onwards, as we saw in the earlier quotation from The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia. There is no evidence that before then calculations were used "to confirm" visual observation.

Continuing to quote from Spier's book:

"A special committee of the Sanhedrin, with its president as chairman, had the mandate to regulate and balance the solar with the lunar years. This so called Calendar Council (Sod Haibbur) calculated the beginnings of the seasons (Tekufoth) on the basis of astronomical figures which had been handed down as a tradition of old. Whenever, after two or three years, the annual excess of 11 days had accumulated to approximately 30 days, a thirteenth month Adar II was inserted before Nisan in order to assure that Nisan and Passover would occur in Spring and not retrogress toward winter. However, the astronomical calculation was not the only basis for intercalation of a thirteenth month. The delay of the actual arrival of spring was another decisive factor. The Talmudic sources report that the Council intercalated a year when THE BARLEY IN THE FIELDS had not yet ripened, when the fruit on the trees had not grown properly, when the winter rains had not stopped, when the roads for Passover pilgrims had not dried up, and when the young pigeons had not become fledged. The Council on intercalation considered the astronomical facts TOGETHER WITH THE RELIGIOUS REQUIREMENTS OF PASSOVER AND THE NATURAL CONDITIONS OF THE COUNTRY.

THIS METHOD OF OBSERVATION AND INTERCALATION was in use throughout the period of the second temple (516 B.C.E.- 70 C.E.), AND ABOUT THREE CENTURIES AFTER ITS DESTRUCTION, as long as there was an independent Sanhedrin. In the fourth century, however, ... the patriarch Hillel II took an extraordinary step ... he made public the system of calendar calculation which up to then had been a closely guarded secret." (pages 1-2)

My comments:

Spier is showing that prior to Hillel II the Jewish calendar did NOT have a fixed sequence of leap years. He shows that leap years were intercalated as needed in order to meet specific requirements. Spier indicates that this sequence of leap years was FLEXIBLE! It was important to keep not only the Passover, but the whole month of Nisan in the spring. And according to Spier it wasn't enough for Nisan to be just barely in the spring; IF the local weather conditions were such that "spring-like conditions" had not yet set in, THEN they would still intercalate and start the new year another new moon later. The sequence of leap years was under the control of the Sanhedrin; it was not that the Sanhedrin was compelled to stick to a sequence of leap years that was imposed upon them.

Spier's comment that this committee of the Sanhedrin "had THE MANDATE to regulate and balance the solar with the lunar years" makes quite clear that at that time the Jews could NOT possibly have followed a calculated calendar with a fixed sequence of leap years, because with a fixed calendar they would not have had "a mandate" of any kind, they would have been BOUND to adhere to that fixed sequence.

This quotation again shows that the current sequence of leap years, or, for that matter, any other FIXED sequence of leap years was NOT YET a part of the Jewish calendar. The sequence was flexible and under the authority of the Sanhedrin.

Notice the next quotation:

"In accordance with this system, Hillel II formally sanctified all months in advance, and intercalated all future leap years UNTIL SUCH A TIME AS A NEW, RECOGNIZED SANHEDRIN WOULD BE ESTABLISHED IN ISRAEL." (page 2)

My comments:

Spier understands Hillel's calendar to NOT have been A PERMANENT MEASURE. It would ONLY be in force UNTIL Israel would once again have a recognized Sanhedrin, which would then be able to decide for local conditions that might then be extant.

This quote from Spier should be viewed together with the closing paragraph of his book on page 227. Keep in mind that Spier was writing 50 years ago, in 1952, when the modern State of Israel was still only a fledgling nation, and it seems Spier had high hopes for this new nation of Israel.

He wrote:

"The rebirth of the state of Israel rekindles in us the hope that the new Sanhedrin, recognized by the whole people of Israel, will be established again in our time. IT WILL BE THE TASK OF THE SANHEDRIN TO MAKE A DECISION AS TO WHEN AND HOW THE SANCTIFIED CALENDAR OF HILLEL II IS TO BE MODIFIED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF ASTRONOMY AND THE TORAH." (page 227)

My comments:

Now let's ask ourselves a question:

WHY did Spier, a loyal Jewish scientist trained in astronomy and in mathematics, make this statement? He made this statement BECAUSE HE KNEW that the present Jewish calendar is NOT "in complete harmony with astronomical realities"! He made this statement BECAUSE HE KNEW that the Jewish calendar is IN NEED OF MODIFICATION! That is why Spier said: "how the calendar IS TO BE MODIFIED", rather than saying "to see IF it perhaps needs to be modified"!

Spier could see that there are certain REQUIREMENTS IN THE TORAH that are not being met by the current Jewish calendar, necessitating that some decisions be made. Let's keep in mind that Spier was a Jew who was LOYAL to his people and to the traditions of his people. He DEFENDED those features of the calendar he felt he could defend. In a footnote following his explanation of the postponement rules ("Dehiyth " in Hebrew) he wrote the following:

"NOTE: In more than 60% of all years Rosh Hashanah does not occur on the day of the Molad but is postponed according to one of the Dehiyth. Therefore the Dehiyth are actually not the exceptions to the rule BUT THE RULE.

"It is obviously NOT the intention of the calendar calculation to establish Rosh Hashanah and the beginnings of the months ON THE DAY OF THE CONJUNCTION. IT WOULD RATHER APPEAR that the beginnings of the years and the months are generally adjusted to the days on which the Sanhedrin would have sanctified them ON THE BASIS OF OBSERVATION OF THE NEW CRESCENT." (page 219)

My comments:

Here we see Spier attempting to justify the postponement rules as having some astronomical significance. HOWEVER, SPIER IS VERY CLEARLY WRONG WITH THIS JUSTIFICATION!

For a start, on the approximately 40% of times when "Rosh Hashanah" DOES fall on the day of the molad, it is NEVER the day of first visibility of the new crescent! This is because the new crescent will ONLY be visible immediately AFTER SUNSET. And that happens to always be the start of a new day!

Furthermore, in the remaining 60% of cases, when "Rosh Hashanah" is postponed to one or two days after the molad, there will also be a considerable number of cases when the new crescent will NOT be visible, or when it was ALREADY visible the previous evening, simply because the molad errs from the real conjunction by anything from 4 hours too early to 15 hours too late.

THE FACTS ARE:

In actual practice "Rosh Hashanah" will be the day of first visibility of the new crescent LESS THAN 50% of the time! And further, "Rosh Hashanah" will also be the same day as the actual real conjunction FAR LESS THAN 50% of the time! In other words, the Jewish determination of "Rosh Hashanah" is neither fish nor fowl; it is nothing more than a bird with scales that cannot fly; it is ONLY OCCASIONALLY the day of the actual conjunction, and ONLY OCCASIONALLY the day of first visibility of the new crescent in Jerusalem. And at times it is neither one. There is no consistency of any kind for the one option or the other.

In this regard the other Jewish authors we have looked at were more open and honest, in freely admitting that the postponement rules are for the purpose of avoiding INCONVENIENT days. Spier's comments here clearly have the motive of providing some kind of justification for the postponement rules, a justification that is not upheld by other Jewish authors, and it is certainly not upheld by the facts of astronomy.

Let's now examine another quotation from Arthur Spier.

"G. THE SEASONS: TEKUFOTH

18. With the introduction of the permanent calendar [i.e. by Hillel II], the solar and lunar years have been adjusted by a calculation which guarantees the coincidence of the lunar months with the seasons AS REQUIRED BY THE LAW. Therefore the independent computation of the beginnings of THE FOUR SEASONS, THE TEKUFOTH, has lost its importance. Nevertheless, in all our annual calendars we find the dates of the four Tekufoth listed as:

Tekufath Tishri (FALL EQUINOX)

Tekufath Tebeth (WINTER SOLSTICE)

Tekufath Nisan (SPRING EQUINOX)

Tekufath Tammuz (SUMMER SOLSTICE)" (page 223)

My comments:

Here Spier freely admits that "tekufah" refers to the two solstices and the two equinoxes, and also to the four seasons that start on those four specific days.

This was written 50 years ago. At that point NOBODY in the Church of God grasped the significance of the implications of the correct meaning of the word "tekufah" (or its plural "tekufoth"). NOBODY in the Church of God at that time understood the impact the word "tekufah", as used in Exodus 34:22, has on the Jewish calendar. Therefore NOBODY in the Church of God at that time considered challenging the

meaning the Jews ascribe to the Hebrew word "tekufah". It was accepted that the Jews understood quite well what the Hebrew word "tekufah" means.

It was still accepted as late as 1981, when Dr. Hoeh in his calendar article in the April 1981 GN wrote: "It (the word 'tequfah') is used SPECIFICALLY FOR THE EQUINOXES OR SOLSTICES" (page 29), and bear in mind that Dr. Hoeh was actually SUPPORTING AND DEFENDING the present Jewish calendar in that article!

But that all changed when about six years ago I started rubbing people's noses in Exodus 34:22! SUDDENLY a lot of people started to recognize the far reaching consequences of the meaning of this little word "tekufah". Suddenly it dawned on people that IF the Jewish definition of the word "tekufah" is indeed correct, THEN THE PRESENT JEWISH CALENDAR MUST BE THROWN OUT OF THE WINDOW!

And THEREFORE there has been a frantic scramble to discredit TWO things: firstly, there has been an attempt to discredit the meaning the Jews have so openly stated for the word "tekufah"; and secondly, there has been an attempt to claim that there are NOT four seasons in the year, but supposedly only two seasons. Both these attacks stem from the same motivation, TO NEGATE EXODUS 34:22 FROM HAVING ANY POSSIBLE IMPACT ON THE CALENDAR!

Now here, in the above quotation, we have a JEWISH author who freely tells us that the word "tekufah" means "season of the year". He shows that "tekufah" is linked to FOUR DAYS IN THE YEAR, the two equinoxes and the two solstices. This is how the Jews have ALWAYS understood the word "tekufah". They have always understood that those four days in the year each signal the start of one of the four seasons. Many other Jewish authors give exactly the same meaning for "tekufah".

THE JEWS KNOW VERY CLEARLY WHAT "TEKUPAH" MEANS!

Three years ago I wrote a 15 page article about "The Meaning of Tekufah", in which I presented 12 quotations from the Jewish Talmud plus a quotation from the Encyclopedia Judaica. Perhaps I should just present the one quotation from the Encyclopedia Judaica at this point, because it clearly sums up the meaning of "tekufah".

This is from volume 5, page 46, the article "CALENDAR". It was published in 1971.

"As stated, THE FOUR SEASONS in the Jewish year ARE CALLED TEKUFOT. More accurately, IT IS THE BEGINNING OF EACH OF THE FOUR SEASONS -- according to the common view, the mean beginning -- THAT IS NAMED TEKUPAH (literally "circuit", from "quph" related to "naqaph", "to go round")."

All these quotations make ABSOLUTELY CLEAR that the Hebrew word "tekufah" means two things: 1) It refers to 4 specific days in the year, the spring equinox, the summer solstice, the autumn equinox, and the winter solstice. 2) It refers to the 4 seasons that START on these 4 specific days: spring, summer, autumn, and winter. It refers specifically to THE BEGINNING PART of each of these 4 seasons.

It is equally clear that the word "tekufah" NEVER refers to a period of time that "straddles TWO seasons", such as a period that would include the last few days of winter and the first few days of spring, or a period that would include the last few days of summer and the first few days of autumn. That possibility is totally excluded by the fact that "tekufah" specifically refers to THE STARTING DATE of each of the four seasons.

The above quotation from Arthur Spier is simply one more source that confirms this meaning of

"tekufah".

Notice also that Arthur Spier stated that "THE LAW" requires the lunar months to coincide with specific seasons. This is also something that many of those who defend the Jewish calendar try to deny. The point is: the month Nisan MUST be IN the spring, for the rest of the year to be in the correct seasons. When people start Nisan IN THE WINTER, then certain "REQUIREMENTS OF THE LAW" are not being met! The Jewish astronomer Arthur Spier understood this.

Armed with these quotations regarding the ASTRONOMICAL FLAWS of the present Jewish calendar, and also all these quotations from JEWISH AUTHORS about the history and the facts about their own calendar, we are now ready to start carefully examining Mr. Franklin's premises. So now we'll get to Mr. Franklin's articles.

EXAMINING MR. FRANKLIN'S "TRUMPETS 2000 AD" ARTICLE

Let's start by looking at his "The Feast of Trumpets 2000 AD" article. In the opening paragraph of this article, on page 1, Mr. Franklin compares the molad of Tishri for 2000 with the time of the conjunction calculated by the U.S. Naval Observatory. He then writes:

"The Hebrew Calendar calculates the Molad of Tishri to occur at 13:17 JT, or 1:17 PM, on the afternoon of Thursday, September 28 " FIFTEEN HOURS AND TWENTY FOUR MINUTES AFTER THE CALCULATION OF THE U.S. NAVAL OBSERVATORY."

"As a result (of the Jewish postponement rules) the Feast of Trumpets is declared ALMOST 44 HOURS AFTER the U.S. Naval Observatory calculation of THE CONJUNCTION OF THE MOON."

He follows this statement by asking:

"IS THE HEBREW CALENDAR LEADING US AWAY FROM THE TRUE OBSERVANCE?"

My comments:

Here Mr. Franklin himself has given us all the information which clearly PROVES that the Jewish calendar is astronomically flawed! A flaw of over 15 hours is by no means even remotely a realistically useful "AVERAGE time of the conjunction". This statement all by itself already very clearly answers Mr. Franklin's own question, that the Jewish calendar is NOT IN COMPLETE HARMONY with the astronomical cycles! How can an error of over 15 hours represent being "in complete harmony" with astronomy?

Let's keep in mind the following:

THERE IS NO INDICATION ANYWHERE IN THE BIBLE THAT GOD EVER WANTED US TO WORK WITH "THE AVERAGE" NEW MOON, ANY MORE THAN GOD WANTS US TO KEEP "THE AVERAGE" SABBATH DAY!

I believe that it is utterly absurd to expect God's people to keep THE AVERAGE NEW MOON, when that "average" may be in error by over 15 hours! There is a vast difference between being "IN COMPLETE HARMONY" with astronomical facts, and using "AVERAGES" which incorporate errors of more than 15 hours.

To continue, Mr. Franklin then acknowledges that the Jewish calendar actually POSTPONED THIS

ALREADY LATE DATE! It was postponed to 44 hours after the real conjunction. Now first visibility of the new crescent is, according to Mr. Franklin's own statements, possible after "a minimum of 17.2 hours" have passed since the time of the conjunction (page 3 of the "Trumpets 2000" article). This means that FIRST VISIBILITY was theoretically possible in 2000 AD twenty six hours BEFORE the Jewish calendar appointed Day of Trumpets.

The new moon was VISIBLE a full day BEFORE the Jewish Day of Trumpets! Now IF the "MEAN conjunction", the "AVERAGE time of the conjunction", would turn out to consistently be WITHIN A FEW MINUTES of the correct conjunction, THEN it might perhaps be suitable for use in the calendar. But IF "the mean conjunction" involves an error of over 15 hours, thus an error that will often result in the wrong day being selected, THEN that can only tell us one thing about such "averages", and that is that God OBVIOUSLY never intended us to work with "averages" in determining the start of a year.

So Mr. Franklin has answered his own question: WITHOUT DOUBT the Hebrew calendar is leading us AWAY FROM THE OBSERVANCE OF THE TRUE NEW MOON! Without doubt it is leading us away from BOTH, the real new moon conjunction, and also from first visibility of the new crescent. And the information Mr. Franklin himself presented has conclusively proved this!

To keep the Day of Trumpets a full day AFTER first visibility of the new crescent is the same as keeping the Sabbath a full day late, keeping the Sabbath on Sunday! To keep the one a day late is just as bad as keeping the other a day late!

So we have now seen TWO separate and distinct astronomical errors:

FIRST: The "19-year cycle" has an unavoidable error of one full day for every 216 years. This error is related to the length of the solar year, and it is the same type of error as is inherent in the Julian calendar. This error is due to the fact that there is in reality no such thing as "19-year cycles"; they are only an approximation, even as the length of the Julian year is only an approximation.

SECOND: As Mr. Franklin himself has here demonstrated, the calculation of the molad, which is SUPPOSEDLY the conjunction, is at times in error by more than 15 hours.

These two errors are totally independent of each other. The first error accumulates at a slow but constant rate. The only way to deal with this problem is to NOT employ a rigid sequence of leap years over the course of every 19-year period. While a sequence will in practice be fixed for a period of time (e.g. a few centuries at a time), there MUST be the ability to alter this sequence as the start of the years begins to drift to later dates in relation to the seasons. Of course, relying on actual real new moon conjunctions means there is no need to be concerned with any 19-year sequences, though in practice a 19-year pattern will always be evident in the short term (i.e. over a few centuries).

The second error lies in the fact that the calculations employed in determining the conjunctions are flawed! Using the "average" time of a lunar month in an attempt to pinpoint any one specific new moon conjunction produces HIGHLY UNSATISFACTORY results. Astronomy today can supply us with the correct calculations. To err by over 15 hours in the calculation of the conjunction may have been acceptable 2150 years ago when a Greek astronomer came up with this calculation (though back then the Jews still relied on visual observation of the new moons and certainly did not use this calculation), but it is assuredly not acceptable today!

The only calculations that are acceptable for use in determining the new moons are those calculations that produce CONSISTENTLY correct results. Calculations that produce results embodying major flaws have never at any time had God's approval. NEVER!

Let's continue with Mr. Franklin's "Trumpets 2000" paper.

Having brought "THIS SIGNIFICANT LAPSE IN TIME BETWEEN THE ASTRONOMICAL CONJUNCTION AND THE DECLARATION OF TISHRI 1 IN THE YEAR 2000" (page 1) to our attention, Mr. Franklin then attempts to justify this large error as follows:

"The term Molad does not refer to the astronomical conjunction of the moon, as many have assumed. The determination of the new moon of Tishri is NOT based on the exact time of the conjunction, but on THE AVERAGE TIME OF THE CONJUNCTION, WHICH RARELY COINCIDES WITH THE ACTUAL CONJUNCTION. The purpose in calculating the Molad, or mean conjunction, is TO DETERMINE THE EARLIEST TIME THAT THE NEW CRESCENT MAY POSSIBLY BE SEEN FROM JERUSALEM." (page 2)

First of all, the term "molad" means "conjunction" and not "average conjunction". This becomes clear from a sub heading in the Encyclopedia Judaica article which reads: "THE TRUE AND THE MEAN MOLAD". Molad means the astronomical conjunction; and "true molad" means the true conjunction, while "mean molad" means the average conjunction. The use of the term "mean molad" in the Encyclopedia Judaica would be meaningless if "molad" by itself already meant "mean conjunction". [Tongue twister on the word "mean"?]

Obviously Mr. Franklin is forced to concede that the molad "rarely coincides with the actual conjunction", because it NEVER really "coincides" with the actual conjunction, though it does at times come fairly close. But an error of over 15 hours really leaves him no other option than to concede this fact.

Let's look at the last statement quoted above, that ... "THE PURPOSE in calculating the Molad, or mean conjunction, is to determine THE EARLIEST TIME that the new crescent may possibly BE SEEN FROM JERUSALEM".

THIS CLAIM IS COMPLETELY FALSE!

For that statement to be correct, the molad calculation should always arrive at a time NOT EARLIER THAN "17.2 hours after the actual conjunction", because, according to Mr. Franklin himself, that is the earliest possible time that the new crescent may be seen. However, the hit and miss results achieved by the molad calculations result in the molad at times being fixed as early as 4 hours BEFORE the conjunction! Mr. Franklin's claim here would imply that the new crescent will be visible in Jerusalem 4 hours BEFORE the conjunction even occurs. And that is simply ridiculous. And whether the molad calculations arrive at a time before or after the conjunction has no influence of any kind on the postponements! The Jewish Day of Trumpets for 2000 makes this quite clear. Furthermore, the molad is also never as late as 17.2 hours after the conjunction, which means that the molad ALWAYS gives a time that is AT LEAST TWO HOURS EARLIER THAN FIRST VISIBILITY in Jerusalem. Put another way, at the exact time of the molad it is NEVER possible to see the first crescent in Jerusalem ... the molad is always two or more hours before visibility is possible. Any postponements that are then applied obviously affect this situation, as in 2000.

But postponements are only applied based on which day of the week that molad happens to be. The relationship between the molad and the true conjunction IN NO WAY affects whether or not any postponements are to be applied.

The earliest day that the new crescent may be seen (ignoring unpredictable atmospheric conditions) is known as "the day of the phasis". Here is a quotation from the 1971 Encyclopedia Judaica, volume 5, article "CALENDAR", page 46, which takes the effects of postponements into account:

"Rosh Ha Shanah does, OF COURSE, occasionally occur BEFORE THE DAY OF THE PHASIS BEGINS or, in some extremely rare cases, ON THE DAY IMMEDIATELY AFTER (never later), with a rather wider range of the occurrence of the New Moon BEFORE AND AFTER THE DAY OF THE PHASIS IN OTHER MONTHS; such oscillation is inherent in a system, like the present Jewish calendar, based on mean values."

Several things we might note here:

- 1) This quotation, clearly written by a Jewish astronomer for the Encyclopedia Judaica, firmly proves Mr. Franklin's statement to be incorrect! Astronomers consistently disprove claims like this made by people in the Church.
- 2) Even Judaica uses the phrase "the PRESENT Jewish calendar", a phrase I almost always use, because it makes clear that this calendar does NOT go back to biblical times. Judaica's use of this phrase "the PRESENT Jewish calendar" is also a tacit acknowledgment of Arthur Spier's 50 year old view that at some point this calendar needs to be "modified".
- 3) Judaica freely admits that the Jewish determination of the start of the 7th month is not at all linked to "the earliest time that the new crescent may possibly be seen from Jerusalem" because sometimes they start the 7th month the day BEFORE first visibility of the new crescent, and at other times they start the 7th month the day AFTER first visibility. No consistency at all!
- 4) Judaica acknowledges that this inaccuracy for starting the months is EVEN WORSE for other months in the year. But we don't care about that because, apart from the 1st month, the other months don't affect any Holy Days, right? We don't really want to see that THE WHOLE YEAR in the Jewish calendar is miserably flawed and divorced from the astronomical realities, right? As the "Fiddler on the Roof" told us, all we are concerned with is "TRADITION"!
- 5) Judaica acknowledges that such errors are "INHERENT IN A SYSTEM LIKE THE PRESENT JEWISH CALENDAR"! They say that such errors are UNAVOIDABLE in a system based on "averages". This should make clear to us that any system based on averages, which averages result in such gross errors (sometimes getting one day too early, and sometimes getting one day too late, and only occasionally hitting jackpot), is simply not right before God! If we used this same system for Sabbath keeping, it would mean that sometimes we end up keeping Friday and sometimes we end up keeping Sunday.

So note very carefully!

IT IS THE PREMISE, THAT GOD WANTS US TO USE "AVERAGES" RATHER THAN REAL NEW MOONS, THAT IS FLAWED!

I have no intention of serving Mr. Franklin's "God of AVERAGES", observing AVERAGE new moons, and AVERAGE Sabbath days, and ON AVERAGE not stealing, and ON AVERAGE not committing adultery, and ON AVERAGE not taking God's name in vain, etc.! By those "average" standards multiple millions of people alive today would qualify for the designation "Christians". Mr. Franklin's "god" believes in playing games; He tells us: "I KNOW that the real new moon occurred yesterday and that the first new crescent is visible today, but I want you to call TOMORROW 'the day of the new moon'; and next month I want you to reverse this order; next month I want you to start the month on the day BEFORE the real new moon, because that is the only way we'll get THE AVERAGES to be correct. I am the God of averages."

I simply don't believe, as Mr. Franklin apparently does, that God wants us to play the averages. It may be

okay to do that with the stock market, but it is definitely "not okay" with the calendar. I believe that when God wants a month to start "on the new moon", then that "new moon" must be firmly linked to reality, be it to the REAL conjunction or be it to the REAL time of first visibility of the new crescent at some specific locality. And it must also be CONSISTENT, not fluctuating between the two like some yo-yo.

To me the Jewish calendar represents an insult to God's intelligence. Now notice another statement Mr. Franklin makes:

"When used as a noun, 'ghoh'desh' [more commonly written 'chodesh'] refers SPECIFICALLY TO A NEW MOON OR TO THE MONTH WHICH IT BEGINS." (page 2)

This statement is PERFECTLY correct! It is ABSOLUTELY correct! And it is a PERFECT illustration of how nouns that refer to the calendar work in the Hebrew language.

Notice very carefully how Mr. Franklin tells us how this Hebrew word "chodesh" is defined! This word refers to exactly TWO things: First it refers to one specific point in time, a specific event, that being "the new moon". Then, secondly, it refers to a period of time which starts with that specific event, that being a month which starts with that new moon.

Now note very carefully: "CHODESH" WOULD NEVER REFER TO A PERIOD OF TIME THAT COVERS A FEW DAYS BEFORE THE NEW MOON, THE TIME OF THE NEW MOON ITSELF, AND A FEW DAYS AFTER THAT NEW MOON!

"Chodesh" can NEVER refer to a period of time that straddles TWO different months! Can you understand this? This is because "chodesh" also refers to one precise point in time, the time of the new moon, and THEREFORE it can never include any time before that new moon occurred; it can only include time that follows that specific event (i.e. the new moon).

A word that refers to AN EVENT and also A PERIOD OF TIME can only reconcile these two meanings within that one word by having THE EVENT as the starting point for THE PERIOD OF TIME. That is quite clear from the word "chodesh".

The Hebrew noun "TEKUFAH" has the exact 100% identical qualities, as far as the meanings it conveys are concerned, as does the noun "CHODESH". The correct definition for the more commonly used word "chodesh" that Mr. Franklin has given us in his article gives us THE PRECEDENT for how we are to understand the less frequently used noun "tekufah", and HOW THE JEWS HAVE ALWAYS UNDERSTOOD IT!

Like the two meanings for "chodesh", so "tekufah" (to adapt Mr. Franklin's expression from above) ... "refers SPECIFICALLY to one of four days in the year (the two equinoxes and the two solstices) OR TO THE SEASONS WHICH BEGIN ON THESE FOUR DAYS". And, obviously, "tekufah" can never straddle parts of two different seasons.

This is a consistency in the Hebrew language.

Even as "chodesh" refers to one of twelve or thirteen specific days in the year, as well as to the months that start on each of those twelve or thirteen days, so also "tekufah" refers to one of four specific days in the year, as well as to the four seasons that start on those four days.

CONSISTENCY IN LINGUISTIC TERMS! CONSISTENCY WHICH THE JEWS READILY ACKNOWLEDGE!

Next Mr. Franklin tries to reason from "the new moon" in 1 Samuel chapter 20, in the days of David and King Saul. He tries to assert that "the only possible answer is that the new moon had been calculated in advance" (page 2). He makes some enormous unwarranted assumptions to infer that it was THE PRESENT JEWISH CALENDAR that "had been calculated in advance".

However, a couple of pages later he shoots himself in the foot, by stating:

"In the days of David and the early kings of Israel, calculating the New Moon Day was a simple task BECAUSE THE LUNAR CYCLE WAS MUCH MORE CONSTANT. But during the reign of Ahaz and the later reign of Hezekiah, THE HAND OF GOD DIRECTLY ALTERED THE ARRANGEMENT OF THE HEAVENLY BODIES. His divine intervention TWICE caused the position of the earth and the moon TO SHIFT in relation to the sun." (page 4)

Now I AGREE with what Mr. Franklin has said in the above quotation.

At some point between the time of David and the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians GOD ALTERED THE ARRANGEMENT OF THE HEAVENLY BODIES!

Yes, Mr. Franklin, you've got that one correct!

Now please tell me: What happens when you SHIFT the position of the earth in relation to the sun? Why, you OBVIOUSLY ALTER THE LENGTH OF THE YEAR! And what happens if you SHIFT the position of the moon? Why, you OBVIOUSLY ALTER THE LENGTH OF THE LUNAR MONTH! Do you in any way QUESTION these conclusions?

And when you ALTER the length of the lunar month and of the solar year, THEN THAT NECESSITATES A CHANGE IN THE CALENDAR!

Mr. Franklin has just given us the explanation WHY we see in the days of Noah a calendar where EVERY month has exactly 30 days, thus making a year of exactly 360 days. That explains WHY God consistently views years as having exactly 360 days, why 42 months are equal to 1260 days in the prophecies.

Mr. Franklin's explanation also shows WHY David and Jonathan could be so sure that "TOMORROW is the new moon". Anyone who was able to count up to 30 was able to predict with absolute certainty when the next new moon would be. It didn't involve any calculations, certainly NOT those employed by the present Jewish calendar; it only required the ability to count unerringly up to 30, not beyond the ability of most people, I presume?

Consider one other thought:

IF the calendar at that time was supposedly based on the present calculations of the Jewish calendar, THEN THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN NO WAY FOR DAVID AND JONATHAN TO HAVE KNOWN THAT "TOMORROW IS THE NEW MOON"!!

Remember that it was NOT COMMON KNOWLEDGE how these calculations worked. They were 1300 years after David's time STILL VERY STRICTLY GUARDED by the priests! And there is NO WAY that the priests would have told people IN ADVANCE when the next month was to start.

And we can say with absolute and total and complete certainty that DAVID AND JONATHAN themselves certainly had not performed the intricate arithmetic calculations of the present calendar; they didn't spend their spare time doing complicated arithmetic calculations. If the priests AT THAT TIME were the

custodians of the calendar calculations, THEN there is no way that Saul or Jonathan or David or any other non-priest would have had access to these calculations. And there is no way that the priests would have told people a day or more in advance when the next month was to start, when 1000 years later they still communicated the start of every new month to outlying communities by means of large fires lit on hilltops.

Get real!

On the other hand, IF at the time of Saul and David God had NOT YET "altered the arrangement of the heavenly bodies", and that therefore every year still consisted of exactly 12 months with exactly 30 days each, THEN it is very understandable how Saul and Jonathan and David could all predict with certainty the next new moon; these men were all intelligent enough to count up to 30 without getting confused.

Think the situation in 1 Samuel 20 through very carefully! IF the calendar at that time was being calculated by the intricate calculations that are employed today, and if this information was being preserved by the priests who carefully guarded and protected these calculations, THEN it would have been impossible for Jonathan and David themselves to accurately predict the next new moon, except for one specific set of circumstances.

The most likely explanation for 1 Samuel 20 is that at that point in time the knowledge of the calendar was COMMON KNOWLEDGE FOR ALL THE PEOPLE! In plain terms: David and Jonathan MUST have been speaking on the 30th day of the month, at a time when EVERY month was still exactly 30 days long. IF every month had exactly 30 days, then it was obvious that "tomorrow the new month starts".

And IF months did fluctuate between 29 days and 30 days in length, then the day on which they were speaking was also the 30th day of the month, and the previous evening had NOT been declared as "the new moon", AND THEREFORE both David and Jonathan could predict with certainty that "tomorrow is the new moon".

Let's keep in mind that EVERYBODY could predict when the new moon is in those situations where the 30th day had NOT been declared to be the new moon; in those situations THE NEXT DAY is always the new moon, because a month (except in our Roman calendar) is never 31 days long.

It is completely unjustified to read a knowledge of the present calculations for the Jewish molads into the account in 1 Samuel 20. And NONE of the Jewish astronomers, whose comments we have looked at, would ever dream of doing so.

This should ONCE AND FOR ALL SILENCE ANY RIDICULOUS APPEALS TO "THE NEW MOON IN DAVID'S TIME"!

So let's note the following points from Mr. Franklin's comments. He says:

- 1) The lunar cycle was MORE CONSTANT in previous times.
- 2) The position of the earth changed in relation to the sun.
- 3) The position of the moon changed in relation to the sun (presumably also in relation to the earth?).
- 4) The hand of God directly altered the arrangement of the heavenly bodies.

I suspect that Mr. Franklin's comments in this regard may very well be correct. The current fluctuating length of the lunar month that varies anywhere from around 29 days 7 hours to 29 days 19 hours is

hardly what God would call "VERY GOOD". And the current length of the solar year of 365 days 5 hours 48 minutes 46 seconds is likewise hardly something God would call "VERY GOOD" (see Genesis 1:31).

With the indication that in Noah's time 5 months equaled EXACTLY 150 days, it means that a year at that time consisted of 12 months of exactly 30 days each, equaling exactly 360 days for each year, the solar years and the lunar years being EXACTLY equal. That's something worthy of calling "very good"! Every year very possibly started with a solar eclipse at the vernal equinox, with the eclipse centered on the area of Palestine?

[Solar eclipses are the precise point in time of the normally invisible lunar conjunctions. So in a solar eclipse the lunar conjunction actually becomes visible to us. IN A SOLAR ECLIPSE THE ACTUAL CONJUNCTION BECOMES THE TIME OF "FIRST VISIBILITY" OF THE NEW MOON. This is probably not something those who push for "first visibility" would like to dwell on for very long?]

This means that at some point there must have been, as Mr. Franklin has stated, direct intervention where the hand of God altered the arrangement of the heavenly bodies to their present circuits and locations.

Yes, Mr. Franklin, I believe you are correct in the above quoted statement. But that also blows any chances of the present Jewish calendar being the one "God gave to Moses".

Now let's understand a pattern in God's dealings with mankind.

1) When God brought Israel out of Egypt, God told them that HE would drive out their enemies. HE would drive out the local inhabitants with hornets. They would not have had to fight at any time. It was going to be the PERFECT arrangement for Israel.

2) But Israel repeatedly disobeyed God.

3) So THEN God told them that He would NOT drive out the people for them. The perfect arrangement God had planned would no longer go into effect. From then on THEY THEMSELVES would have to figure out how to drive out the local inhabitants, and God's help in this particular regard became less and less as time passed.

4) This placed added responsibility on the people.

This principle, I believe, also applies to the calendar.

1) When God created man, God gave us PERFECT SOLAR AND LUNAR YEARS. Every month had exactly 30 days, and every year had exactly 12 months. So every year, consisting of exactly 360 days, started at one of the two equinoxes. (Perhaps before Exodus 12 years started at the autumn equinox?)

2) But we human beings disobeyed God and sinned and sinned and sinned.

3) So, as a penalty, God eventually "altered the arrangement of the heavenly bodies", and then said to mankind: "Now you go and figure out the correct calendar yourself, since you didn't want My rule over your lives."

4) This also placed added responsibility on the people.

Let's clearly understand that Mr. Franklin's position of God Himself having intentionally altered the arrangement of the heavenly bodies (and nobody else could have done it!) leaves us with only two

possibilities:

EITHER: God Himself literally GAVE Israel a new calendar with differences in the lengths of the months and the years from what they had been previously, and God GAVE them the way to determine this new calendar, how long each month should be when every lunar cycle was in fact from seven to nineteen hours longer than 29 full days, how long each year should be, when they were to have years with 13 months in them, and when the year is to start.

OR: God simply told them: GO AND FIGURE! You have rebelled against Me, and now you yourselves can figure out how to have a correct calendar where both, the lunar months and the solar years will always have "difficult" lengths. All the information I am going to give you is this: THE DAY starts and ends with sunset; THE WEEK starts and ends with the sunset at the end of the Sabbath; THE MONTH starts with the new moon, and THE YEAR starts with the first new moon in the spring. Now you go and figure out the rest yourselves!

It should also be obvious that when God "twice" shifted the position of the earth and the moon in relation to the sun, as Mr. Franklin has stated, GOD DID NOT INTEND THIS TO BE "A BLESSING" TO MANKIND!

This "shifting" represented A CURSE, away from what had previously been "very good"! Leviticus chapter 26 and Deuteronomy chapter 28 leave no other option but to conclude that when "the hand of God directly altered the arrangement of the heavenly bodies", that this was A PENALTY FOR HUMAN SINS; the altered arrangement has certainly not been "a blessing to mankind"!

Let's continue the quotation from Mr. Franklin's "Trumpets 2000" article. I'll repeat the last sentence quoted earlier to retain the context.

"His divine intervention twice caused the position of the earth and the moon to shift in relation to the sun. As a result, THERE WERE MANY YEARS WHEN THE NEW MOON WAS NOT VISIBLE FROM JERUSALEM UNTIL ONE OR TWO DAYS AFTER THE PROJECTED TIME OF THE MOLAD.

"The changes in the heavens REQUIRED NEW STEPS TO BE ADDED TO THE PROCESS OF DETERMINING THE NEW MOON. Among the procedures that were instituted to adjust the Hebrew Calendar to the changes in the heavens are THE RULES OF POSTPONEMENT. These rules do not postpone the observance of Tishri 1 past the time of the new moon, as some have claimed. TO THE CONTRARY, they keep the observance of Tishri 1 in harmony with the lunar cycle in the heavens. In as many as six years out of ten, THESE RULES MUST BE APPLIED in order TO ENSURE that the declaration of Tishri 1 is AS ACCURATE AS POSSIBLE.

"Maimonides, who lived from 1135 to 1204 AD, records that determining the New Moon Day often required the application of the Rules of Postponement. The answer is revealed in the book of Ezra, which records the first observance of the Feast of Trumpets in Jerusalem after the return of the exiles of Judah." (page 4)

The claims Mr. Franklin has made in the above quotation are preposterous! Let's summarize the above quotation:

- 1) GOD changed the positions of the earth and the moon in relation to the sun.
- 2) The present calculations of the Jewish calendar are presumed to have been employed prior to God having altered the arrangement of the heavenly bodies.

3) It is PRESUMED that previously those calculations had always resulted in the new moon being VISIBLE in Jerusalem on the dates so calculated for the molads. So the calculations were intended to arrive at the dates of FIRST VISIBILITY of the new crescent, without needing any postponements.

4) So Mr. Franklin here acknowledges that the postponements CERTAINLY did not precede the time of Hezekiah, the time before God made changes in the heavens, right?

SO MR. FRANKLIN IS ADMITTING THAT THE POSTPONEMENT RULES WERE NOT GIVEN BY GOD TO MOSES!

5) God did not bother to GIVE the Jews a new and more accurate set of calculations to cope with the changed circumstances in the heavens. Inferred is that God wasn't up to the mathematics involved in an accurate calculation, as Mr. Franklin says: "to calculate the exact time of the conjunction each year (only one? why ignore the other 11 or 12 conjunctions each year? is God only concerned with ONE month in every year?) would require DOUBLE-PRECISION (64 bit) ARITHMETIC" (page 4). Therefore God resolved this problem by resorting to "the average or mean time". It made things easier for God.

6) As a result, the Jews bungled along for "MANY YEARS" in which they started their months "ONE OR TWO DAYS" before the new crescent was even visible in Jerusalem. No reason is offered as for why God would possibly have left them in the lurch for so many years. However, the OBVIOUS implication is that the lunar months had (supposedly) somehow become "one or two days" LONGER than determined by the previous calculations God had supposedly given to Moses. The implication of a one day or two day LENGTHENING of the lunar months is very likely an unintended consequence in Mr. Franklin's scenario: where previously months had been 30 days long, they now (supposedly) took one or two days LONGER to get to the new moons?

If anything, the bungling along for many years would represent the above "go and figure" option.

Note carefully! The reason WHY Mr. Franklin has stated that for many years the Jews started their months one or two days "BEFORE" the new crescent was even visible in Jerusalem, is to provide A JUSTIFICATION FOR ONE OR TWO DAY POSTPONEMENTS! This is just so much human reasoning to provide a neat little justification for the postponements. He cites no authority to support his statement. And he certainly has not thought through the obvious implication of months now being "one or two days" LONGER than previously.

7) Note further, as I have already stated above, that Mr. Franklin here ADMITS that these postponements were NOT GIVEN BY GOD! Can you see that? Look, if God allowed the Jews to bungle along for "many years" BEFORE they finally resorted to "postponements", it makes very clear that GOD wasn't the One to give them those postponements. Carefully think through the logical consequences of what Mr. Franklin has stated in this quotation. It rejects God being the author of the postponements, unless of course it took GOD "many years" to figure out how to resolve the problems His intervention in the heavens had created?

8) A totally new set of calculations to deal with these "changes in the heavens" was apparently not an option, even if the months now were "one or two days" longer. Apparently the only option was TO ADD "NEW STEPS" to the old calculations. Apparently the way to deal with the new circumstances was "to add a new piece of cloth to an old garment", the principle of Matthew 9:16 applied in reverse?

9) The ONLY "new steps" Mr. Franklin offers for dealing with the changed circumstances are "the rules of postponement". He offers no source for this information. Where did he get this story? Certainly not from the Jewish astronomers whose views we have examined in this article. Nor did he get this from

Jewish historical records, because this is not found in any records. So WHERE did he get this idea? Unless he can provide a source documentation for this claim, the only option is for us to deduce that he himself made up this story?

10) He claims that these rules of postponement CORRECTED the problems God had created by making changes in the heavens. So here Mr. Franklin claims AN ASTRONOMICAL JUSTIFICATION for the postponement rules.

11) He claims that the postponement rules must be applied "in order to ensure that the declaration of Tishri 1 is AS ACCURATE AS POSSIBLE". Since Mr. Franklin has ALREADY told us that in 2000 the postponement rules resulted in postponing Tishri 1 to about 26 hours (more than a full day!) AFTER first visibility of the new crescent, or to 44 hours after the actual conjunction, the only conclusion we can reach is that it is simply not possible for the Jewish calculations to be more accurate than that?

12) As support for this claim he appeals to Maimonides, which claim the Jewish astronomer Shlomo Sternberg also acknowledged, but to which Sternberg also does not extend any credibility at all. The astronomer Sternberg openly acknowledged that the postponement rules are purely for convenience. So let's notice something very, very clearly:

IN THIS PASSAGE MR. FRANKLIN HAS STAKED EVERYTHING ON THE POSTPONEMENT RULES HAVING "AN ASTRONOMICAL JUSTIFICATION"!

He has DENIED that the postponement rules were introduced to avoid INCONVENIENT days.

So it should be very clear that IF it can be demonstrated that the postponement rules are nothing more than AN ASTRONOMICAL JOKE, that ASTRONOMICALLY they serve no purpose of any kind, THEN another of his premises has been ground into dust, AND HIS ENTIRE ARGUMENT IS DEMOLISHED!

His claims also imply that when no postponements are applied, it is because in that year the molad of Tishri is ALREADY "as accurate as possible". So note very carefully: According to Mr. Franklin THE ONLY JUSTIFICATION for postponements is "TO ENSURE" that the declaration of Tishri 1 is "AS ACCURATE AS POSSIBLE".

There is no appeal to any kind of "BIBLICAL" justification for these postponements; they are (supposedly) purely to achieve astronomical accuracy in arriving at the day of first visibility of the new crescent in Jerusalem.

That is a totally different approach from the appeal that having Atonement on a Friday or on a Sunday would be "A HARDSHIP", an approach to which other defenders of the Jewish calendar have unsuccessfully attempted to appeal. Appeals to astronomical reasons and appeals to hardships are mutually exclusive! One of these two claims MUST always be wrong, since "hardships" are certainly not related to astronomy. In actual fact, though, BOTH claims are wrong and easily disproved.

Now we have ALREADY seen that Mr. Franklin's claim here is not correct! We have already seen from the book "STUDIES IN HEBREW ASTRONOMY AND MATHEMATICS" that postponements are indeed for the purpose of avoiding INCONVENIENT DAYS, without any astronomical justification. This book was written by highly qualified Jewish astronomers. The same book openly acknowledged that the postponement rules serve "a utilitarian reason" rather than "an astronomical reason". In other words, we have already seen that the postponement rules are indeed nothing more than "AN ASTRONOMICAL JOKE", albeit a rather pathetic one.

We have already seen that the determination of Tishri 1, with postponement rules and all, achieves NEITHER in a consistent manner, neither the day of the actual conjunction, nor the day of first visibility of the new crescent. We have already seen from the Encyclopedia Judaica that Tishri 1 is sometimes the day BEFORE first visibility, and at other times it is only the day AFTER first visibility.

It is an easy task to present pages of data with endless examples of years where Tishri 1 is NOT the day of first visibility. The year 2000 is the most glaring of such examples! The year 2000 clearly PROVES, all by itself, that the postponement rules cannot possibly have some kind of "astronomical justification". So THE FACTS, as we can look at them today, clearly prove Mr. Franklin's claims to be incorrect.

Appeals to one year here or there in history, where perhaps achieving the correct day of first visibility required doctoring the Jewish molad calculations by applying some postponements to them, PROVE NOTHING AT ALL!

And such appeals can certainly NOT erase the errors for the year 2000, which Mr. Franklin himself has brought to our attention. We also need to understand that appeals to the molads for any dates BC are EXTREMELY SPECULATIVE AND TOTALLY HYPOTHETICAL!

They prove nothing at all!

People back then OBVIOUSLY decided the start of each month by going out and looking for that first new crescent; that's what ALL THE JEWISH EVIDENCE shows! So what if the flawed Jewish molad calculations, doctored by some "postponements", sometimes arrive at the same date that VISUAL OBSERVATION had arrived at all along? What does that prove for the molad calculations? NOTHING AT ALL!

Look! If the Jewish molad calculations for Trumpets in 538 BC are supposedly so accurate, WHY do the molad calculations for 2000 AD come up with SUCH A LOUSY RESULT? Who cares about 538 BC or 6 BC or 26 AD or 27 AD or 30 AD or 31 AD, etc., when the results for the year 2000 AD are, by Mr. Franklin's own testimony, so SHOCKINGLY INACCURATE??

Who cares if the "astronomical facts (supposedly) support an observance of the "Feast" of Trumpets on Thursday, August 31, in 515 BCE" (page 8, Trumpets 2000 article), if the same astronomical facts CERTAINLY DO NOT SUPPORT the determination of Tishri 1 for the year 2000 AD??

Actually "August 31" in 515 BC in the Julian calendar was NOT A THURSDAY! Mr. Franklin's claim here is based on INCORRECT DATA. The correct date should be "SEPTEMBER 1" which was a Thursday! I'll explain this in a moment.

Next, Mr. Franklin's claims that the molad calculations plus postponement rules are supposed to arrive at first visibility of the new crescent in Jerusalem simply mean: the same result could therefore OBVIOUSLY also have been achieved by faithful witnesses reporting that first visibility. Understand that any claims that the Jewish calendar calculations are supposed to achieve first visibility of the new crescent do nothing other than SUPPORT THE JEWISH EVIDENCE that back then the calendar was determined by the reports of eye-witnesses and not by a fixed calculated calendar.

There is NO EVIDENCE OF ANY KIND whether in 515 BC the Day of Trumpets was kept on Wednesday, August 31, or on Thursday, September 1, or on Friday, September 2, or on Friday, September 30, or on Saturday, October 1, or on Sunday, October 2. These are all Julian calendar dates and in the Gregorian calendar they are all 7 days earlier. THERE IS NO EVIDENCE ANYWHERE TO SUPPORT ANY OF THE ABOVE SIX DATES FOR HAVING BEEN THE DAY OF TRUMPETS IN 515 BC! NO EVIDENCE ANYWHERE!

Comparisons are only meaningful when we compare apples with apples. In calendar terms, comparisons are only meaningful when we compare Gregorian dates with other Gregorian dates. So let's highlight the folly of Mr. Franklin's appeals to the year 515 BC.

AN EXAMPLE OF THE FOLLY OF USING BC DATES

Mr. Franklin writes:

"The annals of history reveal that this observance of the Feast of Trumpets took place in 515 BCE. According to Hebrew calendar calculations for that year, the Molad of Tishri fell at 4d 23h 550p, which translates to Wednesday, 03:31 UT (5:31 PM JT), August 30. Based on Postponement Rule Two, the declaration of Tishri 1 was made on the following day, Thursday, August 31. Let us compare this declaration with the astronomical facts."

"In the year 515 BCE, the astronomical conjunction for the month of Tishri fell at 00:44 UT (2:44 AM JT), on Wednesday, August 30. The Molad thus fell about 15 hours after the astronomical conjunction, which was too soon for the new crescent to be visible. A minimum of 17.2 hours must elapse after the astronomical conjunction before the new crescent can possibly be seen. This places the earliest possible time of visibility at 19:56 JT (7:56 PM) on Wednesday, August 30, which was after sunset, and therefore was the next day by Scriptural reckoning. Thus the declaration of Tishri 1 on Thursday, August 31, was in complete harmony with the astronomical facts." (pages 7-8)

THE REASONING HERE IS TOTALLY LACKING IN LOGIC!

"In complete harmony with the astronomical facts"? The above two paragraphs actually contain SHOCKING ERRORS! They contain error after error after error! There are at least FIVE errors in the above statements. And THAT is supposed to represent "complete harmony with the astronomical facts"? This example all by itself utterly destroys ANY CREDIBILITY we might have been inclined to extend to Mr. Franklin's presentation of "technical data".

Furthermore, besides the actual mistakes in this quotation, the logic is ALSO flawed. Let's examine this very slowly, because what I will point out here applies to ALL THE ARGUMENTS ABOUT ANCIENT DATES!

1) Mr. Franklin at no point provides any evidence that the Day of Trumpets was actually observed on the day that he claims! NO EVIDENCE AT ALL! Some ridiculous reasoning about a comparison between the actual lunar conjunction and the calculated molad proves NOTHING!

2) I said "ridiculous reasoning" because Mr. Franklin actually has his calendar facts completely mixed up! THE FACTS ARE: In 515 BC August 31 was A WEDNESDAY! And SEPTEMBER 1 WAS A THURSDAY! Mr. Franklin can't even get his data correct!

3) Okay, so where did Mr. Franklin get the WRONG INFORMATION that "August 31 was a Thursday"? He OBVIOUSLY did not calculate the calendar for 515 BC out manually, as I just did a couple of hours ago, because THAT would very clearly have told him that "August 31 was a Wednesday". Likewise he didn't get it from the Ambassador College copyrighted computer program "HD v2.00" because that program also shows August 31 as a Wednesday. He would not have used that program anyway, because it employs a different sequence of leap years for the year 515 BC from the one he uses. I have two other computer programs that also both show August 31 in 515 BC as a Wednesday. So where did Mr. Franklin get this wrong information?

4) HE GOT IT FROM ME!

Back in 1996 my son Michael was studying computer programming, and together we produced a computer program to calculate the Jewish calendar. I provided the necessary calculations and my son did all the actual programming. We included some very nifty features in that program, which are not available in any other computer program for the Jewish calendar. Amongst other features, we allowed the user to select one of SIX different sequences of intercalation, which could be applied to ANY YEAR BC or AD. This feature allows the user to view, for example, the year 515 BC based on the sequence of leap years that is used TODAY by the Jewish calendar, or based on the sequence that is used by the Ambassador College program or even one of four other possible sequences.

However, we did later discover a few minor glitches here and there (hey, they are nothing compared to some of the big problems in the early versions of MS Windows, right?). We have never corrected them, as the program has long outlived its usefulness. I still occasionally run this program under Windows 95 just for "checking up" on claims that are made. But, because I am very familiar with the Jewish calculations, I myself can easily pick out where the occasional glitch provides a wrong result. So that is no problem for me.

Anyway, ONE of the little glitches is that I didn't explain to my son that SOMETIMES (if we go way back in BC dates) the molad calculations may actually produce an AUGUST date. In starting with an October 7 date for 3761 BC (which is really only September 6 Gregorian, a really terrible starting date!) we didn't consider this. As a result, while in the calendars we always show August as having 31 days, IN THE ACTUAL SUBTRACTIONS we erroneously programmed it so that the molad day before September 1 is "August 30". All subsequent calculations then correctly include 31 days in August. But they result in stating the correct day of the week, but one day too early for the day of the month. This only applies to all dates calculated based on an August molad date. As I said, a minor glitch, right?

[Comment: Other programs that reckon days from midnight to midnight will call the starting date in 3761 BC "October 6" because the actual time is still almost 50 minutes before midnight. We have called that "October 7".]

So our calculations, for molads that have an August date, marry the correct day of the week with the August date that is one day too early. And all other dates will also be one day too early. You follow?

NOW: When you select the leap year sequence in use today for the year 515 BC in our program, THEN our program will calculate the molad for WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 30, and with the postponement designate THURSDAY, AUGUST 31 as the Day of Trumpets.

BUT THAT IS A MISTAKE!

Our program should have designated that Wednesday as August 31, and then designated the Day of Trumpets as THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 1.

It's a small world after all!

So WHERE did Mr. Franklin get this wrong information that in 515 BC Tishri 1 was "Thursday, August 31"? I suspect that this flaw in programming is probably unique to our program. And I can't see Mr. Franklin having gotten this wrong information from any other source. I doubt that anyone else made the same programming mistake. So Mr. Franklin got this wrong date from ME!

5) Another give-away that Mr. Franklin is using OUR computer program to get all this data is that other programs use the midnight-to-midnight reckoning in their calculations of the molad. We in our program,

on the other hand, decided to use the 6:00 p.m.-to- 6:00 p.m. reckoning. The result is that in OTHER programs "23 hours" is 11:00 p.m., but in OUR program "23 hours" is 5:00 p.m.. Thus there is always a 6-hour difference in the results achieved by our program compared to others. So when Mr. Franklin states that "23 hours" translates into "5:00 p.m." this is another give-away that he is using our program.

HOWEVER ...

There is NO PROGRAM ANYWHERE FOR ASTRONOMICAL CONJUNCTIONS OF THE MOON THAT WOULD HAVE TOLD MR. FRANKLIN THAT THE CONJUNCTION IN 515 BC WAS ON "WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 30"!!! EVERY PROGRAM ON EARTH WOULD HAVE TOLD HIM THAT "AUGUST 30 WAS A TUESDAY"! AUGUST 31 WAS A WEDNESDAY AND SEPTEMBER 1 WAS A THURSDAY!

So notice very carefully:

Mr. Franklin states:"In the year 515 BCE, the astronomical conjunction for the month of Tishri fell at 00:44 UT (2:44 AM JT), on WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 30."

THIS INFORMATION HE DID NOT GET FROM ME!

Now the computer program "ONLINE BIBLE" contains an "ASTRO-CALENDAR". This feature gives you all new moons and all full moons for many centuries BC. The further back BC you go, the less likely they are to be real, because they don't consider the changes in the heavens, which Mr. Franklin told us God made with His own hand. The dates are, however, based on the EXACT SAME ASTRONOMICAL DATA that ANY other astronomy program today would use to determine new moons for BC dates. And they are as likely to be theoretically accurate (i.e. results that are usually within sixty minutes of results achieved by other programs) as any other program.

NOW LET'S LOOK AT THE DATA FOR 515 BC:

THE ONLINE BIBLE CALENDAR gives the conjunction as:

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 31 at 2:31 a.m. JT

MR FRANKLIN gives the conjunction as:

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 30 at 2:44 a.m. JT

Now the point is: Every program that calculates ancient new moons will ALWAYS state THE DAY OF THE MONTH. The day of the week is optional, some may give the day of the week as well, while others do not provide the day of the week. For obvious reasons it is always THE DAY OF THE MONTH that is deemed more important than the day of the week.

Now when we look at the above two dates, this is what we find:

A) THE TIME OF DAY is correct ... a difference of 13 minutes is of no consequence here. These pretty close to identical times of day tell us that both calculations are based on the same general data.

B) THE DAY OF THE WEEK is also identical. So again this confirms that both calculations have used

the same basic data.

C) BUT THE DAY OF THE MONTH differs by one full day! Now it is very easy to establish that "August 31 was a Wednesday" and that "August 30 was only a Tuesday", even if we in OUR calendar program wrongly assigned a Wednesday to August 30. So the ONLINE BIBLE program is right, and Mr. Franklin's date is wrong!

SO MR. FRANKLIN HAS PRESENTED A WRONG DATE FOR THE LUNAR CONJUNCTION!

Now since our program does NOT provide the information that the conjunction was on "AUGUST 30" at 2:44 JT, WHERE DID MR. FRANKLIN GET THIS DATE?

I don't believe there is a single astronomy program on earth that will tell you that a new moon occurred in 515 BC ON AUGUST 30!! Without exception they will ALL tell you that the new moon in 515 BC was on August 31! And the DAY OF THE MONTH is something that every program will always provide FIRST! So where did Mr. Franklin get this WRONG information that in 515 BC the new moon was on "August 30"?

We must OBVIOUSLY conclude that the information he has provided here about THE ACTUAL CONJUNCTION is HIGHLY UNRELIABLE! He has told us that the conjunction took place on August 30, when in actual fact it took place 24 hours later on August 31. There is no program that places the conjunction on August 30 that year, though they will ALL place it on a Wednesday. Hmm ...

[Comment: For those who have a relatively recent version of THE ONLINE BIBLE, go to the menu option "UTILITIES", then down to "ASTRO-CALENDAR". The 3 options there are: Astro-Calendar, Historical Calendar, and Preferences. Under "Preferences" select "Zone Time" to get all results in the Jerusalem Time Zone. Then select "Astro-Calendar" and enter the year of your choice, such as "515 BC". If you enter the month and day of the month you are interested in, THEN at the bottom you will see the "Day of Week" displayed. On the right you will see all the new moons and all the full moons displayed, with special attention drawn to eclipses. A very handy program indeed, which I can only highly recommend.]

So HOW RELIABLE is the data Mr. Franklin presents about other years, for the purpose of vigorously defending the Jewish calendar?

Now to continue.

6) So with ALL OF HIS BC EXAMPLES all he has done is COMPARE the molad produced by our program for the year in question with the corresponding astronomical conjunction. And his 515 BC example shows that sometimes he doesn't get the day of the conjunction right either. Yet when he has a year where a postponement achieves the same day as first visibility of the new crescent ... BINGO!

That's all his so-called "proof" consists of.

Now obviously, I can do EXACTLY THE SAME THING to list all the years where the postponements do NOT achieve first visibility! And 2000 AD is the most prominent and obvious year to start with!

7) Understand that A COMPARISON of the molad plus postponements with the time of first visibility of the new crescent NEVER PROVES ANYTHING! It is nothing more than a ridiculous and totally hypothetical GAME!

There is NEVER any proof that the Jews actually DID keep the day on the date Mr. Franklin asserts. It

could easily be a new moon later, as many of his dates require the year to start in the winter. It equally well could have been the day before or the day after he asserts. CALCULATIONS can never give you true information of what people actually DID DO at a time when those calculations obviously did not yet exist. [I'll really hit this point later with a load of dynamite! That's when I cover "internal evidence".]

Next, even IF we supposed that he has the date right and that the Jews did keep Tishri 1 on the date he asserts, there is still NO PROOF OF ANY KIND that they didn't reach this date simply by visually observing the first new crescent. It requires an enormous, gigantic, herculean leap in logic to assume that CALCULATIONS had to be used by the Jews to achieve that assumed date, IF it was OBVIOUSLY in full agreement with visual observations. And ALL Jewish authorities on the calendar state that observation was used in the determination of the calendar right throughout the first century AD. [However, Mr. Franklin also does not really understand "first visibility" correctly, as I will explain in a moment.]

8) Besides getting his day of the month wrong, Mr. Franklin also got THE TIME of the molad wrong! The molad for 515 BC with his sequence of leap years is NOT "4 days 23 hours 550 parts"! The CORRECT molad is "4 days 23 hours 535 parts". I realize that the difference is only "50 seconds" (i.e. between 550 halakim and 535 halakim), but the point is: UNLESS the two calculations involved are IDENTICAL TO THE EXACT HALAK, it must be assumed that the calculations are wrong! So either Mr. Franklin was careless in copying this data from our program, or he intentionally altered it by "50 seconds" to disguise where he got the information from? After all, who is going to quibble about "50 seconds"?

But this can never erase THE FACT that the whole Jewish calculations are built on the premise that TWO individual and completely separate calculations MUST arrive at the EXACT same number of hours and the EXACT same number of halakim, or else it is taken for granted that the calculations are WRONG! And "550 parts" is A WRONG ANSWER!

As far as familiarity with the Jewish calendar calculations is concerned, Mr. Franklin has also presented a mistake in his "Glossary of Terms". On page 117 he defines a halak or part for us. He writes:

"PART: a measurement of time in the Hebrew Calendar equating to three-and-one-third seconds. There are 18 parts to a minute and 1040 parts to an hour."

It is correct that there are 18 parts to a minute, but the statement that there are 1040 parts to the hour IS WRONG! There are in fact 1080 parts or halakim to the hour. Multiply 18 by 60 to see this for yourself. How did Mr. Franklin get to 1040 parts to the hour? It is at any rate a wrong statement. He already presented this same mistake two years earlier in his "Trumpets 2000 AD" article, in the Glossary on page 37. So no one has pointed out this error to him over the past two years. To me that is an indication of how FEW of his readers, if any, actually know anything at all about the Jewish calendar? The fact that there are "1080 parts to the hour" is one of the most basic points about the Jewish calendar calculations. And anyone who will read and accept the statement that there are "1040 parts to an hour" surely knows NOTHING AT ALL about how the Jewish calendar is calculated, because it will be absolutely impossible to ever reach a single correct "molad" if an hour is represented by 1040 parts.

9) Next, the molad calculations AUTOMATICALLY ASSUME that the result is "JT" (Jerusalem Time). To be fully correct, we should note that Mr. Franklin has only chosen the Jerusalem time ZONE (2 hours ahead of Greenwich). Obviously "time zones" didn't exist back in BC centuries. And so the actual LOCAL time for Jerusalem is 2 hours 21 minutes ahead of Greenwich, rather than just the 2 hours of the time zone that Jerusalem (and also we here in South Africa) happens to be a part of. But we'll accept "the JT Zone" as acceptable for working with, though 2 hours 21 minutes ahead of Greenwich would certainly be MORE accurate.

When he then translates "4d 23h 550p" (should really be 535p) he should really list "JT" first and

"UT" (Universal time) second. This "23h" is a clue that OUR computer program was used, as other programs would give this as "17h". However, he doesn't seem to know that 5:31 p.m. is NOT "03:31 UT"! 5:31 p.m. is really "15:31 UT". His "03:31 UT" is really only 3:31 A.M. in London or 5:31 A.M. for "JT"!

Does he really understand the difference between "15:31 UT" and "3:31 UT"? In the next paragraph he at least gets "00:44 UT" correct as "2:44 A.M. JT".

Now let's notice a FIFTH error in this 515 BC example.

MR. FRANKLIN DOES NOT REALLY UNDERSTAND "FIRST VISIBILITY"

Let me now demonstrate that Mr. Franklin is actually also confused about which day is the day of first visibility of the new crescent. This is totally independent of all the other errors in this example. To keep it simple, let's just ASSUME that in 515 BC "August 30 was a Wednesday", BECAUSE THAT IS WHAT HIS REASONING IS BASED ON.

We will use the data he presented in the above quotation from pages 7-8 of his article. So notice the following statements:

1. The ASTRONOMICAL conjunction was at 2:44 a.m. Jerusalem Time (JT). This we'll accept as correct.
2. A minimum of 17.2 hours (17 hours 12 minutes) must pass before visibility of the new crescent becomes possible. This we'll also accept as correct, though in practice 18 hours is a more realistic and safer figure.
3. So Mr. Franklin then tells us that this means that the earliest time first visibility of the new crescent was possible was 7:56 p.m. on Wednesday evening, August 30. This is based on adding 17 hours 12 minutes to 2:44 a.m., which brings us to 19:56, which is 7:56 p.m.. THE TIME he has stated here is correct, but that time means that the new crescent will NOT be visible at all that evening.
4. Since 7:56 p.m. is after sunset, that specific point in time is really the start of Thursday, August 31, as Mr. Franklin correctly pointed out. (We are ignoring Mr. Franklin's error for the purpose of this illustration!)
5. Mr. Franklin's conclusion that therefore declaring August 31 as Tishri 1, because it was the day of first visibility, was therefore "IN COMPLETE HARMONY WITH THE ASTRONOMICAL FACTS" EXPOSES AN APPALLING LACK OF UNDERSTANDING REGARDING "FIRST VISIBILITY"!
6. THE TRUTH IS that, based on the data Mr. Franklin has presented, FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 1 WAS THE DAY OF FIRST VISIBILITY OF THE NEW CRESCENT!

Can YOU understand this?

Let me explain.

7. THE NEW MOON is the time of the lunar cycle when the moon is in a straight line between the earth and the sun. Most months these three bodies are not in the same plane at the time of the new moon, even though they are in a straight line. Occasionally however they are not only in a straight line at the time of the new moon, but they are also in the same plane or very close to being in the same plane. That is when we have a total or partial solar eclipse. In an eclipse we can SEE that they are in a straight line

and in the same plane.

8. About "17.2" to 20 hours later the moon has moved approximately 8 to 10 degrees away from the straight line it had formed with the sun. That is when "first visibility" of the new crescent becomes possible with the naked eye. HOWEVER:

The moon is at that point in time still very close to the location of the sun in the sky. Because of the brightness of the sun it is impossible to see the new crescent during the time that the sun is visible.

9. When we are talking about first visibility of the new crescent less than 20 hours after the time of the conjunction, THEN that "first visibility" is ONLY possible WITHIN THE FIRST HOUR AFTER SUNSET! It is typically only possible for a very few minutes at some point within that first hour after sunset. And granting a whole hour after sunset for this possibility is being very generous. A more realistic figure is within the first 30 minutes after sunset, when we are talking about a time less than 20 hours after the conjunction.

10. Now at the time around the autumn equinox sunset will be close to 6:00 p.m.. Keep in mind that 6:00 p.m. Jerusalem Time ZONE is in fact already 6:21 p.m. Jerusalem LOCAL Time, because Jerusalem is in fact 35 and one-quarter degrees east of Greenwich. The Jerusalem Time ZONE is based on 30 degrees east. So at around the autumn equinox the sun will very likely have set by 6:21 p.m. local time (equal to 6:00 p.m. JT as used by Mr. Franklin). This means that when the first crescent is VISIBLE in less than 20 hours after the conjunction, this MUST BE BEFORE 6:30 p.m. JT (equal to 6:51 p.m. local Jerusalem time). By 6:39 p.m. JT (i.e. 7:00 p.m. local Jerusalem time) it is definitely TOO LATE for any visibility within the first 20 hours after the conjunction. That is because the moon will only be above the horizon for a very short time after sunset in that 17 to 20 hour period after the conjunction.

11. Now without quibbling about a few minutes one way or the other, here are the facts. Mr. Franklin pointed out that first visibility of the new crescent was only possible AT THE VERY EARLIEST at 7:56 p.m. JT (equal to 8:17 p.m. LOCAL Jerusalem Time). So whether you argue about the real local time of 8:17 p.m. or whether you want to use the time of only 7:56 p.m., THAT TIME IS ABSOLUTELY TOO LATE FOR FIRST VISIBILITY WITHIN THE FIRST 20 HOURS AFTER THE CONJUNCTION!

12. That time is MORE THAN 1 HOUR TOO LATE for any possible first visibility. If it was not possible to see the new crescent BEFORE 7:00 p.m. that evening of Wednesday, August 30 in 515 BC, THEN it was DEFINITELY not visible until after sunset the following evening, which would have been Thursday evening, August 31, and THAT in turn would have been the start of FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 1 IN 515 BC!

13. A simple but fairly accurate guideline to keep in mind is this: IF the conjunction takes place between sunset and midnight, THEN first visibility is very likely immediately after sunset the following evening. But IF the conjunction takes place after midnight but before the following sunset, THEN first visibility will only be possible immediately after THE SECOND SUNSET following the conjunction.

14. So a 2:44 a.m. time for the conjunction should IMMEDIATELY alert us to the fact that first visibility will only be possible right after the SECOND sunset following the conjunction. If we call the day of the conjunction "Day 1", then first visibility will in this case only be possible at the very start of "Day 3". This is basic understanding about first visibility that Mr. Franklin does not seem to understand?

SO THERE ARE FIVE ERRORS IN HIS PRESENTATION OF THIS 515 BC EXAMPLE:

A) He presents THE WRONG DAY for the molad in 515 BC.

B) He presents THE WRONG DAY for the actual conjunction in 515 BC.

C) He presents THE WRONG TIME for the molad.

D) He makes AN INCORRECT CONVERSION INTO UNIVERSAL TIME.

E) He claims first visibility for THE WRONG DAY in 515 BC.

FIVE separate and distinct errors in one little example! And that is supposed to be RELIABLE PROOF for the Jewish calendar?

WHY ON EARTH SHOULD I POSSIBLY WASTE MY TIME CHECKING ALL HIS OTHER THEORETICAL EXAMPLES FOR FURTHER ERRORS? Are five separate and distinct errors in one tiny example not enough?

10) His statement: "Let us compare this declaration with the astronomical facts" is meaningless! You can compare molads plus postponements with astronomical conjunctions, ASSUMING that you are actually able to get your facts correct (which is apparently easier said than done for Mr. Franklin?), till the cows come home, AND NEVER PROVE ANYTHING!

Can you understand the illogical reasoning in this process of comparing molads with real conjunctions? When a molad with or without postponements happens to agree with first visibility of the new crescent THAT PROVES NOTHING AT ALL! It has nothing at all to do with what people actually DID do 2500 years ago!

But that is the ONLY kind of "proof" the supporters of the Jewish calendar have! Astronomers would die from laughter at the ridiculousness of that line of reasoning. They would also immediately pick up on the five glaring errors I have presented. It is ridiculous to INFER that therefore "the calculated Jewish calendar" is right and was being used. THEN WHY WASN'T IT "RIGHT" FOR 2000 AD?

But do you understand that this illogical line of reasoning, by making totally unjustified deductions from hypothetical dates, is the ONLY "proof" defenders of the Jewish calendar have to turn to?

In this example Mr. Franklin without contradiction has got THE WRONG DAY OF THE MONTH for both, the molad and the actual conjunction, as well as THE WRONG DAY OF THE WEEK for actual first visibility of the new crescent, as well as the WRONG TIME OF DAY for the molad, but "the annals of history" and everything else supposedly prove his case anyway? Weird!

Now even if Mr. Franklin hadn't gotten his facts mixed up, even if he had presented all the CORRECT data, there is STILL A PROBLEM!

Let's work through this 515 BC example in detail. I'll correct his wrong date of August 31 to the correct Thursday, September 1 Julian, or August 25 Gregorian, in the illustration below.

This is a very elementary comparison. Here goes:

IN 515 BC the Jewish calendar (theoretically!) calculates the molad for Wednesday, August 24th, and thus it designates Thursday, August 25th as Tishri 1 (Gregorian calendar, remember).

THE YEAR 2003 AD (i.e. this present year) has the following astronomically CORRECT CONJUNCTIONS, expressed in the Jerusalem time zone: Wednesday, August 27 at 7:27 p.m., and Friday, September 26 at 5:10 a.m..

The corresponding JEWISH MOLADS for these two conjunctions in 2003 are: Wednesday, August 27 at

3:43:13 p.m. (i.e. about 3 hours 43 minutes before the real conjunction), and Friday, September 26 at 4:27:17 a.m. (i.e. about 43 minutes before the real conjunction).

So, applying the postponement rules as required by the Jewish calendar to these two molads for 2003, that would give us the TWO POTENTIAL DATES FOR TISHRI 1 for this present year of 2003 AD as: Thursday, August 28 and Saturday, September 27.

Now IF in 515 BC August 25 was supposedly perfectly acceptable for being Tishri 1, WHY IS FOR THIS YEAR OF 2003 AD AUGUST 28 NOT EQUALLY ACCEPTABLE FOR BEING TISHRI 1??

This present year Tishri 1 could theoretically be THREE DAYS LATER THAN (it was supposedly) IN 515 BC, but that is still not acceptable, and so for this year the Jewish calendar selects the following new moon for Tishri 1. Yet for 515 BC Mr. Franklin presents supposedly authoritative data that sanctions such an early date, which is today totally unacceptable.

This is Error #6 for his 515 BC example.

Can we not see how SHALLOW and totally HYPOTHETICAL all these arguments about ancient BC dates really are? I certainly appreciate Mr. Franklin having brought the year 515 BC to my attention. Thank you very much indeed!

The point is:

IF for this year of 2003 August 28 is TOO EARLY to start the month of Tishri, THEN back in 515 BC August 25 was EVEN MORE SO TOO EARLY! So Mr. Franklin's argument is flawed. This should illustrate that the arguments about trying to prove the existence of the present Jewish calendar by appeals to supposed specific calendar dates for BC years are PLAIN FOOLISHNESS.

And they cannot prove anything as far as the present Jewish calendar is concerned. It is not the years when the Jewish calendar just "happens to get it right" that prove anything; it is the years when the Jewish calendar obviously and blatantly (as in 2000 AD) "gets it wrong" that PROVE that it is unreliable for use by God's people. And no amount of arguments about BC dates can somehow get around the REPEATEDLY RECORDED FACT that in the whole 1st century AD the start of each month was based on the reports of reliable eye-witnesses of the new crescents.

BUT PEOPLE IN THE CHURCH OF GOD, WHO WANT AT ALL COSTS TO CLAIM DIVINE INSPIRATION FOR THE CALCULATED JEWISH CALENDAR, DON'T HESITATE TO PINPOINT WITH SUPPOSED 100% ACCURACY SPECIFIC DAYS OF THE WEEK INTO THE FURTHEST ANTIQUITY!

Like Mr. Franklin pinpointing that August 31 in 515 BC was supposedly a Thursday. And unless I had taken the trouble to check this claim out, to the point of even manually verifying the calculations for the Jewish calendar, nobody would have known that August 31 in 515 BC was really a Wednesday. Now that I have pointed this out, EVERYBODY can check this out and verify it in their own calendar programs. The facts are irrefutable!

There is a reason why people in the Church of God insist on making such claims. Do YOU know that reason?

They make such claims because that is THE ONLY "PROOF" THEY HAVE TO APPEAL TO FOR CLINGING TO THE JEWISH CALENDAR! THEY HAVE ABSOLUTELY NOTHING ELSE THEY CAN APPEAL TO FOR AUTHORITY! NOTHING!

They don't even have the most pitiful shred of evidence for the supposed antiquity of the calculated Jewish calendar, something all Jewish astronomers know very clearly. Therefore these supporters of the Jewish calendar have to FABRICATE THEIR OWN "EVIDENCE"! That's right! They have to fabricate evidence for the Jewish calendar. Arguments about ancient dates are nothing more than fabricated "evidence".

Now in fabricating such "evidence" they are mostly limited to two options. And as a third thing, there is something they must unconditionally reject and refuse to do ON PRINCIPLE.

1) They can appeal to certain Scriptures to IMPLY God's approval for the present Jewish calendar by the way they interpret those Scriptures. In so doing they must appeal to a bias in WANTING to see the Scriptures express support for this astronomically flawed calendar. Their "proof" requires us to accept without question gross assumptions and clear misinterpretation of the Scriptures in question. It also requires us to reject all historical evidence that contradicts their incorrect interpretations of certain Scriptures.

Examples of this type of fabricated "evidence" include appeals to "the oracles of God", to God "having given Moses the present calculated calendar", to God having "given the Jews the authority to preserve the correct calendar", appealing to "the calendar with 13 months in a year in the Book of Ezekiel", etc.. A recent addition to this list is appeals to Psalm 81:3-4.

2) They can appeal to certain events mentioned in the Scriptures, and then claim to authoritatively establish the precise day of the week and day of the month on which those events SUPPOSEDLY took place. From that kind of reasoning they then INFER that the present Jewish calendar must have been used in order to arrive at that correct day of the week and of the month. They again expect us to accept without question gross assumptions. Specifically, they require us to deny that the correct results could EASILY have been obtained with a calendar where each month was started based on the reports of reliable witnesses having seen the new crescent. And, as this beautiful example of 515 BC so vividly illustrates, they require us to assume that the data they have presented is in fact correct, a really bad assumption to make at the best of times.

Examples of this type of fabricated "evidence" are appeals to the supposed date of Christ's crucifixion, to years like 30 AD, 31 AD, 66 AD, 70 AD, 515 BC, 538 BC, etc..

3) They must, AS A MATTER OF PRINCIPLE, argue against any and all Scriptures that call the present Jewish calendar into question. They must also try to discredit any and all biblical principles that the present Jewish calendar transgresses.

Examples of this "arguing AGAINST the Scriptures" include: denying the correct meaning of the word "tekufah", denying that God consistently starts the year in the spring, denying that the annual cycle in the days of Noah was different from our present annual cycle, denying any possible application to the Jewish calendar of God's statement that He HATES the Jewish new moons (Isaiah 1:14), denying that God established FOUR seasons for the year, denying that God intends the entire Feast of Tabernacles to be in the autumn, etc.. Denying, denying, denying

Now let's examine a very basic point.

THE FOOLISHNESS OF ARGUING ABOUT SPECIFIC YEARS

We need to understand a very basic point about the calendar.

IT IS UTTERLY, TOTALLY AND COMPLETELY USELESS TO APPEAL TO SPECIFIC CALENDAR

DATES FOR SPECIFIC HISTORIC YEARS IN AN ATTEMPT TO PROVE THAT "THE CALCULATED JEWISH CALENDAR MUST HAVE BEEN USED" IN THOSE YEARS!

Astronomers would NEVER attempt to prove that the calculated Jewish calendar was being used by appealing to specific years in which certain biblically recorded events occurred!

Why wouldn't astronomers do this?

Because their fellow astronomers would die laughing at the utter absurdity of trying to use that kind of reasoning to support the historical existence of the Jewish calendar. THEY would know that any such arguments would be totally devoid of any logic!

We have looked at quotations from three different editions of the Encyclopedia Britannica, The Jewish Encyclopedia, The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, The Encyclopedia Judaica, Isidore Loeb, Shlomo Sternberg, and Arthur Spier. Collectively these sources represent an enormous level of qualifications in the fields of astronomy and mathematics and the Jewish calendar. Even the Britannica articles about the Jewish calendar were in all likelihood authored by Jewish writers with qualifications in astronomy. In previous articles I have also presented extensive additional quotations from the Jewish Talmud.

THEY ALL KNOW that specific events are recorded in the Bible. THEY ALL KNOW the best way to trace any event from an astronomical perspective. ALL THESE WRITERS were familiar with the Old Testament Scriptures. ALL THESE WRITERS were experts in the calculations of the Jewish calendar, as well as being highly qualified astronomers. SOME OF THEM even make reference to intercalation being indicated in the Book of Ezekiel, though I suspect that all of them were aware of this. [Comment: I myself first saw this reference to intercalation in the Book of Ezekiel in the 1964 Encyclopedia Britannica back in 1974, when I was writing a letter as a "Personal Correspondent" for the Church, a letter in support of the calculated Jewish calendar, I might add. I obviously did not really understand very much about the calendar at that stage.]

Now consider:

IF these Jewish astronomers were sharp enough to know that THE BIBLE indicates, by putting together Ezekiel 1:1-2; 3:15; 4:4-6; and 8:1, that the specific year Ezekiel is referring to must have had 13 months, don't you think they could ALSO have figured out that they could CONCLUSIVELY PROVE the antiquity of the calculated Jewish calendar by simply "CHECKING UP" specific events recorded in the Bible and comparing them to astronomically accurate information available to them?

But they all tell us that for the entire period of the second Temple the calendar was determined by VISUAL OBSERVATIONS, as reported by reliable witnesses.

Don't you think that the Jewish authors of the article in The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia KNEW what they were talking about, when they wrote:

"NOTHING FURTHER IS KNOWN of the calendar until towards the end of the period of the Second Temple. ... LITTLE IS KNOWN of the procedure of determining the calendar up to the 2nd cent. C.E. [i.e. A.D.], when a description is given of THE TRADITIONAL PRACTICE."

Didn't these Jewish scientists KNOW that the account in the days of David and Jonathan PROVES the existence of the calculated calendar? Didn't they KNOW that the decree of Cyrus the Great in 538 BC PROVES the existence and use of the calculated calendar? Didn't these highly qualified men KNOW that the Day of Trumpets in 515 BC PROVES the use of the calculated calendar? Didn't these astronomers KNOW astronomical data for 536 BC proves the calculated molad to be correct? Didn't these experts

KNOW that 519 BC, the second year of Darius Hystaspes, PROVES the use of the calculated calendar? Didn't these Jewish scholars KNOW that events during the life of "Rabban Gamaliel I the Elder" PROVE that the calculated calendar was already in use during the first century AD?

Didn't all these scholars, who between them very likely represent the most qualified people in the whole world on the subject of the Jewish calendar, KNOW that all these historical events surely PROVE that the calculated calendar was in use in Old Testament times and CERTAINLY during the first century AD?

NO, THEY DIDN'T KNOW THAT!

But WHY didn't they "know" this?

BECAUSE they KNEW that it is utterly and totally illogical to draw any kind of conclusions regarding the calculated calendar from inferences drawn from biblical events, and attempting to compare astronomical data for those events with the calculations of the molads of the present Jewish calendar!

It is that simple!

THE ONLY PEOPLE who are fooled by such illogical inferences from dates in antiquity are people who have A RELIGIOUS BIAS in favour of "WANTING" to see such things "PROVED", people who are DESPERATE for such "proof"!

Even if you were to reason from ONE HUNDRED different dates between 600 BC and 100 AD, it STILL would NOT PROVE that the present calculated calendar was ever used prior to the second century AD! And ONE SINGLE CLEAR EXAMPLE OF WHERE THE CALCULATED CALENDAR IS OBVIOUSLY ASTRONOMICALLY WRONG WILL DEMOLISH EVERYTHING THAT THE "100 EXAMPLES" SUPPOSEDLY "PROVED"!

You can NEVER prove the existence of the calculated Jewish calendar with inferences drawn from examining "molad calculations" for specific years, AND ALL ASTRONOMERS KNOW THIS!

And that is why they never try it! It is so EASY to expose the flaws in such reasoning. It is astronomers who acknowledge that Tishri 1 is sometimes declared the day BEFORE first visibility of the new crescent, and sometimes it is declared the day AFTER first visibility! It is astronomers who know better than anyone else the astronomically unreliable data that the molad calculations produce. It is Jewish astronomers who know that the postponement rules only serve the avoidance of INCONVENIENT days.

A statement like: "As in 536 BCE, the declaration of the Feast of Trumpets in 519 BCE was based STRICTLY ON CALCULATION" (page 10, Trumpets 2000 article) is ridiculous! You would never be able to sell that kind of statement to a highly qualified astronomer writing a calendar article for one of the Jewish encyclopedias. The only people who would buy such a ridiculous statement are those who have a religious bias in favour of that statement.

ALL OF THESE FOOLISH ARGUMENTS ABOUT DATES IN ANTIQUITY CANNOT ERASE THE GROSS ERROR OF 44 HOURS IN THE "DECLARATION OF TISHRI 1" FOR THE YEAR 2000 AD!

When The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia states that ... "LITTLE IS KNOWN of the procedure of determining the calendar up to the 2nd cent. C.E.", then that happens to be the truth! And because it is the truth, THEREFORE the defenders of the present Jewish calendar find themselves DEVOID OF ANY REAL EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THE JEWISH CALENDAR! That is why they are forced to fabricate "evidence" to justify holding to the Jewish calendar. But in fabricating such "evidence" it is inevitable that they will also contradict "evidence" that OTHER supporters of the Jewish calendar have fabricated.

When different people attempt to fabricate evidence for something for which there is no evidence, it is inevitable that they will at times contradict one another.

We need to understand that the supporters of the Jewish calendar do not have even the tiniest shred of BIBLICAL proof or support for their cause. However, they do have a number of BIBLICAL STATEMENTS AND PRINCIPLES THAT WORK AGAINST THE JEWISH CALENDAR! So not only does the Bible NOT support their cause; but they are forced to try to "explain away" biblical statements that really do have a bearing on the calendar.

Therefore they must turn to non-biblical things for support for their cause. However, the Jewish non-biblical historical records ALSO contradict their cause. And that in turn forces them to discredit or to reject outright those particular Jewish historical records, because ALL the Jewish records, when viewed in their totality and in their correct context, contradict the claims such people make for the Jewish calendar. The fact is: there are NO JEWISH RECORDS that claim that the present Jewish calendar was in use any time before the second century AD! You simply don't find any Jewish encyclopedia that will claim that the present Jewish calendar was used in the first century AD, let alone earlier! And with good reason, as I will explain shortly.

But let me show you one example from Mr. Franklin's "Trumpets 2000 AD" article that illustrates how a quotation can be presented to infer something that the actual author did not intend to ever be inferred. On page 11 he quotes the Encyclopedia Judaica as support for the present calculated calendar. He writes:

"Notice: 'The nasi presided over the Sanhedrin, FIXED THE CALENDAR TOGETHER WITH THE COURT BY PROCLAIMING THE NEW MONTH AND INTERCALATING THE YEAR, led public prayers for rain, and ordained scholars (the content and scope of this ordination being somewhat unclear)' (Encyclopaedia Judaica, s.v. 'Nasi')."

MY COMMENTS:

Mr. Franklin has presented this to INFER something that the author of this article in Judaica certainly did not intend to be inferred! "Proclaiming" the new month has nothing to do with "using a calculated calendar". The "proclaiming" followed the examination of reliable witnesses. Similarly, "intercalating" a 13th month into some years also has nothing to do with the calendar having to be the present calculated Jewish calendar. Intercalation was decided based on local conditions extant as the time for a new moon approached. Mr. Franklin implies that Judaica would contradict itself. Here is the proof.

In the Encyclopedia Judaica, volume 5, article "CALENDAR" on page 43 (actually column 43, as the numbering applies to the two columns on each page), thus in the same set of encyclopedias, it is stated:

"IN TEMPLE TIMES this intercalation was decided upon in the individual years ACCORDING TO AGRICULTURAL CONDITIONS (Tosef., Sanh. 2:2; Sanh. 11b); LATER, HOWEVER, IT WAS FIXED to be in the years 3, 6, 8, 11, 14, 17, and 19 of the cycle."

This quotation, which is from an article that deals specifically with the calendar, puts into the correct perspective the incidental reference to the calendar in the article about the "nasi". Thus the Encyclopedia Judaica makes QUITE CLEAR that "in Temple times" the "19-year cycle" was NOT YET FIXED! From other articles we have already seen that "LATER" refers to at least the 2nd century AD!

"Agricultural conditions" very obviously have nothing at all to do with any FIXED sequence of intercalated

years, nothing at all!

Now I ask you:

HOW MUCH PLAINER could you possibly expect this to be said, than to state that intercalation "WAS DECIDED UPON IN THE INDIVIDUAL YEARS ACCORDING TO AGRICULTURAL CONDITIONS"?

To use any other quotation to imply otherwise, to imply that there was indeed a FIXED sequence for the intercalated years, is an attempt to discredit this PLAIN AND UNAMBIGUOUS STATEMENT IN JUDAICA! It is not justified to quote statements which do not very specifically pinpoint the exact time-frame they are intended to apply to. It is not questioned that any quotation which is intended to refer to the time after Hillel II, i.e. after 360 AD, may indeed "support the calculated calendar with its fixed sequence of leap years". But such quotations can NEVER support the calculated calendar supposedly having been in force during the 1st century AD and before!

Understand one other thing about trying to use "the dates of specific biblical events" to try to PROVE that the present calculated calendar was in use back then:

EVERY ARGUMENT ABOUT THE DATES FOR SUCH EVENTS IS TOTALLY "NON-BIBLICAL"! BY "NON-BIBLICAL" I MEAN THAT IT HAS NOTHING AT ALL TO DO WITH THE BIBLE!

This is important to understand! Many people are FOOLED into believing that, by arguing about some biblical event, that therefore the whole argument is somehow BIBLICAL! Nothing could be further from the truth.

Let me make this very plain:

1) Any arguments about the dates of Christ's ministry or Christ's crucifixion have NOTHING TO DO WITH THE BIBLE!

2) Any arguments about the dates or the calendar in the days of David and Jonathan have NOTHING TO DO WITH THE BIBLE!

3) Any arguments about the dates during the reign of Cyrus the Great have NOTHING TO DO WITH THE BIBLE!

4) Any arguments about dates referred to in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah and Haggai have NOTHING TO DO WITH THE BIBLE!

5) Any arguments about the dates for ANY event that is mentioned in ANY book of the Bible have NOTHING TO DO WITH THE BIBLE!

ALL such arguments are TOTALLY non-biblical! Simply because some event or other is REFERRED TO in the Bible, that doesn't therefore mean that such an argument represents BIBLICAL evidence!

The only means anyone has of trying to establish the date for any such events (the crucifixion, decree of Cyrus, etc.) is to appeal to non-biblical secular historical records. THE BIBLE doesn't say that the year of the crucifixion was 30 AD or 31 AD. THE BIBLE doesn't say that the first year of Cyrus was 538 BC. THE BIBLE doesn't say that Ezra arrived in Jerusalem in 515 BC. THE BIBLE simply does not give us any BC

or AD dates for any events!

The determination of such dates relies TOTALLY on non-biblical records.

Now I don't mean to imply that it is wrong to rely on non-biblical records. Not at all. IF it can be shown that certain events can indeed be correctly identified with certain years, then that is fine.

HOWEVER, the point is this:

We should never be fooled into thinking that when we see a whole lot of Scriptures quoted to identify certain historical events, that we are somehow seeing BIBLICAL evidence! Any time someone presents "a molad calculation" for a specific year, that is OBVIOUSLY "non-biblical evidence", because the Bible says nothing about how to calculate the molad. And any time it is asserted that a specific event occurred in 538 BC or in 536 BC or in 515 BC or in 4 BC or in 5 BC or in 26 AD or in 30 AD or in 31 AD or in 69 AD, etc., that is also obviously "non-biblical evidence". Attempts at tying biblical events to specific years and days of the week and of the month in either the Julian or the Gregorian calendar are clearly a non-biblical process. Biblical references to a specific day of the week, for example, would have an equally possible application a week earlier or a week later, or 4 weeks earlier or 4 weeks later, or 50 weeks earlier or 50 weeks later. Such arguments are not anything we can claim as being "biblical support".

I want to make this clear because you should never view arguments about 30 AD or 31 AD, or any other date, as somehow being BIBLICAL EVIDENCE! They are NOT! As soon as someone appeals to "molad calculations" and to "date conversions" into (usually) the Julian calendar, then that AUTOMATICALLY requires NON-BIBLICAL data and information. I do not mean to imply that such arguments are automatically wrong or false, not at all. But the point is: they are not BIBLICAL either! And THAT results in a very significant consideration. Consider this very carefully.

WHENEVER ANY NON-BIBLICAL ARGUMENTS (e.g. appeals to specific calendar dates supposedly being in agreement with the present Jewish calendar, etc.) ARE IN DIRECT CONFLICT WITH BIBLICAL STATEMENTS OR INSTRUCTIONS, THEN IT IS THE NON-BIBLICAL ARGUMENTS THAT ARE THE PROBLEM AND NOT THE BIBLICAL STATEMENTS OR INSTRUCTIONS!

Can you understand this?

For example, when we are told by A NON-BIBLICAL ARGUMENT that in 515 BC the Day of Trumpets was supposedly Thursday, August 24 (Gregorian), thus having the Seven Days of Tabernacles from the evening of September 6 to September 13, while THE BIBLE tells us that Tabernacles is to be AT THE TEKUPAH OF THE YEAR, an unmistakable reference to the autumn equinox, then where is the problem? Do we reject the Scripture (Exodus 34:22) in favour of this non-biblical "evidence", or do we reject the non-biblical "evidence" because it is clearly contradicted by the Scripture? In such a situation it is clearly the non-biblical evidence that needs to be questioned, rather than the Bible!

Let me state something else very plainly.

THERE ARE VERY MANY SUPPORTERS OF THE JEWISH CALENDAR OUT THERE WHO WOULD ALSO WITHOUT HESITATION REJECT MR. FRANKLIN'S CLAIM THAT IN 515 BC THE 7 DAYS OF TABERNACLES WENT FROM SEPTEMBER 6 (evening) TO SEPTEMBER 13!

Even many of the people who strongly support the Jewish calendar would readily admit that claiming a Last Great Day date of September 14 is simply going TOO FAR!

I am convinced that before God it is wrong to argue AGAINST specific scriptural statements and principles in order to uphold some ridiculous argument about the year 515 BC, or any other BC year, supposedly proving the present Jewish calendar to have been in use way back then. That approach smacks very dangerously of the principle of Mark 7:8.

For LAYING ASIDE THE COMMANDMENT OF GOD, YE HOLD THE TRADITION OF MEN, as the washing of pots and cups: AND MANY OTHER SUCH LIKE THINGS YE DO. (Mark 7:8 AV)

Jesus Christ here made very clear that the same people who devised the present Jewish calendar, the Pharisees, were NOTORIOUS for laying aside God's clear instructions in order to uphold some foolish traditions, and, as Jesus Christ said, they used this approach for MANY DIFFERENT THINGS!

Don't we understand that the reason why this was recorded by Mark is so that we would be WARNED? Can we just gloss over this warning by saying: "Well, I don't see any Pharisees around right now, so I guess Mark 7:8 doesn't really have any application to us today? If you use the calculated Jewish calendar, then Jewish records themselves make clear that you are using one of THEIR traditions.

When THE ONLY SUPPOSED "PROOF" people can produce in order to JUSTIFY "holding to" the present Jewish calendar consists of arguing about TOTALLY THEORETICAL AND HYPOTHETICAL DATES FOR BC EVENTS, it makes abundantly clear, beyond any doubts, that they KNOW that THEY CANNOT SUPPORT THEIR VIEWS BY APPEALS TO THE WORD OF GOD! [Arguments about specific dates are NOT biblical support!]

When they then on top of that also have to spend a lot of time trying to discredit and to undermine clear biblical statements and principles, then you know that they themselves realize how weak their case really is. When their focus on the only Scriptures they really present is one of trying to prove that THOSE SCRIPTURES DON'T REALLY MEAN ANYTHING, then they obviously realize that they are fighting with their backs against the wall.

Now let's notice another fact which further demolishes the present Jewish calendar having been in use in BC years.

THE JEWISH CALENDAR CALCULATIONS

I have been very familiar with the calculations of the Jewish calendar for about 34 years, and I have on several occasions taught others how to correctly calculate the Jewish calendar for any given year, without the aid of a computer or even a calculator. All I need is a pen and a piece of paper and a "facts sheet" with all the key data. About 15 years ago I wrote my own little spreadsheet program to correctly calculate the Jewish calendar, with postponement rules applied as laid down in the Jewish calendar instructions, for any given year. I mention this because the vast majority of the people who will vehemently defend the Jewish calendar are themselves in fact TOTALLY CLUELESS as to how the Jewish calendar is actually calculated. Yet they will dogmatically defend something about which they themselves know next to nothing.

Now I mentioned earlier that the calendar calculations depend on TWO separate and independent "molad" calculations. By way of further explanation, in the Jewish calendar calculations each hour is divided into 1080 "halakim" or "parts"; i.e. one "halak" is equal to three-and-one-third seconds.

The first calculation will tell you THE DAY OF THE WEEK for the year you wish to calculate. The answer will tell you exactly how many "days + hours + halakim" the molad you are calculating exceeds a full number of weeks. That information is needed, but BY ITSELF it does not in any way help you to know WHICH WEEK in the year that should be. For example, for the year 1964 AD this calculation gives the answer: "1 day + 21 hours + 872 halakim" (using in the calculations the midnight - midnight reckoning for days). This translates into Day 1 = SUNDAY, 21 hours = 9:00 p.m.; 872 halakim = 48 minutes and 26,6 seconds. That is thus in plain terms Sunday evening at 9:48:26 p.m., which is really the early part of Monday, counting days from sunset to sunset.

So great! Now you know that the molad will be on a Sunday evening between 9 and 10 p.m. But HOW DO YOU FIND OUT WHICH SUNDAY THAT IS?

This is where you now need THE SECOND CALCULATION. This calculation is designed to establish THE DAY OF THE MONTH for that same molad. This answer calculates the day of the month IN THE ROMAN JULIAN CALENDAR for the molad. In the answer that you obtain the "hours + halakim" must be identical to the result you achieved in the first calculation. If they are not identical, then that is proof that you have made a mistake in your calculations.

Now BOTH calculations depend on a STARTING DATE. That "starting date" is the molad of Tishri for the year 3761 BC, which is given as "Day 1 + 23 hours + 204 halakim" and this is given as OCTOBER 6 in the Julian calendar. This translates to Sunday evening shortly after 11:00 p.m., thus really the first part of Monday, October 7.

[Comment: Many people who use that date would not immediately think that Sunday, October 6 for 3761 BC is in fact only Sunday, SEPTEMBER 5 IN THE GREGORIAN CALENDAR ... i.e. in a calendar where the equinox is reckoned to have been on September 23. This translates the theoretical Nisan 1 date for 3761 BC into March 13 in the Gregorian calendar, 8 days before the end of winter. The Julian date for 3761 BC makes it look a month later in the season, thus much more acceptable, than it in fact is. It is in fact a LOUSY starting date; it really should have been one new moon later to be in the correct season. It is obviously all only hypothetical, and ABSOLUTELY divorced from reality. In actual fact every one of the 19 years in that FIRST "19-year cycle" started before the spring equinox, but you only see this when you convert the dates for those years into the Gregorian calendar. THE JEWISH CALENDAR WAS FLAWED FROM THE OUTSET!]

Now here is something that EVERYBODY ought to be able to understand.

THESE CALCULATIONS COULD NOT HAVE BEEN DEvised BEFORE JULIUS CAESAR INTRODUCED HIS CALENDAR INTO THE ROMAN WORLD IN 45 BC!

Can you understand that without a starting date in terms of the JULIAN calendar it would have been impossible to devise these calculations? If you could not use a starting date for 3761 BC IN JULIAN CALENDAR TERMS, then it would be totally impossible to make ANY calculations back into history. It would be equally impossible to make any calculations for FUTURE years. The Jewish calendar calculations, as they are extant today, DEPEND ON AN ABSOLUTE SCALE in terms of years, even if you were to use a different year as the "starting date". And no absolute scale ever existed before Julius Caesar introduced his calendar to the world.

ASTRONOMERS know this as self-evident. And that is why no self-respecting Jewish astronomer would ever dare to claim any BC origin for the present Jewish calendar calculations.

It is IMPOSSIBLE in the Jewish calendar calculations to calculate the day of the month without being

TOTALLY DEPENDENT ON the Julian calendar. Even the "starting date" of 3761 BC could never have been arrived at without the existence of the Julian calendar. Furthermore, it is patently clear that this starting date of 3761 BC was derived from the chronologically very corrupt document known as the "Seder Olam", and it is well-known that this "Seder Olam" could not have been written before the late 130's AD at the very earliest, because it includes references to the Bar Kokhba revolt, which resulted in Jerusalem being destroyed once again by the Romans in 135 AD.

The point is: the Jewish calendar calculations **DEPEND ON THE EXISTENCE OF THE JULIAN CALENDAR**. The Jewish calculations are built on the foundation of the Julian calendar already being in existence. The very purpose of the Jewish calendar calculations is to arrive at a date for the molad **IN ROMAN CALENDAR TERMS!**

That is all very understandable when we bear in mind that Hillel II only established these calculations in 359 AD, at a time when the Julian calendar was accepted throughout the Roman Empire. It was Hillel's explicit purpose to help Jews calculate the molads in terms of the Roman calendar, the calendar Jews throughout the Roman Empire were using for their daily lives, even as we today use the Roman Gregorian calendar for regulating our daily lives.

But the exact same calculations lose any possible meaning or significance when we are talking about BC dates, **BEFORE THE JULIAN CALENDAR CAME INTO EXISTENCE!** It would have been **IMPOSSIBLE** to use those calculations before the Julian calendar existed.

Anybody who is familiar with all the details of the Jewish calendar calculations should **IMMEDIATELY** recognize that these calculations could not possibly have existed in their present format in BC times! Yes, the fairly accurate calculations for the "average" lunar month that are employed in the Jewish calculations can be traced to the Greek astronomer Hipparchus; but these two independent calculations in the Jewish calendar simply could not have existed in BC times!

Therefore it is **PATENTLY RIDICULOUS** to claim that the calculations of the present Jewish calendar, which calculations depend completely on the existence of the Julian calendar, were somehow **"PRESERVED BY THE PRIESTS"**.

Such claims could only be made by people who themselves know nothing about those calculations! It should be **TOTALLY OBVIOUS** that a set of calculations, whose only purpose is to establish a molad **IN ROMAN CALENDAR TERMS** could obviously not predate the existence of that Roman calendar! So how can anybody **POSSIBLY** argue for these calculations supposedly predating the existence of the Roman calendar, without exposing either ignorance or hypocrisy?

Don't we understand that there must obviously be some **VERY GOOD REASONS** why Jewish astronomers are very careful to never imply that the present calculated Jewish calendar was used in the first century AD or earlier? Anyone familiar with the calculated calendar's total dependence on the existence of the Julian calendar should immediately recognize the impossibility of these calculations having been used in BC years. This is what in a legal situation might be described as **"THE INTERNAL EVIDENCE"** within the calculations themselves. This internal evidence negates any possibility of those calculations preceding the existence of the Julian calendar.

And if these calculations were **NOT** used for the Jewish calendar in the centuries BC, then **SOMEONE MUST HAVE ORIGINATED THEM IN THE CENTURIES FOLLOWING THE FIRST CENTURY AD!**

So the question is: **WHO** had the right to originate a set of calculations to determine "the **AVERAGE** new moon conjunctions"? The Jews themselves have no problems with this, because they do not in any way impute some "divine" origin to their calendar calculations. To the Jews it does not in any way make a

difference whether their calendar calculations go back to Hillel II or whether they were only finalized in the 9th century AD. That is immaterial to them. And they see no reason to somehow claim a more ancient origin rather than to acknowledge a more recent origin. It doesn't bother or affect them to acknowledge the 1964 Britannica's statement that "its present form is not of great antiquity". "Great antiquity" is totally immaterial to the Jews.

BUT FOR CHRISTIANS, WHO NEED TO DEFEND USING THIS JEWISH CALENDAR, IT IS A TOTALLY DIFFERENT STORY!

For Christians it is absolutely IMPERATIVE to assert "great antiquity" for this Jewish calendar. For Christian defenders of the Jewish calendar to have to acknowledge that its origin rests with Hillel II in 359 AD, if not later, is their worst nightmare!

It is exactly the same scenario as the Catholics and the Protestants. The Catholics can freely acknowledge that the Bible nowhere commands us to observe Sunday, that THEY on their own authority changed the Sabbath to Sunday. But for the Protestants it is their worst nightmare to be forced to admit that the Bible NOWHERE commands us to observe Sunday. The Protestants simply HAVE TO FIND BIBLICAL REASONS for Sunday observance ... even though the Catholics freely admit that there are no such "biblical" reasons.

Likewise, the Jews can freely admit that their present calendar was devised by Hillel II in 359 AD, and that it continued to go through further development until the 900's AD. But it would be the death knell for any defender of the Jewish calendar to have to concede that it only originated with Hillel II. They simply HAVE TO FIND BIBLICAL JUSTIFICATIONS for this Jewish calendar. It is not surprising that their efforts are just as ingenious and inventive and contradictory and hypocritical and futile and incredibly shallow, as are the efforts of the Protestants in their attempts to provide BIBLICAL reasons for Sunday observance.

So a careful examination of the processes involved in the calculations of the Jewish calendar all by itself proves quite clearly that these calculations could not possibly have existed in BC times. And that is why it is so very helpful for the defenders of the Jewish calendar if the people they wish to persuade are completely ignorant of the actual calculations that are involved.

And while we are dealing with the actual calendar calculations, there is one other point we should notice.

THE STARTING DATE IS TOTALLY WACKY

As mentioned, the Jewish calendar appeals to a supposed molad of Tishri for the year 3761 BC. FROM THAT DATE FORWARDS all subsequent molads of Tishri are calculated based on applying the time for the "mean" lunar month 235 times for every 19-year period.

However, you will recall that Mr. Franklin himself also told us that after the time of David God TWICE "altered the arrangement of the heavenly bodies", and thereby "caused the position of the earth and the moon to shift in relation to the sun". This intervention must OBVIOUSLY have changed the length of the lunar month and the solar year, because Mr. Franklin himself tells us that "as a result" there were many years when the projected time of the molad was not correct.

Mr. Franklin's own statements indicate a difference in the length of the lunar months before and after this intervention by God.

BUT THE JEWISH CALENDAR CALCULATIONS ERRONEOUSLY ASSUME THAT EVERY LUNAR

MONTH ALL THE WAY BACK TO 3761 BC HAS ALWAYS BEEN EXACTLY THE SAME LENGTH OF TIME AS EVERY OTHER LUNAR MONTH.

So clearly the Jewish calendar calculations are ignoring reality and FAKING SOMETHING! In other words: IT IS IMPOSSIBLE for the molad of Tishri for the year 3761 BC (i.e. approximately 200 years after Adam's creation) to have been on October 6 in the Julian calendar! And Mr. Franklin's own evidence proves this!

With that "altered arrangement of the heavenly bodies" in mind, it is equally IMPOSSIBLE to accurately establish ANY DATES PRIOR TO THE TIME ISRAEL WENT INTO NATIONAL CAPTIVITY! Every PRECISE date (i.e. the exact month and day of the month in Roman calendar terms) that we try to establish for any year before 700 BC is GUARANTEED TO BE IN ERROR TO SOME DEGREE!

That October 6 (or September 5, Gregorian) has got nothing at all to do with when the new moon of Tishri in the year 3761 BC REALLY occurred! It is faked. Now it is absolutely NEEDED! And Hillel II arrived at that molad for 3761 BC simply by extrapolating backwards. He could have chosen any other year as the "starting year" for the calendar, without in any way altering the results that are achieved for future years by those calculations. But he was influenced by the Seder Olam document to opt for the molad of Tishri in 3761 BC.

But we are supposedly seeing GOD in the picture, right? So the question is:

WHY would GOD possibly endorse some calculations that assert a totally fictitious new moon for the year 3761 BC? After all, God KNOWS better than anyone else that the new moon of Tishri in 3761 BC was NOT on September 5, Gregorian! God KNOWS that the new moon data for 3761 BC is totally fake! Would GOD ever extend His approval to FAKE DATES? WHY would God

possibly stoop to endorsing dishonest data and dishonest claims, just for the sake of establishing some "calculated" calendar?

Or worse yet, how can anyone claim that GOD gave these calculations, based on a totally fictitious new moon at around the year 200 after Adam's creation, to Moses? WHY would GOD give calculations based on a totally FAKED starting date to His people? Is that supposed to be THE BEST GOD COULD COME UP WITH, calculations that rely on a FAKED starting date?

Once again, I believe it is A GREAT INSULT TO GOD to infer God's involvement IN ANY WAY in calculations that PRETEND that a new moon in 3761 BC occurred on September 5, Gregorian! People are "pretenders" and Satan CERTAINLY is "a great pretender", but pretending is not something GOD engages in! To infer that God gives His approval to some totally fictitious new moon, when God vividly knows, to the millisecond, exactly when that new moon really DID occur, is an insult to God's character! Isaiah 1:14 expresses God's feelings on this subject. DON'T EVER SELL ISAIAH 1:14 SHORT!

Let's now notice some more statements in Mr. Franklin's "Trumpets 2000 AD" paper.

THE START OF YEARS AND THE SEASONS

Let's examine a few quotations from Mr. Franklin's "Trumpets 2000 AD" paper, which show us exactly what he believes in regard to when God wants the year to start and how God views the seasons. This information includes THE MOST BASIC FOUNDATION on which he builds his arguments. Everything else is dependent on his assertions in this regard being correct.

But before we do this, let's firmly keep the following things in mind.

The Jews have since Talmudic times ALWAYS understood that the two solstices and the two equinoxes are the starting dates for the FOUR seasons in the year. Recall that 50 years ago Arthur Spier, a highly qualified Jewish astronomer, published a book which he entitled "THE COMPREHENSIVE HEBREW CALENDAR, ITS STRUCTURE, HISTORY, And One Hundred Years Of Corresponding Dates". How "COMPREHENSIVE" was Arthur Spier's knowledge of the Hebrew calendar? Was Arthur Spier bragging with that title? Or did Arthur Spier PERHAPS know as much about the Hebrew calendar as Mr. Franklin?? Did Arthur Spier PERHAPS know as much about THE HISTORY of the Hebrew calendar as Mr. Franklin?? Arthur Spier's writings (before the age of personal computers) make quite clear that he was also quite familiar with the Talmud.

It is quite clear that Arthur Spier had no ulterior motive of any kind in the way he presented the information about the calendar. He had no particular agenda, as we might term it today. He also did not attempt to hide anything about the calendar. So was Arthur Spier TERRIBLY DELUDED when he told us that the Jews have ALWAYS equated the word "tekufah" (or "tekufath") with the two equinoxes and the two solstices, and the four seasons that start on those four dates? Was Arthur Spier TERRIBLY DELUDED when he stated that the Jewish calendar has always recognized FOUR seasons? Were there MAJOR GAPS IN HIS UNDERSTANDING ABOUT THE JEWISH CALENDAR?

It is quite clear that Arthur Spier was only concerned with presenting INFORMATION AND UNDERSTANDING ABOUT the Jewish calendar. It is equally clear that Mr. Franklin is NOT AT ALL concerned with presenting INFORMATION ABOUT the Jewish calendar. He is concerned exclusively with attempting TO PROVE SOMETHING "ABOUT" THE JEWISH CALENDAR! His efforts are all directed at attempting to prove GOD'S APPROVAL for this Jewish calendar. The opening statements in his articles make this purpose abundantly clear. He has not anywhere presented any calendar information that would, in his own estimation, detract from his goal. His is obviously a vastly different goal from the one that Arthur Spier had.

With any article we must always keep in mind the author's PURPOSE for the information he presents in his writings. An author, whose only purpose is TO INFORM his readers about something, is ALWAYS going to have A TOTALLY DIFFERENT APPROACH from an author whose real purpose is TO PERSUADE OR TO CONVINCE his readers about something. Any author whose purpose is TO CONVINCE his readers of a specific point of view, will OBVIOUSLY NEVER present any facts that he is aware of that would weaken the case he is trying to make. Such facts will certainly never be volunteered, and IF they are brought into the discussion by another party, then they must obviously be argued against. That should be self-evident.

I believe in keeping this distinction in purposes clearly in mind. And THEREFORE whenever there is a clash between the information Arthur Spier has presented and the information Mr. Franklin has presented, then I myself have NO HESITATION WHATSOEVER in accepting Arthur Spier's explanations rather than Mr. Franklin's explanations. Because of his open approach, I believe that I must extend more credibility to Arthur Spier's presentation of the facts. I am also convinced that Arthur Spier did in fact know FAR more about the Jewish calendar than Mr. Franklin.

Next, in 1971 the Encyclopedia Judaica stated the following, which we have already looked at earlier:

"As stated, THE FOUR SEASONS in the Jewish year ARE CALLED TEKUFOT. More accurately, IT IS THE BEGINNING OF EACH OF THE FOUR SEASONS -- according to the common view, the mean beginning -- THAT IS NAMED TEKUFAH (literally "circuit", from "quph" related to "naqaph", "to go round")."

Now I have to again ask myself: WHO knows better what the HEBREW word "tekufah" means: the

Jewish astronomer who wrote this article for the Encyclopedia Judaica or Mr. Franklin? I ask myself: WHO is more qualified to correctly explain how THE JEWS understand this word "tekufah"? I ask myself: WHO has a far greater background in the Jewish calendar, the Jewish astronomer or Mr. Franklin? Again, it is very clear that the Encyclopedia Judaica article is written from the sole motivation of presenting information about the Jewish calendar. That motivation is also clearly vastly different from Mr. Franklin's motivation.

So again I have NO HESITATION WHATSOEVER in accepting the Encyclopedia Judaica's explanation for the Hebrew word "tekufah" rather than Mr. Franklin's explanation. I don't believe that both, Arthur Spier and also the author of the Encyclopedia Judaica article, were somehow TERRIBLY UNINFORMED in their views, and that Mr. Franklin discovered "new truth" about the word "tekufah" that was unknown to these highly qualified Jewish scholars.

Next, I have to ask myself: WHO is correct: ALL THE ENCYCLOPEDIAS we have examined which state unequivocally that there is AN ASTRONOMICAL ERROR of one day for every 216 years in the Jewish calendar, or Mr. Franklin, whose stated purpose is to claim that the present Jewish calendar is "in complete harmony with the astronomical cycles that God has ordained"? I have to ask myself: WHO IS MORE QUALIFIED when it comes to evaluating astronomical facts, the authors of all these encyclopedia articles or Mr. Franklin?

I have to ask myself: did Mr. Franklin and these authors have the same purpose or did they write from different motivations? It is clear that the authors of the encyclopedia articles were only concerned with presenting factual information. It is equally clear that Mr. Franklin was concerned primarily with attempting to substantiate his own position. So again, when it comes to evaluating the Jewish calendar's "harmony with astronomical facts", I have NO HESITATION WHATSOEVER in accepting the information presented by the encyclopedias rather than Mr. Franklin's ideas, which attempt to infer "astronomical harmony".

Next, when I see a clash in statements about THE HISTORY OF THE JEWISH CALENDAR, with numerous encyclopedias and other Jewish authors freely admitting that the Jewish calendar was NOT based on calculations until at least into the 2nd century AD, but rather was until then based on the reports of eyewitnesses, whereas Mr. Franklin asserts that the calculated calendar was already in use for many centuries BC, I again have to ask myself: WHO has access to more information, all these authors or Mr. Franklin? I have to ask myself: WHO has the motive of trying to prove a specific point, and who has no other motive than presenting factual information? I ask myself: WHO is more qualified to have this information correct? So again, when there is a clash in the information pertaining to the history of the Jewish calendar, I have NO HESITATION WHATSOEVER in accepting what all these encyclopedias and other authors have stated over accepting the assertions Mr. Franklin is making about the supposed antiquity of the present calculated calendar.

Next, when a highly qualified Jewish astronomer like Shlomo Sternberg states unequivocally that the postponement rules serve a UTILITARIAN reason, that they serve the purpose of postponing Tishri 1 away from INCONVENIENT days, and when this clashes with Mr. Franklin's claim that the only purpose for the postponement rules is "to determine THE EARLIEST TIME that the new crescent may possibly BE SEEN FROM JERUSALEM", then I again have to ask myself some questions. I have no hesitation in believing that Shlomo Sternberg's only motivation was to provide information about the Jewish calendar. It is also clear that Mr. Franklin's motivation was to claim A JUSTIFICATION for the postponement rules. I have to ask myself: WHO knows better the real purpose for the postponement rules, the Jewish astronomer Shlomo Sternberg or Mr. Franklin? And again I have NO HESITATION WHATSOEVER in accepting Shlomo Sternberg's statements ahead of Mr. Franklin's claims. I see no other option than accepting Shlomo Sternberg's explanation as correct because he clearly had no other motivation than to present factual information about the Jewish calendar.

Similarly, I have to keep in mind that "evidence of intercalation" has NOTHING AT ALL to do with the present calculated Jewish calendar. A calendar that depended on starting each month based on the reports of reliable eye-witnesses OBVIOUSLY also included a 13th month being added to some years. So the fact that we can see certain years with 13 months in them has nothing at all to do with the present calculated calendar. And it proves NOTHING as far as the present calendar is concerned.

Furthermore, when there is a clash between what Arthur Spier tells me about the sequence of intercalation and what Mr. Franklin tells me about the sequence of intercalation, then I am again forced to ask myself some questions. WHO is likely to have had access to the more reliable data, the Jewish astronomer Arthur Spier or Mr. Franklin? It is clear to me that Arthur Spier had no motivation of any kind other than to inform his readers of the facts. Arthur Spier did not present this information in an effort to prove anything specific. On the other hand, it is clear to me that Mr. Franklin's assertions regarding a specific FIXED sequence of leap years going back into the centuries BC is motivated DIRECTLY by a desire to substantiate his claims for the present Jewish calendar. So when there is such a clash in the information presented, I once again have NO HESITATION WHATSOEVER in accepting the views of the Jewish astronomer Arthur Spier over the views of Mr. Franklin.

In ALL of the above situations Mr. Franklin has such an OBVIOUS vested interest in the information he presents, while those who contradict his views EQUALLY OBVIOUSLY have no vested interest of any kind in the information THEY present, that I have no other option but to always accept the views of these Jewish astronomers in opposition to Mr. Franklin's views.

It follows that NO AMOUNT OF QUOTATIONS, which involve interpreting what those quotations actually or supposedly prove, CAN DO AWAY WITH THE INFORMATION ARTHUR SPIER AND THE ENCYCLOPEDIA JUDAICA HAVE PRESENTED! BOTH THOSE AUTHORS SPELL OUT IN PLAIN TERMS WHAT "TEKUFAH" MEANS! NO INTERPRETATIONS ARE REQUIRED!

Likewise no amount of quotations can do away with the information from the other encyclopedias and additional authors that the Jewish calendar does indeed incorporate an astronomical error, that it was NOT based on calculations until at least into the 2nd century AD, that the postponement rules do indeed serve a utilitarian purpose, and that the sequence of intercalation was not fixed until after the 2nd century AD was well under way.

THESE FACTS ARE ALL CLEARLY ESTABLISHED!

Now we are ready to look at some more quotations from Mr. Franklin. The following quotations represent major foundations on which he has built his whole presentation. These quotations show his views on when the year should start, and how he views "the annual seasons". The intent of these views falls into the area of attempting to "explain away" specific scriptural statements.

Here is the first quotation.

"Because the wave sheaf is no longer being offered, they see no reason to wait for THE RIPENING of the first barley BEFORE BEGINNING THE NEW YEAR. Those who hold this view are ignoring THE FACT that when God linked the first month of the year to the harvest cycle, He did not make any reference to the offering of the wave sheaf. ... This month is clearly identified in Scripture as the time of THE RIPENING barley ..." (page 17)

My comments:

Notice that Mr. Franklin states that the first month should NOT BEGIN BEFORE THE RIPENING of the

first barley, and he disagrees with those who reject this "requirement"! Recall that earlier Mr. Franklin told us that in 515 BC the Day of Trumpets was Gregorian calendar August 24 (should have been August 25). This means that in 515 BC NISAN 1 WAS ON FEBRUARY 28 (should have been March 1)Gregorian calendar.

IT IS TOTALLY RIDICULOUS TO ASSUME THAT BARLEY WAS "RIPENING" IN PALESTINE BY FEBRUARY 28! OR BY MARCH 1!

So Mr. Franklin's OWN evidence here exposes the foolishness of all his arguments about ancient BC dates. It also exposes the UTTER DISREGARD FOR GOD'S INSTRUCTIONS inherent in the present Jewish calendar, which is what he is arguing from.

Let's continue.

"The phrase 'the beginning of' in Exodus 12:2 is translated from the Hebrew word 'rosh' and simply means 'head' ... The Hebrew text identifies this month as the beginning or 'head' of all the months of the year." (page 18)

My comments:

In this verse the construct usage of "rosh" actually means "head OF". Abib is identified as the head OF all the months in the year, and as the first month OF "haShanah" (the year). The point is that Exodus 12:2 very pointedly identifies the month Nisan (or Abib) as "ROSH HASHANAH", which means "head of the year". This is thus very clearly a BIBLICAL statement. It follows that ANY CALENDAR that dares to call any other day or month "Rosh HaShanah" is IN VIOLATION OF SCRIPTURE! So why should we possibly not find the present Jewish calendar GUILTY OF CONTEMPT FOR GOD when they call Tishri 1 "Rosh HaShanah"?

The next quotation:

"Abib meaning 'green ears', is a Hebrew term for ripening grain. It is not the title of the month but a descriptive term linking the first month with the beginning of the harvest cycle. ... According to Scripture, the first month CANNOT BEGIN UNLESS THE SPRING BARLEY IS BEGINNING TO RIPEN IN THE LAND OF ISRAEL." (page 18)

My comments:

That sounds fine to me! There are in fact OTHER additional requirements as well, but the month CERTAINLY, as Mr. Franklin has pointed out here, cannot BEGIN before the barley starts to ripen. So in 515 BC Mr. Franklin wants us to believe that barley started ripening by February 28 or March 1?

That is ridiculous.

Now I believe that IF God insisted on barley ripening before the first month could start, THEN GOD WAS ASSUREDLY NOT THINKING OF SOME CLOWN GROWING A SMALL PATCH OF BARLEY IN SOME SHELTERED AND SECLUDED AREA! Because God didn't give His laws and instructions for clowns.

IF God insisted on barley ripening before the first month could start, THEN God intended that to be something that would be verified by THE MAJORITY of barley farmers in the area of Jerusalem (where

the Temple was, and where the wave offering was to later be brought, and where the decisions were made) being able to SEE that their barley harvest was ripening, and within two weeks a sheaf of the firstfruits would indeed be available for the wave offering. God was NOT establishing "some committee" that would each year assess how ripe the barley crop was as a new moon was approaching.

Now as far as WHEN barley ripens in Palestine is concerned, we can easily hear different opinions. When I find a clash between the time for when barley ripens that is claimed by Mr. Franklin or by anyone else who wants to defend the Jewish calendar with such information, and between the time which A QUALIFIED FARMER IN ISRAEL, WHO IS ALSO A CIVIL SERVANT, tells me, then I again have to ask myself some questions. Likewise, when I find a clash between the time such a qualified farmer might tell me and the time A RELIGIOUS GROUP, who use the ripening of barley to determine their calendar (e.g. Karaites in Israel, etc.), might tell me, then I also have to ask myself some questions.

WHO is more likely to have no vested interest of any kind in the outcome of such a question, the qualified farmer civil servant, or the defenders of the Jewish calendar and groups like the Karaites who decide their own calendar? Who is likely to KNOW with greater accuracy the time for ripe barley in Israel, not just "one bunch" of barley, but the whole barley harvest in the country?

Now many of you know that I have on a few occasions quoted from the letter of the DIRECTOR FIELD CROPS DEPARTMENT OF THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL, a Mr. N. Bar-Droma, which letter he wrote on June 8th, 1983. The key paragraph reads as follows (spelling and grammar as in the letter):

"This year [i.e. 1983] was a very exceptional one, from climatic point of view. We have had an extreme wet and cold winter and therefor there was a great delay in the ripening of wheat and barley. Both are sown as a rule, in November and THE HARVEST STARTS AROUND THE END OF APRIL - THE BEGINNING OF MAY. As stated, this year, the first wheat and barley have been harvested NOT BEFORE MID OF MAY in the Jordan Valley [i.e. only 3 weeks before Mr. Bar-Droma wrote this letter]."

As DIRECTOR of the Field Crops Dept. Mr. Bar-Droma was WITHOUT DOUBT A QUALIFIED FARMER! Did he know what he was talking about when he said that in 1983 the barley harvest had only STARTED three weeks before he wrote this letter, or was he all confused and unlikely to get his facts straight? Is there any possible ulterior motive Mr. Bar-Droma could have had to say that NORMALLY the barley harvest in the Jordan Valley only starts around THE END OF APRIL?

Mr. Bar-Droma adds that today they have to leave the harvest in the fields until the moisture content drops to 12-13% in order to use mechanical harvesters. He then wrote (spelling as is):

"IN THE ANCIENT TIMES and even to-day with primitive methods the barley and wheat were harvested with a sickle and left on the land in sheaves for further drying. Therefor the crop COULD BE HARVESTED A COUPLE OF WEEKS EARLIER even if the barley would have been harvested with 20% moisture content."

Here Mr. Bar-Droma is saying that in biblical times the barley could have been manually harvested by the middle of April, i.e. "a couple of weeks earlier". Now with modern technology we have produced specific varieties for various grains that ripen with a shorter growing season. We also have numerous seeds today that have been developed to incorporate certain "desirable attributes". Some well-known examples are: corn, soy beans and cotton, though numerous other seeds have also been modified. In some cases the "desirable attribute" is a shorter growing season.

The motivation behind such "developments" in the case of barley seeds has been to extend further north the areas where these grains can be raised, into the northern states of the USA and even into Canada. These varieties with shorter growing seasons are a modern development; but let's just assume that PERHAPS in biblical times there were also SOME varieties of barley that matured with a shorter growing season. IF that was the case, then PERHAPS barley could have ripened enough for harvesting (with both, a higher moisture content and a shorter growing season) as early as THE FIRST WEEK OF APRIL?

When Mr. Bar-Droma tells me that in 1983 the barley harvest didn't start until THE MIDDLE OF MAY, and when he then points out that in biblical times barley could have been harvested as early as THE MIDDLE OF APRIL, then going another 10 days earlier is surely as early as one could possibly stretch it? So when less than 20 years after Mr. Bar-Droma's MID-MAY barley harvest some Karaites tell me that they found RIPE BARLEY ANOTHER TWO OR THREE WEEKS EARLIER STILL (i.e. around March 15th to 20th) ... THEN I AGAIN HAVE TO ASK MYSELF SOME QUESTIONS.

Was Mr. Bar-Droma totally out of touch with reality? Do people who claim to find ripe barley A FULL 25 DAYS BEFORE Mr. Bar-Droma asserts barley was ripe in biblical times have any vested interests in finding such "ripe barley"? Specifically, are they resorting to using SPECIFICALLY GENETICALLY ENGINEERED SEEDS, developed for the colder growing areas in the northern USA and Canada, in order to come up with such "early RIPE barley"? And are such people staking EVERYTHING as far as their calendar is concerned on finding such "ripe barley"? I have to also ask myself:

"DID GOD REALLY INTEND "RIPE BARLEY" TO BE THE FINAL AND ULTIMATE AUTHORITY IN THE DETERMINATION OF THE CALENDAR?"

Anyway, Mr. Franklin's own examples with references to years like 515 BC contradict his own stated "requirements" for the calendar. It is utterly absurd to expect "ripening barley" in Palestine by February 28 (or March 1), the date on which Mr. Franklin would have us believe the first month started in 515 BC.

THE YEAR 515 BC PROVES CONCLUSIVELY THAT MR. FRANKLIN'S CALENDAR THEORIES ARE COMPLETELY WRONG!

And be warned, using the leap year sequence that Mr. Franklin insists on applying to the year 515 BC means that I could present MULTIPLE DOZENS OF YEARS where the start of the year is supposedly equally ridiculously early as in Mr. Franklin's 515 BC example. The year 515 BC is by no means an isolated example of the folly of Mr. Franklin's theories, not at all.

If anything, the lesson from Mr. Bar-Droma's letter is that for some years the start of the year should be EVEN LATER, because of unexpected climatic conditions (i.e. IF you want to look to the barley harvest, which I personally don't believe is the final word on establishing the start of the year) delaying the ripening of the barley (as in 1983!). So barley can at the earliest be ripe in Palestine by the first week of April; it may sometimes be LATER, but never earlier! Any earlier dates require "cooking the books" with genetically altered seeds, etc..

The Director of Field Crops in Israel really DID know what he was talking about, and in a clash of opinions I would with NO HESITATION WHATSOEVER accept his explanations as correct over any explanations offered by anyone (Karaites, etc.) who has a vested interest in determining the time of the ripening of barley.

Mr. Franklin states:

"By linking the words 'abib' and 'gehres', the Hebrew text confirms that the month of Abib is the time in which the barley ripens TO FULLY MATURE KERNELS." (page 18)

That seems a little bit of an unusual comment when two paragraphs earlier Mr. Franklin claims very directly that Abib "IS NOT THE TITLE OF THE MONTH"! How can he refer to "the month of Abib" after stating so emphatically that Abib is NOT what that month should be called? Is his memory really that short?

Here is his earlier statement:

"ABIB, meaning 'green ears', is a Hebrew term for ripening grain. IT IS NOT THE TITLE OF THE MONTH but a descriptive term linking the first month with the beginning of the harvest cycle." (page 18)

Note also that he INSISTS on the barley kernels being FULLY MATURE before the end of that first month "Abib". That is very unlikely to have been achieved much before the latter half of the Gregorian calendar month of April in biblical times, when TODAY the barley only BEGINS to be ripe by the end of April.

Let's now look at another quotation.

THE BARLEY YEAR AND THE EMPEROR'S INVISIBLE NEW CLOTHES

Here is what Mr. Franklin says:

"The use of the word 'abib' in the Hebrew text makes clear that THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR HINGES ON THE STATE OF THE BARLEY HARVEST." (page 18)

That statement is totally and completely and utterly absurd! The use of the word "abib" doesn't make that clear at all! It requires an ENORMOUS amount of "reading something into this word" to draw such a conclusion, that everything "hinges" on the barley harvest.

Rather, that statement makes God out to be a rather low IQ individual who has no better concept of a year than to look to some barley plants in the area of Palestine to tell Him when the year should start! With God EVERYTHING supposedly "hinges" on the barley in one specific locality on earth. The idea that THIS will determine when a year for the whole planet is to start is utterly preposterous! The whole world supposedly revolves around the barley in Palestine! And God is supposedly TOTALLY AND COMPLETELY UNCONCERNED WITH THE ASTRONOMICAL REALITIES HE HAPPENS TO HAVE CREATED!

For one thing:

I have it on very reliable evidence that the Jews in Palestine in 1983 were not ready, because of very adverse weather conditions, to BEGIN harvesting their barley until the middle of May! Yet the Jewish calculated calendar in 1983 started the first month on MARCH 15TH! That's TWO FULL MONTHS BEFORE the farmers in Palestine were able to BEGIN harvesting barley. The weather that year was very adverse for harvesting field crops, and IF Mr. Franklin's idea is correct, THEN in 1983 the present Jewish calendar was GROSSLY INCORRECT! And, as a matter of interest, for 1983 the Jewish

calendar was INDEED incorrect; it was WRONG to start the year in the winter (March 15th is still a part of winter), and therefore in 1983 the year really should only have started one new moon later than March 15th.

For another thing:

By making two mutually exclusive claims for the calendar, Mr. Franklin is once again shooting himself in the foot! It is IMPOSSIBLE to employ a FIXED SEQUENCE OF LEAP YEARS and to also at the very same time make the beginning of the barley harvest a requirement for the calendar! The year 1983 is a vivid and powerful illustration of this point. ADVERSE WEATHER CONDITIONS, which can easily delay the time of the barley harvest, are totally divorced from any "fixed sequence of leap years". To believe in some kind of relationship between weather conditions and any fixed sequence of leap years requires FAR MORE BLIND FAITH than to believe in the tooth fairy and in the emperor's invisible new clothes!

But that's not even the main point here.

THE MAIN POINT IS THAT MAKING THE START OF THE YEAR CONDITIONAL ON THE BARLEY HARVEST IN PALESTINE MAKES GOD OUT TO BE A FOOL!

And I will not stand by idly while people insult the intelligence of the Almighty God in order to uphold some perverse human traditions! It makes me angry when people INSULT God in order to uphold their traditions! And I don't really care if my anger at people's insults for the intelligence of the Almighty God offends people. That's just tough! But I will NOT stand by and let people debase God's intelligence to the level of a moron!!! I WILL SET THE RECORD STRAIGHT!!!

WE HUMAN BEINGS are smart enough to know that there are four precise days in every solar year that we can pinpoint with accuracy in advance, and these four days have been known to man since antiquity. Without these four days (the two equinoxes and the two solstices) we have NO REFERENCE POINTS OF ANY KIND FOR THE YEAR!

Do you understand this?

IF WE IGNORE the equinoxes and the solstices, then it is IMPOSSIBLE to retain the annual cycle! THE ONLY WAY to have a correct year is to be linked to one of those four days. Without a link to those four days (by being linked to ONE of those four days, a link is also automatically established to the other three days) it is impossible to retain the seasons in their correct positions within the calendar.

WITHOUT THE EQUINOXES "August 31" is not necessarily the same as "August 31". In the Julian calendar "August 31" in 515 BC was TWENTY DAYS EARLIER in the seasons than "August 31" in the Julian calendar for this current year of 2003 AD. [In 515 BC that day was August 24 in the Gregorian calendar, while in 2003 AD that day is September 13 in the Gregorian calendar.] It is precisely because the Julian calendar was not correctly linked to the equinoxes that it had to be replaced.

[As a matter of interest: The astronomical flaw in the Jewish calendar is less than the flaw in the Julian calendar. To be meaningful, any comparison should always be for the same year in a cycle. 515 BC is the 17th year in the cycle. So the molad calculations for 515 BC (using Mr. Franklin's leap year sequence) arrive at 5:29:43 p.m. on August 23 (Gregorian). For 1994, also the 17th year, the molad calculations arrive at 6:13:03 p.m. on September 6. So where the Julian calendar has accumulated an error of 20 days, the Jewish calendar has over the same period accumulated an error of 13 days and a few minutes, when we look strictly at molad calculations and ignore the postponement rules. But the type of error is the same for both these calendars. This is obviously totally hypothetical, simply to illustrate the

point, because the calculated Jewish calendar most certainly did not exist in 515 BC.]

WE HUMAN BEINGS understand this need for the equinoxes and solstices very clearly.

BUT "THE GOD OF THE BARLEY HARVEST CALENDAR" DOESN'T EVEN UNDERSTAND THIS! Maybe He is just "too far out" in space to realize that we NEED the calendar to be linked to one of those four days in order to retain the seasonal cycle in our calendars? Apparently He doesn't realize that those four days can be ACCURATELY calculated in advance and CONSISTENTLY predicted correctly? Apart from those four days there are NO OTHER DAYS IN THE SOLAR YEAR that can be used as identifying markers. The only way to correctly identify ANY DAY in the solar year is to show its relationship to one of the equinoxes or to one of the solstices. Thus, by itself the date "August 31" for any given year is meaningless; it only takes on meaning if you tell us whether that is supposed to be Julian or Gregorian, because THEN we can relate that date to the equinoxes and the solstices. THE ONLY WAY to know how many years have passed from some previous point in time is to know how many SPRING EQUINOXES have passed! But "the God of the barley harvest calendar" doesn't understand this.

And so THE VERY BEST that God could (supposedly!) come up with was to link the calendar NOT TO "THE SEASONS", but to link the calendar to "THE WEATHER"! Apparently He doesn't realize that there is a difference between "weather" and "seasons"? The barley harvest depends NOT only on the season, but also on the weather, as demonstrated by the 1983 barley harvest in Israel. But "hot weather" in winter doesn't change the season of winter into summer. And "cold weather" in summer doesn't change the season of summer into winter.

THE WEATHER does not in any way change the earth's journey around the sun ... and it is the earth's journey around the sun that determines the year, not the weather. The seasons describe and pinpoint very precisely the earth's journey around the sun. The seasons are NOT primarily "weather indicators"; the "weather" comes a distant second when we speak about "seasons". For example, the word "winter" is, as far as weather is concerned, meaningless by itself. Do you mean "winter" in Wisconsin, or do you mean "winter" in Acapulco, Mexico? But the word "winter" (and obviously knowing whether we are speaking about some place in the Northern or in the Southern Hemisphere) gives a clear indication of THE TIME OF YEAR we are referring to, in relation to the winter solstice and to the spring equinox, even if it does NOT give us an indication of "the weather".

By changing "the weather conditions" (e.g. using hot houses) we can grow produce totally out of season. In such man-controlled "weather conditions" we can grow almost any crop at any time of the year, irrespective of the actual seasons.

THE TIME OF ANY SPECIFIC "HARVEST" IS A VERY FICKLE THING, AS FAR AS ITS RELATIONSHIP TO THE ANNUAL CYCLE IS CONCERNED!

And it is an insult to God to imply that He would link the whole calendar to something as fickle as a barley harvest.

There is another point we need to understand very clearly.

By making the start of the year dependent on the barley harvest, CONTROL OVER THE YEARLY CYCLE HAS BEEN TAKEN AWAY FROM GOD AND GIVEN TO MAN!

It is MAN who decides when to harvest the crop. It is MAN that decides whether a moisture content of 18% is acceptable for harvesting the barley, or whether one should wait until the moisture content has

dropped to 13%. It is MAN that goes out into the fields and then MAKES A DECISION! It is MAN that decides whether the ground is dry enough to start harvesting the crop or whether the ground is still too wet. It is MAN that decides whether to use seeds with a longer growing season or whether to use seeds that have a shorter growing season. It is MAN who decides whether to irrigate the fields or whether to rely on natural rainfall. It is MAN who decides whether or not to do things that will speed up the growing season. It is MAN that decides WHERE to grow the crop. It is MAN who decides whether to even grow any barley in the first place. There is nothing whatsoever to stop all the Jewish farmers in Israel from switching to planting the more profitable wheat crop instead of barley, and how would the start of the year THEN be determined? It is MAN that decides in a 3-year drought (like in Ahab's time) when the barley that is simply not there that year would THEORETICALLY have been ripe.

IT IS MAN WHO MAKES THE FINAL DECISION ABOUT WHEN TO START "THE BARLEY HARVEST YEAR"!

AND GOD HAS NO SAY OF ANY KIND IN "THE CALENDAR OF THE BARLEY HARVEST". He is nothing more than a figurehead who is given lip-service, but who has no say of any kind regarding when the year is to start. MAN makes every single decision for the calendar. And man makes those decisions WITH A TOTAL DISREGARD FOR THE ACTUAL TIME IN THE ANNUAL CYCLE WHICH GOD HAS ESTABLISHED.

Now IF we actually did have "global warming" so that barley crops could INDEED be harvested in Palestine by the middle of February, should MAN therefore decide that it is now okay to start the year in February? IF there is no relationship of any kind to the spring equinox, then there would be no reason at all to not start the year in February (as supposedly in 515 BC), right?

Further, WHY is the barley harvest IN PALESTINE so important to God? Did God not intend for the people of Israel to eventually migrate to OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD? Were the people of Israel not STILL IN EGYPT when God spoke these words?

And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron IN THE LAND OF EGYPT, saying, THIS MONTH shall be unto you the beginning of months: IT SHALL BE THE FIRST MONTH OF THE YEAR to you. (Exodus 12:1-2 AV)

Look at this Scripture!

The Israelites were IN EGYPT when God said this! In this "calendar instruction" God did NOT SAY ANYTHING ABOUT THE LAND OF ISRAEL!

It is only the LATER instruction regarding the "wave sheaf offering" that specifically refers to the land of Israel. But that later instruction (Leviticus 23:10) does not say anything about establishing some calculated calendar. It ASSUMES that the year would never start so early that no barley would be available for this offering. But it neither assumes nor implies that such ripe barley would be the key determining factor in deciding the start of a year. Making the start of the year totally dependent on the barley harvest assumes that there are no other requirements that are to be met. In plain English, OTHER requirements could NEVER cause the year to start so early that no barley would be available; but OTHER requirements COULD require the year to start somewhat LATER than barley might theoretically be available.

The point is:

It is ridiculous to attempt to define AN ASTRONOMICAL EVENT (i.e. the annual cycle), which is the result of the predictable movements of two heavenly bodies (the earth and the moon) in their circuits around the sun, in terms of SOME AGRICULTURAL CROP in some specific location on earth! That is like saying that God would define the year by "stone-age standards"! The whole idea is just so demeaning towards God! It implies that God would lower His standards because people back then were supposedly too stupid to understand anything much higher than "just look at the barley" to know when a new year should start. And in order to uphold this absurd picture people will go to INCREDIBLE LENGTHS to refuse to see that God Himself was actually smart enough to know about the equinoxes when He SPECIFICALLY ADDRESSED "THE TEKUFAH OF THE YEAR" in Exodus 34:22! People WILLINGLY blind themselves to what Mr. Franklin himself calls "GOD'S COMMAND IN EXODUS 34:22" (page 3 of his "Calendar of Christ" article) because they just don't want to know what this means!

Anyway, in Exodus 12:1-2 that specific "first month of the year" without contradiction started while they were still in Egypt (they only left on the 15th day), so the start of that month could not POSSIBLY have been based on "the barley harvest in Israel". Now in Egypt you only grow crops by using the waters of the Nile to irrigate. But IF you are going to irrigate fields, especially in the southern part of Egypt, THEN you will also be able to have the crops ripen MUCH EARLIER than in Israel. So, could that perhaps be a justification for starting the year even earlier still? That's ridiculous reasoning, isn't it?

For the 40 years in the wilderness the years also could NOT be based on when the crops in Israel would ripen, because they saw no crops of any kind for 40 years. How did they know which new moon to choose for the start of the year when they didn't have any experts (like the Karaites today?) going out and examining the state of the barley crops? "Ripe barley" could not possibly have been the deciding factor for the first 40 years from when God gave Israel this calendar in Exodus 12. Therefore WHY SHOULD BARLEY HAVE BECOME THE DECIDING FACTOR THEREAFTER?

[Comment: The above is purely a hypothetical approach, which is all that Mr. Franklin's argument is ... totally hypothetical. In all likelihood at that point in time every month was still exactly 30 days long. Mr. Franklin himself told us that the solar and the lunar cycles were much more constant before God "directly altered the arrangement of the heavenly bodies" well after the time of David.]

Consider the following:

After God had spoken these instructions in Exodus 12, they spent 40 years outside of the land of Israel. That was followed by 700 - 800 years in the land of Israel (till first Israel and then Judah went into captivity). Then a small minority of the people of Israel returned to Palestine from Babylon and lived in Palestine for another 600 years or so. Then the land was peopled by other nations. For the past 50 years a small population of Jews has again lived in Palestine. But for the past 2700 years (note!) the vast overwhelming majority of ethnic Israelites have not lived in the land of Palestine at all! Since God spoke those instructions to Moses approximately 3500 years ago most Israelites have NEVER lived in or near Palestine, and only for SOME of that period of time did Israelites actually live there. Yet their calendar was supposed to be based on some harvest in Palestine that most Israelites would never even see once in their whole lives?

Yes, without contradiction the area of Jerusalem and of Israel is important to God. But WHY would God want to base a calendar FOR THIS WHOLE WORLD on the fickleness of a barley crop (sometimes ripe in April, and sometimes, like 1983, only ripe in May) in the geographic area of Palestine? How important is BARLEY in God's plans and His scheme of things?

Specifically: IS BARLEY MORE IMPORTANT TO GOD THAN THE LAWS HE SET IN MOTION AND WHICH HE UPHOLDS EVEN NOW?

This whole scenario of determining the start of the year based on the condition of the growing barley in the fields in some location in the State of Israel is such an incredibly INSULTING perception of the incredible power and intelligence of the Creator God of this entire universe. Here God CONTROLS the entire universe by having given powerful LAWS to establish and to maintain His entire creation. EVERYTHING is under the control of LAWS! The circuits of the heavenly bodies are all controlled by laws. In many cases DOZENS and even HUNDREDS of different forces interact and impact on one another to produce the orbit of one heavenly body like the moon or one of the planets. And God knows exactly what He is doing.

But when it comes to determining the start of each year, then God SUPPOSEDLY throws all these laws out of the window and says:

"Look, let's just keep this simple, shall we? Whenever you see that the barley is ripening in Palestine, then you just start a new year, okay? IF you happen to live somewhere else in the world (i.e. between 100 AD and 1900 AD) THEN you better send someone to the area of Palestine every year TO CHECK UP AND TO VERIFY that barley is indeed ripening. From about 2000 AD onwards you won't need to do that, because then you'll have the Internet to get this information from the Karaites. Oh yes, and before I forget: in case you need a backup, I'll give you these mathematical calculations which are reasonably close averages, though they may sometimes be just a day or two off target, but you can fix that yourself with a few postponements, can't you?"

A calendar based on some barley harvest somewhere is simply not compatible with the strict adherence to physical laws we see in the whole creation all around us.

I don't believe that God EVER intended to relinquish control over the yearly cycle to the point where man makes every single decision. You say: but God still has control over the weather and therefore also over the harvests? FINE, so what happened in 1983 ... when MAN started the year on March 15th, while GOD withheld the harvest of barley until THE MIDDLE OF MAY? Is there ANY Church of God group that started the year in MAY in 1983? How much control over the Jewish calendar did God's intervention in the weather in 1983 achieve? NO CONTROL AT ALL!

Furthermore, while it may be possible to harvest the barley with a moisture content somewhere between 15% and 20%, is there really any REQUIREMENT that it must therefore be harvested? Is there ANY possible reason why someone could not simply DECIDE: "I will not harvest the barley UNTIL the moisture content has dropped to 12%"? WHY does it have to be harvested at THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE TIME when that is really still very early in the seasons? Is there any scriptural injunction that makes it mandatory to harvest the barley AS SOON AS the moisture content drops just a tad below 20%? The point is: IT IS MAN WHO DECIDES when the barley is ready for harvesting, and God is excluded from this decision.

The truth is: The start of the year is controlled by LAWS that God has set in motion, and when these laws are adhered to, then they automatically ensure that the year will not start before barley will start to ripen. And IF God decides to enact unusual weather circumstances (e.g. withhold the harvest till some time in May, or withhold the harvest altogether as in a 3-year drought and famine), THEN the LAWS always take precedence over the barley! THE LAWS are the deciding criterion, and the "ripe barley" is a byproduct. But UNUSUAL WEATHER CIRCUMSTANCES cannot hold back the start of the year, as long as the season of spring has actually started.

There is another point we should keep in mind, and that is this:

ANYTHING THAT CAN BE ACCURATELY PREDICTED CONSISTENTLY FOR FUTURE OCCURRENCES IS BASED ON LAWS!

The equinoxes and the solstices can be predicted with a very high degree of accuracy, because they are based on laws.

Every lunar month, in spite of fluctuations from one month to the next, can be predicted with a very high degree of accuracy, because the whole lunar cycle is based on laws.

Mr. Franklin himself states:

"The variation in the length of time between astronomical conjunctions is caused by the countless irregularities that occur in the moon's orbit. To date, astronomers have identified MORE THAN 5,000 PERTURBATIONS OF THE MOON as it circles the earth." (page 4)

So that is the way GOD made it. And when all of these irregularities are taken into account, it is STILL possible to predict with a high degree of accuracy every single conjunction in the year, and every single eclipse, for many years into the future. Predictability is clear evidence of adherence to laws. WHY should ANTIQUATED CALCULATIONS be somehow "more righteous" or "more sacred" or "more desirable" than modern HIGHLY ACCURATE calculations? Does God somehow have A SENTIMENTAL ATTACHMENT to the Greek-origin antiquated and inaccurate calculations of the Jewish calendar? WHY would God possibly object to the very accurate calculations of modern astronomy? Has God got something AGAINST being astronomically accurate? Is God EMOTIONALLY ATTACHED to the flawed calculations (i.e. flawed when applied to any ONE SPECIFIC new moon) employed by the Jewish calendar?

When God has enacted LAWS that regulate the solar years and the lunar months, then those laws OBVIOUSLY must feature in the determination of the months and the years. To appeal to something as fickle as the barley harvest in Palestine, implies that God somehow didn't know about the only four specific days in the year that identify and define the annual cycle of the solar year. Without the solstices or the equinoxes you cannot really define a solar year ... you have no starting date and you have no ending date ... AND GOD KNOWS THIS FAR BETTER THAN WE DO!

Consider this:

If you allow SOME YEARS to start BEFORE the spring equinox, then you have ABSOLUTELY NO STANDARD AS TO WHERE TO DRAW THE LINE!

The two equinoxes and the two solstices are THE ONLY DEFINING DAYS IN THE SOLAR YEAR. When you IGNORE the spring equinox, then you have no defining standard of any kind for your calendar; it is TOTALLY AND COMPLETELY at the mercy and whim of whoever feels he has the right to make the decision (like the Karaites evaluating the barley harvest). And you have NOTHING to fall back on as an absolute and uncompromising standard! You only have the TRADITIONS of the Pharisees to appeal to, hardly a very comforting thought.

I hate hypocrisy with a purple passion! And it just irritates me no end when I see any number of people attempt to argue AGAINST THE EQUINOX! The only reason they do so is because of Exodus 34:22! They simply have to get rid of that Scripture! They want Exodus 34:22 to mean nothing at all! And when they argue against the equinox, they are in actual practice arguing AGAINST THE ONLY POSSIBLE ABSOLUTE STANDARD YOU CAN HAVE FOR THE SOLAR YEAR! Apart from the two equinoxes and

the two solstices there are NO STANDARDS OF ANY KIND THAT CAN DEFINE A YEAR!

Which other days in the year can you possibly define and pinpoint in advance? None at all! People who argue against the equinoxes and the solstices are arguing FOR TOHU AND BOHU ... they are arguing FOR CHAOS AND CONFUSION! They are arguing for the rejection of the only possible ABSOLUTE standard for the annual cycle! In short, they are arguing FOR Satan!

And it is all motivated by a desire to get rid of Exodus 34:22!

And when the motivation for any argument is to do away with the implications of any Scriptures, then we are dealing with HYPOCRISY! Any time an argument is designed to take all possible meaning out of a Scripture, we are dealing with hypocrisy. Any time no real explanation is offered for what a Scripture really DOES mean, when asserting that the same Scripture certainly does NOT mean something, we are dealing with hypocrisy. And when I read Matthew chapter 23, I get the very strong impression that Jesus Christ was not very impressed with hypocrisy.

Rejecting the equinoxes as an absolute standard makes God out to be a fool and an idiot. And I just HATE to see insults like that leveled at God! It implies that God doesn't know what we know. It implies that God doesn't know that without reference to the equinoxes and the solstices you have no start and no finish for the annual cycle.

In order to uphold their own traditions, people are willing to throw out the only possible standard that exists for the annual cycle. Why was the Julian calendar flawed? Because it was NOT linked to the equinox. In that calendar the equinoxes DRIFTED to earlier dates! What did the creators of the Gregorian calendar realize was an absolute requirement for the calendar? They realized that to have a correct solar year, they simply had to have the spring equinox FIXED RIGIDLY TO ONE SPECIFIC DAY IN THE YEAR! For historical reasons (because of decisions made by the Council of Nicea in 321 AD) they decided to FIX the spring equinox to always be on March 21. A far better system would have been to make March 21 the first day of the year ... to start "January 1" on March 21, as it were, to START THE SOLAR YEAR WITH THE FIRST DAY OF SPRING!

IF THE CALENDAR GOD WANTS US TO USE was a TOTALLY SOLAR CALENDAR, then God would most assuredly want the year to always start on March 21. In the perfect year where every month consists of exactly 30 days, that will indeed be the case ... Day 1 of every year will be a solar eclipse at the spring equinox! Every new moon will be exactly 30 days later than the previous new moon. And that will be something God will describe as "very good".

HOWEVER, ever since "God directly altered the arrangement of the heavenly bodies", God has required a more complicated calendar that incorporates CORRECTLY relating the altered annual movement of the earth around the sun to the altered movement of the moon around the earth. But "the altered arrangement" of the heavenly bodies has NOT changed the fact that there are still ONLY 4 DAYS IN THE YEAR that can be accurately pinpointed in the annual solar cycle, the two equinoxes and the two solstices.

So the correct calendar for this present age requires TWO considerations. Step one is that it must START with the solar year. The solar year starts with the spring equinox. The correct solar year can ONLY start on one of the four days in the annual cycle that can be correctly predicted, and God has indicated the spring equinox to be that starting date. Once that annual SOLAR cycle has been correctly identified and pinpointed, THEN step two is that the "altered" lunar months must be accommodated WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE CORRECT SOLAR CYCLE.

THEREFORE THE ONLY POSSIBILITY is for the start of the year to fluctuate within the first 30 days of

THE CORRECT SOLAR YEAR. THE START of the year CANNOT be shifted BACKWARDS into the previous solar cycle. The start can only be moved FORWARD in the solar year to the correct time of the new moon. There will always be a new moon within the first 30 days of spring. The second new moon in spring can never occur earlier than Day 30 of spring.

Intercalating a 13th month is NOT controlled by some rigid sequence of leap years, but totally and exclusively by the occurrence of a 13th new moon BEFORE the spring equinox! EVERY new moon that occurs before the start of the new SOLAR cycle starts another month of the old year.

THIS PRINCIPLE of only starting the new year with the first new moon in spring is actually accepted MOST OF THE TIME by the present Jewish calendar, though in the time of Hillel II this was true less often. So notice:

1) In the theoretical 1st cycle of the Jewish calendar (i.e. 3761 BC - 3743) ALL 19 YEARS would have started in the winter. The earliest year would have been 3745 BC with Nisan 1 being on FEBRUARY 15 Gregorian (or March 17 Julian, which looks deceptively more reasonable).

[Comment: It is precisely because the present sequence of intercalation places ALL 19 YEARS of Cycle #1 to start in the winter, that therefore the Ambassador College calendar program selected a different sequence of leap years. Thus for 3745 BC that program will show Nisan 1 as "April 16" but that is still only a Julian date, and it is equivalent to only March 16 Gregorian. However, there is no evidence of any kind that any calculated fixed calendar was ever used in BC centuries, and so the sequence of intercalation chosen by the Ambassador College calendar program is totally arbitrary, an attempt to make the Jewish calendar "more palatable". Mr. Franklin has correctly rejected that "more palatable" sequence of intercalation, but at the expense of looking FAR, FAR WORSE!]

2) In the 300's AD 10 YEARS OUT OF EVERY 19 YEARS started before the spring equinox. For the cycle from 382 - 400 AD those 10 years were: 384, 386, 387, 389, 392, 394, 395, 397, 398, 400.

3) Because of the astronomical error with the "19-year cycle", this has corrected the situation to the point that TODAY only 5 YEARS OUT OF EVERY 19 YEARS in the Jewish calendar start before the spring equinox. For the current cycle from 1997 - 2015 AD those 5 years are: 1999, 2002, 2007, 2010, 2013.

4) AND IF YOU ARE PREPARED TO BE ABSOLUTELY PATIENT, then I can give you the "good news" that by the Year 4008 AD the last of the years in the Jewish "19-year cycle" will finally also start in the spring, although only by means of a one day postponement. But I suppose if we are willing to wait until 4008 AD, by THAT time we shouldn't be too critical of a little one day postponement, should we? So, IF you are prepared to wait until the year 4008 AD, THEN you can confidently state that your present Jewish calendar will also start EVERY year in the spring.

Look, there are many people in the world who say: "I can't keep the Sabbath right now because I would lose my job. BUT WHEN I RETIRE, then I will keep the Sabbath faithfully all the time". So likewise, why can't you just patiently HANG ON UNTIL 4008 AD, and then you too can keep a calendar that starts every year in the spring, AND THEN YOU'LL BE OKAY?!

However, for me personally waiting for 4008 AD is not really an option, since I don't believe I will live that long in the flesh. So I will have to come to grips with 2007 and 2010 and 2013, even as I did come to grips with last year (i.e. 2002). But that's no reason why you, who support the Jewish calendar, could not be optimistically looking forward to 4008 AD, is it?

The point is this:

Notice the steady progression of the present Jewish calendar when applied over long periods of time. In the 3700's BC all 19 years would have started before the spring equinox. In the 300's AD (i.e. 4000 years later) 10 years still started in the winter. Today (i.e. another 1700 years later) 5 years still start in the winter. By 4008 AD (i.e. another 2000 years later) all the years finally start in the spring. Though this exercise is only theoretical, the facts I have stated here are correct. They also PROVE this astronomical error inherent in the Jewish calendar. It is LUDICROUS to claim that the Jewish calendar is in harmony with astronomical cycles.

People need to understand that WITHOUT the equinoxes and the solstices you cannot define a solar year! Without the equinoxes and the solstices the Hebrew word "tekufah" is TOTALLY MEANINGLESS! This word literally means "to come around" or "to complete a circuit". All the Jewish astronomers understand VERY CLEARLY that it is impossible to "complete a circuit" UNLESS you have a very clearly defined STARTING POINT! And every astronomer knows that there are only four POSSIBLE "starting points" in the solar year circuit. It is ridiculous to speak about "completing a circuit" if you don't know where the starting point is, and therefore you also don't know where the finishing point is. The word "tekufah" REQUIRES the knowledge of the equinoxes and the solstices!

Also keep the following in mind:

It is quite clear that "tekufah" must refer to the sun and NOT to the moon! And that means whenever "tekufah" happens to be in the solar year (the solar circuit) for THIS CURRENT YEAR, it must be THE IDENTICAL POINT in the solar year for all previous and all future occurrences. For those who deny the application to the equinoxes and the solstices, it is their responsibility to offer alternative days to which this word could possibly be CONSISTENTLY applied!

The people who want to trash the word "tekufah" obviously don't want it to have ANY meaning at all. They simply MUST remove all possible meaning from this word. So they don't want it to apply to ANY specific days in the solar year that can be accurately predicted and pinpointed. So when you reach the end of their arguments against "tekufah", you are left with an empty shell of a word that has been stripped of all possible meaning.

However, all Jewish astronomers very readily acknowledge that "tekufah" refers to the equinoxes and the solstices. THERE SIMPLY IS NO OTHER POSSIBILITY! But members of the Church of God with a vested interest in the present Jewish calendar think they know better! And so they argue for "NO MEANING" for the word "tekufah", because that is the only way they have to dismiss Exodus 34:22. Exodus 34:22 is a thorn in their side, and they don't like that verse one little bit! And in their efforts to get rid of that verse they don't even hesitate to insult God's intelligence.

Let's look at a two paragraph quotation from Mr. Franklin's "Trumpets 2000" article:

"The structure of the Hebrew text is describing TWO CLIMATIC SEASONS THAT FORM ONE UNIT, GRADUALLY WARMING to the extreme heat of summer AND THEN COOLING DOWN to the deep chill of winter. The structure of the text makes no division between the two climatic seasons. THERE IS NO POINT IN TIME THAT SEPARATES THE SUMMER FROM THE WINTER." (page 20)

"The Hebrew text makes it clear that GOD DOES NOT VIEW THE SEASONS AS FOUR DISTINCT DIVISIONS IN THE YEAR. This modern concept is based on the Roman calendar, which is strictly a solar calendar, and as such is regulated by the spring equinox, the summer solstice, the autumnal equinox and the winter solstice. There is a vast difference between the Roman calendar and the calculated Hebrew Calendar. The Hebrew Calendar does not use the

equinoxes and solstices to keep the months aligned with the climatic seasons. IF the months of the year were CALCULATED by the equinoxes, there would be NO NEED FOR INTERCALATION." (page 20-21)

My comments:

THESE CLAIMS ARE UTTERLY ABSURD! MR. FRANKLIN MAKES GOD OUT TO BE A FOOL WHO DOESN'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT "THE SEASONS IN THE YEAR"!

It is pathetic to see the lengths people will go to in their efforts to discredit Exodus 34:22. They are not even deterred by the fact that the views they impute to Almighty God imply that God is clueless about real astronomical facts, that God even struggles to know the difference between summer and winter, that God doesn't know when summer begins and when winter ends, that the concept of FOUR seasons in the year is totally beyond God's capacity to grasp or think of. The "god" of Mr. Franklin has to be a totally clueless fool!!

These insults to God's intelligence need to be recognized for what they are, brazen insults! And I would urge Mr. Franklin to change his views quickly, before God in heaven takes note of these insults and responds in some way. Where is the fear of God?

So understand the picture Mr. Franklin presents very clearly. Here are the steps involved:

- 1) It is Mr. Franklin's goal to TOTALLY NULLIFY THE MEANING OF EXODUS 34:22. To achieve this goal he has to do the following things:
- 2) FIRST of all he has to remove all possible meaning from the Hebrew word "TEKUFAH".
- 3) NEXT he has to reject all possible links between the seasons on the one hand, and the equinoxes and the solstices on the other. He simply cannot afford to have these four clearly identifiable and predictable days have any impact or significance in the annual cycle.
- 4) NEXT he has to persuade us that God does not understand that there are FOUR clear seasons in the year. He has to convince us that God thinks that there are ONLY TWO seasons.
- 5) To achieve this goal, he has to destroy the meaning of the word "season" and reduce it to mean something vague and nebulous, which has neither a clear beginning nor a clear ending.
- 6) Even though he acknowledges at least TWO seasons for the year, it is of paramount importance to his cause that these two seasons have no distinct divisions, that there is no point in time when you can say: "TODAY is the first day of summer", or: "TODAY is the first day of winter". Any such start for a season COULD ONLY BE ONE OF THOSE FOUR DAYS ... there simply are no other days to choose from. THEREFORE Mr. Franklin's two "seasons" can have neither a clear beginning nor a clear ending.
- 7) However, since there MUST be some beginning, however vague and flexible, to his two seasons, THEREFORE the fickleness of the time of the "barley harvest" has to fit that bill. It is appeals to "the barley harvest" that are supposed to replace the need for "the spring equinox".
- 8) HOWEVER, as the example of the barley harvest in 1983 clearly illustrates, there is simply NO CONNECTION between the present Jewish calendar and the time of the barley harvest in Palestine. So all appeals to the barley harvest in fact OBLITERATE any possible justifications for the present Jewish calendar with its fixed sequence of leap years.

9) There is more logic in believing in the tooth fairy than to believe in some kind of relationship between the sequence of leap years in the Jewish calendar and the time of the barley harvest in Palestine. And, I might add, I DO NOT BELIEVE IN THE TOOTH FAIRY! Surprised??

10) This exposes the fact that Mr. Franklin himself does not take the real time of the barley harvest in Palestine seriously; it is only "an argument to use". He himself is clearly guided EXCLUSIVELY by the sequence of leap years that is employed in the present Jewish calendar. His argument requires his readers to be unaware of any conflicts between the start of the year in the Jewish calendar and the actual time of the ripening of barley in Palestine, as in 1983.

Before examining the above quotation more closely, let's notice one Scripture.

When Noah and his family came out of the ark, God acknowledged that man is "evil from his youth", something God had by then recognized very clearly. So God said, in response to this recognition, that He would not again "smite any more every living thing" as He had done. And then God gave a promise:

While the earth remaineth, SEEDTIME and HARVEST, and COLD and HEAT, and SUMMER and WINTER, and DAY and NIGHT shall not cease. (Genesis 8:22 AV)

In quoting this verse on page 20 of his article, Mr. Franklin chose to only quote the middle 7 words of this verse "cold and heat, and summer and winter". He conveniently did NOT quote the first part of this verse because that doesn't fit into the picture he wishes to present. So let's notice a few things about this verse.

1) God is here guaranteeing a continuity of natural cycles. God does so by four examples of OPPOSITES that He guarantees to maintain.

2) "Cold" is intended to convey the opposite TEMPERATURE condition of "heat"; "summer" is intended to convey the opposite SEASON condition of "winter"; and "day" is intended to convey the opposite LIGHT condition of "night". So here we have covered temperatures, seasons and light.

3) Clearly "SEEDTIME" is intended to convey the opposite of "HARVEST".

4) Now let me ask you some very intellectually-taxing questions: EXACTLY WHAT WAS GOD TRYING TO SAY TO NOAH WITH THIS EXPRESSION "SEEDTIME AND HARVEST"? Is there perhaps "A SEASON" that is associated with "seedtime"? Is there perhaps "A SEASON" that is associated with "harvest"?

5) Is winter the time for sowing seeds? Is summer the time for harvesting the grain crops? Yes, the Old Testament Hebrew text does not use the words for the seasons of autumn and spring. But does it take a genius to figure out that "SPRING" is the opposite of "AUTUMN", even as "summer" is the opposite of "winter"? Does it take a genius to figure out that "seedtime" is a reference to the season of "SPRING"? Does it take a genius to figure out that "harvest" is a reference to the season of "AUTUMN"? Just how super-intelligent does someone have to be to understand this?

6) "Seedtime and harvest" are the first of these four opposites God mentions, because they regulate MAN'S FOOD SUPPLY, which supply God was herewith ensuring. Furthermore, since God starts the year in the spring, THEREFORE "seedtime" is in fact THE FIRST of the four seasons in the year. So it is appropriate that God mentioned it first.

7) So where we today call the four seasons: spring, summer, autumn, and winter, GOD in Genesis 8:22

called the four seasons: seedtime, summer, harvest, and winter. There simply were no other names for those seasons in biblical Hebrew, as Mr. Franklin has also stated. So "seedtime" identified "spring" and "harvest" identified "autumn".

8) Now THAT CONTINUITY of the four things (seedtime - summer - harvest - winter) IS LOST BY THE PRESENT JEWISH CALENDAR! The "19-year cycles" from the 3700's BC to the 4000's AD show VERY CLEARLY the steady movement through the seasons. It is only a question of time before the present Jewish calendar would end up with the sequence of: summer - harvest - winter - seedtime. And later still it would eventually have the sequence of: harvest - winter - seedtime - summer. That calendar is FLAWED! How long it would take to migrate through the seasons is really immaterial. The point is: it is NOT supposed to do that! Not even to a SMALL degree! Not even ONE DAY IN EVERY 216 YEARS!

9) Also keep in mind that the names of the four seasons all HAVE A MEANING. The name "spring" is derived specifically from the fact that this is the season when "growth and development" SPRING UP and become very evident in the plant world. The name "summer" refers to the warm or hot season. The name "autumn" comes from the Latin word "autumnus" (origin of the "mn" ending for this English word). In the US this season is generally known as "fall", in reference to the leaves changing colour and FALLING to the ground. The name "winter" refers to the cooler or cold season.

Even as "spring" describes an action typical for that season, so "seedtime" describes an action equally typical for that season. And even as "fall" describes an activity typical for that season, so "harvest" describes an activity equally typical for that season. I fail to understand how anyone can miss the connection between "seedtime" and "spring", and between "harvest" and "autumn", except for those people who desperately WANT TO MISS THIS CONNECTION?

Now let's examine Mr. Franklin's comments.

1) The idea that there are only two wishy-washy seasons in the year, with no clear starting or ending times is ridiculous. Mr. Franklin himself, in his own private life, does not think of the year as having only TWO seasons. He knows there are FOUR seasons in the year. But God is supposedly too stupid to know this? So TO GOD Mr. Franklin only attributes the knowledge of TWO seasons. IF God really DOES know that there are indeed FOUR RECOGNIZABLE SEASONS in the year, then God OBVIOUSLY would not have tried to fool us into believing that there are somehow only two seasons. God teaches us human beings THE TRUTH, not make-believe fairy tales! So IF God supposedly wants us to believe that there are only two seasons in the year, THEN the only option is that God Himself IS NOT AWARE of the fact that there are actually FOUR clear and distinct seasons in the year.

2) Mr. Franklin's motivation for these statements is very obvious. It is to get around Exodus 34:22.

3) Mr. Franklin's assertion about only two seasons is totally and completely contradicted by every Jewish historical record on the subject. For example, here is one quotation from the Talmud.

(2) In its apparent motion in the ecliptic, the sun has FOUR 'TURNING POINTS' which mark the beginnings of THE FOUR RESPECTIVE SEASONS. These points are generically referred to as the TEKUFOTH (sing. tekufah). They are: THE TWO EQUINOCTIAL POINTS when the sun crosses the equator at the beginning of SPRING AND AUTUMN respectively, and 'turns' from one side of the equator to the other; and THE TWO SOLSTICES, when the sun is at its maximum distance, or declination, from the equator, at one or other side of it, at the beginning of SUMMER AND WINTER respectively, and instead of progressively increasing its declination it 'turns' to decrease it progressively. (It may be mentioned that the term 'tekufah' is also used not only for the beginning of a season but for the whole of the season itself.) (Berachoth 59b,

Note in this quotation how THE JEWS explain why the word "turn" (i.e. tekufah) applies to the FOUR seasons. Are the Jews deceived or misguided in this understanding? Should we send them to Mr. Franklin for some extra tutoring on this topic?

When I see a clash between what Mr. Franklin claims about the Old Testament view of the seasons, and what the Jewish editors of the Talmud, thus highly qualified scholars, tell me about the biblical view of the seasons and about the Hebrew word "tekufah", then I have to again ask myself some questions. It is clear that Mr. Franklin is reasoning from nothing other than what he calls "THE STRUCTURE OF THE TEXT" of one specific verse in the Hebrew Scriptures. This is because he has no REAL evidence to support his views here.

I have to ask myself: did God intend THE STRUCTURE OF THAT TEXT (Psalm 74:16-17) to be the final word about all the seasons in the annual cycle? I have to ask: did the Jewish scholars who edited the Talmud correctly understand WHY the equinoxes and the solstices are described as "TURNING POINTS" (i.e. tekufoth) in Hebrew? Were they only explaining something, or did they have some specific point they were trying to prove? Can their explanation here be trusted to be honest, or were they misinformed about the biblical facts pertaining to the seasons? Are they really totally mixed up when it comes to understanding what "tekufah" means? Again, I see nothing in the reasoning Mr. Franklin has presented to make me question the correctness of what is stated by the editors of the Talmud, and to reject Mr. Franklin's reasoning about "the structure of the text" in Psalm 74 as motivated by his desire to vigorously defend the Jewish calendar.

Isn't it obvious that when Mr. Franklin's argument for only two seasons in the year rests totally on "THE STRUCTURE OF THE TEXT" in Psalm 74:16-17 that he is desperately fishing for support for his ideas? Did God leave it up to ASAPH, the author of this psalm, to define how God views the seasons in the year? And specifically: is this very general statement made here in a psalm by the man Asaph supposed to carry MORE WEIGHT THAN THE WORDS GOD HIMSELF SPOKE IN GENESIS 8:22? Would you dare to try to negate Genesis 8:22 by an appeal to Asaph's words in Psalm 74? Or should Asaph's words not be understood in the context of GOD'S WORDS in Genesis 8:22? Where are the priorities?

The main thing that concerns me regarding Mr. Franklin's attempt to do away with the seasons of spring and autumn, is that this represents such an incredible insult to the intelligence of Almighty God. Mr. Franklin is DENYING something that God Himself created and set in motion! This insult towards God is the worst part of Mr. Franklin's statement here.

Let me state this very clearly:

THE JEWISH CALENDAR AND THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE FOUR SEASONS AND OF THE FOUR TEKUFOTH BEING THE EQUINOXES AND THE SOLSTICES ARE INEXTRICABLY INTERWOVEN!

The same people who have preserved "the present Jewish calendar" have also ALWAYS understood that calendar to be based on a year with FOUR seasons, each of which starts either at an equinox or at a solstice. Those same people have also ALWAYS understood the word "tekufah" to be a reference to one of those four days in the year, as well as to the seasons that START with each of those four days.

The concepts "the Jewish calendar" and "four seasons" and "four tekufoth" cannot be separated from one another. You can't have the first one without also having the other two! Any attempts at having "the first one" while trying to do away with "the other two" are blatantly manipulative. Any attempts at rejecting

the four seasons and the four tekufoth are ipso facto attempts at trying to reject the entire Jewish calendar!

Mr. Franklin's statement "there is no point in time that separates the summer from the winter" is an incredible insult to Almighty God! You ask God: "when does summer start?" And God supposedly tells you: "I don't really know, so I can't tell you." So you ask: "does it start with the winter solstice on December 21?" And God answers: "no!" So you ask in turn: "well then, does it start on January 1 or January 15 or February 1 or February 15 or March 1 or March 15 or March 21 or April 1 or April 15 or May 1 or May 15 or June 1 or June 21?" And to all of those questions God supposedly gives you the same answer: "I don't really know, so I can't tell you! All I can tell you is that it is very fluid and flexible. And I can further tell you that it DEFINITELY does not start on either a solstice or an equinox, because I don't really like those four days."

Can we not see that Mr. Franklin's claims here really do away with ALL the seasons? He rejects the existence of spring and autumn, and then he makes summer and winter indistinguishable from one another. So what is left of the annual seasons? NOTHING!

All you've got is some very vague and very imprecise and rather nebulous concept of when the season of summer actually occurs in the annual cycle. I suppose it could be thought of as "THE MEAN SUMMER" or "THE AVERAGE SUMMER"? And if "the MEAN molad" can be anything from 4 hours too early to 15 hours too late, I suppose it is not totally unreasonable to have the start of "the MEAN summer" fluctuate anywhere from starting at the winter solstice and going for the next six months from there, to starting at the summer solstice and going for the next six months from there?? In that way summer could really comprise ANY six consecutive months of your own choice?

In that way Mr. Franklin's "god" is then at least somewhat consistent. He is not only the "god" of AVERAGE NEW MOONS, but also the "god" of AVERAGE SEASONS, thereby solidifying his position as the "god" of averages!

I believe the attempts to do away with the seasons in order to do away with Exodus 34:22 are absolutely abominable! They are such an unbelievable insult to the mind and the intellect of God!

Let's examine one more point in Mr. Franklin's "Trumpets 2000 AD" article.

PSALM 81:3 EXAMINED

He writes:

"The Scriptures reveal that God ordained the new moon of the seventh month AS THE BASIS FOR CALCULATING THE NEW YEAR." (page 24)

This is another TOTALLY ABSURD claim! The Scriptures do not anywhere make any statement that even remotely instructs us to CALCULATE the new moon of the seventh month. Only the most gullible of Bible illiterates would swallow such a ridiculous claim! No Jewish astronomer would ever DARE to make such a claim!

Mr. Franklin follows the above assertion with the following statements, representing his "proof" for this assertion.

"Calculating the new moon of the seventh month, or Tishri, is of paramount importance to the

observance of the feasts of God. The record that we find in Psalm 81 shows that THE CALCULATION OF THE NEW MOON OF THE SEVENTH MONTH WAS A LAW OF GOD, delivered to the children of Israel at the time of the Exodus from Egypt:

"Blow up the trumpet in the new moon, in the time appointed, on our solemn feast day. For THIS WAS A STATUTE FOR ISRAEL, AND A LAW OF THE GOD OF JACOB. This He ordained in Joseph for a testimony, when he went out through the land of Egypt, where I heard a language that I understood not" (verses 3-5)." (page 24)

It is a staggering twisting and perverting of the Scriptures to claim that "THE CALCULATION" was a law that God gave when Israel came out of Egypt! These verses do not say or imply ANYTHING about "calculations"! It just isn't there!

It is absolutely staggering to me that Christian supporters of the Jewish calendar will make monumental claims for that Jewish calendar, which no Jewish scholar has ever dared to make! Why is it that not a single Jewish scholar "knows" that the present Jewish calendar can be led back all the way to Moses? This is just another vivid example of fabricating supposed "evidence" to support this Jewish calendar.

For a start, Psalm 81:3, as Mr. Franklin has quoted it from the KJV, contains a glaring mistranslation! That EXTREMELY TWISTED mistranslation totally alters the meaning of this verse to say something that was never intended by the writer of this psalm.

The Hebrew word for the expression mistranslated as "IN THE TIME APPOINTED" really means "AT THE FULL MOON"!

It is very well known that the Hebrew word "kece" used in this passage means "FULL moon", and this is now recognized by many translations, including ASV, NIV, RSV, JPS, Green's Literal Translation, etc.. Even the 1982 New King James Version has acknowledged this fact. And Mr. Franklin himself actually also acknowledges this fact! YET HE INTENTIONALLY STILL PRESENTS US WITH THIS GLARING MISTRANSlation IN THE TEXT OF THE KJV!

Psalm 81:3 is in fact speaking about TWO DISTINCT LUNAR OCCASIONS, one of them being "A NEW MOON", and the other one being "A FULL MOON"! And absolutely nothing at all is said about anything you might call "IN THE TIME APPOINTED"! This verse is NOT speaking about any "appointed times".

It is the totally incorrect inclusion of the phrase "in the time appointed" that is here exploited by Mr. Franklin. At no point does he ever tell his readers that the words "in the time appointed" must be COMPLETELY DELETED from the text of this verse! Psalm 81:3 does not in any way speak about "an appointed time"; that is a mistranslation! DELETE THAT PHRASE FROM YOUR BIBLE!

The trumpet was to be blown on EVERY "new moon" to announce the start of a new month. That obviously also included "the SEVENTH new moon", which happens to be the Holy Day of Trumpets. But the Day of Trumpets is NOT "a feast" any more than the Day of Atonement is "a feast"; both of these are only "Holy Days". And NOTHING is said in this verse about any one specific new moon being "a Holy Day" or "an appointed time". This verse is simply addressing every new moon in the year. That's all.

Secondly, the trumpet is ALSO to be blown AT THE FEAST DAY ON THE FULL MOON! That is a reference to TWO feast days which are both always AT THE FULL MOON. The First Day of the FEAST of Unleavened Bread is at a full moon on the 15th day of the first month, and the first day of the FEAST of Tabernacles is also at a full moon, on the 15th day of the seventh month.

So Psalm 81:3 refers to 14 SPECIFIC DAYS IN THE YEAR on which the trumpet was to be blown, on the 12 new moon days and also on the two full moon Feast days that are the starting days for the Seven Days of Unleavened Bread and for the Seven Days of Tabernacles.

It is abundantly clear that Psalm 81:3 refers to BOTH, a "new moon" and also a "full moon", and NOT to any "appointed time". This all by itself makes clear that this can IN NO WAY be some hidden reference to "CALCULATING" some new moon. Secondly, it is equally clear that Psalm 81:3 does NOT SINGLE OUT ANY ONE NEW MOON IN THE YEAR! The trumpet was to be blown on EVERY new moon in the year, to announce the start of a new month! The Day of Trumpets is simply not mentioned or singled out in this Psalm; it is nothing more than "INCLUDED" amongst the other days to which this instruction also applied.

In the Hebrew text certain simple words, typically simple prepositions and conjunctions, are often implied without actually being used. This is recognized by translators, and that is why the translators of the KJV decided to use italic print for all the words they felt needed to be provided in an English translation, but which words are in fact not found in the Hebrew text, though they are obviously implied. In the vast majority of cases they are correct in this practice. But there are the occasional places where they should NOT have provided an extra word in English. And there are also some places where they really SHOULD have provided an additional word in English but didn't do so. In most cases where they "didn't get it right" this is due to their lack of understanding of what God is actually telling us in the verse or verses concerned.

In Psalm 81:3 the translators of the KJV had an obvious lack of understanding, as evidenced by mistranslating the word for "full moon" as "in the time appointed". In this verse they really should have provided the word "and" in italics. The verse really should read:

"Blow up the trumpet in the new moon AND in the full moon, on our feast day."

THERE IS NO HINT OF ANY KIND IN THIS VERSE THAT SOME KIND OF "CALCULATION" WAS SUPPOSED TO TAKE PLACE TO FULFILL THIS VERSE!

The expression "in the new moon" could not be misunderstood because it refers to ALL new moons in the year. But the expression "in the full moon" needed to be limited in some way to make clear that NOT ALL full moons in the year were intended to be included in this. Had this verse just omitted the phrase "on our feast day", THEN ALL the full moons in the year would ALSO have been implied. By adding the qualifying expression "on our feast day" to the expression "in the full moon", this very clearly limited this blowing of the trumpet to only those full moons that are also "feast days" (in addition to all the new moons). But even then, this verse does not distinguish the full moon of Tabernacles from the full moon of Unleavened Bread.

Psalm 81:3 is talking about blowing the trumpet on 14 days in the year, and not just on one day or even two days in the year. Other Scriptures ADD more days in the year when the trumpet was also to be blown, but THIS verse focuses on 14 specific days.

The facts are that there is NOTHING in Psalm 81 to even hint at this psalm supposedly being about "the Holy Day of Trumpets"! Nothing at all! Most of this psalm actually speaks about coming out of Egypt, which was in the spring. Psalm 81:3 very clearly CAN BE APPLIED to Nisan 1 and Nisan 15; it CAN BE APPLIED to Day 1 of every other month in the year, and it CAN BE APPLIED to Tishri 1 and Tishri 15. But there is no evidence anywhere in this psalm that Asaph had one of these days more in mind than any of the others when he wrote this verse. When you BLOT OUT the mistranslation "in the time appointed", then the appeal to the Day of Trumpets being the main focus of this verse totally evaporates.

Furthermore, there is no such thing as any "oral law". If something is NOT recorded in the Bible, then firstly there is no proof that it was ever given by God. Secondly, if something was given by God at a certain point in time, but God chose to not have it recorded anywhere in the Bible, then God also did not intend it to be in any way something we today need to take note of. Thus: if God really WANTED to tell us that the calendar should be "calculated" by some specific sets of data, then God would have recorded this in clear terms somewhere in the Bible. But that is not the case.

What the Jews refer to as "the oral law" is in fact nothing other than the Jewish Talmud. And the Talmud is one of the most chaotic and contradictory works you could ever choose to examine. It was with absolute certainty not in any way "given by God". There is nothing "godly" about the Talmud.

Next, let's understand what the next verse is actually telling us.

For this was a statute for Israel, and a law of the God of Jacob. (Psalms 81:4 AV)

What is the subject being spoken about? What did the previous verse focus on ... the new moons and the full moons ... OR ON THE ACT OF BLOWING A TRUMPET? A careful objective examination of Psalm 81:3 shows us that the subject of that verse is THE ACT OF BLOWING A TRUMPET! The references to "the new moon" and "the full moon" only QUALIFY WHEN the trumpet was to be blown. Neither the Passover, nor the Days of Unleavened Bread, nor Pentecost, nor the Day of Trumpets, nor the Day of Atonement, nor the Feast of Tabernacles, nor the Last Great Day are directly mentioned. THE ACTIVITY that is the focus of verse 3 is THE BLOWING!

The next verse, verse 4, states categorically that THE ACTIVITY mentioned in the previous verse was a statute and a law! Numbers 10:10 shows that trumpets were to be blown, amongst other days, "IN THE BEGINNINGS OF YOUR MONTHS" and also on all the Holy Days. This is the verse that the author of Psalm 81 was thinking about when he wrote that this blowing of trumpets was a statute and a law.

Next, Mr. Franklin's claim that "THE CALCULATION of the new moon of the seventh month WAS A LAW OF GOD, delivered to the children of Israel at the time of the Exodus from Egypt" is once again shot in the foot by his earlier admission that "IN THE DAYS OF DAVID AND THE EARLY KINGS OF ISRAEL CALCULATING THE NEW MOON DAY WAS A SIMPLE TASK BECAUSE THE LUNAR CYCLE WAS MUCH MORE CONSTANT" (page 4).

It follows that whatever "calculations" God might (supposedly) possibly have given Israel at the time of the exodus, when the lunar cycles were much more constant, would OBVIOUSLY BE INCORRECT after "the hand of God DIRECTLY ALTERED the arrangement of the heavenly bodies" (also page 4). And then God supposedly left them in the lurch "FOR MANY YEARS" before they finally decided upon postponements?

It is also patently absurd to propose that God at the time of the exodus gave Israel calculations whose only purpose is to establish dates IN THE JULIAN CALENDAR for when to reckon the Jewish year. The entire Jewish calendar calculations do nothing other than determine JULIAN calendar dates (or today by means of adjustments Gregorian dates), and God supposedly gave those calculations 1400 years before the Julian calendar was ever created?

Keep in mind that before the Julian calendar was established by Julius Caesar there was NO POSSIBLE USE, LET ALONE ANY POSSIBLE MEANS, for such calculations.

Once and for all we need to silence these ridiculous claims that GOD gave these calculations "in the days of Moses". HERE ARE THE ONLY CALCULATION FACTS THAT ARE PROVIDED BY THE

JEWISH CALENDAR CALCULATIONS:

Note! You do not need to know anything about "calculating" to understand what I will now explain. Realize that these are THE ONLY bits of information provided for these calculations. These "calendar calculation details" make ABSOLUTELY clear that they could not possibly have existed in BC centuries.

Consider this information you are given, which information was SUPPOSEDLY "given by God" to Moses. These are the only facts from which you must then CALCULATE the Jewish calendar:

- 1) A starting date in the JULIAN calendar. This is for the year 3761 BC.
- 2) The length of time Jewish "19-year cycles" are shorter than 19 JULIAN years.
- 3) The length of time the average "common year" in the Jewish calendar is shorter than the average JULIAN year.
- 4) The length of time the average "leap year" in the Jewish calendar is longer than the average JULIAN year.
- 5) The length of time (in days and in 6-hour blocks) by which adjustments have to be made for JULIAN (and later Gregorian) common years and leap years in the Roman 4-year leap year cycle.
- 6) The length of time by which the Jewish "19-year cycle" exceeds a full number of weeks.
- 7) The length of time by which a Jewish "common year" exceeds a full number of weeks.
- 8) The length of time by which a Jewish "leap year" exceeds a full number of weeks.

And that is ALL THE INFORMATION YOU ARE GIVEN TO MAKE THE CALCULATIONS! There is nothing mysterious about this. The "length of time" in these calculations always consists of "days + hours + halakim". After you have completed these calculations, you THEN examine the results as to whether or not to apply any "postponements". And then the start of the year and the length of the year are established.

The calculations presuppose and require the existence of TWO distinct calendar systems: the Jewish calendar and AN ABSOLUTE CALENDAR against which to measure this Jewish calendar. THE PURPOSE of the Jewish calendar calculations is to establish a starting date for the Jewish calendar in terms of ANOTHER CALENDAR, which must have an absolute scale.

The calculations start out with a date in the JULIAN calendar. They then compare Jewish "19-year cycles" and common years and leap years to JULIAN years. They also compare Jewish "19-year cycles" and common years and leap year to a full number of weeks (each full week is $7 \times 24 = 168$ hours). But it should be clear that the entire calculations are meaningless if you don't have a JULIAN calendar to start with! You CANNOT make these calculations if there is no Julian calendar. You cannot make the calculations if you don't have the first 5 things in the above list of 8 points.

So Mr. Franklin wants us to believe that God told Moses how to calculate in advance new moon dates for the JULIAN calendar?

Now YOU might have thought that these Jewish calendar calculations tell you how long each lunar cycle is, or at least how long the "mean" lunar cycle is, etc.? Those things do underlie the calculations, and

you can find them out by extrapolation, but they don't actually feature in the calculations of any specific molad AT ALL. That is because the SOLE FOCUS of the Jewish calendar calculations is to establish JULIAN calendar dates for the Jewish calendar, and that has ALWAYS been the focus of these calculations. Can you understand why any Jewish astronomer would be embarrassed out of his pants to claim that these calculations existed in BC centuries?

IF God had given these calculations to Moses, then God would have had to require Moses to establish the Jewish calendar IN TERMS OF the Canaanite calendar. IF God had expected these calculations to be used in the days of David, then God would have had to require Saul and David to establish the Jewish calendar IN TERMS OF the calendar used by the Philistines around them. IF God had expected Ezekiel to use these calculations, then He would have had to require Ezekiel to establish the Jewish calendar IN TERMS OF the Babylonian calendar. If God had expected Ezra to use these calculations, then God would have had to require Ezra to establish the Jewish calendar IN TERMS OF the calendar used by the Medo-Persians. Do you follow?

The Jewish calendar calculations can ONLY work if you have ANOTHER CALENDAR TO COMPARE THEM TO! The calculations are TOTALLY USELESS if the only calendar you have is the Jewish calendar. If all you have is the Jewish calendar (and no other calendar to compare it to), then you would need a totally different set of "calculations" from those that are provided in the present Jewish calendar calculations. The present Jewish calendar calculations simply don't allow you to establish "Tishri 1 IN TERMS OF a scale of Tishri 1". You absolutely NEED another calendar "in terms of which" you can establish Tishri 1. But until Julius Caesar introduced his calendar to the world no such "other calendar" ever existed.

LET ME TRY TO MAKE THIS REALLY PLAIN!

- 1) The JULIAN calendar is not "calculated". Even with the provision of leap years in that calendar NO CALCULATIONS are required. Years follow one another in a predictable and simple manner.
- 2) The GREGORIAN calendar likewise also is not "calculated". It only follows a slightly different sequence of leap years than the Julian calendar.
- 3) Other ancient calendars also did not require any calculations. They were all based on establishing the length of the solar year and then determining how to divide that year into months, and where to add extra days. Some of them were more accurate than others. Whether we consider the Babylonian or Egyptian or Greek calendars, none of them involved anything like the calculations employed by the present Jewish calendar.
- 4) So consider this: ALL these calendars (Egyptian, Babylonian, Greek, Julian, Gregorian, etc.) are BASED ON certain calculations that were originally performed, yes, but they do NOT require any complicated ADDITIONAL CALCULATIONS TO GET FROM ONE YEAR TO THE NEXT AND TO THE NEXT AND TO THE NEXT!
- 5) The reason is that none of these calendars were or are determined in reference to ANOTHER calendar! Every one of them was determined totally independently of any other calendar that may or may not have existed. Even if they involved certain rules of intercalation. Do you follow?
- 6) Thus:

The Babylonian calendar was determined AS IF it was the only calendar in existence.

The Egyptian calendar was determined AS IF it was the only calendar in existence.

The Greek calendar was determined AS IF it was the only calendar in existence.

The Julian calendar is determined AS IF it is the only calendar in existence.

The Gregorian calendar is determined AS IF it is the only calendar in existence.

NEVER do any of these calendars use ANOTHER CALENDAR as a "REFERENCE POINT"!

7) BUT THE PRESENT JEWISH CALENDAR IS TOTALLY DIFFERENT!

It would simply be IMPOSSIBLE to calculate it if there was not ANOTHER CALENDAR against which the Jewish calendar can be measured. The present Jewish calendar simply could NOT be established if it was the only calendar in existence. Without the existence of another calendar, it would be totally impossible to establish THE DAY OF THE MONTH FOR TISHRI 1 OR FOR NISAN 1! Without the existence of another calendar to provide A STARTING DATE it would be impossible to make any calculations.

8) You simply CANNOT have a starting date that says "Tishri 1 was on Tishri 1, a Monday, in 3761 BC"! That information simply wouldn't tell you when Tishri 1 really was! Can you understand this? Yes, we all KNOW that Tishri 1 was on Tishri 1 for whatever year you care to mention (3761 or 536 or 515 or 457 BC, etc.) but that still does not tell us when Tishri 1 REALLY WAS!

9) If you are going to have anything like THE CALCULATIONS that are employed by the present Jewish calendar, then you simply MUST have ANOTHER CALENDAR in terms of which you can establish Tishri 1 (and for now we'll ignore whether that should be Tishri 1 or Nisan 1). Look again at those 8 categories of data that the Jewish calendar provides for you to calculate the molad for any past or future year.

10) THE ENTIRE JEWISH CALENDAR CALCULATIONS are based on the premise that there is ANOTHER CALENDAR against which these calculations can be evaluated. And that is EXACTLY the purpose Hillel II had when he devised these calculations in about 359 AD.

11) THE GIVE-AWAY in the Jewish calculations for even an outsider to recognize is this:

A) You calculate the molad of Tishri for 2000 AD by going back to the molad of Tishri for 3761 BC in Julian calendar terms. Okay, so you have now established the molad for 2000 AD.

B) When you then want to establish the molad for 2001 AD, you don't build on the information you obtained from the previous calculation. No, you once again GO BACK to the molad of Tishri for 3761 BC.

C) When you then want to establish the molad for 2002 AD, you once again have to start the whole calculations from the beginning, with the molad of Tishri for 3761 BC.

D) For EVERY subsequent year the calculations ALWAYS GO BACK to the molad of Tishri for 3761 BC.

E) In other words, the molad for EVERY SINGLE YEAR is always individually calculated in terms of ANOTHER CALENDAR! The calculations never build on the results you achieved for (as an example) 2000 AD, and then as it were "cut loose" from the Julian calendar 3761 BC date. You have to calculate 2001 AD afresh as though you had learned nothing from the previous year's calculations. And THE ANCHOR for every single year's calculation is THE JULIAN CALENDAR!

F) In this regard other calendars are different. They determine the start of the next year by looking at the present year in their own calendar. They just continue, some with more rules and some with less rules.

But the Jewish calendar skips back to the molad of Tishri in 3761 BC in JULIAN calendar terms after EVERY SINGLE YEAR. It could not exist without such skipping back.

12) Every Jewish astronomer IMMEDIATELY recognizes this fact. And ANYONE who is even superficially familiar with the Jewish calendar calculations should IMMEDIATELY recognize that they are totally meaningless without the existence of the Julian calendar.

This should make plain once and for all that IT IS UTTERLY ABSURD TO CLAIM THAT THESE CALCULATIONS EXISTED IN THE DAYS OF MOSES OR OF DAVID OR OF EZEKIEL OR OF EZRA!

THIS IS THE ULTIMATE AND FINAL NAIL IN THE COFFIN OF THE CLAIM THAT THESE CALCULATIONS WERE GIVEN BY GOD TO MOSES! SUCH A CLAIM IS RIDICULOUS!

Now we should understand one more thing.

GOD DID NOT GIVE ANY LAWS IN THE BOOK OF PSALMS!

We should also understand very clearly that God did not give ANY of His LAWS in the Book of Psalms!

Can you understand this?

It is foolish to look to the Book of Psalms for supposed LAWS OF GOD, which are not ALREADY clearly spelled out in Genesis or Exodus or Leviticus or Numbers or Deuteronomy.

God gave HIS LAWS in Old Testament times THROUGH MOSES! There was ONE lawgiver used by God in Old Testament times! God did not use anybody else in Old Testament times to give to Israel HIS laws (the laws that would still be binding on God's people after Christ's ministry).

There are three divisions to the Old Testament: THE LAW, THE PROPHETS and THE PSALMS (also known as THE WRITINGS, Psalms is simply the first book of this third section). Now "the Prophets" are NOT "the Law", and "the Psalms" are NOT "the Law"! Only "the Law" is "the Law"!

Likewise, in the New Testament there is ONLY ONE LAWGIVER, and that is Jesus Christ! None of the apostles had any power to give additional "LAWS OF GOD"! The "traditions" and "the teachings" that Peter and Paul and the other writers of the New Testament have recorded for us are NOT "the giving of new or additional laws of God", unless they are quoting the direct words of Jesus Christ. Every "law" or instruction we find the apostles giving, unless they are directly quoting Jesus Christ, must absolutely be based on the principles of laws that ALREADY existed, and that is certainly the case. The apostles, for example, had no authority of any kind to set aside other days for worship (as the Catholic Church, for example, set aside Sunday and all the other religious days extant today), and the apostles certainly didn't do anything like that. They could only give instructions to the Church that would clearly fall within the parameters and the principles of EXISTING laws. They could only apply God's existing laws to specific circumstances and situations. The same holds true for us in God's Church today.

Moses understood very clearly that God had used HIM to give His (God's) laws to Israel. And once all of God's laws had been given to Israel through Moses, then that was it, they had all been given. To a lesser degree God afterwards gave certain instructions through THE PROPHETS, usually in response to certain forms of wrong conduct by the people. But those were not "laws" intended for God's people to live by after Christ's ministry. They were mostly PRINCIPLES that show specific applications of laws God had already given previously, or they were PENALTIES in response to wrong conduct.

And in the PSALMS (or WRITINGS) God simply did NOT give ANY laws. These books, where they mention laws, only refer to laws that already existed. There were no "NEW" laws given by anyone who wrote any of the psalms! In Psalm 119, for example, there are 175 verses that each contain at least one of twelve different Hebrew words for "laws", yet there is not a single statement anywhere where you could say: "Look, HERE is another law of God which we don't find recorded anywhere else." That is simply never the case.

So we cannot find ANY laws in the Psalms unless those laws are ALSO clearly spelled out in one of the 5 books of "the law".

Moses towards the end of his life knew that LATER God would give more laws or amplify and enlarge the application of existing laws. And so Moses said:

The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee A PROPHET from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, LIKE UNTO ME; UNTO HIM YE SHALL HEARKEN; (Deuteronomy 18:15 AV)

Moses was a lawgiver, and this was a reference to Jesus Christ. The expression "unto Him shall you listen" was Moses' way of saying that Jesus Christ would also GIVE LAWS to which God's people had better listen!

But Jesus Christ Himself then said:

Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I AM NOT COME TO DESTROY, BUT TO FULFIL. (Matthew 5:17 AV)

Jesus Christ didn't come to do away with the laws God had given THROUGH MOSES! We understand that Jesus Christ came to expand the application of the real intent of God's laws, to make them more binding than ever.

The point is this:

All of God's LAWS for God's people in Old Testament times are found in the FIVE BOOKS MOSES WROTE! And to a smaller degree we can find certain instructions in THE PROPHETS, though they don't introduce "new laws" whose principles had not already been given previously. No other books of the Old Testament introduce new "laws of God". What other books of the Old Testament do is this: they EXPOUND and EXPAND and ELABORATE and cite SPECIFIC APPLICATIONS for laws that have ALREADY been given by God through Moses. Kings made "laws" that applied to people in Old Testament times (like David dividing the priesthood into different courses, etc.), but such instructions were not intended to be carried over as binding on God's people AFTER Christ's ministry.

So we can find INSTRUCTIONS given in books like Joshua and Judges and Samuel and Kings and Chronicles and Ezra and Nehemiah and the major prophets and the minor prophets, etc., but they NEVER give binding laws for the whole nation EXCEPT where those laws are already clearly given during the time of Moses, or they are a clear expansion of, or a clear specific application of, laws that were already given by God through Moses. ALL the laws God requires His people to live by today are covered in principle by the 10 commandments, which in turn are encapsulated by the two great commandments of Matthew 22:37-40. Notice that Jesus Christ SPECIFICALLY said:

On these two commandments hang ALL THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS. (Matthew 22:40 AV)

Now Jesus Christ was certainly not forgetful! He knew EXACTLY what He was saying. When Jesus Christ wanted to refer to THE WHOLE OLD TESTAMENT, then He used the expression "the law (of Moses) and the prophets and the psalms", as in Luke 24:44.

And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written IN THE LAW OF MOSES, and IN THE PROPHETS, and IN THE PSALMS, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand THE SCRIPTURES, (Luke 24:44-45 AV)

In these two verses Jesus Christ defined the Old Testament Hebrew Scriptures as consisting of the three sections "the law of Moses" plus "the prophets" plus "the psalms".

Now in Matthew 22:40 Jesus Christ specifically and knowingly referred to ONLY TWO OF THOSE THREE SECTIONS, "the law" and "the prophets". The subject Christ was addressing was the commandments we are to live by, and Jesus Christ in this verse showed that they are found in "the law" and perhaps even in "the prophets" (typically "laws" or "commandments" that were given as penalties for wrong conduct).

But "LAWS" are not found in "THE PSALMS", or "THE WRITINGS". That is why Jesus Christ conspicuously omitted to mention this third major section of the Old Testament here in Matthew 22:40 and also in Matthew 5:17.

Now let's get back to what Mr. Franklin was saying. He wrote:

"The record that we find in Psalm 81 shows that THE CALCULATION OF THE NEW MOON OF THE SEVENTH MONTH WAS A LAW OF GOD, delivered to the children of Israel at the time of the Exodus from Egypt."

Now it is IMPOSSIBLE for the Book of Psalms to introduce "A LAW" from the days of Moses, UNLESS THAT LAW IS ALREADY SPECIFICALLY SPELLED OUT IN ONE OF THE 5 BOOKS OF MOSES!

The Book of Psalms can refer to EXISTING LAWS, but the Book of Psalms simply CANNOT introduce new laws that are NOT RECORDED ANYWHERE ELSE! That is an impossibility!

So UNLESS one of the 5 books which Moses wrote clearly tells us that "the calculation of the new moon of the seventh month" is A LAW OF GOD, then it is IMPOSSIBLE for the Book of Psalms to introduce this idea to us as A LAW!

That kind of reasoning (inferring laws from statements in the Book of Psalms, which "laws" are mentioned nowhere else in the Bible) is what we would generally describe as a twisting and perverting of the Word of God! It shows a clear desire to read one's own ideas into the Word of God.

I have already correctly explained Psalm 81:4 in a previous section. But it is important that we keep in mind that there are NO REFERENCES TO ANY LAWS OF GOD in the Book of Psalms, where those "laws" are not already CLEARLY SPELLED OUT in one of the 5 books comprising "the Law". In this particular case, Psalm 81:4 is in fact a clear reference to the LAW spelled out in Numbers 10:10, which applies to ALL the new moons in the year, as well as to all the Holy Days, and it has absolutely nothing whatsoever to do with any "calculating".

Mr. Franklin's claim that "the law" was supposedly how to calculate the new moon of the seventh month

is ridiculous and totally devoid of any biblical support.

A general principle we should keep in mind:

When anyone wants to convince us that there is a specific LAW God wants us to observe, and that "law" is ONLY found in the Writings (Psalms), and it is not recorded in clear terms anywhere else in the Bible, THEN it behooves us to scrutinize such a claim very, very carefully. The Book of Psalms is simply NOT the place where God chose to record HIS LAWS for us! Yes, there are many prophecies in the Book of Psalms, because God inspired the writers (mostly David) to make such prophetic statements. But God did not use the psalms as a vehicle for giving more LAWS to His people. For that purpose God specifically used the books that Moses wrote.

So much for Mr. Franklin's "Trumpets 2000 AD" article.

Now let's look at his "Calendar of Christ" article. Now we are ready to start with the utter demolition of Mr. Franklin's claims for the present Jewish calendar.

A CAREFUL LOOK AT MR. FRANKLIN'S "PREFACE"

Let's start off by looking at a summary of how Mr. Franklin develops his argument in the Preface of this article. After that we can examine each of his claims more closely. Here is how his argument goes:

- 1) He attempts to destroy the concept of 4 annual seasons.
- 2) This then becomes his foundation for claiming that God does not care about the equinoxes and the solstices. Those concepts are only "Roman" and not godly.
- 3) This lets him then do away with Exodus 34:22.
- 4) He attempts to use other references to "tekufah" to further do away with Exodus 34:22.
- 5) As a replacement for the equinoxes he then presents the harvest cycle, which must be "in the area of Jerusalem".
- 6) He tries to imply a link between the "harvest cycle" in Jerusalem and the fixed sequence of leap years in the Jewish calendar as a justification for that leap year sequence.
- 7) He states that the calendar is based on the LUNAR year rather than on the solar year.
- 8) He changes the name of the MONTH "Abib" to refer to "THE TIME OF Abib".
- 9) He tries to obscure the BABYLONIAN connections of the Jewish calendar by claiming that the names of the months are "Akkadian" and thus supposedly still "Semitic", which is apparently not as bad as "Babylonian"?
- 10) He claims that the Jewish calendar has "an ancient history" that can be traced back to the time of Moses.
- 11) He then argues that God commanded that the new moon of the seventh month was to be the basis for calculating the calendar for the whole year. So he argues AGAINST the new moon of the first month being used to determine the start of the first month.

- 12) He again provides the CORRECT definition for the Hebrew word "chodesh".
- 13) Psalm 81 is the only support for his claims to the calculations supposedly being "a law". We have already seen that he misinterprets this Scripture.
- 14) He acknowledges that Psalm 81 also mentions the FULL MOON, but carefully avoids ever presenting us with a correct translation of the whole verse (Psalm 81:3), thus not allowing us to see this reference in its correct context and with the mistranslation expunged.
- 15) He then claims an astronomical NEED for the postponement rules. They are supposedly NEEDED to keep the months in harmony with the lunar cycles.
- 16) He claims that the "19-year cycle" was given to Moses by God back in 1486 BC, although this cycle was supposedly also "widely used" by ancient city-states and empires. He implies great antiquity to the knowledge of such "cycles".
- 17) He then does a complete SWITCH in his argument! Knowing that the Jewish calendar is OBVIOUSLY not in harmony with either the correct astronomical conjunctions or with first visibility of the new crescent, he now claims that the purpose of the postponement rules is to synchronize the calendar with THE FULL MOONS of Nisan and Tishri.
- 18) He then states that in the days of David the lunar cycle was much more constant.
- 19) He then tells us that the hand of God twice directly altered the arrangement of the heavenly bodies.
- 20) He claims that the result was that there were MANY YEARS when the new moon was not visible in Jerusalem until one or two days AFTER the time of the molad.
- 21) This required new steps to be added to determining the new moon.
- 22) The sole purpose of the postponement rules is to ensure that the declaration of Tishri 1 is AS ACCURATE AS POSSIBLE.
- 23) He then appeals to Maimonides for support that the postponement rules supposedly serve an astronomical purpose.
- 24) He then claims that THE BOOK OF EZRA provides "BIBLICAL evidence" to support the use of these postponement rules.
- 25) He then argues against the actual astronomical conjunction and in favour of first visibility of the new crescent, which he tells us is not possible until at least "17.2 hours" after the conjunction.
- 26) NOW COMES HIS PUNCH-LINE!
- He claims that "the math underpinning the Hebrew Calendar calculates TO THE HIGHEST POSSIBLE PERCENTAGE OF DISC ILLUMINATION FOR THE FULL MOONS OF TISHRI 15 AND NISAN 15."
(page 12)
- 27) He then claims that the Jewish calendar does NOT attempt to calculate the astronomical conjunction, but only the "mean" conjunction.
- 28) He states that "to calculate the exact time of the conjunction each year WOULD REQUIRE

DOUBLE-PRECISION (64-bit) ARITHMETIC", something that was obviously far too difficult for God who didn't have a computer. So God resolved this problem by using the average time for lunar months; that made it so much easier for God.

29) He claims that the postponement rules "fine tune" the Jewish calendar to achieve "THE BEST POSSIBLE DISC ILLUMINATION FOR TISHRI 15". (page 13)

30) Since the Jewish calendar does not really have Nisan 15 and Tishri 15 CONSISTENTLY at the time of the full moon, therefore Mr. Franklin now states that the best possible illumination for Nisan 15 "OFTEN COINCIDES WITH THE FULL MOON OF TISHRI". That's very sweet, isn't it? It also "often" does NOT coincide.

31) To divert us from real discrepancies, he then states that we mustn't focus on any one specific year, but rather view it "AS A CONTINUUM within each 19-year cycle, which repeats over periods of centuries."

32) He then claims that "IT IS AN ASTRONOMICAL IMPOSSIBILITY that a PERFECT 100% ILLUMINATION occur for both holy days in every year continuously over the decades and centuries". He is thus laying the groundwork for presenting some excuses.

33) So he argues for a 94% to 97% disc illumination still meeting the requirements. He does not point out that the moon takes 100 HOURS (i.e. 4 full days plus 4 hours of the 5th day) to go from being 95% full to 100% full and then back down to just before dropping from 95% back to 94%. That period of time gives you plenty of scope to juggle things any way that you like.

34) He supports his claims by saying that the human eye cannot "discern the difference between 98% and 100% of disc illumination" anyway (page 13). That allowed God to fudge a little bit and to not be so picky and precise in insisting on EXACT "full moons", since human beings wouldn't know the difference anyway.

35) He then states that "the determination of the full moon [by this he means the Jewish calendar calculation!] is based on the highest possible illumination for the area of Jerusalem, whether or not illumination in other geographical regions has attained the highest point." (pages 13-14) This conveniently means that you aren't supposed to argue unless you were at Jerusalem yourself to observe this "highest possible illumination".

36) He then states that "the mathematical steps that are required for calculating the Hebrew Calendar are complex." So don't even try to check up on this for yourself, as you might find some rather embarrassing information; embarrassing for the Jewish calendar that is.

37) He suggests that people should accept on faith the results achieved by the Jewish calendar calculations with its appended postponement rules.

38) He then acknowledges that "CONVINCING ARGUMENTS HAVE BEEN PUBLISHED IN RECENT YEARS IN OPPOSITION TO THE HEBREW CALENDAR". (page 15) Yes, and the reason why they are "convincing" is because they expose all the flaws, biblical and astronomical, that are inherent in the Jewish calendar.

39) He then states: "We believe the present Hebrew Calendar is the calendar God wishes us to observe". (page 15) His "belief" makes quite clear that he will therefore reject all evidence that contradicts his belief.

40) He also states: "It is therefore incumbent upon us to seek out the true facts IN ORDER TO DEFEND THE HEBREW CALENDAR WITH VIGOR AND DILIGENCE. WE ARE DUTY-BOUND TO DEFEND OUR BELIEFS ..." (page 15). And that is precisely what he attempts to do in his article ... defend his beliefs regardless of the facts. We should really seek out the true facts for their own sake, because we want to know the truth, rather than seeking them out with the preconceived intention of wanting to use them in some form of defense.

Well, that gives you an overview of Mr. Franklin's "Preface" to his "Calendar of Christ" article. There are another approximately 100 pages of text after this Preface. However, there is really no point in examining any of those subsequent 19 chapters. It will not change anything.

THE ABOVE 40 STATEMENTS effectively summarize ALL the premises on which Mr. Franklin's entire "VIGOROUS DEFENSE" of the present Jewish calendar is built. They comprise the entire foundation for his arguments. And there are enormous flaws and errors in those 40 statements, so that an awareness of any additional errors and wrong assumptions does not change anything. There are enough errors in the above 40 statements to cause us to TOTALLY REJECT THE PRESENT JEWISH CALENDAR, and additional flaws and errors aren't needed to somehow "reject it even more". To adapt Mr. Armstrong's frequent saying: "If we can saw down THE TRUNK OF THE TREE, then that's it!!" We have no need to show that the branches and the small twigs can ALSO be cut off. Besides, I shudder at the prospect of having to add a further 200 pages to this already extremely lengthy article.

So we'll now examine these premises Mr. Franklin has presented to us in his Preface. Let's go through the above 40 points one at a time.

POINT #1: THE 4 ANNUAL SEASONS

Mr. Franklin states that the Hebrew word "mo'ed" (or "mow'ed") "refers specifically to God's appointed feasts" (page 1). The point is that the Bible translators mistranslated this word. It does not mean "season" at all. But neither does it mean "feast"! There are two different Hebrew words that need to be considered in this regard, because in the KJV both are unfortunately at times translated into English as "feasts".

The Hebrew word "mow'ed" really refers to assemblies. It is used to refer to THE HOLY DAYS, all of which are commanded assemblies. But by itself this word does not in any way imply "feasting" or "rejoicing". The Hebrew word "chag", on the other hand, really means "FEAST", and the verb form refers to feasting and celebrating. So a correct understanding is that there are 3 annual "chag" occasions (Feast of UB, Pentecost, Tabernacles), and there are 7 annual "mow'ed" occasions (1st Day of UB, 7th Day of UB, Pentecost, Trumpets, Atonement, 1st Day of FoT, Last Great Day). The weekly Sabbath is also identified as a weekly "mow'ed", but it is NOT a weekly "chag" occasion. The weekly Sabbath is definitely NOT "A FEAST"; it is only a weekly Holy Day!

So "mow'ed" does not really refer to "appointed feasts", as Mr. Franklin has claimed; it really refers to "appointed HOLY DAYS". Apparently Mr. Franklin is not aware of the difference between "a feast" and "a Holy Day"?

I have already earlier commented on his views in regard to the year having only two seasons. When he says that "the Hebrew text only names two climatic seasons" (page 2), he is obviously arguing from omission; he is arguing from something that is NOT said. Arguments from omission are always weak; while they may be correct, there is never any guarantee that they ARE correct. You can NEVER prove that something does not exist or is not recognized simply because it is not specifically mentioned! We have also already looked at Genesis 8:22, which does not require someone to be an intellectual giant to understand correctly. My previous comments regarding his views on "seasons" apply.

Mr. Franklin writes:

"The Hebrew text does not divide the warm months of the year into spring and summer, but refers to them as A SINGLE CLIMATIC SEASON. This season and the following climatic season -- the only two that are named in the Hebrew text -- extend from the first month through the seventh month of the year." (page 2)

What he is saying is that THE CALENDAR determines the seasons, rather than the seasons determining the calendar. So the annual seasons are supposed to be subject to some crummy sequence of intercalation? I wonder why the seasons didn't play ball and go along with the calendar in 1983? Isn't there some mechanism in the Jewish calendar to get the seasons to toe the line? Someone should have told the seasons that they were WAY OUT OF LINE IN 1983!

We need to understand that Mr. Franklin is doing nothing more than presenting a totally theoretical assertion, which is completely divorced from reality! An added insult to God's intelligence is that NOW he claims that the only two seasons in the year cover only the first 7 months of the calendar. God apparently couldn't care two hoots about the last 5 months of the year, they are completely SEASONLESS? God apparently has something against those 5 months?

Mr. Franklin's motive for this claim is very obvious. It is to vigorously defend his faith in the Jewish calendar. Objective Jewish scholars and scientists know and readily acknowledge that the Jews have understood since antiquity that there are FOUR seasons in the year, all of which start on one of the "tekuphoth". I find it absolutely ludicrous that someone would try to argue against the existence of FOUR annual seasons. But THAT is precisely what is needed in order to banish Exodus 34:22 into meaningless obscurity.

POINT #2: EQUINOXES AND SOLSTICES

Mr. Franklin states:

"... THE HEBREW CALENDAR VIEWS the climatic seasons as two distinct phases in the harvest cycle." (page 2)

This is a wrong focus!

It is not a question of determining how THE CALENDAR "views" the seasons! The calendar and its supposed computation is not even included anywhere in the Bible. The real issue is how GOD views the seasons. The Jewish calendar of itself has no "views" of any kind, it is just a dumb human tradition.

Is GOD supposedly concerned with nothing else in the entire year other than the 3 feasts and the 7 Holy Days and their precise "calculation"? In most editions the whole Old Testament takes up a thousand pages or more. And out of that only a very small handful of Scriptures apply to the calendar. So what is God's view of the seasons THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE BOOK? Does God view a whole year as having 12 months (and sometimes 13) or not? Does God have ANY IDEAS what season HE would like to fit those "last 5 months" into? Does He really just ignore them?

Can we not see that this is just a foolish argument, intended to do away with Exodus 34:22?

Mr. Franklin, in his attempt to vigorously defend the Jewish calendar, states that "THE CALCULATED HEBREW CALENDAR places no significance in the equinoxes and solstices of the solar year". (page 2)

Officially the Jewish calendar is very closely linked to the equinoxes and the solstices, as we have seen from the quotations I presented earlier. But, because of its astronomical errors, IN PRACTICE the Jewish calendar ignores the equinoxes ... because it will repeatedly place the start of the year into the wrong season.

It is "THE CALCULATED CALENDAR" that places no significance in the equinoxes and the solstices. And that is PRECISELY why it needs to be rejected, because GOD MOST CERTAINLY places significance in the equinoxes and the solstices, as evidenced by the verse Mr. Franklin is so vigorously trying to banish into oblivion

THE FOCUS must be on GOD and not on THE HUMAN TRADITION which is known as "the calculated Jewish calendar". Jewish authors FREELY acknowledge that the equinoxes and the solstices are each known as a "tekufah". But then there isn't anything that they are trying to "vigorously defend". Perhaps that has something to do with what they are willing to acknowledge when compared to the claims Mr. Franklin puts forward?

POINTS #3 & #4: EXODUS 34:22 AND OTHER REFERENCES TO "TEKUFAH"

Mr. Franklin writes:

"This interpretation of God's COMMAND in Exodus 34:22 [my comment: that FoT cannot start before the fall equinox] is based on the Roman view of the seasons. It is clearly exposed as a false assumption by comparing Exodus 34:22 with other Scriptures that use the same Hebrew expression." (page 3)

He claims that the Hebrew for "at the year's end" (tekufah hashanah) does not refer to an event in time, such as the equinox, but to "A CIRCUIT OR CYCLE OF TIME" (page 3).

The truth is that it refers to BOTH, a specific point in time and also a period of time. It parallels exactly the two meanings which Mr. Franklin himself has provided for the word "chodesh".

But notice one point very, very clearly:

In the above quotation Mr. Franklin HAS ACKNOWLEDGED THAT EXODUS 34:22 IS IN FACT A "COMMAND"! That is quite an admission! And since all of his efforts are aimed at trying to persuade us that Exodus 34:22 actually doesn't mean anything specific at all, he is by his own admission in fact trying to do away with one of God's "COMMANDS"!

Next, he OBVIOUSLY does not want that "circuit or cycle" to have any clear beginning or ending. It MUST be vague to serve his cause. But you can NEVER have a real "circuit" unless you also have a very clear and distinct starting point! The truth is that the circuit or cycle of time can only possibly start on a solstice or an equinox; there are no other possible starting points in the annual solar cycle. And all Jewish astronomers know this.

But now notice that the "evidence" he has provided is not very honest. First he tells us that the expression "the year's end" is a translation of "ha shanah tekufah" ("ha shanah" = of the year, "tekufah" = circuit or cycle). The use of "THIS HEBREW EXPRESSION" in other scriptural passages will supposedly prove his point. Then he states:

"IT IS USED IN 1.SAMUEL to refer to Hannah's nine-month cycle of pregnancy (obviously

Hannah's pregnancy did not encompass all four days of equinox and solstice), AND IN PSALM 19 to refer to the circuit of the sun across the sky." (page 3)

For a start, the Hebrew expression is "tekufah ha shanah" and NOT "ha shanah tekufah". Next, he has NOT told us the precise scriptural references. So we have to search the references out for ourselves. And when we do that, we find that his claim is not really true! The facts are that THE EXPRESSION "ha shanah tekufah" (or correctly "tekufah ha shanah") is NOT USED IN EITHER PSALM 19 OR IN 1.SAMUEL!

So how reliable are the comments Mr. Franklin is making in his vigorous defense of the Jewish calendar?

THE FACTS ARE:

Only the word "tekufah" is used in 1 Samuel 1:20 and in Psalm 19:6. This is the word for "circuit". But the word for "YEAR" (ha shanah) is NOT USED in either of those two verses. After presenting these two vague references, Mr. Franklin promptly continues to argue about the phrase "THE YEAR'S END".

Now he KNOWS that the only two Scriptures in the entire Old Testament that use THE EXPRESSION "tekufah ha shanah" are Exodus 34:22 and 2 Chronicles 24:23.

And it came to pass AT THE END OF THE YEAR (tekufah ha shanah), that the host of Syria came up against him: and they came to Judah and Jerusalem, and destroyed all the princes of the people from among the people, and sent all the spoil of them unto the king of Damascus. (2 Chronicles 24:23 AV)

There simply are no other Scriptures that contain this expression!

So what was the purpose of his reference to Hannah's nine months of pregnancy? It was to create THE IMPRESSION that the expression "at the tekufah of the year" has nothing to do with REAL turning points in the annual cycle. But that impression is not justified at all. Note also that the only other Scripture that DOES in fact use the expression "the tekufah OF THE YEAR" (i.e. 2 Chronicles 24:23) is a verse Mr. Franklin did not even bother to present as evidence for his case. Why not? Well, because it would only work against his cause, rather than for his cause. So it was more expedient to not even use this verse.

The point is this:

The word "tekufah" is only used 4 times in the Old Testament, twice in the expression "the tekufah OF THE YEAR", then once for Hannah in 1 Samuel 1:20 (literally that reads "it came to pass at the revolution or circuit OF DAYS ..."), and once in Psalm 19:6 which speaks about THE SUN and its circuit (tekufah). The "tekufah of days" and the "tekufah of the sun" do not in any way determine the meaning of the expression "the tekufah OF THE YEAR"!

It is absolutely and irrefutably known by all Jewish astronomers that "tekufah", when used to refer to a year, MUST refer to the equinoxes and the solstices, because those days are such OBVIOUS turning points, and no other days are! The highly authoritative quotations we looked at earlier make this quite obvious.

Now let's examine the following question:

DO YOU UNDERSTAND WHY MR. FRANKLIN IS SO DESPERATE TO DESTROY THE MEANING OF "TEKUFAH OF THE YEAR"?

He has realized the full implication of Exodus 34:22, that the present Jewish calendar flagrantly violates this Scripture. He has also realized that the only option for retaining the present Jewish calendar, which he wants to defend so vigorously, is to deny any and every specific meaning for the word "tekufah"; the only option is to push for the expression "tekufah of the year" to have some vague and obscure and highly negotiable meaning, as long as it doesn't refer to an equinox or a solstice. His is the argument of a very desperate man who has to fight his way out of a corner. To claim or to imply that two Scriptures use the expression "the tekufah OF THE YEAR" when they in fact don't say that at all is the expression of a desperate mind.

And it TOTALLY DESTROYS any credibility for the point he is trying to make.

POINT #5: REPLACING EQUINOXES WITH THE HARVEST CYCLE

Mr. Franklin writes:

"There is no confusion regarding 'the year's end' when we understand that the Scriptures divide the year by the harvest cycle -- not by the equinoxes and solstices." (page 3)

That is simply not true! The Scriptures nowhere "DIVIDE THE YEAR"! That claim is ridiculous! This claim is made after he has appealed to 1 Samuel and Psalm 19, then misrepresented Exodus 34:22, and followed that by an appeal to Leviticus 23:39, which states "when you have gathered in the fruit of the land". For the year 515 BC that was supposedly all "gathered in" by September 6th or 7th according to the dates Mr. Franklin presented in his other article! So what PROOF has he presented? None at all!

The Scriptures simply do not "divide the year", EXCEPT for telling us in Exodus 12:2 that the year must start in the spring!

To "DIVIDE" the year implies SEPARATING between different parts of the year. And that's what God did in Exodus 12:2, by clearly spelling out that the first month is to start in THE SEASON of spring!

But notice that you first have to CONDITION YOUR MIND before Mr. Franklin's views will make sense to you. As he said, IF YOU FIRST ACCEPT HIS UNPROVED PREMISE that "the Scriptures divide the year by the harvest cycle", THEN his views seem to make sense. The real problem here is that NOWHERE DOES THE BIBLE "DIVIDE THE YEAR BY HARVEST CYCLES"! That is a totally unjustified assumption.

WHAT SCRIPTURE "divides the year by the harvest cycle"? NONE! References to harvests have nothing at all to do with "DIVIDING the year"!

Mr. Franklin continues to say:

"It is THE HARVEST IN THE LAND OF ISRAEL that DETERMINES THE 'YEAR'S END' -- not the fall equinox. The only Scriptural basis for dividing the year is the harvest cycle in the area of Jerusalem. This cycle, which begins in the first month and ends with the seventh month, is the focus of the Hebrew Calendar." (page 3)

My comment: You have to be a fool to believe that statement!

This is saying that GOD DID NOT ESTABLISH ANY SEASONS! The seasons get their clue from the harvest, and the harvest gets its clue from the Jewish calendar, and the Jewish calendar gets its clues from the postponement rules, and the postponement rules get their clues from the days of the week, and the days of the week get their clues from strictly utilitarian purposes!

Weird, isn't it?!

THERE ARE SUPPOSEDLY NO ABSOLUTES! IT'S ALL WISHY-WASHY!

The calendar is king! And the seasons and the harvests had better take note of that and jump whenever the calendar decides to give an order. So when the calendar decides to start the year on February 28 (Mr. Franklin's own very flawed 515 BC example), then the season of spring is commanded to start right then. And when the calendar decides to only start the year in the middle of April, then the season of spring has a little longer to get its act together. And when the calendar decides to start the year on March 15 (as in 1983) but the harvest doesn't play ball and is only ready two months later, then all we can do is "turn the other way", like people who pretend not to notice the mess their dogs are making in a public park.

THE FACTS ARE: There is no correlation at all between the barley harvest and the start of the year in the present Jewish calendar. 1983 proves this conclusively!

So why does Mr. Franklin appeal to the barley harvest? Because he realizes that he has to replace the equinoxes he is trying to remove with SOMETHING! There must be "something" that can be called "the year's circuit". But that "something" must be flexible enough to accommodate the inherent flaws of the present Jewish calendar. Obviously Mr. Franklin realizes that most people can only find out about the time of the barley harvest in Israel today, if they are even interested enough to want to know this, by relying on someone like the Karaites to make some "authoritative" decision, and the Karaites are known for also wanting to find their "ripe barley" as early as possible. They certainly would not have agreed with Mr. Bar-Droma back in 1983 and waited until some time in MAY before starting their year in 1983. And Mr. Franklin also knows that most people will never bother to search out the inconsistencies in such claims.

But THE INSULT TO GOD is that GOD supposedly says: "When the harvest finishes in the fall in Palestine, then I'll just call THAT "the year's circuit" ("end" is really a mistranslation). I don't mind at all if "the year's turning points" fluctuate all the time. Nor do I mind at all if those "turning points of the year" steadily drift to a constantly later date in the solar year, because I fluffed it a little when I created those '19-year cycles' and didn't manage to fully coordinate them 100% with the solar cycles."

Imputing to God that HE would designate "the turning points of the year" by the fickleness of autumn harvests, or by the even greater fickleness of the cycles of the calculated Jewish calendar, is such an insulting view of God's mind and intelligence! I find it staggering that anybody would actually buy such an idea?! God supposedly doesn't believe in absolute standards that are simply not negotiable? He supposedly lets experts (like the Karaites, etc.) decide for Him when the year should start?

Mr. Franklin states:

"... the calculated Hebrew Calendar places NO SIGNIFICANCE in the equinoxes and solstices of the solar cycle. Although its calculations CONSISTENTLY place the first day of the year NEAR THE SPRING EQUINOX, it does not recognize the equinox as a dividing point in time -- neither between the seasons nor between years." (page 2)

Firstly, that is not true! And secondly, IF it was true, then that would be weird!

What Mr. Franklin is doing here is DENYING THE ASTRONOMICAL ERROR OF ONE DAY FOR EVERY 216 YEARS!

There is NO CONSISTENCY AT ALL with the Jewish calendar. It DRIFTS through the seasons in exactly the same way that the Julian calendar drifts through the seasons.

For its theoretical starting date in the 3700's BC all 19 years started BEFORE the equinox. 4000 years later, at the time of Hillel II, 10 out of every 19 years still started BEFORE the equinox. Today, another 1700 years later, only 5 out of every 19 years still start BEFORE the equinox. And another 2000 years from now all 19 years will start AFTER the equinox! The appeal to starting "NEAR the equinox" is a VERY FLIMSY AND CHEAP EXCUSE! The point is also that THE BARLEY HARVESTS in Israel certainly don't all start "NEAR the equinox", as 1983 so vividly demonstrates. There is also no consistency between the start of the year Mr. Franklin claims for 515 BC and the present year, as already discussed earlier.

Next, it would be absolutely strange indeed if GOD would plan it in such a way that the year ALWAYS starts "NEAR" the spring equinox, and yet He TOTALLY IGNORES IT. It's like God pretends that the spring equinox doesn't exist, BUT He also makes sure that the start of the year never strays very far from the spring equinox. Kind of like "strangers in the night ...". Does it occur to anyone to ask: WHY would God possibly ensure that the year always starts NEAR the equinox, when He really doesn't care about the equinox one way or the other? What kind of thinking does this sort of claim impute to God? It is such an insult to God.

Next, it is pretty obvious that, if we were now living in 4000 AD, Mr. Franklin would present a totally different argument. THEN he would say: "Look, what's your problem? EVERY year in the 19-year cycle starts on or after the spring equinox. So yes, I fully accept that Exodus 34:22 refers to the autumn equinox, because EVERY Feast of Tabernacles also only starts after that equinox. So what's your problem with Exodus 34:22?" His different argument today is only motivated by the different circumstances that confront us today. He has to vigorously defend the present flaws with the Jewish calendar.

POINT #6: HARVEST CYCLE IN JERUSALEM AND FIXED LEAP YEAR SEQUENCE

Mr. Franklin states:

"A late harvest in the area of Jerusalem is OFTEN REFLECTED by a similar climatic pattern in other regions of the world. This is ESPECIALLY TRUE IN INTERCALARY YEARS, when a thirteenth month is added to the calendar to realign the months with the climatic seasons." (page 3)

This claim is absolutely ridiculous! It implies some magical powers to the leap year sequence. Only someone who is totally superstitious would buy that sort of statement.

Here are the facts!

First of all, MR. FRANKLIN HAS HIS FACTS MIXED UP! It is not "IN intercalary years" that what he is alluding to can be noticed. It is only in the year "AFTER an intercalary year" that what he is alluding to supposedly takes place. In other words, AFTER a year with 13 months has been completed, THEN the start of THE NEXT YEAR is shifted to a later date in the seasons. The fact is that intercalary years in the

Jewish calendar are THE SEVEN EARLIEST YEARS in the whole cycle. THEY are the problem years because 5 of them still today start the year too early!

So Mr. Franklin's lack of understanding concerning the Jewish calendar is once again exposed. ANYBODY who thinks that "IN INTERCALARY YEARS" the months are realigned with the climatic seasons DOES NOT EVEN UNDERSTAND THE BASICS OF THE JEWISH CALENDAR! It is only in the years AFTER intercalary years that the months are realigned with the seasons.

THE PROBLEM is that some years in the Jewish calendar start the year too early! Now the year AFTER an intercalary year will typically start in the first half of April, while all the other 12 years will all start earlier, mostly in the second half of March. So yes, the year AFTER every intercalary year is always A RELIEF, because it again places the start of the year at a more realistic time slightly later in the season of spring.

Yes, the year AFTER an intercalary year realigns the months with the seasons. Those are not the problem years. THE PROBLEM is that the present Jewish calendar allows the start of the year to get OUT OF ALIGNMENT WITH CLIMATIC SEASONS!

Note also Mr. Franklin's tacit acknowledgment that there is in fact A NEED for the months to be aligned with the "climatic seasons" rather than being aligned with "the harvests". Shouldn't he have said that the year AFTER an intercalary year again "aligns the months with THE HARVESTS"?

Next, the acknowledgment of this NEED for realignment PROVES THE NECESSITY OF THE VERNAL EQUINOX! You can't do any realigning unless you RECOGNIZE the vernal equinox as being the vital yardstick! However, a fixed sequence of intercalation counteracts any "realigning" because the drift (1 day every 216 years) is unavoidable with a fixed sequence of leap years.

However, Mr. Franklin's insinuation that "late harvests" are somehow linked to intercalary years (he should have said to the year AFTER an intercalary year!) is ridiculous. As in 1983, when the year started on March 15 and the "LATE" harvest only started two months later. 1983 was in fact an intercalary year in the Jewish calendar; its early start is a clear giveaway of this fact. So, based on the reasoning he has presented here, 1982 should really have been an intercalary year, because THAT would have gone at least SOME way towards realigning the months with the seasons and also the harvest for the following year. 1982 was the 5th year of cycle #303 in the Jewish calendar, and Mr. Franklin insists on the Jewish tradition that the 6th year (that was 1983) must be the intercalary year. And that resulted in a lousy mis-alignment with the harvest that year.

The truth is that there is no relationship between the sequence of intercalation and the time of harvests, even though many of us have heard that stated many times in the past. Such a belief is nothing more than blind superstition taken to the nth degree. It falls into the category of fairy tales.

POINT #7: CALENDAR BASED ON LUNAR YEARS?

Mr. Franklin writes:

"Remember that the Hebrew Calendar is BASED ON THE LUNAR YEAR, which is approximately eleven days shorter than the solar year." (page 3)

This is also not correct.

Look, IF the calendar was indeed based on the "lunar" year, then it would RAPIDLY drift through the

seasons, like the Islamic calendar. IF the lunar year is the standard, THEN you have no way of fitting the solar year into the lunar year, simply because THE SOLAR YEAR IS LONGER THAN THE LUNAR YEAR! It is the SOLAR year that keeps the seasons constant, not the lunar year.

It should really be OBVIOUS that the SOLAR YEAR COMES FIRST, and into that context THE LUNAR YEAR IS ACCOMMODATED!

As the 1964 Encyclopedia Britannica, volume 4, page 623, article "CALENDAR, section VII "Jewish Calendar" states:

"The Jewish calendar in use today is LUNISOLAR, THE YEARS BEING SOLAR AND THE MONTHS LUNAR."

I wonder how much someone who thinks that the Jewish calendar is based on THE LUNAR YEAR really understands about that Jewish calendar?

Any calendar that is going to keep the seasons constant in the year (e.g. the year must always start in the spring, or even always "when barley is ripe") simply MUST be based on the solar year. God's statement in Exodus 12:2 makes very clear, beyond any doubts, that God WANTS THE SOLAR YEAR TO BE THE FOUNDATION for the yearly cycle, without which foundation the calendar would drift through the seasons, which seasons Mr. Franklin tries to tell us are not "biblical". It is the lunar year (actually the lunar MONTHS) that must be accommodated within the framework of the solar year; it could never be the other way round, that the solar year must somehow be accommodated within the framework of the lunar year. The Encyclopedia Britannica clearly recognized this fact!

But that, in turn, requires a specific date in the solar year BEFORE WHICH THE YEAR CANNOT START! So I can understand why Mr. Franklin claims that the Jewish calendar is "based on the lunar year". To make this quite clear: IF YOU ACKNOWLEDGE that THE SOLAR YEAR must be the foundation of the calendar, THEN there simply MUST be some fixed date in the SOLAR year before which the year cannot start. So claiming that the LUNAR year is "THE BASIS" for the Jewish calendar is essential in order to get around a "not-earlier-than" starting date for the year. And remember, there are only four POSSIBLE dates on which the solar year can start; there are no others.

So who is right ... the Encyclopedia Britannica or Mr. Franklin? The answer to this question is obvious, isn't it?

POINT #8: THE NAME OF THE MONTH "ABIB"

Mr. Franklin writes:

"As Moses' words to the children of Israel reveal, the time that God established as the beginning of the year is 'the month Abib' (Exodus 13:4). In commanding that THE TIME OF ABIB BE RECOGNIZED AS THE FIRST MONTH, GOD PERPETUALLY LINKED THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR WITH THE SPRING HARVEST CYCLE." (page 4)

"Abib" refers to "ears of barley".

The use of the name "Abib" is a very clear reference to the season of SPRING! "Abib" does NOT identify with the season of winter. The start of the year is "linked" to the barley harvest only in as far as the start of the year is "linked" TO THE SEASON OF SPRING!

Mr. Franklin is trying to get to the season of spring WITHOUT having to acknowledge that it is actually SPRING. His "doing away with the season of spring" is an exact parallel to the Protestants "doing away with the 10 commandments" but then deviously bringing 9 of those commandments back as "good principles", but not because they are "commanded". He tries to do away with the season of spring, but then BRINGS IT BACK under the guise of "the spring harvest cycle".

Note also that he called it "the SPRING harvest cycle"! You don't have "the SPRING harvest cycle" in the WINTER! You simply don't have any "harvest cycles" in the winter. Ever notice that?

The whole argument that Mr. Franklin presents is such an obvious "striving about words". It is a vivid illustration of what Paul wrote to Timothy ...

Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord THAT THEY STRIVE NOT ABOUT WORDS TO NO PROFIT, BUT TO THE SUBVERTING OF THE HEARERS. (2 Timothy 2:14 AV)

That is precisely what has happened. Those who have listened to the arguments that try to destroy the meaning of words and concepts like "tekufah" and "year's end" and "the four seasons" are being subverted. The very fact that I have to here explain well-known concepts and obvious facts that ALL JEWISH ASTRONOMERS FREELY ACKNOWLEDGE is evidence that people have indeed been subverted by these arguments that are designed to strip words and concepts of their well-established and recognized meanings.

The truth is that the beginning of the year is linked to the season of spring, even as the barley harvest is ALSO linked to the season of spring. And it is simply because BOTH (the beginning of the year, and the barley harvest) are linked to the same event, that THEREFORE there exists also a link between the two of them, the beginning of the year and the barley harvest. But that is only a SECONDARY link! The primary link for both is to the season of spring.

It is patently ridiculous for Mr. Franklin to attempt to deny and to destroy this PRIMARY link.

POINT #9: AKKADIAN NAMES FOR THE MONTHS?

Mr. Franklin writes:

"Many centuries later, the original name of this month, Abib, was replaced by THE AKKADIAN NAME Nisan. The Israelites of old adopted the name Nisan, AND OTHER AKKADIAN NAMES for the months, during the Babylonian captivity." (page 4)

In a footnote Mr. Franklin then says that the ancient Akkadians were "a Semitic people". He claims that the Babylonians took over these (supposed) Akkadian names.

We have already seen earlier that encyclopedias and Jewish scholars alike freely acknowledge that: THE NAMES of the months are in fact Babylonian, THE MOLAD calculations are really for the locality of Babylon, and that THE START OF THE YEAR WITH TISHRI was forced upon the Jews in Palestine by the Jewish leaders in Babylon. "BABYLON" is written all over this present Jewish calendar!

These facts, which the Jews themselves so FREELY admit, are highly embarrassing for anyone who wants to vigorously defend the Jewish calendar. And so here we have an attempt by Mr. Franklin to remove some of the stigma of "Babylon" from the Jewish calendar by trying to convince us that the

names for the months are really only "Semitic" anyway. Like the "SEMITIC" pagan god "Tammuz", right?

The fact is that "Akkadians" is only another name for the people known as "Sumerians". The Sumerians were the people of the area known as "Babylonia". The "Semitic" people in Mr. Franklin's equation were THE AMORITES who anciently took over the land of Sumeria.

Now if you care to check this out, Genesis 10:16 shows that "the Amorite" in fact descended from Canaan; they were one of the tribes of the CANAANITES. They are sometimes described as "Semitic nomads".

Here is a quotation from the Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia, the article "AMORITES":

"Amorites: ANCIENT TRIBE OF CANAANITES who inhabited the country northeast of the Jordan River as far as Mount Hermon. In the 13th century BC, the Amorites defeated the Moabites, crossed the Jordan, conquered the Hittites, and overran Canaan to the sea. Their power was broken (see Joshua 9-10) by the Hebrews, under their leader Joshua, at Gibeon. The Amorite ancestry of the Hebrews is mentioned in Ezekiel 16:3. The Amorites have been identified with the Amurru, A PEOPLE WHO INVADED BABYLONIA in the 21st century BC and two centuries later founded the first dynasty of Babylon."

The dates in this article may be debatable, but the point is quite clear: the Akkadians or Sumerians or Babylonians are traced back to the Amorites, one of the tribes of the Canaanites.

The point is: Mr. Franklin was just casually "THROWING OUT" some information that was intended to take the edge off of the names of the Jewish calendar being "BABYLONIAN"! The connection of the Amorites to Israel is only as far as Ezekiel 16:3 tells JERUSALEM that "your nativity is of the land of Canaan, your father was an Amorite, and your mother a Hittite". These references are geographic rather than ethnic.

But as far as the calendar is concerned, Mr. Franklin would much rather establish a link to some unknown entity like "the Akkadians" (i.e. people of the city of Akkad), rather than to "Amorites" or "Hittites" or "Canaanites". The fact remains that the names of the months in the present Jewish calendar are BABYLONIAN! In no way can those names be described as having some "Israelite" connection!

Again, this is an example of Mr. Franklin striving about words in an effort to obscure the Babylonian origin of the names of the months. Is the attempt to hide and to obscure information evidence of a noble and upright motivation? WHY attempt to obscure some well-known facts? Would someone who has absolutely nothing to hide (e.g. the author of an encyclopedia article) EVER resort to that kind of tactic?

POINT #10: DOES THE PRESENT CALENDAR HAVE "AN ANCIENT HISTORY"?

Mr. Franklin writes:

"The Hebrew Calendar has AN ANCIENT HISTORY THAT CAN BE TRACED BACKWARD THROUGH SCRIPTURE TO THE TIME OF MOSES IN THE 15TH CENTURY BC. Moses was given divine instructions for a luni-solar calendar that CALCULATED the annual holy day SEASONS by both THE NEW MOONS (lunar year) AND THE HARVEST SEASONS (solar year). The first month of THE HOLY DAY YEAR BEGAN IN THE SPRING at the time of the barley harvest and was designated as the Abib (meaning "green ears"), as we read in Deuteronomy 16." (page 4)

This claim is completely untrue! There is NO WAY that the present Jewish calendar can be traced back to Moses! The claim that God gave Moses some "CALCULATIONS" is absurd! First of all, there is not the slightest shred of evidence for this anywhere. Do you ever wonder why Mr. Franklin does not quote ANY reputable encyclopedia to support his claims for "AN ANCIENT HISTORY" for the present Jewish calendar? Because they all freely acknowledge that this Jewish calendar is not even as old as the Julian calendar (which Julius Caesar introduced in 45 BC). See the quotations I presented earlier.

Next, this sort of claim depends on people not being familiar with the actual calculations of the Jewish calendar.

The entire data used for calculating the Jewish calendar PRESUPPOSES THE EXISTENCE OF TWO DIFFERENT CALENDARS! The sole purpose of the Jewish calendar calculations is to establish dates for the Jewish calendar IN TERMS OF THE JULIAN CALENDAR!

And without the existence of the Julian calendar the entire process of calculating the Jewish calendar becomes unstuck and meaningless and incapable of being performed!

Now Mr. Franklin is here trying to convince you that GOD gave Moses "divine instructions" as to how to find the correct day IN THE JULIAN CALENDAR YEAR for starting day 1 of the Jewish calendar year ... 1400 years before Julius ever introduced his calendar to the world.

Understand this!

You cannot use these "Jewish calendar calculations" if the Jewish calendar is the only one you have! You NEED to have another absolute calendar against which the calculation will evaluate the Jewish calendar.

On a scale of Nisan 1 to the end of Adar (or Adar II): how would you possibly CALCULATE where to place "Nisan 1"? How can you POSSIBLY "calculate" when Nisan 1 is to start, when all you have is a scale of "Nisan to Adar"? What if your "molad calculations" showed you that you need to start the year on "Nisan 2" ... and a postponement then required you to further postpone this to Nisan 3 or to Nisan 4 ... would that mean that you THEN start the year on "Nisan 2 or 3 or 4"?

I am trying to illustrate the absolute ridiculousness of using the Jewish "molad calculations" if the Jewish calendar is all you have to work with. You could not possibly use the molad calculations without the existence of the Julian calendar.

This is why I earlier gave you all the categories of the data that is used in the Jewish calendar calculations. That should help everyone to understand that the calculations of the present Jewish calendar could not possibly predate the existence of the Julian calendar.

UNLESS MOSES HAD SOME OTHER ABSOLUTE CALENDAR AGAINST WHICH TO EVALUATE DATA, THERE IS NO WAY THAT HE COULD HAVE USED ANYTHING LIKE THE CALCULATIONS OF THE PRESENT JEWISH CALENDAR TO "CALCULATE" THE START OF FUTURE YEARS!

Next, the only way the establishment of a set of "calculations" is even possible is IF THE LENGTH OF THE SOLAR YEAR IS KNOWN TO A HIGH DEGREE OF ACCURACY! Without an accurate knowledge of the length of the solar year it is impossible to establish any pattern of intercalation. And having an accurate knowledge of the length of the solar year presupposes a knowledge of THE EQUINOXES AND THE SOLSTICES! Without the equinoxes and the solstices you CANNOT have an accurate knowledge of the length of the solar year. The very practice of "intercalation" proves that the solar year is THE REAL FOUNDATION of the calendar; and if the solar year was NOT the real foundation for the year then

you would have no idea how or when to intercalate a 13th lunar month into the annual cycle.

But the supporters of the Jewish calendar would rather argue for CHAOS; don't give me any absolute rules as to WHEN I must intercalate; my TRADITIONS in this regard are good enough, right?

Next, Mr. Franklin's claim that God supposedly gave Moses some "calculations" was obviously one of God's more foolish ideas, right? I mean, didn't God foresee that 500 years after Moses He Himself with His own hand would alter the positions of the heavenly bodies, thereby totally messing up any accuracy those calculations might previously have had? Didn't God realize that after His second intervention in the positions of the heavenly bodies He really should give the Jews (as the House of Israel was by then in national captivity) A TOTALLY NEW SET OF CALCULATIONS? And didn't God realize that if He only waited another 600 years, until after Julius had established his absolute calendar scale, that He would then have to give the Jews ANOTHER SET OF NEW CALCULATIONS, this time to coordinate the Jewish calendar with the Julian calendar?

What use could ANY calculations that applied to the heavens BEFORE God altered the positions of the earth and the moon (thereby changing the length of both, the solar year and of the lunar month) possibly have AFTER such changes had been carried out?

Reasoning from supposed BC dates and INFERRING the use of calculations into the process is one of the most foolish and illogical and plain dumb ideas that anybody could put forward. The ONLY thing you can show by reasoning from BC dates is THE FOOLISHNESS of attempting to confer credibility on this process! You can use BC dates to prove that such reasoning is illogical (and that is what I have consistently done); but you can never use BC dates to prove that such reasoning is logical and sound!

And any such reasoning is never, never, never "BIBLICAL" evidence!

Mr. Franklin's claim that the ancient history of the present calendar can be "traced backward THROUGH SCRIPTURE" is an appeal to reasoning about supposed BC dates for specific events mentioned in the Bible. We have already examined his disastrous claims for 515 BC in this regard.

There is not one shred of evidence ANYWHERE IN THE BIBLE that the calendar was ever "calculated". It all has to be "inferred" and "reasoned out" from supposed dates. But there is NO clear proof anywhere!

But notice one other point in the above quotation. Mr. Franklin writes: "The first month of the holy day year BEGAN IN THE SPRING at the time of the barley harvest". CORRECT! God wants the first month to start IN THE SPRING, and not in the winter. It is NOT that spring begins in the first month of the year; it is that the first month must start in the spring! So here Mr. Franklin ADMITS when God wants the year to start ... in the spring. But you can't possibly start the year in the spring if you have earlier already trashed the season of spring by claiming that God doesn't really recognize spring. Mr. Franklin's statement here clearly takes the existence of spring for granted. So how clear is he in his own mind about the different seasons, when he here refers to spring, after earlier telling us that God doesn't actually recognize spring as a season? He really DOES know that there is a season of spring, but he wants to convince us that GOD apparently does not know that?

POINT #11: THE NEW MOON OF THE 7TH MONTH IS MORE IMPORTANT?

Mr. Franklin writes:

"CALCULATING the new moon of the seventh month, or Tishri, IS OF PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE to the observation of the feasts of God -- THE PROCLAMATION OF TISHRI 1

declares the "New Year for Years" (Goldman, The Talmud of the Land of Israel, Vol. 16, pp. 35-39). The month of Tishri was THE FIRST MONTH OF THE NEW YEAR. Nisan 1 was THEN CALCULATED from this benchmark." (page 6)

Mr. Franklin seems to be totally unaware of the fact that, while he is in agreement with Jewish TRADITIONS, HE IS IN CONFLICT WITH THE WORD OF GOD! Has he already forgotten what he said two pages earlier about Abib being "PERPETUALLY LINKED" to the beginning of the year?

How can Mr. Franklin POSSIBLY refer to Tishri as "THE FIRST MONTH OF THE NEW YEAR"? That is just so flagrantly in violation of Exodus 12!

But that's my point all the way through this wretched calendar hypocrisy, that PEOPLE GANG UP AGAINST GOD AND HIS WORD!

Mr. Franklin has NOT in any way indicated that he is supposedly presenting a direct quotation representing someone else's views; yet he has not hesitated to refer to Tishri as THE FIRST MONTH OF THE NEW YEAR! But GOD in His Word (if THAT happens to carry any weight compared to Goldman's "Talmud"?) unequivocally makes NISAN the first month of the year (see Exodus 12:2).

Nowhere, nowhere, nowhere does the Word of God ever give ANYBODY the right to refer to Tishri as "THE FIRST MONTH OF THE YEAR"! To refer to Tishri as the FIRST month is a MAJOR violation and a MAJOR insult to Almighty God, like a slap in the face! How DARE anybody, Mr. Franklin included, ever tell God that the first month is in the autumn? That amounts to an open rejection of Exodus 12:2.

I know there are hypocrites, as well as deceived people, out there who think GOD somehow established TWO annual cycles, one for the Holy Days and the other for supposed "civil" years. But that is nothing more than an attempt to justify THE HYPOCRISY of the Jewish calendar! There is NO JUSTIFICATION anywhere in the Word of God to claim that there are TWO annual cycles, one from Nisan to Nisan, and one from Tishri to Tishri. All this does is impute that God is FICKLE! Moses was used by God to also be the CIVIL ruler over the people of Israel during those 40 years in the wilderness, and God told Moses very directly that the FIRST MONTH was to be in the SPRING! There is NOTHING in the Word of God to justify EVER starting the year in the autumn after Israel's exodus out of Egypt.

For decades people in the churches of God have tried "TO COVER" for the Jews, to find excuses and justifications for the blatant opposition in their customs and traditions, when measured against the Word of God! How about calling a spade a spade?

IT IS WRONG for the Jews to refer to Tishri as "the first month". IT IS WRONG for the Jews to refer to Tishri 1 as "Rosh Ha Shanah". No excuses. No justifications. It is just wrong!

We have already seen the absurdity of claiming that God gave these calculations to Moses. But it goes much further.

WHY would God possibly be against the REAL new moon, and for this argument here I mean first visibility of the new crescent, which is what Mr. Franklin claims to argue for? God KNOWS that there aren't always exactly 177 days between the new moons of the first and the seventh months, because that is the way He made it. Sometimes there are only 176 days, and at other times there are even 178 days between these two new moons.

WHY would God possibly support some ridiculous claim that says: "TOMORROW" is the new moon, when you can reply and say: "But Lord, the new moon is already visible TODAY; so why do You want me to believe that TOMORROW is the new moon? Have You got something against REAL new moons?"

When Jewish encyclopedias freely admit that the new moon is VISIBLE sometimes on the day before Tishri 1, and sometimes only on Tishri 2, WHY would God possibly be so hypocritical (hypocritical means play-acting, right?) as to say: "Get off my back! I don't care when the new moon is REALLY visible for the first time. As long as you get THE AVERAGES right, I don't have a problem with Tishri 1 sometimes being a day early or a day late. Let's just keep it simple and work with averages, shall we?"

Do I have to spell it out so bluntly before people will grasp THE INCREDIBLE INSULT TO GOD that the Jewish calendar represents? Let's IGNORE REALITY in favour of "TRADITIONS". LONG LIVE THE POSTPONEMENT RULES!!!

Surely God understands that certain days of the week can make observance of His laws very awkward and inconvenient? Surely God is going to be REASONABLE about this, and recognize our good intentions when we postpone the year away from inconvenient days?

Really??

I know that the majority of those who will get this article actually support the present calendar. And I know that most of what I am saying is going to make them unhappy, to put it mildly. But that I cannot help.

I AM TRYING TO SHAKE UP YOUR CONSCIENCE TO FACE UP TO THE FACTS OPENLY AND HONESTLY! HOW LONG WILL YOU CONTINUE TO DECEIVE YOURSELF? YOU KNOW THAT YOUR DEFENSE OF THE JEWISH CALENDAR DEPENDS ON ARGUING AGAINST THE BIBLE! YOU KNOW THAT I HAVE SMASHED EVERY SUPPOSED PROOF THAT PEOPLE CAN DRAG UP TO SUPPORT THE JEWISH CALENDAR! YOU KNOW THAT THE JEWS THEMSELVES DON'T CLAIM ANY DIVINE ORIGIN FOR THEIR CALENDAR! YOU KNOW THAT YOU ARE FORCED TO TURN A BLIND EYE TO ALL THE EVIDENCE AGAINST THE JEWISH CALENDAR FOR WHICH YOU HAVE NO ANSWERS!

Yes, you who are a supporter of the Jewish calendar KNOW all these things. So when are you going to be open and honest with yourself about "the calendar question"?

I understand that this is going to upset some (or even many?) people. So if, as a result of reading this article, you want me to remove your name from my mailing list, that's fine. I understand. But there comes a time when somebody really does have to "cry aloud and spare not", and to show God's people the hypocrisy inherent in using the Jewish calendar to establish God's feasts and Holy Days. It is just plain wrong, and it is so insulting to the intelligence and might and power of God that I find it hard to not speak plainly.

Coming back to the point we are discussing here: there is NOTHING in the Bible that in any way justifies "CALCULATING" (and then getting it wrong by 44 hours!) the new moon of Tishri, and then, in total disregard of astronomical realities, from that data "CALCULATE" all the other new moons for the year. Would it ever bother God IF EVERY SINGLE NEW MOON IN A YEAR in the Jewish calendar turned out to be on a different day from the REAL new moons for that year? Or would God just smile benignly at such clumsy "missing of the target"?

Simply because the Day of Trumpets happens to be the new moon of the seventh month, THAT does not justify making all the other new moons in the year dependent on this new moon. There are, after all, SIX new moons that precede this particular new moon.

The method that people use to calculate the calendar, or anything else for that matter, is not really

important. The only thing that is important is that, whatever calculation is used, CONSISTENTLY ACCURATE AND CORRECT RESULTS are achieved. So IF the Jewish calendar calculations consistently achieved highly accurate lunar conjunctions, and IF the method of then calculating back to Nisan likewise achieved a highly accurate time for the conjunction of Nisan, and IF the method that is used would also achieve highly accurate times for all the other new moons in the year, THEN there would be no problem using those calculations ... because they would consistently be confirmed by the real lunar cycles as they take place.

But calculations that produce INACCURATE results are never approved by God! The Creator God is not the "god of inaccurate new moons"!

POINT #12: THE CORRECT DEFINITION FOR "CHODESH"

As in the other article, Mr. Franklin again freely provides the correct definition for "chodesh", that it "... REFERS SPECIFICALLY TO A NEW MOON OR TO THE MONTH WHICH IT BEGINS". (page 6)

That is such an obvious and clear and unmistakable parallel to the meaning of the word "tekufah", that the only way anyone can miss that is to be "willingly ignorant". I have already given the quotations from Jewish authors in this regard.

POINT #13: PSALM 81 AND "THE LAW OF CALCULATIONS"

Mr. Franklin writes:

"The record that we find in Psalm 81 shows that THE CALCULATION OF THE NEW MOON OF THE SEVENTH MONTH WAS A LAW OF GOD, delivered to the children of Israel at the time of the Exodus from Egypt." (page 7)

I have already thoroughly explained this point. To claim that "THE CALCULATION" was a law is an incredible twisting of the Scriptures! But it requires THAT kind of twisting of the Scriptures in order to justify the Jewish calendar. The mistranslation in this verse all by itself demolishes any appeals to "calculations" for this verse. A correct translation shows that the new moon of the seventh month is only one of 14 days in the year that this verse applies to.

It is interesting that Mr. Franklin did not feel it necessary to point out where the mistranslation actually is. Nor does he actually even tell his readers that there is a "mistranslation".

POINT #14: PSALM 81:3 AND THE FULL MOON

Mr. Franklin writes:

"Verse 3 of Psalm 81 also refers to THE FULL MOON FESTIVAL (Hebrew keh'seh). This full moon was the fifteenth day of the seventh month, which begins the Feast of Tabernacles. ALTHOUGH THE KING JAMES VERSION DOES NOT TRANSLATE KEH'SEH IN THIS VERSE, the New King James does. Keh'seh is used only in Psalm 81:3 and in Proverbs 7:20." (page 8)

That isn't actually totally honest!

For a start, it is not true that the KJV "does not translate keh'seh in this verse"! THEY DID TRANSLATE IT! BUT THEY MISTRANSLATED IT!

Next, at no point does Mr. Franklin actually offer us THE CORRECT TEXT for this verse. Now he is going to use THIS VERSE to build a major, major case for "full moons", and he doesn't even bother to once quote a correct translation of the only Scripture he has for "full moons". The very least he could have done is to present the actual text of the New King James Version he has just referred to. But he doesn't even do that.

Surprised?

You shouldn't be. These are the type of tactics I have to deal with all the time when I examine defenses that are presented for the Jewish calendar.

So let's note the following points:

1) The word "keh'seh" is used to refer to the "full moon feast day", yes. But realize that "keh'seh" only means "FULL MOON"! It does not mean "full moon festival". This becomes clear from the only other place where "keh'seh" is used, in Proverbs 7:20. That is the verse where a harlot lures a simpleton into her bed by saying that her husband will only come home "at the day of the full moon" (mistranslated in the KJV as "at the day APPOINTED"). In BOTH places where "keh'seh" is used in the OT, the KJV MISTRANSLATES it as "at the APPOINTED time or day". The word in actual fact has nothing to do with anything "APPOINTED".

2) On page 6 Mr. Franklin already provided the fact that "keh'seh" means "full moon" and stated that this word is only found in Proverbs 7:20 and in Psalm 81:3. But then when he quotes the text of Psalm 81:3 in full at the bottom of page 7, Mr. Franklin makes no attempt to expose this mistranslation that he is clearly aware of. He presents the KJV text as if it is perfectly correct.

3) The words "IN THE TIME APPOINTED" are not found in the Hebrew text of Psalm 81:3. They are the mistranslation that the KJV translators supplied INSTEAD OF providing the correct words "AT THE FULL MOON". In other words, in your KJV text you should DELETE the words "in the time appointed", because that is simply not said there!

4) However, the words "in the time appointed" are very important to Mr. Franklin's vigorous defense of the Jewish calendar. From those words he can INFER that it must supposedly be a reference to the ONE day he has in mind, Tishri 1.

5) ONLY AFTER he has made his argument for a Tishri 1 "new moon calculation law", ONLY THEN does he mention that Psalm 81:3 "ALSO refers to A FULL MOON festival". We know that THIS full moon is "a feast day" because the Hebrew text in Psalm 81:3 tells us so with the Hebrew word "chag".

6) It is totally unjustified to claim that this verse is supposed to single out Tishri 1 and Tishri 15 from the rest of the year. The verse, when correctly translated, refers to an unspecified new moon (which could be ANY new moon in the year) and to a full moon that is also a FEAST (Hebrew "chag") DAY (Hebrew "yom"); and both, the 1st Day of UB and the 1st Day of FoT fit the bill here.

7) You have to have an incredibly hyper-active imagination to read anything about "calculations" into these verses. Or else you need a very strong motivation?

Mr. Franklin writes:

"The record that we find in Psalm 81:3-5 reveals that God WROTE THE INITIAL "CALENDAR PRESCRIPTION" BY COMPUTING THE CALENDAR FOR ISRAEL AT THE TIME THEY LEFT

EGYPT. HE THEN DELIVERED THE RULES FOR COMPUTATION (THE MATHEMATICS) TO MOSES AND AARON." (page 8)

That is again absurd!

So when God told Moses that THIS is to be the first new moon of the year (Exodus 12:2), Mr. Franklin wants us to believe that God had -- don't laugh --

A) CALCULATED the molad for the upcoming month of Tishri

B) PERHAPS (?) checked for the need for any POSTPONEMENTS

C) THEN SUBTRACTED 177 days from that

D) AND THEN been confident enough to tell Moses that "THIS is the new moon that I want you to start the year with"?!?

Had God really done it that way, there would have been A VERY HIGH CHANCE that He would have been out by a day or two for the new moon of Exodus 12:2, the new moon of Nisan. Because that is just the way things are today! Was God ALREADY IN EXODUS 12:2 happy with achieving "AN AVERAGE NEW MOON"?

IF God gave the mathematics to Moses back then, what happened to those computations AFTER God twice changed the positions of the heavenly bodies?

Next, about HALF of the "mathematics" that God supposedly delivered to Moses involves facts about THE JULIAN CALENDAR. This was supposedly at the time they left Egypt, at the time of Exodus 12:2. Was God planning ahead for Julius Caesar's calendar THAT EARLY? Look: no Julian calendar means no Jewish calendar calculations. It is that simple!

Next, it is clear beyond doubts that Mr. Franklin made up this whole story about God "giving Moses the mathematics", because THE JEWS certainly don't know about that, and it isn't recorded anywhere in the Bible. So what is this? It is just another attempt at vigorously defending the Jewish calendar. I get the impression, though, that the "vigour" is rapidly evaporating?

Mr. Franklin writes:

"The Hebrew text clearly contradicts those who claim that THE NEW MOON OF THE FIRST MONTH SHOULD DETERMINE THE APPOINTED TIMES OF GOD. The new moon of the SEVENTH MONTH is the new moon that God ordained to set the months of the year. THIS LAW OF GOD IS RECORDED IN PSALM 81, A SONG OF ASAPH." (page 9)

I agree fully with Mr. Franklin that THE FIRST NEW MOON OF THE YEAR should not be used with the crummy computations underlying the present Jewish calendar TO CALCULATE the rest of the year!

That is because we should ONLY use REAL NEW MOONS for EVERY MONTH! With the "averaged out" computations of the Jewish calendar it doesn't really matter whether you calculate the 1st month or the 7th month; errors are unavoidable (as in 2000 AD!) both ways. The only calculations that should ever be used are those that ACCURATELY predict every single new moon in the year. We need to replace "A RITUAL" with "REALITY".

Having seen that Mr. Franklin TOTALLY misrepresents what Psalm 81:3 actually says, this means that his justification for calculating the new moon of the 7th month is ALSO INVALID!

Mr. Franklin's statement that:

"There is no Scriptural basis for using the new moon of the first month TO CALCULATE the beginning of the year" (meaning using the Jewish calculation data) (page 9) IS PERFECTLY CORRECT!

The fact is that there is NO SCRIPTURAL BASIS for using the Jewish calculations for ANY new moon in the year, because they are highly inaccurate when applied to any specific new moon in the year. Nowhere does the Bible ever hint at ANY calculations being required. Since Mr. Franklin himself has raised the point of a "scriptural basis", we should keep in mind that he himself has also NOT presented any "scriptural basis" for calculating the 7th new moon either!

POINT #15: AN ASTRONOMICAL JUSTIFICATION FOR POSTPONEMENTS?

Mr. Franklin writes:

"The Scriptures require that the months of the Hebrew Calendar, which begin with each new moon, be synchronized with the seasons (Lev. 23:4)." (page 10)

This statement is indeed correct; the Jewish calendar should be synchronized with THE REAL SEASONS! And that is not really the case! But here Mr. Franklin is appealing to a mistranslation in Leviticus 23:4. This verse uses the word "mow'ed" TWICE, which is not apparent from the KJV. And "mow'ed" refers to Holy Days or commanded assemblies, but without any meaning of "feasting" attached to the word. "Mow'ed" does NOT refer to seasons at all. Here is a correct rendering of this verse.

"These are the Holy Days (mow'ed) of the LORD, even holy convocations (i.e. commanded assemblies), which you shall proclaim to be Holy Days (mow'ed)." (Lev. 23:4)

The word "seasons" should simply not appear in this verse!

The KJV translators mistranslated the first use of "mow'ed" as "feasts" and then they mistranslated the second use of "mow'ed" as "IN THEIR SEASONS". Leviticus 23:4 in fact says nothing at all about "seasons" one way or the other. I don't see how Mr. Franklin, who engages in so much Hebrew research, could possibly expect us to buy the word "seasons" for Leviticus 23:4? The word "mow'ed" NEVER means anything remotely like "seasons". Is it just that this obvious KJV mistranslation is another convenient Scripture to use when needed? As mentioned earlier, Mr. Franklin really does not seem to understand the difference between the Hebrew words "mow'ed" and "chag"? One comes from the root "to celebrate" (i.e. "chagag"), while the other comes from the root "to meet together, to congregate" (i.e. "ya'ad", the root of "mow'ed"). It should be obvious that these two totally different words cannot possibly mean the same thing.

Now notice his next statement:

"By applying the rules of intercalation (in years 3,6,8,11,14,17 and 19 of a 19-year cycle an extra month of 30 days is added), the Hebrew Calendar is periodically adjusted to the solar year SO THAT THE ANNUAL HOLY DAYS OF GOD REMAIN IN THEIR ORIGINAL SEASONS FROM YEAR TO YEAR." (page 10)

THIS CLAIM IS COMPLETELY FALSE!

IT IN EFFECT DENIES THE 1-DAY SHIFT EVERY 216 YEARS!

We need to get one thing very clearly in mind:

Without A CHANGE at some point in the sequence of intercalation IT IS IMPOSSIBLE to keep any "19-year cycle" IN ITS ORIGINAL SEASONS! With this claim Mr. Franklin is arguing with EVERY ASTRONOMER who has ever commented on the "19-year cycle" of the Jewish calendar.

It is just so plainly DISHONEST to claim that ANY fixed sequence of leap years can somehow keep the years in their seasons. That is simply an astronomical IMPOSSIBILITY! I can demonstrate this 1-day shift for every 216 years over and over and over and over again. It is one of the most BASIC FACTS of the present Jewish calendar!

So is Mr. Franklin making this statement KNOWINGLY, or is he truly and genuinely ignorant of this astronomical fact? Either way I don't believe that it enhances his credibility.

Let's continue the above quotation. The very next sentence reads:

"And, by applying the postponement rules of intercalation THE LUNAR MONTHS OF THE CALENDAR ARE SYNCHRONIZED WITH THE NEW AND FULL MOONS OF TISHRI AND NISAN AS CLOSELY AS IS POSSIBLE." (page 10)

Garbage!

Who is supposed to swallow that story ... Snow White and the seven dwarfs?

That claim is utterly preposterous!

The postponement rules have nothing at all to do with astronomical realities. They are concerned exclusively with the days of the week on which the incorrect molad calculations happen to fall. The molad can arrive at a time that is BEFORE the real conjunction, and because of the day of the week that happens to be NO postponements are enacted by the Jewish calendar, and so Tishri 1 is declared the day BEFORE first visibility of the new crescent. And at other times the molad may arrive at a time 15 hours after the real conjunction, and because of the day of the week that happens to be, TWO days of postponement are enacted, and so Tishri 1 is postponed to the day AFTER first visibility of the new crescent (like 2000 AD). No consistency of any kind!

The above claim is simply dishonest!

Jewish astronomers, who are intimately familiar with ALL THE ASTRONOMICAL FACTS, freely admit that the postponement rules only serve a utilitarian purpose, to avoid certain INCONVENIENT days. You can appeal to Maimonides' incorrect claim a million times, and Maimonides will STILL BE WRONG on this particular issue, something all competent astronomers know very well.

THE FACTS prove that the postponements have nothing to do with "synchronizing" the months in any way.

If you are wondering why my tone in this article is somewhat aggressive and provocative and sarcastic, you need to understand that I myself am provoked when I have to address clearly dishonest claims! And

while I can certainly have patience with ignorance and with a lack of understanding, I never have any patience with dishonesty. In establishing biblical teachings there is NEVER any excuse for dishonesty! And if you are going to be dishonest with me, then don't ever expect anything that could even remotely be called "a merciful treatment"!

It is an IRREFUTABLE FACT that the postponement rules have nothing whatsoever to do with "synchronizing" anything! The astronomers whose views we examined earlier were speaking the truth!

But notice what Mr. Franklin has done with the above quotation.

He has introduced A TOTALLY NEW SPIN ON EVERYTHING BY APPEALING TO "FULL MOONS"! Did you notice that?

The appeal to "synchronizing with the FULL moons" is a load of garbage! The facts are very simple to understand.

IF YOU START EVERY MONTH WITH THE REAL NEW MOONS, THEN YOU WILL ALSO BE CONSISTENTLY SYNCHRONIZED WITH THE FULL MOONS!

However, in any theoretical conflict situation it is WITHOUT CONTRADICTION "THE NEW MOON" THAT ALWAYS TAKES PRECEDENCE OVER ANY "FULL MOON" REQUIREMENTS THAT MAY BE INFERRED!

The molad calculations are simply based on the astronomical calculations developed by the Greek astronomer Hipparchus (lived 190 - 120 BC). Hipparchus, while he certainly held some incorrect views, was nevertheless highly skilled in astronomy, and discovered, amongst other things, the precession of the equinoxes (i.e. a slow westward motion of the equinoctial point along the ecliptic caused by the action of the sun and moon upon the protuberant (i.e. bulging) matter about the earth's equator). Hipparchus calculated the length of the seasonal (solar) year to an accuracy of within 6.5 minutes of our most modern measurements. Hipparchus was really on the ball when it came to knowing the lengths of the solar years and of the average lunar month. And it is his determinations for the length of the solar year and for the average length of a lunar month that form the foundation for the Jewish calculations.

Now while the "averages" are indeed remarkably close to modern determinations, the problem is that "averages" never give you any accuracy when you are wanting to calculate ONE SPECIFIC NEW MOON IN THE YEAR. That is where "averages" bomb out! Hillel II lived about 500 years after Hipparchus, and Hillel copied Hipparchus' data into his calendar computations, because they were the best calculations available at his time. But they have ALWAYS been totally unreliable when applied to one specific new moon in the year, simply because the fluctuations between lunar months are so large.

Now the first point is this:

The calculations are very clearly focused on THE NEW MOONS! In these calculations there is no focus of any kind on full moons. Full moons are not given any consideration whatsoever in the Jewish calculations. Full moons simply NEVER feature in any way in the calculations.

Every astronomer will contradict the claim that the Jewish molad calculations are supposedly somehow, in some way, connected to the full moons! The INTENT of the calculations is to determine as accurately as possible the NEW MOON CONJUNCTIONS. But full moons are never in any way considered.

However, if you really are concerned with synchronizing NISAN with the full moon at the correct time, all

you have to do is start the month CORRECTLY ON THE NEW MOON. And if you are really concerned with synchronizing TISHRI with the full moon at the correct time, then again all you have to do is start the month CORRECTLY ON THE NEW MOON. You simply CANNOT get any "closer" than that! Now starting every month based on reliable eye-witness reports, as was done throughout the period of the second Temple, will achieve this very effectively and also consistently with, for all practical purposes, a zero percent error rate! (Later I'll explain why I say "zero percent error rate".)

POSTPONEMENTS, which is what Mr. Franklin is attempting to infer, on the other hand, have nothing whatsoever to do with any such "synchronizing". Using postponements would be based on the premise that the first calculation comes up with AN ERROR, which error then needs to supposedly be counteracted by a postponement. But that simply doesn't work, as the year 2000 AD clearly demonstrates.

But there is more to Mr. Franklin's appeal to "full moons" than initially meets the eye! We'll see more on this when we come to point #17.

POINT #16: WAS THE "19-YEAR CYCLE" GIVEN TO MOSES BY GOD?

Mr. Franklin writes:

"Although the Hebrew Calendar was given directly to Moses by the revelation of God in 1486 BC, OTHER PEOPLE KNEW THE 19-YEAR ASTRONOMICAL CYCLES on which it is based. THESE ASTRONOMICAL CYCLES WERE WIDELY USED by ancient city-states and empires ..." (page 10)

Here Mr. Franklin has thrown out the date 1486 BC, and then he speaks about ancient city-states and empires, implying a knowledge of these cycles into dim antiquity.

The point is: As the Universal Jewish Encyclopedia clearly stated, this "19-year cycle" was only discovered by Meton in 432 BC, about 1000 years AFTER Moses was supposedly given this secret information by God. This same encyclopedia also freely acknowledged that "this calendar was widely adopted, and was EVENTUALLY followed by the Jewish teachers, who made seven out of every group of nineteen years leap years", obviously more than 1000 years after Moses!

THERE IS NOT ONE SHRED OF EVIDENCE ANYWHERE THAT ANYONE HAD A KNOWLEDGE OF "19-YEAR CYCLES" BEFORE THE TIME OF METON!

Now the Universal Jewish Encyclopedia tells us one thing, and Mr. Franklin tells us the opposite. So who do we trust in this situation to give us THE TRUTH: Mr. Franklin in the corner over on my left, or the Universal Jewish Encyclopedia in the corner over on my right? Would his desire to vigorously defend the Jewish calendar have anything to do with Mr. Franklin's claims regarding knowledge of the supposed "19-year cycles" preceding Meton by over 1000 years?

Next, how could the same "19-year cycles" supposedly hold true before and after the hand of God "directly altered the arrangement of the heavenly bodies", thereby twice causing the position of the earth and the moon to shift? Maybe they were "25-year cycles" or "15-year cycles" before God's intervention, which were after His intervention changed to "19-year cycles"? How can anyone POSSIBLY know what the cycles were like before God's intervention on two occasions, UNLESS the cycles had been PERFECT before those two interventions? "Perfect" means 360-day solar years and 30-day lunar months.

Clearly Mr. Franklin, in his desire to vigorously defend the Jewish calendar on every front, has to frequently shift his position in response to whatever specific flaw or weakness he has to defend. Thus it is inevitable that he will have to at times contradict his own positions. And we have seen examples of that in the last 100 pages of this article, even as we here see such an example once again.

As with the present Jewish calendar, "this bird with scales", so too with Mr. Franklin's defense of that calendar: there is no consistency. And there is certainly no respect for the infinite intellect of the Great Creator God. Some of the views and the lines of reasoning that God supposedly accepts are open insults for God.

POINT #17: SYNCHRONIZE THE CALENDAR WITH FULL MOONS?

Mr. Franklin writes:

"In addition, ONE OR TWO DAYS ARE PERIODICALLY ADDED to keep the months of the year closely synchronized WITH THE FULL MOONS OF NISAN AND TISHRI." (page 11)

Here Mr. Franklin claims that the purpose of the postponement rules is supposedly to synchronize TWO SPECIFIC MONTHS, Nisan and Tishri, with the FULL moons.

So now Mr. Franklin has shown his hand. Let's note:

- 1) He KNOWS that the Jewish calendar, even with its postponement rules, does NOT really start the months consistently on the new moons; they start the months sometimes a day too early and at other times a day too late. That is just an indisputable fact, even though Mr. Franklin himself has at no stage been willing to directly acknowledge this fact, since that just wouldn't be compatible with a vigorous defense, would it?
- 2) He also knows that admitting THE TRUTH, that the postponement rules are really only for avoiding inconvenient days, will not fly. That kind of justification is so obviously unbiblical, that he would be forced to admit defeat and then have to throw out the Jewish calendar.
- 3) But anyone intent on "vigorously" defending his clearly unbiblical traditions doesn't give up that easily. There MUST be some way to rationalize the existence of the postponement rules. He must find "a need" for these postponements, even if no Jewish astronomers have ever been able to do that.
- 4) ENTER THE FULL MOONS!
- 5) The "full moons" are like "Custer's Last Stand"; if they (the full moons) don't fly, then the hypocrisy inherent in the postponement rules is publicly exposed. He cannot go back and appeal to "inconvenient days" which would constitute "hardships"; like it is supposedly a major "hardship" to expect anyone in their right mind to observe the Day of Atonement on a Sunday, I mean, how cruel can you get, expecting people to actually FAST for one whole day without having some convenient "preparation day" available before starting such a fast? He is COMMITTED to having to find an astronomical justification for the postponement rules. It is that or nothing!
- 6) And the full moons are that last stand. As I recall, Custer's Last Stand ended in a bit of a disaster?! Relying on the full moons leads to the exact same fate. In biblical terms, appealing to the FULL moons is like "leaning on a broken reed", and to paraphrase Isaiah 36:6, if a man leans on it, it goes into his palm and pierces it, really bad news.

So we can now examine the facts about "FULL moons".

- 1) The Hebrew word for "full moon" is only used TWICE in the whole Old Testament. The reference in Proverbs 7:20 (about the immoral woman whose husband was only coming back at the full moon) is not useful at all for making a case for full moons.
- 2) The only other occurrence of "full moon" is in Psalm 81:3, and at no point has Mr. Franklin made an effort to even present THE CORRECT TEXT for this verse.
- 3) It follows that a correct understanding of Psalm 81:3 is THE ONLY POSSIBLE BIBLICAL JUSTIFICATION FOR APPEALING TO "FULL MOONS"!
- 4) The correct translation for Psalm 81:3 reads: "Blow the trumpet in the new moon and at the full moon, on our feast (Hebrew "chag") day (Hebrew "yom")."

Mr. Franklin himself admits that this verse refers to TWO lunar occurrences. However, the Hebrew for "on our FEAST DAY" is in the SINGULAR! This means that the writer of this Psalm clearly understood that ONLY ONE OF THOSE TWO LUNAR OCCURRENCES IS A FEAST, i.e. "chag". So the question is: which of these TWO lunar occurrences was the author designating as a "chag" feast, the new moon OR the full moon?

Clearly, the expression "on our feast day" was only intended to qualify ONE of those TWO lunar occasions. Can you see this? Otherwise the writer would have said "on our feast DAYS"!

IF the writer had said: "Blow the trumpet in the new moon, on our feast day, AND at the full moon", THEN he would obviously have intended to tell us that he considered THE NEW MOON to be that "feast day". However, that is NOT the way this verse is written in the Hebrew.

It is quite clear from the Hebrew text, and this is recognized by those translations that correctly say "at the full moon", that the expression "on our feast day" SPECIFICALLY QUALIFIES THE TERM "AT THE FULL MOON"!

THEREFORE here in Psalm 81:3 the "new moon" is NOT EVEN REFERRED TO AS "A FEAST DAY" (chag)! Neither is the new moon here referred to as "A HOLY DAY" (mow'ed)! The word "mow'ed" is simply not used in Psalm 81:3.

AND THAT UNDERSTANDING "BLOWS" ANY POSSIBLE CHANCES OF THIS VERSE APPLYING TO "CALCULATING TISHRI 1"! THIS VERSE DOES NOT CALL ANY NEW MOON IN THE YEAR "A FEAST DAY" OR "A HOLY DAY"!

It is ONLY THE "FULL MOON" that is here specifically identified as "A FEAST DAY" (chag). And this is EXACTLY what Leviticus 23 tells us. Notice:

And on THE FIFTEENTH DAY of the same month is THE FEAST (Hebrew "chag"!) of UNLEAVENED BREAD unto the LORD: seven days ye must eat unleavened bread. (Leviticus 23:6 AV)

Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, THE FIFTEENTH DAY of this seventh month shall be THE FEAST (Hebrew "chag"!) of TABERNACLES for seven days unto the LORD. (Leviticus 23:34 AV)

By contrast, when God refers to the Day of Trumpets in Leviticus 23, God does NOT use the Hebrew word "chag". Notice:

Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, In the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall ye have a sabbath, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, an holy convocation. (Leviticus 23:24)

NOTHING is said about this day being a feast ("chag"). It just isn't there! For anyone wishing to pursue this further: the Hebrew word in verses 2, 4, 37 and 44 of Leviticus 23 is "mow'ed" in every case, and this word really means "HOLY DAY". The word "chag" is only used in verses 6, 34, 39 and 41 of Leviticus 23. It is Deuteronomy 16:16 that also uses the word "chag" for Pentecost, and that verse (Deuteronomy 16:16) makes quite clear that there are ONLY 3 "chag" occasions in the year ... only 3 annual "Feasts" and only 7 annual "Holy Days". [As an aside: The annual OFFERINGS are commanded for the THREE "chag" feasts, and NOT for the SEVEN annual "mow'ed" Holy Days! It is simply not right for ANY Church to demand offerings on SEVEN days in the year!]

So now the whole matter should be quite clear:

A) Psalm 81:3 refers to TWO lunar occasions, and ONLY ONE of these is designated as "a feast day".

B) It is clearly THE FULL MOON that is here designated as a "chag" feast day.

C) This agrees 100% with Leviticus 23, where BOTH full moons mentioned in that chapter are also called "chag" feasts.

D) The Day of Trumpets is NEVER called a "chag" feast day.

E) It follows that Psalm 81:3 does not single out ANY ONE "NEW MOON" IN THE YEAR! Therefore this instruction must obviously refer to EVERY NEW MOON IN THE YEAR!

F) This is confirmed by Numbers 10:10, which tells us that trumpets were to be blown in all the Holy Days (Hebrew is "mow'ed" in this verse) and also at the beginning of every month. This is clearly "a statute" and "a law of God". So this certainly includes the Day of Trumpets on TWO counts, but it also includes the beginning of the 11 or 12 other months in the year.

G) It follows that Psalm 81:3 IN NO WAY SINGLES OUT THE DAY OF TRUMPETS!

H) Likewise, Psalm 81:3 also IN NO WAY SINGLES OUT THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES!

The instruction in Psalm 81:3 to "blow the trumpet" applies to EVERY NEW MOON IN THE YEAR, and one of those just happens to be the Holy Day of Trumpets. This verse also applies to TWO FEAST DAYS that happen to be FULL MOON DAYS, and neither of these two days is specifically singled out for attention.

[Comment: When we sing Psalm 81 "Praise The Eternal With A Psalm", number 62 in the old Hymnal, then I usually change two words in the first verse. Where the verse reads "on our solemn feast day" I sing the words "on our solemn HIGH DAY". This is based on the understanding that the Day of Trumpets is an annual High Day but NOT "a feast day". Alternatively, if I were to retain the original words "on our solemn feast day", THEN I would sing those words with the understanding that I am referring to both, the 1st Day of UB, and also the 1st Day of FoT, with this expression "feast day". The point is to sing with a correct understanding.]

The conclusion of the matter?

IT IS ABSOLUTELY USELESS TO APPEAL TO PSALM 81:3 IN ANY WAY TO REASON ABOUT THE CALENDAR! THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NOTHING IN THIS VERSE TO IN ANY WAY INFER THAT IT IS SPEAKING ABOUT THE CALENDAR!

5) To continue, the Jews NEVER attempt to link the calendar calculations or the postponement rules to THE FULL MOON. The determination of the Jewish calendar plus postponements has nothing at all to do with WANTING TO achieve "the correct full moon time".

6) As a matter of interest, I searched through the entire Talmud and found the following results:

The computer returned 542 places where the expression "NEW MOON" is used, and it returned only 9 places where the expression "FULL MOON" is used. Most of those 9 references apply to Psalm 81:3 (which in the Jewish translation is known as Psalm 81:4), and none of them have any constructive information that would be useful in a calendar discussion.

This should show that the Jews themselves do not place any particular attention on the full moon. This would certainly be different if the intention of the postponement rules was to achieve the correct time of the full moons for Tishri and Nisan. Then we would expect to find far more references to the full moon in the Talmud. So Mr. Franklin is proposing a reason for the postponement rules that the Jews themselves have never thought of. Does he know better than the Jews themselves what the true purpose for the postponement rules really is?

7) There is NOTHING to support Mr. Franklin's claim that the postponement rules are supposed to achieve close synchronization with the full moons of Nisan and Tishri; Psalm 81 does not support this, nor does ANY historical record preserved by the Jews support this, and most of all, nor do the astronomical FACTS support this claim. We'll examine more of his statements in this regard when we come to the points about "disc illumination".

8) I have here explained Psalm 81:3 correctly, and most of you will probably recognize that. Will you go so far as to ADMIT it? It means that Mr. Franklin's arguments for WHY the calculation of Tishri 1 is supposedly so important has been utterly demolished. It has also utterly demolished his attempt at justifying the postponement rules on astronomical grounds. Full moons are simply never considered when it comes to determining the start for every month, they take care of themselves.

It is plain ridiculous to drag Psalm 81 into any calendar discussion, because Psalm 81 does not deal with the calendar in any way. All that appeals to Psalm 81 show is THE ENORMOUS DEGREE OF INFERENCES that people who wish to support the Jewish calendar are forced to make. They are inevitably FORCED TO READ THEIR OWN IDEAS INTO THE VERSES THEY APPEAL TO FOR SUPPORT!

POINT #18: IN DAVID'S TIME THE LUNAR CYCLE WAS MUCH MORE CONSTANT

Mr. Franklin writes:

"In the days of David (1050-1010 BC) and the early kings of Israel (970-800 BC), calculating the New Moon Day WAS A SIMPLE TASK BECAUSE THE LUNAR CYCLE WAS MUCH MORE CONSTANT." (page 11)

I agree whole-heartedly with Mr. Franklin on this point. Even his use of the expression "a simple task" tells us that he himself expected DIFFERENT "CALCULATIONS" to be involved in David's time.

Understand this:

With the present Jewish calendar THE EASY PART is to apply the postponement rules. That is a very simple task. But THE DIFFICULT PART (i.e. for most people who are not comfortable with doing maths; it isn't in fact ever really "difficult") is doing the calculations to achieve a Julian calendar date for the molad.

So IF in David's time this was "a SIMPLE task", THEN it is "the calculations" that must have been simpler. The postponements really don't involve any "calculating" and they are not difficult. So somebody AFTER David's time must obviously have originated the calculations that are used today.

Next, today we take "pen and paper" for granted. Paper is very likely the most ubiquitous substance in our environment. We THROW AWAY enormous amounts of paper. But at David's time writing materials were scarce and precious, both, the medium for writing with and also the medium for writing on. David certainly didn't carry a notepad in his shepherd's bag for scribbling down his "to do" lists. The point is: it is not correct to picture people just writing and calculating on the scale we take for granted today. There is no evidence that David EVER engaged in "calculating" something like the molads for the calendar.

But the "more constant lunar cycle" did away with any need to do major calculations. In the situation with the more stable lunar and solar cycles you only had to be able TO COUNT UP TO 30 to know when the next month would start.

POINT #19: GOD TWICE ALTERED THE ARRANGEMENT OF THE HEAVENS

Mr. Franklin writes:

"His divine intervention TWICE caused the position of the earth and the moon TO SHIFT IN RELATIONSHIP TO THE SUN." (page 11)

Agreed! So ANY calculations that were supposedly given or developed before that time became UTTERLY USELESS! It is an impossibility to change the positions of the earth and the moon without totally demolishing ANY calculations for the months and years that may have been valid before that time. Anybody who knows anything about astronomy and mathematics would immediately recognize this as self-evident.

So this acknowledgment by Mr. Franklin totally pulverizes his claims for the calculations supposedly going back to Moses. [The Julian calendar component of the Jewish calendar calculations also does exactly the same pulverizing job!]

POINT #20: MANY YEARS WHEN THE NEW MOON WAS NOT VISIBLE IN JERUSALEM TILL ONE OR TWO DAYS AFTER THE TIME OF THE MOLAD?

Mr. Franklin writes:

"As a result, there were MANY YEARS when the new moon was NOT VISIBLE from Jerusalem UNTIL ONE OR TWO DAYS AFTER THE PROJECTED TIME OF THE MOLAD." (page 11)

Let's for now accept this claim as being correct.

First of all this implies that GOD allowed the Jews to just bungle along for MANY YEARS. Therefore whatever "solution" they finally came up with after "many years", it obviously wasn't from God!

It's not as if God said: "Go ahead, and just struggle along with those calculations I gave Moses 800 years ago; it's not My problem but your problem. Oh, okay, I can see that you aren't EVER going to get this on your own, if I don't help you, are you? So look, all you have to do is continue using THE SAME calculations because they are almost perfect -- I should know because I figured them out -- but all you need to do is ADD these neat little postponement rules I've figured out, see? To tell you the truth, I Myself struggled for "many years" to figure out a solution to the problems I created in the heavens. But these neat little postponement rules should do the trick. And if some of the time they don't get the day of the new moon correct, don't worry about that, they will then at least get the FULL moon correct, unless of course you want to be real picky and insist on it being 100% full, that is."

That would obviously be a grave INSULT to God, right? But that is precisely what is implied IF THIS JEWISH CALENDAR IS ATTRIBUTED TO GOD ALMIGHTY! And GOD supposedly taking responsibility for their calendar calculations!

Next, Mr. Franklin's comments also obviously don't have an answer for why sometimes the new moon is actually VISIBLE even BEFORE the Jewish Day of Trumpets starts. What is sometimes needed is A DEDUCTION from the calculations for Tishri 1 ... to get Tishri 1 to start ONE DAY EARLIER than was determined by the calculations plus postponements. In other words, the postponements actually messed up what would have been the right day for the new moon.

It should be quite clear that Mr. Franklin intended his comments here to be a neat little explanation for introducing one and two day POSTPONEMENTS. But it has backfired on him.

Next, notice quite clearly that HERE Mr. Franklin provides a justification for the postponement rules based on NEW MOONS! He claims that it is the "new moons" that WERE for many years one or two days LATER THAN CALCULATED.

So with this appeal he himself is in fact DESTROYING his appeal to FULL MOONS as a justification for the postponement rules. If the "new moons" were supposedly one or two days late, then that has nothing at all to do with full moons, right?

That's what I like about people who try to write EXHAUSTIVE defenses for the Jewish calendar. The more such writings try to cover EVERY OBJECTION to the Jewish calendar, the more they inevitably have to contradict themselves, or else contradict known factual information. Since I have nothing to hide and nothing to fear from ANY defense by ANYBODY that is presented for the Jewish calendar, all I have to do is look for the obvious contradictions and the obvious conflicts with the facts in such presentations. And there are invariably MANY of those in such presentations. While that process is laborious for me, it is certainly not difficult.

POINT #21: NEW STEPS NEEDED IN THE CALCULATIONS?

Mr. Franklin writes:

"The changes in the heavens REQUIRED NEW STEPS TO BE ADDED to the process of determining the new moons. Among the procedures that were instituted to adjust the Hebrew Calendar to the changes in the heavens are THE RULES OF POSTPONEMENT. These rules do

NOT postpone the observance of Tishri 1 PAST THE TIME OF THE NEW MOON, as some have claimed." (page 11)

So was the Encyclopedia Judaica being dishonest when they stated in their "Calendar" article:

"Rosh Ha Shanah does, OF COURSE, occasionally occur BEFORE THE DAY OF THE PHASIS BEGINS or, in some extremely rare cases, ON THE DAY IMMEDIATELY AFTER (never later), with A RATHER WIDER RANGE of the occurrence of the New Moon BEFORE AND AFTER THE DAY OF THE PHASIS IN OTHER MONTHS [comment: that would include Nisan, right?]; such oscillation is inherent in a system, like the present Jewish calendar, based on mean values."

Has Mr. Franklin forgotten his own example for the year 2000 AD, where the postponement rules of the Jewish calendar placed Tishri 1 "almost 44 hours" AFTER the actual time of the conjunction, and thus also on the day AFTER first visibility of the new crescent?

Mr. Franklin's comment that the astronomical changes required "new steps TO BE ADDED" to the calculation process displays either a lack of understanding or else an assumption that his readers are extremely naive.

Realize this:

When the orbits of heavenly bodies, like the earth and the moon, are CHANGED, then it is IMPOSSIBLE to simply "ADD" new steps to an existing calculation! Only a simpleton would buy that sort of statement!

If you CHANGE the distances of the earth and the moon from the sun and CHANGE the distance of the moon from the earth, then the only thing you can possibly do is THROW OUT your old calculations! Why? Because all the facts on which your previous calculations were based have CHANGED! You cannot "patch up" calculations that are now based on WRONG DATA!

Next, THE ONLY NEW STEP Mr. Franklin actually offers his readers is: postponement rules! That's it!

This makes quite clear that he devised this neat little explanation as a ready justification for the postponement rules. There is no historical record anywhere that supports this little story, and Mr. Franklin has not made any attempt to quote any source for his information.

And again, it is of immense help to Mr. Franklin's cause if his readers know nothing about the actual calculations, if they are completely ignorant of the fact that the entire calculations do nothing other than determine A JULIAN CALENDAR DATE for the Jewish calendar. Ignorance of the ready acknowledgment by Jewish astronomers that these postponement rules only serve a utilitarian purpose, to avoid inconvenient days, is also helpful for his cause.

Next, everybody should be able to understand that postponement rules, which look at no other fact than "what day of the week is the molad on?", can NEVER possibly deal with changed astronomical facts regarding the orbits of heavenly bodies. The degree of superstition required to believe that sort of assertion borders on the superstition required to believe that the earth is flat!

POINT #22: THE SOLE PURPOSE OF THE POSTPONEMENT RULES IS TO ENSURE THAT THE DECLARATION OF TISHRI 1 IS AS ACCURATE AS POSSIBLE?

Mr. Franklin writes:

"To the contrary, THEY (i.e. postponements) KEEP the observance of Tishri 1 in harmony with the lunar cycle in the heavens. In as many as six years out of ten, these rules MUST BE APPLIED IN ORDER TO ENSURE THAT THE DECLARATION OF TISHRI 1 IS AS ACCURATE AS POSSIBLE." (page 11)

That sounds like Mr. Franklin got his astronomical facts from the Flat Earth Society? Is 44 hours AFTER the conjunction in 2000 AD really "as accurate as possible"? Isn't that enough evidence all by itself that the data achieved in the molad calculations is just TOTALLY UNRELIABLE?! And that is IN ADDITION to the fact that the Jewish calendar at times also starts the year far too early, in the winter, the wrong season?

Is Mr. Franklin not aware that IT IS POSSIBLE to calculate the time of the conjunction to an ACCURACY OF WITHIN ONE MINUTE? Just what does he mean by "as accurate AS POSSIBLE"? Possible for WHO, people living in 500 BC?

POINT #23: MAIMONIDES' OPINION ON POSTPONEMENTS?

Mr. Franklin writes:

"Maimonides ... records that determining the New Moon Day often requires the application of the Rules of Postponement." (page 11)

Maimonides died about 800 years ago! There are many MODERN Jewish astronomers who know with absolute certainty that Maimonides' opinion in this regard is clearly wrong.

How about looking for support in a highly authoritative book like "STUDIES IN HEBREW ASTRONOMY AND MATHEMATICS" by SOLOMON GANDZ, with The INTRODUCTION written by SHLOMO STERNBERG? Does it sound like Solomon Gandz and Shlomo Sternberg might perhaps, just perhaps, know as much about astronomy as Moses Maimonides did 800 years ago?

When modern Jewish astronomers very politely disagree with old Maimonides, then it is clear that Maimonides' claims for the postponement rules are clearly WRONG! And Tishri 1 in 2000 AD again proves this beyond any doubts! It is one thing for people 800 years ago maybe being willing to buy the idea that rules that only look at the days of the week can somehow have an astronomical justification; but it is quite something else to expect people TODAY to buy that sort of superstitious assertion. Nobody is supposed to live by BLIND faith! Would you believe me if I told you that when I was seven years old the tooth fairy put a \$10 bill under my pillow one night after I had lost one of my milk teeth?

POINT #24: THE BOOK OF EZRA AND "BIBLICAL EVIDENCE" FOR THE POSTPONEMENT RULES?

Mr. Franklin writes:

"Is there any BIBLICAL EVIDENCE to support the application of these rules? The answer is revealed IN THE BOOK OF EZRA, which records the first observance of the Feast of Trumpets in Jerusalem after the return of the exiles of Judah." (page 11)

This is a reference to THE FIASCO with his 515 BC calculations that we have already examined in great detail. Recall that Mr. Franklin has FIVE ERRORS in that example. And on top of that error #6 is that he places the whole year of 515 BC ONE NEW MOON TOO EARLY!

It bears repeating:

Arguments about dating events mentioned in the Bible are NEVER "BIBLICAL EVIDENCE"! And such arguments about supposed precise dates are ludicrous and meaningless.

To PROVE that the postponement rules are justified, you must be willing to examine the exact data for EVERY YEAR since the inception of that calendar. And 2000 AD is a good year to start with.

POINT #25: FIRST VISIBILITY RATHER THAN THE ACTUAL CONJUNCTION?

Mr. Franklin then argues against the actual time of the real conjunction and insists on first visibility of the new crescent.

I believe that the correct calendar must be based on the time of the real conjunction, in terms of Jerusalem time, and then CONSISTENTLY starting the month with the sunset that follows that conjunction, be that conjunction 1 hour before sunset or be it 23 hours before the next sunset. I don't believe that it is right in our age to start a month based on first visibility. I feel that there are some very compelling reasons for believing that in this age God expects us to start every month with the sunset after the conjunction.

For a detailed discussion of this particular issue, see also my article "WHAT STARTS A NEW MONTH: THE LUNAR CONJUNCTION OR FIRST VISIBILITY?".

Now, as far as Mr. Franklin's statements are concerned: it is very clear, even to him, that the Jewish determination of Tishri 1 with the postponement rules does NOT achieve "first visibility" except by pure chance. That is why I have referred to the Jewish calendar as "a bird with scales" ... it isn't going to fly!

So Mr. Franklin's argument FOR first visibility is totally theoretical and divorced from reality, just think of 2000 AD. For him it is nothing more than another theoretical argument.

POINT #26: HIGHEST POSSIBLE PERCENTAGE OF DISC ILLUMINATION?

Mr. Franklin writes:

"The math underpinning the Hebrew Calendar calculates TO THE HIGHEST POSSIBLE PERCENTAGE OF DISC ILLUMINATION FOR THE FULL MOONS OF TISHRI 15 AND NISAN 15. In order to understand how the Hebrew Calendar accomplishes this feat, we must first learn the basis for its calculation of the Molad of Tishri." (page 12)

That is a lot of nonsense!

For a start, I have lying in front of me sections of a book entitled "ASTRONOMICAL TABLES OF THE SUN, MOON, AND PLANETS", written by JEAN MEEUS from Belgium, with a Foreword written by Robert C. Victor, who is an astronomer at the Abrams Planetarium at Michigan State University. It was published by Willmann-Bell Inc. in Richmond, Virginia. This was given to me by the astronomer in charge of the Planetarium at the University of the Witwatersrand here in Johannesburg, in response to some questions I took to this astronomer.

Specifically, I have the sections that show the PHASES OF THE MOON for the years 1987 up to 2050.

For that period of time I have the four phases (new moon, first quarter, full moon, and last quarter) for every single lunar cycle, CORRECT TO THE NEAREST SECOND, EPHEMERIS TIME! "Ephemeris Time" differs by about one minute from what used to be called "Greenwich Mean Time". For all practical purposes for our considerations they are basically the same.

These are the tables ASTRONOMERS use, and they are as accurate as you can get. And it is possible to calculate this more than 50 years into the future, and still maintain this extremely high level of accuracy.

To illustrate the point, below I will list the EXACT TIMES, to the second, for EVERY NEW MOON AND EVERY CORRESPONDING FULL MOON FOR THIS CURRENT YEAR OF 2003. The purpose is to establish just how long it takes to get from the new moon to the full moon in different lunar cycles throughout the year.

[COMMENT: I will in this data give the precise time to the nearest second of the exact 100% full moon. In actual practice the moon will be "full" for longer than 24 hours, from the time when it exceeded 99% fulness to the time just before it again drops down to 99% fulness. So no matter where on earth you may be, there will always be at least one night every month when the moon is for all purposes (except for astronomers!) 100% full, and it is quite common for most places to actually experience two consecutive nights when the moon is 100% full. I will refer more to percentages of fullness of the moon after presenting the data below.]

The Format will be: the DATE (month, day), followed by the exact time in HOURS (24-hour scale), MINUTES, and SECONDS ... first for the NEW MOON, followed by the data for the FULL MOON, followed by the EXACT TOTAL TIME that elapsed.

Abbreviations are: NM = new moon, FM = full moon, ET = elapsed time.

Here is the data:

NM = 01-02 at 20-23-52

FM = 01-18 at 10-48-41

ET = 15 days and 14-24-49

NM = 02-01 at 10-49-25

FM = 02-16 at 23-52-13

ET = 15 days and 13-2-48

NM = 03-03 at 2-36-01

FM = 03-18 at 10-35-37

ET = 15 days and 7-59-36

NM = 04-01 at 19-19-46

FM = 04-16 at 19-36-46

ET = 15 days and 0-17-0

NM = 05-01 at 12-15-52

FM = 05-16 at 3-37-02

ET = 14 days and 15-21-10

NM = 05-31 at 4-20-57

FM = 06-14 at 11-16-59

ET = 14 days and 6-56-2

NM = 06-29 at 18-39-45

FM = 07-13 at 19-22-28

ET = 14 days and 0-42-43

NM = 07-29 at 6-53-48

FM = 08-12 at 4-49-17

ET = 13 days and 21-55-29

NM = 08-27 at 17-27-25

FM = 09-10 at 16-37-18

ET = 13 days and 23-9-53

NM = 09-26 at 3-10-15

FM = 10-10 at 7-28-31

ET = 14 days and 4-18-16

NM = 10-25 at 12-51-21

FM = 11-09 at 1-14-24

ET = 14 days and 12-23-3

NM = 11-23 at 23-0-0

FM = 12-08 at 20-37-43

ET = 14 days and 21-37-43

NM = 12-23 at 9-44-03

FM = 01-07- 2004 at 15-41-12

ET = 15 days and 5-57-09

The period of time between the new moon and the full moon is fairly constant for the same time in the solar year, for successive years. The variations in this regard are influenced by the particular phases in the solar year. As can be seen, the longest time from the new moon conjunction to the full moon is always in the period from December to February, just after the winter solstice. That is usually around fifteen and one half days.

The shortest time from the new moon conjunction to the full moon is always in the period June to August, just after the summer solstice. That drops as low as just a couple of hours short of fourteen full days.

At the time of the spring equinox (the start of the year), in the March to April time-frame, that length of time is usually very close to exactly fifteen full days.

At the time of the autumn equinox (Tabernacles time), in the September to October timeframe, that length of time is usually around 14 full days to fourteen and one half days. So the difference in the length of time from the conjunction to the full moon, between Nisan and Tishri is typically around 12-18 hours, less than a full day.

I have the same data as in the above layout for subsequent years, all the way to 2050 AD. And for the March-April period the time from the conjunction to the full moon is usually very close to exactly 15 days. For the September-October period the time from the conjunction to the full moon is also usually just a shade under fourteen and a half days.

IF FULL MOONS WERE REALLY IMPORTANT TO GOD, THEN WE SHOULD EVALUATE THIS DATA IN THE FOLLOWING WAY:

What if the months start:

- A) With the day of the actual conjunction;
- B) With the sunset following the actual conjunction;
- C) With first visibility of the new crescent;
- D) With the times set by the present Jewish calendar.

Let's evaluate these scenarios specifically for the 1st and the 7th months.

Also keep in mind that Day 15 of the month STARTS as soon as 14 full days have elapsed, right? That's when Day 15 STARTS at sunset.

A) STARTING MONTHS WITH THE DAY OF THE ACTUAL CONJUNCTION:

This will mean that DAY 1 of the month starts anywhere from right at the time of the conjunction up to 23 hours BEFORE the time of the conjunction (i.e. if the conjunction occurs 1 hour before sunset, and that day is retroactively proclaimed as Day 1 of the month).

[Comment: For the sake of simplicity I am rounding times off to the nearest whole hour in all of the following examples.]

THEREFORE: In Nisan, Day 15 will START from one to almost two full days BEFORE the moon is 100% full. If the conjunction occurred as early as one hour after sunset, THEN Day 15 will still start almost a full day before the moon will be 100% full. But if the conjunction occurred at around 5:00 p.m. and the previous sunset was proclaimed as the start of Day 1, THEN Day 15 will START almost two full days before the moon will be 100% full.

By the END of Day 15 in Nisan, it will be from one day before the moon is 100% full to the moon actually attaining exactly 100% fullness.

In Tishri, Day 15 will look slightly different, because the time from the conjunction to the full moon is shorter. So in Tishri, even under the best conditions, starting the month with the day of the conjunction will ALWAYS result in day 15 being AT LEAST a full day BEFORE the moon will be 100% full, and it will frequently be TWO days BEFORE the moon is 100% full.

By the END of Day 15 in Tishri, it will be from one and a half days before the moon is 100% full to only about half a day before it is 100% full.

B) STARTING MONTHS WITH THE SUNSET FOLLOWING THE ACTUAL CONJUNCTION:

This will mean that Day 1 of the month starts anywhere from one hour AFTER the conjunction up to 23 hours AFTER the time of the conjunction.

THEREFORE: In Nisan Day 15 will START anywhere from almost a full day BEFORE the moon is 100% full to the moon being EXACTLY 100% full. The later situation occurs when the conjunction was an hour or so after sunset, and Day 1 was proclaimed at the following sunset.

By the END of Day 15 in Nisan, the moon will be from 100% full, to being a full day after it was 100% full.

In Tishri the START of Day 15 will look slightly different. There Day 15 will vary from being somewhat more than a full day before the moon is 100% full to being only about half a day before the moon is 100% full.

By the END of Day 15 in Tishri, the moon will vary from being half a day short of being 100% full to being half a day past having been 100% full.

C) STARTING MONTHS WITH THE DAY OF FIRST VISIBILITY:

This will mean that Day 1 of the month starts anywhere from 18 hours after the conjunction to about 40 hours after the conjunction.

THEREFORE: In Nisan Day 15 will START anywhere from a few hours BEFORE the moon is 100% full to as much as 16 hours AFTER the moon was 100% full.

By the END of Day 15 in Nisan, the moon will vary from being between 18 hours to 42 hours AFTER having been 100% full.

In Tishri the START of Day 15 will vary from being close to half a day AFTER the moon was 100% full to being 36 hours AFTER the moon was 100% full.

By the END of Day 15 in Tishri, the moon will vary from being 36 to 60 hours AFTER the moon was 100% full. As a point of interest: 60 hours after the moon was 100% full it is only 92% full, and that is already a fairly noticeable reduction in the size of the moon by the end of that Holy Day.

D) USING THE PRESENT JEWISH CALENDAR TO START THE MONTHS:

This model is THE LEAST PREDICTABLE of these different models. The reasons are as follows:

i.) The molad calculation may be up to 4 hours BEFORE the true conjunction. Sometimes no postponements are applied in this situation; sometimes a one day postponement is applied in this situation; and sometimes a two day postponement is applied in this situation.

Thus: the molad may be at 11:00 a.m. on a weekday that does not invoke any postponements, and therefore the previous sunset is declared the start of Day 1. But the actual conjunction was only at 3:00 p.m. after the molad, and thus 21 hours after the Jewish calendar started Day 1.

ii.) The molad calculation may also be over 15 hours AFTER the true conjunction. Sometimes no postponements are applied in this situation; sometimes a one day postponement is applied in this situation; and sometimes a two day postponement is applied in this situation. The year 2000 AD is a clear example of this situation.

iii.) The new moon of Nisan is ASSUMED to always be 177 days before the new moon of Tishri. But sometimes the new moon of Nisan is only 176 days before the new moon of Tishri, and postponements may have been applied to Tishri, thereby causing a shift for the start of BOTH months. And sometimes the new moon of Nisan is 178 days before the new moon of Tishri, and again postponements may have been applied, thereby again causing a shift for the start of BOTH months.

Now when these three errors (an error in the actual time of the molad, the postponement rules, and a one day variation from the 177 day assumed time lapse) work SYNERGISTICALLY, then they will SOMETIMES compound the error, SOMETIMES almost cancel out the error, and FREQUENTLY produce only a relatively small error in determining Day 1 of the months.

To then determine the time of the FULL moons means that you then throw ANOTHER VARIABLE in the form of fluctuations in the length of time from the new moon to the full moon into this mix. This then again has varying consequences:

SOMETIMES a wrong date for the new moon day (i.e. Day 1 of the month) can result in the 15th Day being the correct "full moon day"; and SOMETIMES a wrong date for the new moon day can result in the 15th Day also NOT being the correct "full moon day"; and FREQUENTLY this will result in achieving "a reasonably effective full moon day" for the 15th Day of the month. I say "reasonably effective" because full moons have a built-in fudge factor when compared to new moons. And that also applies to all the above scenarios.

Now with the Jewish calendar calculations you cannot predict the results as readily as you can with the other scenarios. Neither does the "19-year cycle" provide a ready prediction for what the error in the molad calculations is likely to be ... it is not as if Year #1 in the cycle will always have a similar error. For example, 1997 was Year #1 of Cycle #304 and the molad calculations give a time that is more than 3 hours BEFORE the actual conjunction. The year 2016 will be Year #1 of Cycle #305, and for that year the molad calculations give a result that is over 12 hours AFTER the actual conjunction. The Jewish calendar calculations are simply not very predictable when compared to astronomical realities.

So in order to determine the Jewish calendar's spread of the divergence from the real new moon, we can accept the statement from the Encyclopedia Judaica as factually correct. Here is the relevant quotation again:

"Rosh Ha Shanah does, of course, occasionally occur BEFORE the day of the phasis begins or, in some extremely rare cases, on the day immediately AFTER (never later), with A RATHER WIDER RANGE of the occurrence of the New Moon BEFORE AND AFTER the day of the phasis in other months." "Other months" would also apply to "Nisan".

THIS TRANSLATES AS FOLLOWS:

- 1) The day BEFORE "the phasis" will almost always be the day of the actual astronomical conjunction. Let's call this "day one".
- 2) The day of "the phasis" will then be "day two".
- 3) And the day AFTER "the phasis" will then be "day three".
- 4) These points will hold good as least as much for Nisan, and possibly even more so.

So the Jewish calendar will have THE LARGEST SPREAD away from attaining 100% accuracy in hitting the correct new moon day, when compared to the other three options. By "largest spread" I mean that the Jewish calendar will VARY MORE from the 100% mark than the other three options.

Now when we add 15 days to this "spread" around the time of the new moon, then it will result in a similar spread around the full moon.

So in both Nisan and Tishri the Jewish calendar is likely to vary over A THREE DAY PERIOD regarding the precise point of 100% for the full moon. This is ONE FULL DAY MORE of variations than each of the other three options. So all three of the other options are more reliable to CONSISTENTLY be closer to the 100% full moon mark.

But this may not be apparent from just visual observations, as I will explain in a moment.

Another point to keep in mind:

Remember a basic guideline that scientists always use when evaluating formulas and equations they may formulate: It is NOT the situations in which their formula comes up with the right answers that prove the formula to be correct! IT IS THE SITUATIONS WHEN THEIR FORMULA PRODUCES OBVIOUSLY INCORRECT RESULTS THAT PROVE THAT THERE IS A FLAW IN THEIR FORMULA!

So with the Jewish calendar:

It is not the years for which that calendar happens to produce the right results, or almost right results, that demonstrate that the calendar must therefore be correct. Rather, it is the years for which that calendar produces RESULTS THAT ARE CLEARLY WRONG which prove conclusively that the Jewish calendar is indeed FLAWED!

Now regarding the "fudge factor" for full moons:

The new moon conjunction is one specific point in time, irrespective of which location on earth is used as a reference point. It is very objective, as well as being precise. First visibility of the new crescent is likewise only one specific point in time FOR ONE SPECIFIC LOCATION ON EARTH. Seen in a worldwide context, first visibility travels around the earth in 24 hours, where the starting meridian will be different for every lunar cycle. But seen from one specific location (e.g. Jerusalem) it is also only one specific point in time, immediately after a sunset at that specific location.

BUT THE FULL MOON IS NOT ONE SPECIFIC POINT IN TIME! THE FULL MOON IS A PERIOD OF TIME! AND THAT MAKES A VAST DIFFERENCE!

When the moon reaches the stage of being 95% full, it will look "pretty much like a full moon" for most people with average eyesight. It is in fact quite common to have THREE CONSECUTIVE NIGHTS where the moon will, for all practical purposes, look "FULL"! Do you grasp the significance of this? Since the Jewish declaration of Day 1 of the month is sometimes a day too early, and at other times a day too late ... this can all be "ACCOMMODATED" within a three-day full moon period. Pretty neat, isn't it?

So IF it can somehow be claimed that the Jewish calculations really aim at establishing THE FULL MOON, not even necessarily the real correct full moon, but just what would typically LOOK LIKE a reasonably "full" moon, THEN you have found your justification for these incorrect calculations and ungodly traditions. BINGO!

The ulterior motive for appealing to full moons should be abundantly transparent.

However, for the record, let's examine some specific full moon data for the area of Jerusalem.

In the Jewish calendar the years 1989 and 2000 WERE ON THE IDENTICAL DATES! That should immediately ring a little warning bell because these two years are NOT 19 years apart! In both years Nisan 1 was April 6, and Tishri 1 was September 30. Now 1989 was Year #12 in the Jewish "19-year cycle", while 2000 was Year #4 in the next "19-year cycle". Notice the difference in the molads for those years, and also for the year 2008:

In 1989 the molad was on SEPTEMBER 30 at 9:25:40 a.m.

In 2000 the molad was on SEPTEMBER 28 at 1:17:13 p.m.

In 2008 the molad will be on SEPTEMBER 30 at 1:58:43 a.m.

So THESE TWO MOLAD CALCULATIONS WERE EXACTLY 44 HOURS 8 MINUTES 23 SECONDS APART, YET THEY PRODUCED THE ABSOLUTELY IDENTICAL CALENDAR FOR BOTH YEARS!

The reason is that in 1989 NO POSTPONEMENTS were applied, because that molad was in fact on a VERY CONVENIENT DAY ALREADY! But in 2000 the molad was on a very INCONVENIENT day, and so a 2-day postponement was enacted.

Now let me make the hypocrisy of the Jewish calendar rules very, very, very clear!

The calculations for the conjunction (it doesn't matter whether you argue for actual or only for average conjunctions) are supposedly SO ACCURATE that they determine the molad to WITHIN THREE SECONDS, to within the nearest halak. Yet for the year 2000 AD the calculations could have produced ANY RESULT THEY LIKE FOR A 44 HOUR PERIOD ... and the fixing of Nisan 1 and Tishri 1 would have been EXACTLY THE SAME!

Do you follow?

If in 2000 the molad calculations had arrived at: September 28 at 2 or 3 or 4 or 5 or 6 or 7 or 8 or 9 or 10 or 11 p.m. or at midnight, or on September 29 at 1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5 or 6 or 7 or 8 or 9 or 10 or 11 a.m. or at noon or at 1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5 or 6 or 7 or 8 or 9 or 10 or 11 p.m. or at midnight, or on September 30 at 1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5 or 6 or 7 or 8 or 9 a.m. ... THE DATES FOR TISHRI 1 AND FOR NISAN 1 WOULD HAVE BEEN IDENTICAL!

The molad calculations in 2000 could have arrived at a supposed time for the conjunction ANYWHERE in that 44 hour period ... and it would not have made one iota of difference! So EVEN IF the molad calculations supposedly determine the correct lunar cycles, it shows that the Jewish calendar DOESN'T CARE whether the moon has moved on for another 44 hours in its circuit or not! Any claims for some "ASTRONOMICAL" justification for the postponement rules stand naked and exposed and found wanting by these two molads for the years 1989 and 2000.

And all Jewish astronomers know this quite clearly.

You cannot tell me that real new moons and real full moons are not somehow affected by the moon having traveled on for another 44 hours! Everybody who has one of the different "calendar programs" available out there can very easily verify this data for 1989 and 2000.

[COMMENT: Here is something that is not of any consequence to the argument at hand, but may still be good to understand. Both, the actual real 19 new moons and also the 19 molads, during a "19-year cycle" all fall on different days over a 29-day spread. Thus there is always a one or two day gap between real new moons (and the same applies to molads) when all 19 are viewed collectively. So without postponements no two years within a "19-year cycle" would normally start on the same day in the solar year. That is why it is (approximately!) a "19-year CYCLE", because only AFTER 19 years is the whole cycle supposed to repeat itself. Postponements have the effect of sometimes moving some years in the cycle into the positions of other years in the cycle, like the years 2000 and 2008. While this does not affect the argument at hand, when two years in the Jewish calendar that are less than 19 years apart start on the same day on the solar year, it is helpful to realize that one of those years was NOT postponed from the day of the molad, while the other one only achieved that starting date in the solar year by means of a postponement. Thus two years with different molad determinations end up with identical time slots in the solar year.]

[COMMENT FOR THOSE WHO ARE TECHNICALLY MINDED (others should just ignore this comment): Earlier I mentioned that the Jewish "19-year cycle" is just over 2 hours LONGER than 19 solar years. However, when you compare the molad times for 1989 and 2008 as given above, you will see that the molad for 2008 is in fact 7 hours 26 minutes 57 seconds EARLIER in the Gregorian calendar than the molad for 1989. That is due to the respective positions of these two years in the Gregorian leap year cycle. A more VISIBLY accurate result is produced when you compare two years in the Gregorian calendar that are exactly 20 full cycles (i.e. 380 years) apart, because you will then be comparing years that are both, in the same position within the Jewish "19-year cycle" and also in the same position within the Gregorian 4-year leap year cycle. Such a comparison should produce a difference of just over 42 hours between those two molads. Such a comparison might be for 1609 AD and 1989 AD, the 12th year in cycles 283 and 303 respectively. In this specific example the difference is in fact just a shade under 43 hours. That small discrepancy is due to the "400-year adjustment" that is periodically required by the Gregorian calendar. I have mentioned this only for the benefit of those who might question why a molad date 19 years later actually arrives at an earlier time in the Gregorian calendar. As with the previous comment, this is also not intended as proof for anything.]

Next, let's look at the actual data for these two years (i.e. 1989 and 2000) and notice something about "full moons".

NISAN FOR THE YEAR 1989:

In 1989 the Jewish calendar fixed Nisan 1 as April 6, and Nisan 15 as April 20. So Nisan 15 STARTED after sunset on the evening of April 19. At that point in time (around 6:30 p.m. in Jerusalem) the moon was 98% full. It would only attain the exact precise moment of being 100% full OVER 33 HOURS LATER, at 5:14 a.m. on April 21, though it would for practical purposes be 100% full for some time

before and after that precise point in time. Thus, THE FOLLOWING EVENING, at 6:30 p.m. on April 20, the moon would be 100% FULL! Now notice: by 6:30 p.m. THE FOLLOWING EVENING, i.e. on April 21, it would still be 100% FULL! And by THE FOLLOWING EVENING, that is April 22, at 6:30 p.m. in Jerusalem, the moon would still be 98% FULL! (The fractions of one percent, which are also highly important to astronomers, have been omitted, and the figures above are to the nearest full percentage point.)

[Oh, the power of computer programs! What would I do without the ability to look all of these facts up -- with a visual presentation of the moon for both, the Northern Hemisphere and the Southern Hemisphere -- at the press of a few keys on my keyboard? All I have to do is feed in the date and the time of day, and hey presto, there I have the likeness of the 98% full moon, craters and all, with the clock just ticking away.]

So here is a summary of the facts for the full moon of Nisan in 1989:

1) The Jewish calendar started Nisan 15 on the evening of April 19 (I'll take 6:00 to 6:30 p.m. Jerusalem time zone for all the following dates for the percentages of fullness of the moon).

2) At that point in time the moon LOOKED VERY FULL, but was only 98% full.

3) The following evening the moon was 100% full.

4) The evening after that it was STILL 100% full.

5) And the evening after that, on April 22, the moon was STILL 98% FULL!

So for FOUR CONSECUTIVE EVENINGS THE MOON WAS 98% OR MORE FULL!

TISHRI FOR THE YEAR 1989:

In 1989 the Jewish calendar fixed Tishri 1 as September 30. So Tishri 15 STARTED after sunset on October 13. At that point in time (around 6:30 p.m. in Jerusalem) the moon was also 98% full. It would only attain 100% full OVER 28 HOURS LATER, at 10:32 p.m. on October 14. Again I'll take 6:00 to 6:30 p.m. for consecutive evenings.

The following evening on October 14 the moon was 100% full.

The following evening on October 15 the moon was still 99% full.

The following evening on October 16 the moon was still 95% full.

The moon first attained 99% full around midnight at the end of October 13. It was 100% full the following evening, October 14. It was still 99% full the following evening, October 15. It is VERY COMMON to have THREE CONSECUTIVE DAYS where the moon is at least 99% full.

NISAN FOR THE YEAR 2000:

In 2000 Nisan 1 was on April 6 and Nisan 15 STARTED on the evening of April 19. Again taking about 6:00 to 6:30 p.m. Jerusalem time we have the following:

On April 18 the moon was 95% full, attaining 96% full around 10 p.m. that evening.

On April 19 the moon was 98% full.

On April 20 the moon was 100% full.

On April 21 the moon was still 100% full.

On April 22 the moon was still 98% full.

By April 23 the moon had dropped to only 94% full.

Again you had FOUR CONSECUTIVE DAYS on which the moon was at least 98% full. That leaves plenty of scope for "cooking the books" any way you want to choose.

TISHRI FOR THE YEAR 2000:

In 2000 Tishri 1 was declared on September 30, and Tishri 15 STARTED on the evening of October 13. Taking 6:00 to 6:30 p.m. Jerusalem time we get:

On October 13 the moon was 98% full.

On October 14 the moon was 100% full.

On October 15 the moon was 99% full.

On October 16 the moon was 95% full.

Again you have at least THREE CONSECUTIVE DAYS on which the moon was at least 98% full.

So now let's come back to Mr. Franklin's claims about "HIGHEST POSSIBLE PERCENTAGE OF DISC ILLUMINATION".

Mr. Franklin writes:

"Although in most years the level of illumination will reach the 99 percentile and above, in one or two years of each 19-year cycle, illumination may dip to a low of 96-97% in Jerusalem (94-95% in other parts of the world)." (page 13)

He doesn't bother to tell us that you can have 99% illumination on THREE CONSECUTIVE DAYS! He is obviously trying to impress his readers with the reference to 99%. What he is showing ... NOTE THIS VERY CAREFULLY! ... is that the Jewish calendar doesn't manage to even hit one of those three consecutive days CONSISTENTLY! And THEREFORE the Jewish calendar has to on occasion be content with only 96% illumination. Achieving only a 96% illumination, when that is supposedly the REAL AIM (!) of the molad calculations is nothing short of AN ABSOLUTE CATASTROPHE!

A 96% illumination means that you are fishing in A FIVE DAY PERIOD! That would have been anywhere in the period of the evenings of April 18, 19, 20, 21 and 22 in the year 2000 AD! The "occasional" appeal to only 96% doesn't seem to sound too bad to us, UNTIL you realize that 96% covers 5 different days.

So we should now be able to put the facts together:

The Encyclopedia Judaica tells us that the determination of Tishri 1 covers a spread of 3 days around

the time of "first visibility" of the new crescent, with a greater spread at other times of the year. So we should likewise expect A SPREAD of days around the time of the full moon. Mr. Franklin is in fact indirectly ACKNOWLEDGING this spread by volunteering the information that at times the new moon will only be 96% full on the 15th day, because WE KNOW that "96% full" can easily cover a 4-day period involving 5 consecutive evenings. Mr. Franklin's admission of only 96% full CAN ONLY MEAN that the time of the supposed new moon IS ALSO INCORRECT!

Now the lessons from all this should be:

- 1) The Jewish calendar does NOT do as well at achieving "the full moon" as some of the other three options for starting the months, as they all consistently do better than only 96% fullness.
- 2) There are NO INSTRUCTIONS in the Bible to hint at looking to full moons for some kind of guidance for determining the months. None whatsoever! The only reference to a full moon, in Psalm 81, has nothing at all to do with calculating any calendar. [People who appeal to "the full moons" to start their months having nothing other than a misinterpretation of Psalm 81 to appeal to.]
- 3) God made it so that the moon "looks full" to us for anything up to 5 consecutive evenings (if we accept 96% as being reasonably full in looks, a percentage Mr. Franklin appeals to).
- 4) THEREFORE God OBVIOUSLY did not ever intend the full moons to be the final word in any kind of calendar determinations.
- 5) The ONLY Scripture anyone can possibly appeal to for "full moons" is Psalm 81:3. It should be SUPER-ABUNDANTLY CLEAR that God did NOT give any laws to Israel through ASAPH, the author of this Psalm! That's just not the way things worked in Old Testament times! To somehow find "a new law" in the verses of this Psalm written by Asaph is a gross distortion of the Scriptures. All the Psalms can do, as far as "laws" are concerned, is to APPEAL to laws that have ALREADY been recorded in the first five books of the Old Testament. If any "law" is not recorded IN WRITING in those books, then there is no way that A PSALM can somehow introduce a new law into the mix. There has NEVER since the days of Moses been such a thing as an "ORAL" law as far as God Almighty is concerned. When Jews refer to "the ORAL law" they in fact mean nothing other than the WRITTEN DOWN Talmud. There is NOTHING "oral" being passed on from generation to generation, and there never has been!

This verse is simply a factual commentary of a "law" that was put into practice 14 times every year, on 12 new moon days and on two days that happened to be full moon days. FOR SINGING PURPOSES (this psalm was supposed to be SUNG by people, right?) the other occasions when the trumpet was also to be blown (i.e. the other "mow'ed" Holy Days) didn't get to feature in this song. SONGS can't be expected to be as THOROUGH AND COMPREHENSIVE as statements in LAW BOOKS (i.e. Genesis to Deuteronomy).

- 6) The reference by the psalmist to "full moon" in this verse is a simple practical observation. Note that THE LAW was to blow the trumpets ON THE HOLY DAYS. That is what Numbers 10:10 tells us, where the KJV "in your solemn days" is a translation of the Hebrew "mow'ed". But note very carefully:

THERE IS NO COMMAND ANYWHERE IN THE BIBLE TO BLOW THE TRUMPET "AT THE FULL MOON"! IT JUST ISN'T THERE!

The command is to blow the trumpet "on the Holy Days", and BECAUSE two of the annual Holy Days HAPPEN TO BE AT THE FULL MOON, THEREFORE IN PRACTICE the trumpet would be blown on two full moons in the year. But the trumpet was ALSO to be blown on the 7th Day of Unleavened Bread,

on the Holy Day (and at the same time Feast Day) of Pentecost, on the Day of Atonement, and on the Last Great Day, because all four of these days are also "mow'ed" days. But the condition of the moon had nothing at all to do with the blowing of the trumpet on these particular four "mow'ed" days. And likewise the condition of the moon on the 1st Day of UB and on the 1st Day of FoT is only A SECONDARY CONSIDERATION; the primary consideration being that these two full moon days were HOLY DAYS!

Let's not get the cart before the horse! The instruction is to blow the trumpet "on the 15th day" in two months, and that would in practice always be in the 99% to 100% fullness period, but the fullness of the moon is NOT the criterion. It is NOT that the instruction is to blow "on the full moon" and we had better fix it so that we always get the full moon to be 100% on the 15th day. The instruction really is: WE HAD BETTER START EVERY MONTH ON THE CORRECT NEW MOON DAY, AND THEN THE FULL MOONS TAKE CARE OF THEMSELVES! THAT IS BECAUSE THERE ARE USUALLY AT LEAST THREE CONSECUTIVE DAYS WHICH CAN FIT THE BILL! So whether it will be 15 days to the full moon, or whether it will only be 12 hours less than 15 full days to the full moon, is really immaterial.

"The highest possible percentage of disc illumination" has nothing to do with this. Besides, the highest "POSSIBLE" disc illumination is obviously 100%; you can't get higher than that. And appealing to a 96% illumination for the 15th day of the month represents a GROSS ERROR! You just have to realize how many days are involved in the moon being at least 96% full.

And Mr. Franklin's claim that "the math underpinning the Hebrew Calendar" is supposed to be aimed at achieving the highest possible percentage of "disc illumination" is TOTALLY SPURIOUS! Absolutely NOTHING in those calculations has anything whatsoever to do with "the full moon". The claim is simply bizarre. It seems that Jewish astronomers like Solomon Gandz and Shlomo Sternberg also didn't know about the intentions of the Jewish calculations to supposedly be aimed at achieving "disc illumination" at the time of the full moon? I wonder how qualified those astronomers were to write a book like "STUDIES IN HEBREW ASTRONOMY AND MATHEMATICS"?

Now note the following:

We have now totally and utterly demolished Mr. Franklin's appeals, both, for the Jewish calendar's supposed "complete harmony with astronomical cycles", and for the supposed astronomical justification for the postponement rules. So the whole foundation of his arguments has already crumbled into dust and ashes ... and we haven't even gotten past page 13 of his 115-page article.

Let's move on to the next point.

POINT #27: ARE "MEAN" MOLADS ACCEPTABLE?

Mr. Franklin knows that the Jewish molad calculations do NOT establish the accurate lunar conjunction. So he claims that the Jewish calendar does NOT attempt to calculate the astronomical conjunction, but only the "mean conjunction".

The calculations are based on the assumption that every single lunar cycle is of the exact same length of time, which is not the case. It is clear that the intention originally (in Hillel's time) was to calculate the EXACT conjunction for Tishri. But it doesn't really make a difference whether the intention was to calculate "the exact time" or only "the average time".

The point is that GOD has not anywhere in His Word ever indicated that the beginning of every month should be based on AVERAGES, when all people had to do was walk outside at sunset and wait for that first crescent to appear within less than an hour. The premise that God wants us to use "averages" is

flawed! And the lousy result for the year 2000 is abundant proof for this!

POINT #28: THE NEED FOR "DOUBLE-PRECISION (64-bit) ARITHMETIC"

Mr. Franklin writes:

"To calculate the exact time of the conjunction each year would require double-precision (64-bit) arithmetic ... The Hebrew Calendar resolves the problem by using the average or mean time -- that is, 29 1/2 days". (page 12)

But I thought that Mr. Franklin believes that GOD supposedly gave these calculations to Moses (and after that God still changed things in the heavens!)? So was "double-precision arithmetic" TOO DIFFICULT FOR GOD? Or was GOD willing to sacrifice accuracy for convenience and simplicity? Where in the Bible has God ever sacrificed correctness for "averages"? Mr. Franklin's statement "the Hebrew Calendar resolves the problem ..." sounds so very much like typical HUMAN REASONING to establish what is right and what is wrong WITHOUT THE SLIGHTEST REGARD FOR GOD'S ACTUAL INSTRUCTIONS!

On what BIBLICAL laws or principles is this idea of using "averages" in our obedience to God based, on the laws against stealing and adultery and murder and taking God's name in vain? Where did GOD ever give anybody THE RIGHT to decide that "averages" are good enough for determining the start of the year, when those "averages" sometimes postpone the start of the year to 44 hours after the actual conjunction?

I believe Mr. Franklin's reasoning in the above quotation is once again an insult to God.

POINT #29: DO POSTPONEMENT RULES "FINE-TUNE" THE JEWISH CALENDAR?

Mr. Franklin writes:

"If the calculated Molad time falls after noon by Jerusalem time, rules are applied to adjust the declaration of Tishri 1 by a day or two forward on the calendar. THESE intercalations or POSTPONEMENTS FINE-TUNE the Hebrew Calendar to THE REALITIES OF THE LUNAR CYCLES." (page 13)

The data we have already looked at shows that this claim is patently incorrect! A further point of logic is this:

How can you POSSIBLY decide to postpone on the basis of THE AVERAGE time of conjunction being after noon by Jerusalem time? After all, we know that the REAL conjunction may have been as early as 15 HOURS BEFORE this "average conjunction". So the REAL conjunction may have been at 10 p.m. on the previous evening, but THE AVERAGE conjunction claims that it is 1 p.m. the following afternoon. And because THIS AVERAGE claims it is "after noon" THEREFORE "fine-tuning THE REALITIES OF THE LUNAR CYCLES" supposedly demands A POSTPONEMENT of one or even of two days, when, if THE REALITY had only been known, no postponement whatsoever would have been applied?

Can we not see how ABSURD this reasoning about postponements being for fine-tuning to "the realities of the lunar cycles" really is?

Let me spell this out very clearly:

ANY APPEALS TO "THE REALITIES OF THE LUNAR CYCLES" CAN ONLY START OUT WITH THE REAL CONJUNCTIONS!

How much intelligence does it require to understand that to agree with THE REALITIES of lunar cycles we MUST obviously start out with the REAL conjunctions? Starting out with AVERAGES can NEVER get us back to THE REALITIES EXCEPT BY PURE CHANCE!

And that is precisely what the Jewish calendar does, by pure chance it now and then actually is in agreement with astronomical realities. But Mr. Franklin doesn't seem to understand that he is once again contradicting himself, by first appealing to "averages", and by then wanting to use such "averages" to actually get back to precise realities.

THE ONLY WAY to achieve results that agree with the astronomical realities is to START OUT with the realities!

POINT #30: THE BEST POSSIBLE ILLUMINATION FOR NISAN 15 "OFTEN COINCIDES WITH THE FULL MOON OF TISHRI?"

Mr. Franklin writes:

"The best possible illumination for Nisan 15 OFTEN COINCIDES with the full moon of Tishri."
(page 13)

This is again intended to justify that they don't ALWAYS coincide! If you start every month correctly with the new moon, then the full moons will ALWAYS be correct. We have also seen just how many days there are for 96% illumination or better. Further, we have also seen that the Bible says NOTHING AT ALL about full moons somehow being something that should even be considered. So the point Mr. Franklin is trying to make is totally immaterial to the question of what the correct calendar is supposed to achieve.

Full moons simply never enter the equation when decisions need to be made about the calendar. In a correct calendar they take care of themselves.

Another point Mr. Franklin makes is:

"These facts help to explain the prolonged high level of illumination of the March or April moon on occasion. IT IS THIS VERY PHENOMENON THAT PREVENTS THE DETERMINATION OF THE HOLY DAYS BY OBSERVATION. The human eye cannot discern the difference between 98% and 100% of disc illumination." (page 13)

That is another claim that is totally ridiculous!

Do you understand what Mr. Franklin is attempting to do in that quotation? He is trying to provide another justification for using the new moon of Tishri for determining the Jewish calendar.

But that is sheer nonsense!

The beginning of each month and the beginning of the year has nothing at all to do with THE

PROLONGED ILLUMINATION OF THE FULL MOONS! The molads profess to calculate THE NEW MOONS, and not the full moons!

Whether or not our eyes can discern the difference between the moon being 100% full or only 98% full has nothing at all to do with establishing the start of ANY month of the year! I find it staggering that Mr. Franklin would even dare to make such a claim in print?

The full moons never enter the picture in the determination of the Jewish calendar, let alone in the determination of the correct calendar. To imply some magical connection between the calculations of the new moons and the "level of illumination" of the full moon at Nisan requires enormous capacities for blind faith that is oblivious to any contradictory proof.

But notice another unintended implication in Mr. Franklin's statements:

He is implying that if you were to CORRECTLY calculate the time of the new moon of Nisan, THEN it would give you wrong results for the rest of the months of the year. Can you see that? Don't look to the new moon of Nisan, because that just isn't going to be reliable.

WHY NOT?

If starting with the correct new moon of Nisan produces "undesirable results" for Tishri, what does that tell us? IT TELLS US THAT THERE IS SOMETHING WRONG WITH THE WAY THE JEWISH CALENDAR FOR THE YEAR IS ESTABLISHED!

It is one thing to argue for using Tishri to calculate the calendar for the whole year. But it is something altogether different to BADMOUTH the correct calculation of Nisan, as if that would somehow be WORSE than calculating Tishri and working back to Nisan.

Mr. Franklin is clearly implying that IF you calculate the molad of Tishri and then work backwards to Nisan, you will get A DIFFERENT RESULT from just calculating the molad of Nisan directly and then just working forwards to the end of that year. IF those two calculations would produce THE SAME RESULT, with Nisan 1 and Tishri 1 being on the same days according to both calculations, then there would be no need to argue FOR calculating Tishri 1, right? But IF those calculations produce different results, even when you have established the new moon of Nisan CORRECTLY, then it tells you that there is something wrong with the whole system for establishing the Jewish calendar.

Next, HOW could the "disc illumination" POSSIBLY give you any help in establishing the start of a month? I mean, you are supposed to establish when the month starts BEFORE you ever have any disc illumination; the last time I checked into this, "disc illumination" didn't feature in the determination of the new moon?! Have things changed since the previous page, where Mr. Franklin quoted Maimonides to tell us that the Jewish calendar uses "the average time of the CONJUNCTION, or the mean CONJUNCTION, to calculate the Molad" (page 12)? How on earth did Mr. Franklin get from "conjunction" to "disc illumination" at the full moon?

Furthermore, IF there was really something to this "disc illumination" thing, then it would have to be THE FEBRUARY FULL MOON that would produce "a false reading" as it were. Do you follow? It would have to be the prolonged "disc illumination" BEFORE the new moon that you are supposed to calculate that could perhaps "throw out" the readings for the next new moon (the molad), rather than the disc illumination AFTER you have already clearly established Nisan 1. Any prolonged disc illumination AFTER you have already established Nisan 1 is too late for changing anything. So there is even a lack of logic here in appealing to the wrong month's "disc illumination". But appeals to "disc illumination" for ANY month are a lot of nonsense anyway.

POINT #31: VIEW CALENDAR ANOMALIES AS "A CONTINUUM"?

Mr. Franklin writes:

"All of this MUST BE VIEWED AS A CONTINUUM within each 19-year cycle, which repeats over periods of centuries." (page 13)

The word "continuum" means "something ABSOLUTELY continuous and homogeneous" (Webster's Dictionary). Mr. Franklin is telling us to not focus on the errors we can spot here or there in the Jewish calendar determinations, but to just look at the big picture.

Now "the best possible illumination for Nisan 15", which he refers to in the sentence preceding this quote, has nothing at all to do with how the correct calendar must be determined. And we should NEVER be willing to overlook clear errors for the sake of maintaining "the continuum".

Here is a principle Jesus Christ Himself gave us:

He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and HE THAT IS UNJUST IN THE LEAST IS UNJUST ALSO IN MUCH. (Luke 16:10 AV)

Now what about the year 2000? When the Jewish calendar determined to start Tishri 1 about 44 hours AFTER the actual conjunction, wouldn't that perhaps qualify for being "UNJUST IN THE LEAST"? And if people are willing to KNOWINGLY be unjust in the least, what does Jesus Christ here tell us to expect?

When people knowingly start the month 44 hours after the conjunction, can you really say that they are being "FAITHFUL in that which is least"? What does the word "faithful" mean to you? Do you sacrifice correctness on the altar of "the continuum"?

Next, Mr. Franklin appeals to "over periods of centuries". It is precisely "periods of centuries" that forcefully bring home the Jewish calendar's DRIFTING AWAY FROM THE SEASONS, just like the Julian calendar drifts away from the seasons.

POINT #32: AN ASTRONOMICAL IMPOSSIBILITY?

Mr. Franklin writes:

"... it is an astronomical impossibility that a perfect 100% illumination occur for both holy days in every year continuously over the decades and centuries." (page 13)

First of all, here Mr. Franklin is setting the stage for making excuses. It is common to have two consecutive evenings with 100% illumination, and certainly two consecutive days with one day 100% and the other 99% illumination. But what Mr. Franklin is here doing is to justify only achieving 96% illumination! And 96% illumination frequently involves 5 consecutive evenings. And THAT is simply not justified. It can only mean that the start of the month is way off track!

Next, Mr. Franklin's statement should make equally clear that THEREFORE God OBVIOUSLY did not in any way involve "disc illumination" of the full moons in the determinations of the correct calendar! "Disc illumination" is just too unreliable to ever be used as a standard for anything. And God does not use things that are not reliable. Period!

POINT #33: ARGUING FOR 94% - 97% ILLUMINATION?

We have already seen Mr. Franklin's claims in this regard. The fact that such percentages of illumination cover as many as 5 consecutive evenings, totally destroys any potential usefulness of such percentages. Appealing to percentages creates a very misleading picture!

We today are very much used to working with percentages, and for most things in life we are willing to give top marks to anything that is actually 99% correct. But simply because the moon is today 99% full doesn't mean that therefore that is the right day, when TOMORROW it is in fact 100% full, or when YESTERDAY it was in fact 100% full.

In other words, what's the point of appealing to 99% fullness of the moon according to the Jewish calendar, when, HAD THEY ONLY STARTED THE MONTH ON THE CORRECT DAY, they could have achieved 100% fullness of the moon? But THEIR TRADITIONS prevented them from starting the month on the correct day, and so God is supposed to with a shrug of His shoulders simply accept this 96% - 99% result? Is that how we view this calendar question? Are we too going to become EXPERTS AT FINDING EXCUSES and justifications for why the Jewish calendar so often comes up with the wrong dates?

POINT #34: THE ABILITY OF THE HUMAN EYE?

Mr. Franklin writes:

"The human eye cannot discern the difference between 98% and 100% of disc illumination".
(page 13)

So what does that have to do with the price of putty?

Does this mean that God has based His laws on what "THE HUMAN EYE" can discern? Just what is the ability of "the human eye" supposed to have to do with the laws God has established? On the previous page, page 12, Mr. Franklin told us that THE NEW CRESCENT can at the very earliest be seen 17.2 hours after the conjunction ..." BY THE NAKED EYE OF A TRAINED OBSERVER WORKING UNDER PERFECT WEATHER CONDITIONS".

So there Mr. Franklin was telling us that the overwhelming majority of people (who don't have perfect eyesight and who are not "trained" in this skill) would not be able to see the new crescent when in actual fact it really WAS already visible. Would God therefore also want to "postpone" the start of the month to the next day, because THE EYESIGHT of the vast majority of people is simply too poor? If the new crescent WAS visible, then it was VISIBLE. Period!

What if the new crescent is not visible with the naked eye, but with A POWERFUL TELESCOPE aimed at the correct spot on the horizon it actually IS visible for a fleeting moment: would God say: "Look, if you use a telescope then you are cheating, because I want my calendar based on the ability of the naked human eye. So I want you to disregard that sighting with a telescope."? Is the determination of the correct calendar supposed to be primarily AN EMOTIONAL THING, something that appeals to our feelings? Or should the correct calendar always be OBJECTIVELY CORRECT? And certainly, we should always be able to feel good when we know that we are doing what is right. Feeling good should be THE CONSEQUENCE of knowing that we are doing what is right, rather than the primary motivation for doing anything.

Disc illumination has nothing to do with the determination of the correct calendar anyway. But appealing

to the shortcomings of human vision is another foolish attempt at justifying the Jewish calendar's shortcomings.

POINT #35: THE HIGHEST POSSIBLE ILLUMINATION FOR THE AREA OF JERUSALEM?

Mr. Franklin writes:

"The determination of the full moon is based on the highest possible illumination for the area of Jerusalem." (pages 13-14)

By "the determination of the FULL moon" Mr. Franklin means the Jewish calendar molad calculations for establishing a Julian calendar date for the Jewish year, which calculations are aimed exclusively at determining the NEW moon conjunctions. He is here contradicting himself again, as he EARLIER claimed that those calculations determine the average NEW MOON! Can we not see the repeated contradictions he is forced to make in his assertions?

The truth is that there is ABSOLUTELY NOTHING in those calculations that takes any notice of when the full moons occur, let alone for the area of "Jerusalem". I marvel that anyone would actually believe such a claim?! I know what those calculations are, and they are EASY to calculate, and full moons have nothing to do with those calculations.

POINT #36: ARE THE MATHEMATICAL STEPS REQUIRED FOR CALCULATING THE JEWISH CALENDAR REALLY COMPLEX?

Mr. Franklin writes:

"The mathematical steps that are required for calculating the Hebrew Calendar are complex." (page 14)

First of all, let's keep in mind that when Hillel II put together these calculations over 1600 years ago, he didn't have a computer, he didn't even have a simple little electronic calculator, he didn't have a glut of paper and writing materials and countless pens and scribbling pads available.

All of the writing materials he had available were considered very precious and expensive, and he certainly didn't fill a wastepaper basket with hundreds of scraps of paper every day, while working on these calculations and throwing away every "parchment" on which he had made a mistake in his calculations. But the point is:

THE CALCULATIONS ARE REALLY NOT DIFFICULT TO PERFORM!

All you have to be able to do correctly is four different things: addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. Anyone who can correctly perform those four functions can easily calculate the Jewish calendar for any given year. And yes, today you are perfectly free to use your calculator or even your computer for this process.

Mr. Franklin writes:

"These mathematical procedures CANNOT BE UNDERSTOOD without first learning the meaning of basic calendric and astronomical terms and then learning their application." (page 14)

Really? Then why is it that 20 years ago I conducted a special 2-hour study for about a dozen average people in one congregation to teach them how to calculate the Jewish calendar, including when to apply postponement rules, and when I saw them a week later four or five of them had actually CORRECTLY calculated the molad for a specific "test year" I had assigned them? I mean, their calculations were correct down to the last halak.

Mr. Franklin's claim that it is difficult to understand the mathematical procedures is not really correct. If you are able to correctly add, subtract, multiply and divide, then you can also learn how to calculate the Jewish calendar. Yes certainly, it is not for everybody to get involved with these calculations, but neither are they all that difficult to understand. Mr. Franklin's comment is nothing more than a smokescreen to surround these calculations with a certain mystique. That mystique must be stripped away and the bare bones of that calendar need to be exposed for what they are.

But irrespective of how simple or how complex they are, THAT has got nothing to do with whether THE RESULTS they achieve are correct or whether they are flawed!

It is the flawed results those calculations arrive at, not their degree of complexity, that demands that we reject using them to determine the correct calendar.

POINT #37: ACCEPT THE JEWISH CALENDAR ON FAITH?

Mr. Franklin writes:

"We realize that there are some who see no need for understanding the mathematics of the Hebrew Calendar. THEY BELIEVE THAT IT IS SCRIPTURALLY BASED AND LIVE BY ITS HOLY DAY DECLARATIONS." (page 15)

Nice try! But that isn't how the Bible tells us to establish our beliefs. Paul tells us quite clearly:

PROVE ALL THINGS; HOLD FAST THAT WHICH IS GOOD. (1 Thessalonians 5:21 AV)

It is very foolish indeed to accept the Jewish calendar on faith. It is especially foolish to do this when overwhelming evidence is available that makes clear that it violates biblical instructions and principles. How can anybody possibly "BELIEVE" that the Jewish calendar is scripturally based, when the Jews themselves freely admit that this is NOT the case? How can anybody possibly believe that it is scripturally based when NOT A SINGLE SCRIPTURE can be presented to support that calendar?

Having put the Jewish calendar to the test, it is abundantly clear that it is NOT "good", and therefore we are NOT to hold fast to it.

POINT #38: CONVINCING ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE JEWISH CALENDAR?

Mr. Franklin writes:

"Nevertheless, CONVINCING ARGUMENTS have been published in recent years IN OPPOSITION TO THE HEBREW CALENDAR." (page 15)

Yes sir, Mr. Franklin, you certainly got that one right!

The arguments against the Jewish calendar are indeed WITHOUT CONTRADICTION "VERY CONVINCING", even if other defenders of the Jewish calendar are not very keen to admit this. And WHY would they possibly be "convincing" if the case in favour of the Jewish calendar was so clear-cut and water-tight? If those arguments were shallow and flawed, there is no way Mr. Franklin would have described them as "convincing". For example, I wouldn't in my wildest dreams consider describing ANY of the arguments in his articles OR IN ANY OTHER ARTICLE BY ANY OTHER AUTHOR that I have ever examined as "convincing". FLAWED arguments are never "convincing".

NOBODY HAS EVER PUBLISHED WHAT COULD BE CALLED "CONVINCING ARGUMENTS" FOR THE JEWISH CALENDAR! THERE JUST AREN'T ANY! NOT EVEN ONE!

The truth is that the arguments against the Jewish calendar are "convincing" because they EXPOSE all the flaws inherent in the present Jewish calendar. However, the above quotation gives us one other very important bit of information, and that is this:

Mr. Franklin's statement here makes quite clear what is HIS MOTIVATION FOR EVERY SINGLE POINT HE HAS TRIED TO MAKE! Can you see that? Every single point he has tried to make has been aimed at discrediting "CONVINCING" evidence against the Jewish calendar. And since he tries to make A LOT OF DIFFERENT AND CONFLICTING POINTS, it means that he is quite familiar with A LOT of "convincing" arguments against the Jewish calendar.

Thus:

WHY does he try to argue against "4 seasons in the year"? Because four annual seasons are CONVINCING evidence against the Jewish calendar. He realizes that with FOUR annual seasons there is NO WAY to get around ONLY starting the year in the spring.

WHY does he argue against the word "tekufah"? Because the word "tekufah" and its use in Exodus 34:22 embodies CONVINCING evidence against the Jewish calendar?

WHY does he argue for the postponement rules supposedly having an astronomical justification? Because the real purpose of avoiding inconvenient days is CONVINCING evidence against the Jewish calendar.

WHY does he argue for great antiquity for the Jewish calendar calculations? Because there is CONVINCING evidence that they originated with Hillel II in the 300's AD and were further refined at a later date.

WHY does he argue for calculations preceding observation of the new crescent? Because there is CONVINCING evidence that the calendar was determined by visual observations throughout the first century AD and before that time.

WHY does he argue for a fixed sequence of intercalation? Because there is CONVINCING evidence that the sequence of intercalation was NOT fixed until AFTER the first century AD.

WHY does he argue for average new moons? Because there is CONVINCING evidence that the molad calculations miss the mark very badly.

WHY does he argue for full moons instead of new moons? Is it because there is CONVINCING evidence that the Jewish calculations commonly miss the new moon very badly?

WHY does he argue for first visibility rather than the time of the actual conjunction? Because there is CONVINCING evidence that the Jewish calculations err much more often, and also to a greater degree, on the side of being LATER than the actual conjunctions rather than earlier.

WHY does he argue for the Jewish calculations supposedly being "in complete harmony with astronomical cycles"? Because there is CONVINCING and IRREFUTABLE evidence that these calculations are NOT in harmony with the astronomical cycles.

WHY does he never tell us that the phrase "IN THE TIME APPOINTED" in Psalm 81:3 is a complete mistranslation and should be EXPUNGED from the text of that verse? Because that admission would DESTROY what erroneously looks like "CONVINCING" evidence for his cause. The verse in fact says nothing at all about any "appointed times".

Need I go on?

Yes, Mr. Franklin, that is probably one of the truest statements you have made in your article, that "CONVINCING ARGUMENTS" AGAINST THE JEWISH CALENDAR HAVE BEEN PUBLISHED IN RECENT YEARS!

POINT #39: HOW IMPORTANT IS "OUR BELIEF" IN DECIDING ABOUT THE JEWISH CALENDAR?

Mr. Franklin writes:

"We believe the present Hebrew Calendar is the calendar God wishes us to observe." (page 15)

This statement clearly exposes his obvious bias in wanting to do everything to uphold the Jewish calendar. His statement makes clear that he will not knowingly give us ANY information that would threaten the credibility of his belief. His statement also tells us that he will interpret any and every Scripture he examines to supposedly support his belief. His statement tells us that his mind is made up, and any facts to the contrary will not make any impression on him. His statement tells us that his "belief" does not depend on the real facts; his belief will supercede facts that contradict his belief. His stance is not an unusual one at all, thousands of other people view the Jewish calendar in exactly the same way he does.

However, the fact that, in spite of his intentions, he provided us with an ENORMOUS AMOUNT OF EVIDENCE AGAINST THE JEWISH CALENDAR in his paper, can only tell us that his own understanding of all the factors that impact on this question must still be rather limited? I mean, no Jewish astronomer would have made any of the NUMEROUS incorrect statements Mr. Franklin has made in the space of his 15-page Introduction. For example, his lack of understanding about first visibility of the new crescent with the molad time he provided for 515 BC is absolutely basic and as elementary as we can get.

Note also that he did slip up just a little here by referring to "the PRESENT Hebrew Calendar", because Jewish testimony itself makes quite clear that the Jews have NOT always used "the PRESENT Hebrew Calendar". Yes, Mr. Franklin, you are correct in designating it as "the PRESENT Hebrew Calendar".

POINT #40: ARE WE DUTY-BOUND TO DEFEND OUR BELIEFS?

Mr. Franklin writes:

"It is therefore incumbent upon us to seek out THE TRUE FACTS in order to DEFEND THE HEBREW CALENDAR WITH VIGOR AND DILIGENCE. We are duty-bound to defend our beliefs by convincing (refuting) the gainsayer (contradictor) (Titus 1:9)." (page 15)

That sounds splendid! But the focus must be on THE TRUE FACTS and not on the tooth fairy!

The various encyclopedias I have quoted give us THE TRUE FACTS. The various Jewish astronomers I have quoted give us THE TRUE FACTS. The information I have presented about the sole purpose of the Jewish calendar calculations being to establish a JULIAN calendar date for the Jewish year give us THE TRUE FACTS. The information I have given in this article about "disc illumination" around the full moons gives us THE TRUE FACTS. The explanation I have given for Psalm 81 gives us THE TRUE FACTS. Etc.

In this quotation Mr. Franklin is "talking the talk", but then he doesn't really "walk the walk". We can never seek out THE TRUE FACTS unless we are open to the possibility that MAYBE, JUST MAYBE, those true facts contradict some of our strongly-held beliefs.

Note one more contradiction in his statement. Mr. Franklin said: "... to seek out the true facts IN ORDER TO defend the Hebrew calendar with vigor and diligence". THAT IS A CONFLICT OF INTERESTS! THAT IS A CLEAR STATEMENT OF BIAS!

That statement exposes that his mind is made up BEFORE he even has all the facts. We need to recognize very clearly that whenever someone intends to seek out THE FACTS that will support his particular position, then that person has obviously ALREADY REACHED A CONCLUSION before the search for "the facts" has even begun. There is NO ROOM in that particular approach for FACTS that expose flaws and weaknesses in the Jewish calendar. The purpose for the "facts" he intends to seek out is stated very clearly in that sentence. Only "facts" that are useful for a "defense" will be considered.

However, we should also recognize that "gainsayers" are never convinced by shallow and contradictory arguments. THIS ARTICLE THAT I AM WRITING RIGHT HERE is intended for the exact same purpose that Mr. Franklin has stated here, to fulfill Titus 1:9. I am fulfilling my duty in writing this article.

Well, that finally brings us to the end of his 15-page "Preface".

So what about the 19 chapters that follow this Preface? Let's look at them and see if they merit any comments.

THE 19 CHAPTERS

CHAPTER 1 deals with the calendar for the year 70 AD. That is a waste of time! You can NEVER prove anything about the present Jewish calendar by appealing to years and events in biblical times. Just look at the year 2000 AD with its obvious flaws.

CHAPTER 2 deals with the calendar of the year 66 AD. That is a waste of time.

CHAPTER 3 deals with the calendar of the year 69 AD. That is a waste of time.

CHAPTER 4 deals with the calendar of the year 5 BC. That is a waste of time.

CHAPTER 5 deals with the molad of the year 3761 BC. That is a waste of time.

CHAPTER 6 deals with Dr. Hoeh's calendar views. That is a waste of time.

CHAPTER 7 deals with what I have previously presented about the history of the calendar. That is a waste of time. Any gaps in understanding I had when I wrote some of my previous articles (and without question I NOW understand this subject FAR better than three and four years ago, which means I then CERTAINLY still had some gaps in my understanding) does not in any way affect the accuracy of the quotations about the history of the calendar I have presented in THIS article. [I have thus far never yet looked at this chapter in Mr. Franklin's article.]

CHAPTER 8 deals with "Nelte on Nelte". That is a waste of time. The accuracy of the facts I have explained in THIS article is not affected by any gaps in understanding I may still have had several years ago. Without question, this whole subject of "the calendar" has been a very large learning curve for me over the past seven years, taking up well over 2000 hours of my time. And as I have come to a better understanding on many aspects of this whole subject, so I have changed my mind on more than one occasion. It was a full four years of study into this subject BEFORE I was even willing to commit myself to deciding which format of the calendar I would put into practice. Before then I realized that I still needed more input and more understanding before I could make any final decisions. [I have thus far also never yet looked at this chapter. Have I missed anything?]

CHAPTER 9 deals with the basic facts of calendar mathematics. I am VERY familiar with the mathematics involved, like detecting errors in data for years like 515 BC. THE FACT is that the whole calculations depend on the existence of the Julian calendar. THE FACT is also that those "calculations" could not possibly be the same before and after the hand of God changed things in the heavens. So for me it is a waste of time to read that chapter.

CHAPTER 10 deals with visibility and postponements. That is a waste of time. The facts stated by the Encyclopedia Judaica cannot be refuted. Nor can the facts pertaining to the year 2000 AD be refuted.

CHAPTER 11 deals with 30 AD and the supposed first visible crescent. That chapter is an UTTER AND TOTAL waste of time. Speculations about 30 AD have nothing to do with the Jewish calendar TODAY.

CHAPTER 12 deals with the year 31 AD. That is a waste of time.

CHAPTER 13 deals with new moons and full moons and the 177-day period. That is a waste of time. We have already examined the facts about new moons and full moons. There is NOTHING in the Bible to support looking to full moons.

CHAPTER 14 deals with the years from 5 BC to 70 AD. That is a waste of time. It is IMPOSSIBLE for historical dates to in any way substantiate the present Jewish calendar.

CHAPTER 15 deals with the "19-year cycle" 18 BC to 1 AD. That is a waste of time.

CHAPTER 16 deals with the "19-year cycle" 2 AD to 20 AD. That is a waste of time.

CHAPTER 17 deals with the "19-year cycle" 21 AD to 39 AD. That is a waste of time.

CHAPTER 18 deals with the "19-year cycle" 40 AD to 58 AD. That is a waste of time.

CHAPTER 19 deals with the "19-year cycle" 59 AD to 77 AD. That is a waste of time.

Recall that Mr. Franklin included FIVE SEPARATE MISTAKES in his one example for the year 515 BC! And it is not as if one of those five mistakes triggered the other four. Not at all! His mistake for the day of the molad is totally divorced from the mistake he made for the day of the actual conjunction; and both of those mistakes are totally divorced from the mistake he made for the day of first visibility; and those

three mistakes are totally divorced from the mistaken time of day that he presents for the molad; and all four of those mistakes are totally independent from his incorrect conversion of UT time to JT time. None of those mistakes "set him up" to make all the other mistakes. On top of that comes the mistake of wanting to start the year 515 BC one new moon too early. With that kind of record it truly would be a waste of time to examine his other theoretical examples about dates and cycles.

Whatever theoretical data can be calculated for ANY of those "19-year cycles" cannot obliterate the astronomical error inherent in those cycles, which errors are READILY acknowledged by various encyclopedias. Nor can theoretical arguments about those years, which are certainly NOT anything that could be called BIBLICAL EVIDENCE (!), do away with THE FACTS that are stated by The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, as already previously quoted:

"NOTHING FURTHER IS KNOWN of the calendar until towards the end of the period of the Second Temple. ... LITTLE IS KNOWN of the procedure of determining the calendar UP TO THE 2ND CENT. C.E. [i.e. A.D.], when a description is given of THE TRADITIONAL PRACTICE."

There is simply NO WAY that someone, whose expressed goal is to "vigorously defend" the Jewish calendar, knows more about the history of the Jewish calendar than THE UNIVERSAL JEWISH ENCYCLOPEDIA AND THE JEWISH ENCYCLOPEDIA AND THE ENCYCLOPEDIA JUDAICA! NO WAY!

So what has Mr. Franklin done in the 19 chapters of his article?

He has done ONLY TWO THINGS:

1. He has ARGUED ABOUT HISTORIC DATES AND HISTORIC CYCLES.
2. He has found fault with things Dr. Hoeh and I have written.
3. But he has NOT presented any BIBLICAL evidence for his views!

THAT'S ALL!

Okay, so perhaps Dr. Hoeh got some things wrong twenty and more years ago? And maybe he didn't? And I got some things wrong four to six years ago. But what does that supposedly prove? NOTHING!

The facts I have spelled out in THIS article stand on their own feet, not on anything I may have said previously. All the quotations I have presented here speak for themselves. And Mr. Franklin's handling of the year 515 BC and all his errors there likewise speak for themselves.

Arguments about historic years and cycles ARE JUST AS FOOLISH as any errors Dr. Hoeh may have had in his conclusions, and any errors I may have had in my original writings on the calendar. Understand that appeals to historic dates and cycles as supposed proof for the antiquity of the present Jewish calendar come from people who know that they have NO REAL PROOF AT ALL! Such appeals are an expression of desperation.

NOTHING can erase the candid admissions made by The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia. Therefore I see no point in actually perusing Mr. Franklin's 19 chapters. I would have considered examining them very carefully and meticulously IF the Preface had not contained so many mortal flaws, and IF the very first example of "technical data about the year 515 BC" had not contained such glaring mistakes. Those flaws totally eliminate THE NEED to examine any subsequent arguments. When those arguments on top

of that are about foolish issues (like theoretical dates and cycles), it further obliterates the need to examine that material.

Further, one thing is CONSPICUOUS BY ITS ABSENCE (like the conspicuousness of David not sitting at his place at Saul's table at the new moon!) in those 19 chapters. Did you notice it?

AT NO STAGE HAS MR. FRANKLIN ACTUALLY SPELLED OUT "EVERY SCRIPTURAL REQUIREMENT" FOR THE CALENDAR, AND THAT AFTER SPECIFICALLY REFERRING TO SUCH REQUIREMENTS IN HIS OPENING STATEMENTS! OR DID I REALLY MISS THAT SOMEWHERE?

Don't you find that a little strange? After telling us that he was going to show us that the present Jewish calendar "fulfills every Scriptural requirement", the total remainder of his article is ominously silent about these SCRIPTURAL requirements. Did he just forget about them? Does he feel that there aren't any scriptural requirements? We are agreed that "scriptural requirements" actually have nothing to do with dates, are we not? "Scriptural requirements" are comments from Almighty God that DIRECTLY impact on what the calendar should be like, what God will approve of and what God will not approve of. All dates are clearly non-scriptural, and they certainly are not "requirements". It is not just a matter of briefly referring to Scriptures that apply to the calendar, but actually EXPLAINING exactly what impact those Scriptures should have on the calendar.

So let's see if we can find any scriptural requirements?

SCRIPTURAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE CALENDAR

1) I suppose we should start with Genesis chapter 1.

And God said, Let there be LIGHTS IN THE FIRMAMENT of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for SIGNS, and for SEASONS, and for DAYS, and YEARS: And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. And God made TWO GREAT LIGHTS; THE GREATER light to rule the day, and THE LESSER light to rule the night: he made the stars also. (Genesis 1:14-16 AV)

God is here speaking about TWO great lights, an obvious reference to THE SUN and THE MOON. These are the two that are stated as having some kind of "RULE". The Hebrew here translated as the verb "to rule" is in fact the Hebrew NOUN "memshalah", which means "dominion, power, government". In order to establish exactly WHAT the sun and the moon were to have a certain amount of power over, we need to look at THE FIVE PURPOSES that God has spelled out for these lights.

These five God-ordained purposes are:

A) to DIVIDE the day from the night

B) for SIGNS

C) for SEASONS

D) for DAYS

E) for YEARS

Let's look at these five purposes more closely.

A) TO DIVIDE THE DAY FROM THE NIGHT

The division between the day and night must be controlled by one or both of these lights. It is in fact controlled by THE SUN! The "day" part of a full 24-hour day is defined by when THE SUN IS VISIBLE. In other words, the "day" part of that 24-hour period STARTS when the sun rises in the morning, and it ENDS when the sun has set.

This statement here in Genesis 1:14 already tells us that with God A DAY must start with either sunrise or else with sunset. It CANNOT start "with darkness" because then neither the sun nor the moon is actually exerting any influence over that DIVISION. The moon is simply not consistently available to have any influence in this decision; therefore it must be exclusively THE SUN that plays the deciding role here.

The sun only starts its rule "when it comes up in the morning", and it ceases to rule the moment it goes down in the evening.

From God's PREVIOUS statements about "THE EVENING AND THE MORNING WERE THE ... DAY" we understand that it must be SUNSET, rather than sunrise, that with God marks THE START of a 24-hour day.

B) FOR SIGNS

The Hebrew word here translated as "signs" is derived from a verb that means "to agree" or "to consent". In other words, God tells us that these two lights (the sun and the moon) are to help us achieve AGREEMENT ABOUT SOMETHING! We have often made the point that "a sign" helps us TO IDENTIFY SOMETHING!

So let's put this together. God is telling us with this statement that these two lights are "for signs" that THEY AGREE IN WHAT THEY IDENTIFY! What the sun "identifies" will AGREE with what the moon "identifies". There can never be a conflict between what is identified by the sun and what is identified by the moon. They can never produce CONFLICTING "SIGNS". They must work together towards the same goal. The sun CONSENTS to what the moon "identifies", and the moon CONSENTS to what the sun "identifies". But the sun is THE GREATER; it must have a FOUNDATIONAL influence on which the influence of the moon is then built. The moon derives all its light from the sun, remember? It is the sun that is more important than the moon.

This statement about being "for signs" tells us that they will work together to achieve agreement. They will IDENTIFY the next three items listed.

C) FOR SEASONS

The Hebrew word here translated as "seasons" is "mow'ed", and it has NOTHING AT ALL TO DO WITH "SEASONS"! Nothing at all! This is a very unfortunate mistranslation. The word really means "meeting together, gatherings, assemblies", etc. This is the word that God uses to refer to commanded assembling before Him on the Holy Days and on the weekly Sabbath Days.

BUT IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH "SEASONS"!

So with this statement God is telling us that THE DAYS FOR ASSEMBLING BEFORE HIM would also be controlled by these two lights. All the "mow'ed" days of Leviticus chapter 23 are controlled by these

two lights. The moon pinpoints the months for these days, and the sun determines when those days start and end.

D) FOR DAYS

These two lights determine when days start and end. Where the previous statement about "dividing" the day from the night referred to the most basic spheres of influence of these two lights (sun by day, moon by night), THIS STATEMENT here now refers to DETERMINING WHEN DAYS START AND END.

It is quite obvious that the moon is totally unsuitable for that task because at times it is totally invisible for more than 24 hours. Therefore this particular task must be accomplished by the sun without any input from the moon.

So when the sun sets, one day comes to an end and the next day starts. It is the SUN and not twilight that controls the end of a day, and therefore the immediate start of the next day.

E) FOR YEARS

NOW WE HAVE COME TO THE CALENDAR!

The determination of years is to be controlled by these two lights, the sun and the moon. Years are NOT to be controlled by only the sun or by only the moon. They are to be controlled by BOTH of these lights working in agreement with one another. But they are NOT "equal partners" in that process; one is greater than the other. It is THE SUN that provides all of the light for the moon, and without the sun the moon would always be invisible.

Now the only way you can have a calendar that is luni-solar is if the solar year starting with an equinox or with a solstice is THE FOUNDATION for such a calendar. If you do not have the solar year with an equinox or a solstice as the foundation, it is IMPOSSIBLE to have anything that you could call a luni-solar calendar. Without the equinoxes you can have a lunar calendar, but you simply cannot have a luni-solar calendar.

This is probably the most basic point we need to understand: without the equinox there can never be a luni-solar calendar. It is THE RECOGNITION of, and THE COMPLIANCE with, the equinox that turns a lunar calendar into a luni-solar calendar.

People, like Mr. Franklin, who acknowledge that the calendar is "luni-solar", need to recognize very clearly that they are appealing to a calendar system which is based on the recognition of the equinoxes and the solstices! THAT IS ABSOLUTELY BASIC, LIKE "CALENDAR 101"!

Let's get back to this statement in Genesis 1:14. God did not make it so that the sun would EVER play second fiddle to the moon! Think of the places where both of these lights are mentioned, and without fail the sun is always more important. God wants us to know in an unmistakable way that THE SUN COMES FIRST, AND THE MOON COMES SECOND!

So when both of them, the sun and the moon, are to be used to determine "YEARS", then it cannot be otherwise but that THE SUN COMES FIRST!

The sun simply MUST be the foundation for the year. It cannot be otherwise! And the sun can ONLY be the foundation of the year IF the year has a very clearly identifiable starting point in the solar cycle, before which a year can NEVER start. The sun can only be the foundation for the yearly cycle if AN EQUINOX (or a solstice) is recognized as that starting point for the year. Otherwise the sun simply does

NOT RULE in the process of determining the year. And God does NOT want the sun to play second fiddle to the moon.

But since God wants each month of the year to start with a new moon, THE ONLY POSSIBILITY is that the first month of every year must start with the new moon within the first 30 days of the solar year, i.e. within the first 30 days following the spring equinox.

IF THE YEAR COULD START WITH A NEW MOON BEFORE THE EQUINOX, THEN THE RULE OF THE SUN OVER THE MOON HAS BEEN DESTROYED!

THE MOON has become more important than the sun! THE MOON decides the start of the year with a TOTAL DISREGARD FOR THE SUN! It doesn't (supposedly) matter that the sun has not yet completed its circuit; THE MOON has decided that it is time to start a new year. The moon RULES as to when the year starts, and the sun has had its RULE taken away from it. THE LESSER light has MORE RULE over the year than THE GREATER light.

Can you understand what I am explaining?

Genesis 1:14-16 requires the moon to be subject to the sun, rather than the sun being subject to the moon. In THE PERFECT YEAR the sun and the moon will always start the year on the same day; every year will start with a new moon on the spring equinox. The sun and the moon will then be "perfect signs"; they will be in perfect agreement. But until then the moon has to take second place to the sun. It is more important that the sun has completed its circuit than deciding that, because 12 new moons have passed, therefore a new year is to start.

IT IS THE SUN THAT DETERMINES THE SEQUENCE OF INTERCALATING A 13TH NEW MOON INTO THE YEARLY CYCLE! THAT SHOULD BE SELF-EVIDENT!

That is part of the sun's "RULE"!

Let's now look at the next Scripture that applies to the calendar.

2) Let's look at Exodus 12:2 as a scriptural requirement for the calendar. Now, as I have already shown, in this verse God calls Nisan "ROSH HA SHANAH". So any calendar that calls any OTHER month "Rosh Ha Shanah" doesn't meet this "requirement", does it? Okay, go ahead and argue FOR Tishri 1. But understand that you are disagreeing with GOD and not with me. Check the Hebrew of this verse for yourself.

3) This verse is also a requirement for THE TIME OF YEAR within the solar year, at which God wants the year to start. IF this requirement is supposed to be "the barley harvest", THEN the start of the year could theoretically fluctuate from the end of February (as in 515 BC as per Mr. Franklin) to the middle of May (as per the evidence for 1983). That is a fluctuation of about 10 weeks. OBVIOUSLY the readiness of the barley harvest is not in any way connected to a fixed sequence of leap years. As long as no one in the Church perceived that the Jewish calendar transgressed in this matter, people, including Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong, FREELY acknowledged that God wants the year to start IN THE SPRING! This the Jewish calendar does not do consistently.

And from this verse it is ABSOLUTELY CLEAR, no reservations of any kind, that it is indeed God's intention for the year to ALWAYS, not just 75% of the time, start in the spring, which means NEVER before the spring equinox.

4) This verse also makes clear the requirement that every month is to start with the new moon. Two possible options for determining the new moon are either the actual conjunction or else first visibility of the new crescent. The present Jewish calendar fulfills BOTH OF THESE OPTIONS SOMETIMES, but neither one consistently, as well as SOMETIMES fulfilling NEITHER one of these two options (as when Tishri 1 is declared the day AFTER first visibility of the new crescent).

5) "YOUR NEW MOONS and your appointed feasts MY SOUL HATES: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them." (Isaiah 1:14 AV)

This verse must obviously mean SOMETHING! God is obviously expressing INTENSE DISPLEASURE about something! The Hebrew here for "new moons" is "chodesh", and the Hebrew for "appointed feasts" is "mow'ed". Now the only Old Testament Hebrew word that could possibly be used to designate "the calendar" is the word "chodesh". The context in which "chodesh" is used will indicate whether it should refer to the actual new moon, to the month, or to the calendar, a year being nothing more than a collection of 12 or 13 "chodesh"s.

In Exodus 12:2 we understand that God was speaking about THE CALENDAR, yet in that verse "the calendar" is only identified by references to two things: "chodesh", which means both, "new moon" and "month", and the word "shanah", which means "year". So in Exodus 12:2 God very clearly used the word "chodesh" to identify THE CALENDAR.

Now in Isaiah 1:1 God addresses JUDAH (i.e. the vision was "concerning Judah"). So this chapter is addressed to the Jews. "Vain customs" are referred to by God ("vain oblations" in Isaiah 1:13), but idolatry is not really mentioned in this chapter.

So Isaiah 1:14 is NOT speaking about "idolatrous practices which the Jews supposedly engaged in at the new moons". The emphasis is really on "YOUR new moons" and "YOUR religious days". But yet it is speaking about something that God WITHOUT RESERVATION "HATES"! Recognizing that the whole Book of Isaiah is largely devoted to prophecies for the end time makes the interpretation of "idolatrous practices at the new moon times" even more remote and more unlikely. God hates the Jews' "new moons" AT THE END TIME!

In the absence of any references to pagan idolatrous customs and practices, the only alternative is that God is here addressing the JEWISH CALENDAR! As I have repeatedly pointed out throughout this article, that calendar, as well as Mr. Franklin's attempts at justifying it, embody some ENORMOUS INSULTS FOR GOD! I believe that I understand fairly clearly WHY God hates that calendar, because it is so insulting to Him!

In Isaiah 1:14 God is expressing hatred for both, the Jewish calendar, and also all the Jewish religious days. They are not of God; they trouble God and God is getting tired of putting up with these things. The Jews referring to Tishri 1 as "Rosh ha Shanah" is also included here in the things God hates, because it is a slap in the face for God's statement in Exodus 12:2.

Isaiah 1:14 MUST be considered in any discussion about the Jewish calendar!

6) And thou shalt observe the feast of weeks, of the firstfruits of wheat harvest, and the feast of ingathering AT THE YEAR'S END. (Exodus 34:22 AV)

The Hebrew here tells us that Tabernacles is to be observed "AT THE TEKUFAH OF THE YEAR". This expression "at the tekufah OF THE YEAR" is only used twice in the Bible (also in 2 Chronicles 24:23). The other two places where "tekufah" is used (1 Samuel 1:20 and Psalm 19:6) do NOT apply the word "tekufah" to "A YEAR"!

Both the places that speak about "at the tekufah of the year" (Exodus 34:22 and 2 Chronicles 24:23) make very clear, beyond any doubts, that in both cases A VERY SPECIFIC TIME OF YEAR IS MEANT! Harvests can fluctuate. This expression is a very clear reference to autumn, which starts with the autumnal equinox. All Jewish astronomers and calendar authorities clearly understand this.

Exodus 34:22 expresses a requirement for the Feast of Tabernacles which the Jewish calendar does not consistently meet. Mr. Franklin himself refers to this verse as "a law". How can anyone possibly attempt to do away with this law?

7) "Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring A SHEAF OF THE FIRSTFRUITS of your harvest unto the priest: And he shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted for you: ON THE MORROW AFTER THE SABBATH the priest shall wave it." (Leviticus 23:10-11 AV)

This instruction, to bring a sheaf of barley to the priest DURING the Days of Unleavened Bread, TAKES FOR GRANTED that the year will never start so early that no ripe barley would be available for this ceremony.

This "requirement" is taken care of if the year is NEVER started in the winter. It is not "THE deciding factor" as to when the year should start, it only prohibits the year from starting TOO EARLY! There is no indication that, should the barley really start to ripen a few days earlier in some years, it could not stand in the fields to dry out a little longer before harvesting, even as it does today.

Note this point: the correct intent in looking at these two verses is to avoid starting the year TOO EARLY. BUT the people who look at this passage actually come to it with the opposite frame of mind. They look at these verses to try to find THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE TIME when they could meet this "requirement". That is a misuse of this Scripture! It was NOT God's intention for us to use Leviticus 23:10-11 in order to find the earliest possible time by which we can meet this "requirement". THESE VERSES ARE NOT A CALENDAR DETERMINATION SCRIPTURE! They simply highlight the importance of NOT starting the year too early! And never starting the year in the winter will take care of this "requirement".

It is ONLY when someone attempts to start the year TOO EARLY (e.g. Mr. Franklin for 515 BC) that these verses actually come into play. But they NEVER prevent a year from starting somewhat later. There is no requirement of any kind from God that we simply MUST harvest the barley "as early as possible". So beware of people who misapply this Scripture to justify starting the year EARLIER.

Also keep in mind that IF this Scripture was indeed a key determination for the correct calendar, THEN "RULE OVER THE YEAR" (as per Genesis 1:14) will have been wrested from the sun and given to the barley. Genesis 1:14 is a key for establishing a right calendar, and the barley harvest takes care of itself when the year is never started too early. But there is no scriptural support anywhere to justify the barley harvest ruling over the sun.

8) With God the guidelines for the correct calendar are very simple:

A) THE DAY starts at sunset (the sun rules).

B) THE WEEK starts at sunset at the end of the Sabbath (the sun rules).

C) THE MONTH starts with the new moon (the moon rules).

D) THE YEAR starts with the first new moon in the spring (the sun rules over the moon).

This makes THE SOLAR YEAR the foundation for the calendar. And the LUNAR MONTHS are accommodated within the context of the solar year. The start of the solar year can never be compromised, by attempting to start the new year before the end of the previous solar year.

Because an exact number of lunar months does not fit into the solar year, therefore the year can start at any point within the first 30 days of the solar year. But it could never start both, before and after the start of the solar year at the spring equinox; that would be confusion, because it would erase the very distinct starting point for the solar year.

These are some of the Scriptures that I expected Mr. Franklin to address when he referred to the "scriptural requirements" for a correct calendar.

Well, we've covered a lot of ground in this article (my longest one to date), so let's summarize the main points we have discussed.

A SUMMARY OF THE MAIN POINTS

1) Mr. Franklin pointed out the need for the calendar to be "in complete harmony" with the astronomical cycles. We saw that the Jewish calendar embodies two separate and distinct astronomical flaws. Firstly, it produces an error of one full day for every 216 years. This problem could only be addressed by being willing to sometimes (as needed) modify the sequence of leap years. Secondly, the "average new moons" result in totally unacceptable errors, with Tishri 1 being declared as late as 44 hours after the actual lunar conjunction. Thus without contradiction the present Jewish calendar is indeed astronomically flawed.

SO PREMISE #1 FOR MR. FRANKLIN IS FLAWED.

2) Mr. Franklin also mentioned that the correct calendar must fulfill every scriptural requirement. However, at no point does he ever spell out what all the SCRIPTURAL requirements for the calendar actually are. In the above section we have seen that the present Jewish calendar also violates some biblical requirements.

SO PREMISE #2 FOR MR. FRANKLIN IS FLAWED.

3) We saw that Mr. Franklin's "proof" for the Jewish calendar consists of arguing about supposed BC dates and dates in the first century AD., and supposed "19-year cycles" in history. Mr. Franklin argues for "first visibility" of the new crescent. Now the Jewish historical evidence shows that the calendar was determined by faithful witnesses reporting having seen the new crescent. It follows that none of the results Mr. Franklin presents for the various dates he examines, assuming that his speculative assertions were really correct (!), can prove that "the calculated calendar" was used, since visual observations would clearly have produced exactly the same results.

SO "THE PROOF" MR. FRANKLIN PRESENTS DOESN'T IN FACT PROVE ANYTHING.

Note carefully! It is THE CONCEPT, that the historical existence of the present Jewish calendar can somehow be PROVED by reasoning about historical dates and cycles, that is WRONG! The whole concept is totally lacking in logic and in soundness! No amount of arguments about real or about supposed dates can ever substantiate that the present Jewish calendar was used in biblical times. THE CONCEPT IS FLAWED!

4) We saw that so-called "19-year cycles" have exactly the same flaw that the Julian calendar has, just to a slightly lesser degree. Such "cycles" are thus clearly "astronomically flawed" when used in an

attempt to determine 19 exact solar years.

5) We saw Jewish evidence that these "19-year cycles" were not known before 432 BC. The Jewish authors admit that the Jews got the idea of "19-year cycles" from the Greek astronomer Meton.

SO MR. FRANKLIN'S HIGHLY SPECULATIVE APPLICATION OF "19-YEAR CYCLES" TO DATES BEFORE 450 BC IS CERTAINLY FLAWED.

6) We saw that highly qualified Jewish astronomers acknowledge that the postponement rules serve only a utilitarian purpose, to avoid inconvenient days. Those astronomers were familiar with the comments by Moses Maimonides in this regard, but clearly rejected them because they are astronomically invalid.

SO PREMISE #3 FOR MR. FRANKLIN IS FLAWED.

7) Mr. Franklin builds on the premise that the Jewish calendar has "great antiquity". Authoritative encyclopedia articles show that the present Jewish calendar does NOT have any great antiquity.

SO PREMISE #4 FOR MR. FRANKLIN IS FLAWED.

8) Mr. Franklin claims that the Jewish calendar has been calculated since the time of Moses. Authoritative encyclopedia articles show that the calendar was determined by observation till way into the 2nd century AD.

SO PREMISE #5 FOR MR. FRANKLIN IS FLAWED.

9) Mr. Franklin claims that the Bible requires the calculations to be based on the new moon of Tishri. We saw that he misinterpreted Psalm 81 to reach this conclusion. We also saw an authoritative encyclopedia article which shows that it was the Jewish leaders IN BABYLON that made this decision in opposition to the Jews in Palestine.

SO PREMISE #6 FOR MR. FRANKLIN IS FLAWED.

10) We saw that GOD in Exodus 12:2 refers to Nisan as "Rosh Ha Shanah", but the Jews call Tishri 1 "Rosh Ha Shanah". So THERE IS A CONFLICT between what God tells us and what the Jews do in their calendar.

11) We saw that Mr. Franklin tries to divert attention from the names of the months being BABYLONIAN by claiming that they were Akkadian and of "Semitic" origin. We saw in an encyclopedia that the Akkadians were in fact of Canaanite origin, a fact that isn't any more desirable than a "Babylonian" origin.

12) We saw that a Jewish astronomer told us that the molad used in the Jewish calculations is in all likelihood based on BABYLONIAN time rather than Jerusalem time. This makes sense in "conjunction" with the Babylonian Jews being the ones who decided to base the calculations on Tishri rather than on Nisan.

13) We saw that Moses Maimonides also stated that "observation preceded calculation", thereby disagreeing with Saadia, who claimed that calculations preceded observation. The consensus amongst Jewish authorities is that in this regard Maimonides was right and that Saadia was wrong, as evidenced by various descriptions in authoritative encyclopedias.

14) We recognized that the need to occasionally intercalate a 13th month has nothing at all to do with a

calculated calendar. A calendar based on visual observations of the new crescents has precisely the same need for intercalated months to prevent a rapid shifting away from the seasons.

15) Mr. Franklin claims a fixed sequence of intercalation going back into antiquity. We saw authoritative encyclopedia articles which show that the sequence of intercalation was not fixed until into the 2nd century AD.

SO PREMISE #7 FOR MR. FRANKLIN IS FLAWED.

16) Mr. Franklin claims a knowledge of the present format of the Jewish calendar going back many centuries BC. An authoritative Jewish encyclopedia article showed us that little is known about the format of the calendar until some time in the 2nd century AD.

SO PREMISE #8 FOR MR. FRANKLIN IS FLAWED.

17) Mr. Franklin claims that God gave Moses the calculations for the present calendar in 1486 BC. Articles in various authoritative Jewish encyclopedias show that the Jews do not attribute any part of their present calendar to God; their calendar is something they themselves developed as they went along.

So Mr. Franklin has NO SUPPORT AT ALL for his claim that God gave Moses the present calculations.

18) We saw that the sole purpose of the Jewish calendar calculations is to establish a date for the Jewish calendar in terms of the JULIAN calendar, and that these calculations simply could not have existed before Julius Caesar introduced his calendar to the world.

THIS UTTERLY DEMOLISHES MR. FRANKLIN'S CLAIMS ABOUT GOD HAVING GIVEN MOSES THESE CALCULATIONS.

19) Mr. Franklin stated that in the days of David the circuits of the earth around the sun and of the moon around the earth were more stable than they are today, and that they were different from today. This demolishes his claims that any calculations devised for that time could possibly still be applicable today. Changed circuits produce years and months of totally different lengths. And that unavoidably demands NEW calculations.

20) We saw a statement from a Jewish scholar who made clear that Hillel II did NOT have any authority to make binding calendar decisions for future generations. The same Jewish scholar, Arthur Spier, stated that there is a need for the present Jewish calendar to be revised to properly comply with "requirements of astronomy AND the Torah (i.e. the law of God)". So Spier was acknowledging flaws in the Jewish calendar on two different fronts, astronomy and biblical requirements.

21) We saw a comment from a qualified Jewish astronomer who stated that Maimonides 800 years ago used DIFFERENT calculations than those that are used today. So at some point between 1200 AD and today those calculations were in some way changed. This is also obvious evidence against great antiquity for the present calculations.

22) The astronomer Arthur Spier, who saw that the present calendar does not comply with requirements of the Torah, also stated that Nisan must be IN THE SPRING.

23) We saw authoritative encyclopedia articles which state that the Sanhedrin had A MANDATE to intercalate years as they saw fit. This also contradicts a fixed leap year sequence existing in BC centuries.

24) Mr. Franklin claimed an astronomical justification for the postponement rules, that they supposedly are needed to achieve first visibility of the new crescent. We saw from the example of 2000 AD, Mr. Franklin's own data, that the postponement rules do NOT achieve first visibility consistently. We also saw an authoritative encyclopedia article which confirmed the same thing.

THIS FURTHER DEMOLISHES MR. FRANKLIN'S PREMISE #3.

25) We saw authoritative statements from Jewish astronomers that "tekufah" has two meanings: it refers to one of four days and to the four seasons that start on those days. Mr. Franklin argued for the word "tekufah" having no meaning.

SO PREMISE #9 FOR MR. FRANKLIN IS FLAWED.

26) Mr. Franklin correctly and very concisely defined the Hebrew word "chodesh" as having TWO meanings. The exact same point applies to the Hebrew word "tekufah", as documented by Jewish scholars.

27) The supposed "average" molads of the Jewish calendar achieve such highly unacceptable results that it is clear God would NEVER want us to use those "averages" to determine the annual calendar.

MR. FRANKLIN'S PREMISE #10, THAT GOD WANTS US TO USE "AVERAGES", IS TOTALLY WRONG.

28) Mr. Franklin acknowledged that at some point after King David God twice altered the arrangement of the heavenly bodies. Such intervention obviously demanded a totally different calendar from the one that had existed before. IF calculations were going to be used, THEN they would OBVIOUSLY have to be totally different from any calculations that might (theoretically) have been used before that time.

29) Mr. Franklin claimed that David and Jonathan must certainly have used "calculations" to know in advance that "tomorrow is the new moon". We saw that Mr. Franklin completely misinterpreted the situation for David and Jonathan, and that the conclusions he drew from that incident are totally unjustified.

30) Mr. Franklin stated that FOR MANY YEARS after God's intervention in the heavens the new moon only became visible one or two days after the calculated molad. The OBVIOUS conclusion from that is that therefore God CERTAINLY is not the author of the postponement rules, which were supposedly eventually devised to deal with this problem. Clearly Mr. Franklin made this up as a ready explanation for the need for these postponements. Jewish astronomers deny this supposed need.

31) Mr. Franklin's claim that at that time the postponements were added to the existing calculations is ridiculous and unsubstantiated.

32) Mr. Franklin tries to convince us that in 515 BC God wanted the year to start on February 28 (or, had he gotten his facts right, March 1), Gregorian calendar. His 515 BC dates totally lack any credibility, which dates are MORE THAN A FULL MONTH earlier than are the dates for this year of 2003 AD.

33) The "19-year cycles" are supposed to keep (according to Mr. Franklin) indefinitely the start of the year limited to the same 30-day period (from the earliest year to the latest year in the same cycle). Therefore whenever it can be shown that there is a lapse of MORE THAN 30 DAYS between the start of ANY years today and the start of ANY years in history (i.e. in biblical times), then that is EVIDENCE that a SHIFTING of the calendar to later in the solar year has taken place. If there was no astronomical flaw in the "19-year cycle", then THE IDENTICAL 30-DAY PERIOD would be used by the Jewish calendar

over many millennia to start the year. The start of the year would NEVER shift to later dates.

34) Practical examinations of claims for supposed BC dates show that such dating is always HIGHLY HYPOTHETICAL. There is no value of any kind in appealing to such dates for support of the present calendar. NOTHING can be proved by such appeals, as far as the present Jewish calendar is concerned.

35) As an example, Mr. Franklin's presentation of his case for the year 515 BC contained FIVE SEPARATE ERRORS: the time of the molad is wrong, the date for the molad is wrong, the date for the actual conjunction is wrong, the day for first visibility is wrong, and there is a mistake in one time conversion for UT to JT. This should suffice to show that the credibility for ALL his examples is highly questionable, to put it kindly.

36) All arguments about ancient dates, which ancient dates are supposed to verify the present Jewish calendar, are foolish and flawed. They never prove anything, and astronomers would never risk their professional credibility by appealing to such illogical reasoning in an attempt to prove some antiquity for the present Jewish calendar, when all the available evidence so CLEARLY proves otherwise.

37) We need to ask ourselves: HOW PLAIN MUST JEWISH EVIDENCE AGAINST ANY ANTIQUITY FOR THEIR OWN CALENDAR BE before people in God's Church will actually accept it as valid? Do we ever accept evidence against our own customs and preferences?

38) We need to acknowledge that ALL arguments about dates can at best only constitute "NON-BIBLICAL EVIDENCE". Establishing dates is never biblical evidence. There is a vast difference between taking a biblical statement at face value (Exodus 34:22; Isaiah 1:14; etc.) and using a Scripture TO INFER some specific date or other. And IF the date happens to agree with "visual observation", then it still cannot prove anything for the calculated calendar.

39) The reason WHY people appeal to such foolish reasoning about hypothetical dates is because THEY KNOW THAT THEY DON'T HAVE ANY REAL BIBLICAL EVIDENCE.

40) The internal evidence in the calculations themselves (their total dependence on the existence of the Julian calendar) mitigates against any BC existence for these calculations. Therefore the question is: WHO devised these "average new moon" calculations if they did not exist BC? The Jews freely acknowledge that Hillel II put them together in about 359 AD. But this is AN IMPOSSIBLE SITUATION for any Church of God supporter of the Jewish calendar to accept. It would destroy ALL justification for holding to those flawed calculations.

41) The vast majority of those who fervently support and defend the Jewish calendar actually know NOTHING OR ONLY VERY LITTLE about how that calendar is in fact calculated.

42) The starting date of the Jewish calendar (3761 BC) is totally fictitious and flawed. It starts the year in the wrong season. It is an insult to expect God to support such a fictitious date. People who are not familiar with the Seder Olam usually don't realize that the molad of Tishri for 3761 BC is supposed to represent the molad of Tishri for the year BEFORE Adam was created. The Seder Olam places Adam's creation in the year 3760 BC, and the Jewish calendar claims to use the molad of Tishri BEFORE Adam's creation. That seems a really tough one to call if you have ever read Genesis 1:2 about "total darkness" existing at that time. The fact that this starting date embodies A MISTAKE copied from the Seder Olam means that 3761 BC is in fact approximately 200 years after Adam's creation.

43) We saw that appeals to a fixed sequence of leap years and "ripening barley" to determine the start of the year are mutually exclusive, since ripening barley has nothing to do with any fixed sequence of leap

years, as the 1983 barley harvest demonstrates.

44) We noted that it is extremely important to be aware of any author's PURPOSE for writing. An author who has no other motivation than to inform his readers (e.g. an encyclopedia article) will always be more factually reliable than an author whose sole purpose is to defend his particular position on a particular subject. The defense of any particular position always demands a critical analysis before the facts can be separated from unsubstantiated "defense tactics".

45) We saw that Mr. Franklin attempts to do away with the concept of FOUR annual seasons. The motivation for this claim is to get around the year always having to start in the spring. In making this assertion Mr. Franklin did two things: firstly he argued from what is NOT said and drew totally unwarranted conclusions from this line of reasoning. Secondly, he very obviously ignored the clear intent of God's statement in Genesis 8:22. He only quoted a part of this verse, being careful to omit the part that opposes the view he puts forward.

There is no substance to his claims that God only views the year as having two seasons. The Jews have always understood, as we do today, that there are four seasons in the year. Four annual seasons are simply an undeniable fact of life.

46) We saw that Mr. Franklin wrongly implies that the expression "tekufah OF THE YEAR" is used in two verses (1 Samuel 1:20 and Psalm 19:6) which in fact use the word "tekufah" but NOT the expression "tekufah OF THE YEAR". He made this implication in order to assert that tekufah does "not refer to an event in time". An examination of the only two places that use the expression "tekufah of the year" (Exodus 34:22 and 2 Chronicles 24:23) shows that this expression in fact very much so refers to an event in time.

His own freely provided definition for "chodesh" in principle likewise contradicts this claim.

47) Mr. Franklin stated that the correct calendar must be based on the lunar year. This is clearly wrong, as the lunar year drifts through the seasons. A correct calendar must without contradiction be based on the solar year, and within that framework the lunar months must be accommodated. The sun must rule over the moon; the moon can never rule over the sun.

We saw an authoritative encyclopedia quotation which also stated this. Keep in mind that only THE SOLAR YEAR IS CONSTANT year after year (we can ignore the tiny fraction of a second per year that the earth is actually slowing down); neither the lunar month nor the lunar year are constant. So the only CONSTANT factor in the whole calendar determination, the solar year, must obviously be the foundation on which a correct calendar must be established.

48) A careful analysis of Mr. Franklin's premises shows that THE ONLY SCRIPTURE that he presents that could be called "biblical support" for his views is PSALM 81! None of the other Scriptures he has presented actually present anything FOR his position. All his other discussions of Scriptures either argue AGAINST what those Scriptures say, or they are about trying to establish specific dates (a foolish exercise!) for events mentioned in the Bible. But Psalm 81 is Mr. Franklin's "trump card"! This Scripture is the supposed "proof" FOR his position. It is supposedly A LAW OF GOD TO CALCULATE THE CALENDAR BASED ON THE MOLAD OF TISHRI. It is easy to show that this interpretation is completely wrong.

49) We saw that Mr. Franklin freely acknowledges that Psalm 81:3 also mentions the full moon. Yet he NEVER presents a correct translation for this verse. Instead he repeatedly presents the flawed KJV translation to IMPLY that this verse is speaking about "IN THE TIME APPOINTED". This allows him to infer that this is speaking about a Holy Day.

50) His claim that the translators left the Hebrew word for "full moon" untranslated is not true. The truth is that they MISTRANSLATED this Hebrew word with the expression "in the time appointed". Therefore this verse in actual fact does not say anything about any "appointed time"! This phrase "in the time appointed" must be totally expunged from this verse!

51) We saw that this verse speaks about TWO lunar occurrences (a new moon and a full moon), but that the singular "on our 'chag' day" can only refer to ONE of those two lunar occasions. It is THE FULL MOON that is here referred to as a FEAST (chag) day, and this effectively describes two days in the year, the 15th of Nisan and the 15th of Tishri. And in this verse neither one of these two days is specifically identified to the exclusion of the other. Both of these full moon feast days are EQUALLY included in this verse.

52) This means that THE NEW MOON mentioned in Psalm 81:3 is NOT in any way called either a FEAST day (and no new moon days are actually feast days anyway!) or a Holy Day (and the Day of Trumpets is a Holy Day). Therefore there is NOTHING in this verse that distinguishes this new moon from any other new moon in the year. It follows that ALL the new moons in the year are included in THE INTENT OF THIS PARTICULAR VERSE.

53) The next verse, Psalm 81:4, refers specifically to the law that is spelled out in Numbers 10:10. That verse instructs the trumpets to be blown on EVERY new moon in the year and also on EVERY Holy Day (mow'ed) in the year. This latter instruction includes the two full moon Holy Days, which happen to also be Feast Days (chag), of Nisan 15 and Tishri 15. There is simply no mistaking that the "statute and law" in Psalm 81:4 is a clear reference to Numbers 10:10.

54) Thus Mr. Franklin's claim that this Psalm is supposedly A LAW TO CALCULATE THE CALENDAR stands exposed as GROSS BIBLICAL MISREPRESENTATION! So Mr. Franklin's only supposed scriptural proof for his position is false.

SO PREMISE #11 FOR MR. FRANKLIN IS FLAWED.

55) We saw that after arguing for the Jewish calculations supposedly determining the new moons, Mr. Franklin then does a complete switch and claims that the calculations are aimed at establishing the greatest possible DISC ILLUMINATION at the full moons of Tishri and Nisan. We saw that full moons include a fudge factor of from 3 to 5 evenings with the percentages of full moon to which Mr. Franklin appeals. The truth is that there is absolutely no consideration of any kind given to supposed disc illumination at the full moon in the Jewish calendar calculations. The claim is simply preposterous.

SO PREMISE #12 FOR MR. FRANKLIN IS FLAWED.

56) We saw that to the human eye the moon will very commonly look full for three or more consecutive days. We also saw that a calendar based on either the true conjunction or on first visibility of the new crescent will more consistently achieve a higher percentage of disc illumination for the two feast days at the full moons than the present Jewish calendar.

57) We saw that the principle of 1 Thessalonians 5:21 demands that we PROVE the things we accept as true. Such proving should always be motivated by a desire to find out THE TRUTH. It is NEVER acceptable before God that we turn a blind eye to, or even argue against, evidence we don't like and for which we know that we don't really have an answer.

58) Mr. Franklin admits that "CONVINCING ARGUMENTS" against the Jewish calendar have been published. Yes, when the truth is explained to God's people, it should not really surprise us if that often has a very convincing effect. Since two of his chapters are devoted to me specifically, I take it that some

of those convincing arguments have come from me, otherwise Mr. Franklin, in his vigorous defense of the Jewish calendar, would surely not have bothered to direct his comments at me? And in this article I have added several more CONVINCING ARGUMENTS against the Jewish calendar that I had not written up previously.

59) Mr. Franklin did not at any stage show WHY God would possibly have some kind of sentimental attachment to the obviously flawed and antiquated calculations of the Jewish calendar, when today EVERY SINGLE LUNAR CONJUNCTION can be calculated in advance to an accuracy of within a few seconds! Why argue for some flawed calculations when today you can KNOW, to within a few seconds, the precise conjunctions for both, the first month in the year and also the seventh month in the year. Likewise, today you can accurately know in advance the day of first visibility of the new crescent. WHY would God possibly prefer us to use what are by comparison rather crude and inaccurate "averages"?

60) We saw that the Book of Psalms is not the place where God chose to reveal laws to His people Israel. The only laws the Book of Psalms can bring to our attention are those that have ALREADY been recorded in the five books that comprise "THE LAW".

And that about sums it up.

WOULD YOU EVER MAKE A SUCCESSFUL CASE "FOR ADULTERY"?

Would you ever be able to present a solid case that argues "FOR ADULTERY"? I know there were some creeps who thirty or forty years ago came out with the perverse idea that "a little adultery can spice up your marriage". But surely no one in their right mind would EVER endorse such a perverse idea? You understand that, if you really want to accept God's views, then you could NEVER make a case FOR adultery. Right?

Would you ever be able to present a solid case that argues "FOR TAKING GOD'S NAME IN VAIN"? Again, no one in their right mind would ever believe that anybody can use the Bible to make a case FOR taking God's name in vain.

Would you ever be able to present a solid case that argues FOR SUNDAY AND AGAINST THE SABBATH? Vast numbers of Protestants have tried this over the centuries. But you realize that anyone who is actually willing to look at the truth knows that biblical arguments totally demolish any and every justification that is put forward as support for Sunday observance. Simply because many hundreds of MILLIONS of people are not willing to accept the biblical evidence that supports the Sabbath and rejects Sunday observance, that does not in any way decrease the utter and complete demolition of any supposed arguments FOR Sunday observance.

It is simply that ...

- Adultery is WRONG.
- Taking God's name in vain is WRONG.
- Trying to change the Sabbath to Sunday is WRONG.

The basis for why these things are indefensible is because it is so very clear that they are WRONG!

Likewise, there isn't anybody on this earth who can present an argument FOR the present Jewish calendar that I would not be able to totally demolish and strip naked and grind into dust. And I would do that without regard for status or reputation of whoever attempted to justify the use of the present Jewish

calendar by God's people!

WHY?

That statement makes me real arrogant and conceited and opinionated, right? And probably even unconverted, right? Well, I don't really care what PEOPLE think of me.

I HAVE MADE THIS STATEMENT BECAUSE IT IS SO IRREFUTABLE THAT THE PRESENT JEWISH CALENDAR IS JUST SO BLATANTLY WRONG! IT IS SO EXTREMELY INSULTING TO THE GREAT GOD IN HEAVEN! IT IS JUST SO HYPOCRITICAL IN MANIPULATING THE START OF THE YEAR! THE EVIDENCE AGAINST IT IS JUST SO OVERWHELMING! THE ATTEMPTS BY ITS DEFENDERS ARE JUST SO OBVIOUSLY AIMED AT DISCREDITING THE VERY SCRIPTURES THAT CONDEMN THAT CALENDAR! THE DEFENSES OF THAT CALENDAR ALWAYS SO OBVIOUSLY IGNORE THE REAL FAULTS WITH THAT CALENDAR THAT HAVE BEEN EXPOSED AND BROUGHT INTO THE OPEN! THE JEWISH CALENDAR IS EVERY WHIT AS WRONG AS ADULTERY AND TAKING GOD'S NAME IN VAIN AND ATTEMPTING TO DO AWAY WITH THE SABBATH! IT IS JUST WRONG! YOU WILL IGNORE ISAIAH 1:14 AT YOUR OWN PERIL!

He that is unfaithful in that which is LEAST, is unfaithful also in that which is MUCH! To argue against the facts, when deep-down far too many people KNOW that they have no real answer to the problems with the Jewish calendar, calls a person's integrity into question. Ignorance and a lack of understanding are one thing; but deliberately trying to discredit condemning evidence for which there are no real justifications is something altogether different. It becomes a question of character.

After about seven years of fighting to get people to even ADMIT THE FACTS about the Jewish calendar, I have no other option but to CRY ALOUD WITHOUT SPARING and to expose in full Technicolor the faults inherent in that calendar, and the utterly insipid and effete justifications that are put forward for holding to that calendar.

I didn't like having to write this article. I hate the thought of perhaps having to write "another calendar article" after this one. I hate arguing. It's not my problem if people willingly reject evidence for which they have no real answers. But at the same time I will not stand by and watch God's people being deceived by ridiculous arguments. Like Mr. Franklin said, it is my job to vigorously defend THE TRUTH! And if there really WAS any truth in the assertion that God wants His people today to use the undeniably astronomically flawed Jewish calendar, I would love it and embrace it! It would make my life so much easier. But I am not prepared to ignore FACTS for which the Jewish calendar has no satisfactory answers. I will not ignore FACTS which Jewish scholars and Jewish astronomers are quite willing to openly acknowledge, even if some Christians try to deny them and try to "explain them away". It's not my fault that I hate and despise hypocrisy ... that's a bias I was born with!

THERE IS NO POSSIBLE WAY IN THE WORLD TO JUSTIFY GOD'S PEOPLE CONTINUING TO USE THE JEWISH CALENDAR!

Now there is just one more point we should consider.

HOW DO WE PROVE THAT OUR OWN POSITION IS RIGHT?

I have in this article examined all of Mr. Franklin's basic premises, and shown them to be flawed. So I have shown that the calculated Jewish calendar is wrong before God, and must be rejected by God's people.

However, to be logical, we should keep the following point in mind:

To prove another person's position to be wrong is not the same as proving one's own position to be right. Do you follow?

I can show that your position is wrong all day long, and that still does not mean that therefore my own position must be correct. I can in fact be completely correct in exposing all the flaws and errors in your position, and that by itself STILL does not prove that therefore MY position must be the only correct alternative.

So there are TWO SEPARATE AND DISTINCT PROCESSES involved in establishing which position amongst several conflicting options is the correct one.

FIRSTLY, wrong positions can be exposed by the flaws and the errors they embody. Clearly demonstrated real errors are sufficient to reject any and all wrong positions. This is what I have mostly done in this article; I have exposed the errors inherent in the present Jewish calendar. So I have established that the present Jewish calendar is WRONG before God. But throwing out the Jewish calendar is not enough, is it? What option do we replace it with? We must have SOMETHING to fulfill the function for which we have previously used the flawed Jewish calendar. So what do we do now?

This is where the SECOND process enters the picture. The option with which we replace the Jewish calendar must stand on its own legs. It is not automatically correct simply because the Jewish calendar is wrong. So where the first process focuses on exposing what is wrong, the second process focuses on proving what is right. Such proof is essential, even if the other options that have already been proved to be wrong had never existed. We are to prove all things.

The fact that we, the people of God's Church in this present age, have NEVER yet completed this second process, has been a stumbling block to many people, who have in fact RECOGNIZED the very real problems with the present Jewish calendar. Because a viable alternative, that has been conclusively shown to be correct, has never been arrived at by the churches of God, therefore many have opted to stay with "the devil they know" rather than risk taking on "the devil they don't know". And the present Jewish calendar happens to be "the devil they know"!

THE PROLIFERATION OF NUMEROUS ALTERNATIVES TO THE JEWISH CALENDAR HAS BEEN A DISSERVICE OF ENORMOUS PROPORTIONS TO THE PEOPLE OF GOD IN THIS AGE!

It has been nothing short of "every man doing that which is right in his own eyes". And it has enormously weakened the focus on what is wrong with the Jewish calendar, simply because it can justifiably be claimed for MANY of these "alternative calendars" that THEY TOO EMBODY CERTAIN PROBLEMS AND WEAKNESSES. It has allowed people to downplay the very real problems of the Jewish calendar.

Simply because it can be proved that the Jewish calendar is flawed, that does not in any way mean that ten different alternative models must therefore all be correct. They are NOT all correct. And what I referred to above as "the first process" can be applied equally much to many of those alternative models. Many of them can be shown to be wrong.

Now where the flawed Jewish calendar provided us with a ritual that required neither thought nor input from us, the choice of an alternative that will be correct before God is complicated by the fact that certain things need to be very carefully examined and analyzed and thought through for their consequences in a worldwide context BEFORE a decision regarding those very things can be made.

It is very easy for "MY particular alternative to the problems with the Jewish calendar" to seem to me to

be the only POSSIBLE alternative. But that is always, always a dangerous position to espouse. Any time we sail through uncharted waters, we should be open to the possibility that there are some things we may not yet be aware of, or some things to which we had not given adequate consideration.

So let me briefly recap the proof for what is a CORRECT alternative to the present Jewish calendar.

1) The very first step is that a correct calendar must be in full harmony with ALL the biblical requirements I listed earlier. It must be in agreement with the Scriptures in that section.

2) At the same time a correct calendar must also be in full agreement with all the astronomical requirements for a correct calendar. There must be a consistent and recognizable link to the real new moons. This link must be based on reality and not on some ritual.

3) As already mentioned earlier, in the correct calendar every month must start with a new moon, and every year must start with the first new moon in the spring.

But when we get to that position, THEN we have reached a quagmire, and further progress is almost impossible.

Why is that?

Because we now come to a fork in the road. One direction leads to "the actual time of the conjunction", while the other direction leads to "the time of first visibility of the new crescent". And there are supporters for both these options who have already firmly entrenched themselves in their positions. When they in their journey away from the calculated Jewish calendar came to this quagmire, they quickly made up their minds to go left or right, and concluded that the path they took is the only correct option. They concluded that the other option must without question be wrong.

Now it is not really possible to solve this problem as long as God's people continue to arrive in dribs and drabs at this quagmire, and are forced to make individual decisions on their own, usually based on an incomplete understanding of all the ramifications involved, as to whether to turn right or left.

A PREREQUISITE for resolving this problem is that FIRST the problems with the present Jewish calendar must be clearly and unequivocally acknowledged! That has to be the first step in arriving at a correct solution to the problem. It is only once we have AGREED that "yes, the Jewish calendar is flawed and must therefore be rejected by the people of God" we can THEN examine possible solutions for the "conjunction versus first visibility" quagmire. It is precisely because this is not nearly as clear-cut, as is the matter that the Jewish calendar is flawed, that it can become the permanent languishing point in the quest for a God-approved solution to the problems of the Jewish calendar.

So here is the catch 22 situation:

We cannot complete "the second process" until we have a clear acknowledgment that we agree that the present Jewish calendar is flawed and must be rejected by the people of God. But the majority are not willing to make this acknowledgment, even when they can recognize the real problems with the Jewish calendar, until a clear solution for the "conjunction versus visibility" has been established, until "the second process" has been completed.

To put this another way:

Most people are not willing to act on the results of "the first process" until they see that "the second process" presents a clear alternative. But "the second process" cannot reach any clear conclusions until

people act resolutely on the results of "the first process".

SO WE ARE STUCK IN A STALEMATE!

We need to recognize that it is only when we ACT on the information revealed by "the first process" that we can possibly ever reach a God-approved solution to the problems of the Jewish calendar, which may have a glimmer of a chance to find some acceptance amongst God's people across organizational boundaries. We need to ACT on what we understand.

And with that the prosecution rests its case. Now YOU are the judge to evaluate all the evidence you have seen.

NOW YOU ARE THE JUDGE!

Picture yourself as THE JUDGE in a court case in which the accused is THE PRESENT CALCULATED JEWISH CALENDAR. The accusation is that this calendar is nothing more than a human tradition which is both scripturally and astronomically flawed, and which therefore must be unconditionally rejected by the people of God.

You have heard all the evidence that the prosecution has put forward. You have also heard all the evidence and the arguments put forward by the defense. How will you judge? As a wise judge you realize that truth does not always prevail. You recall a trial almost 2000 years ago where the judge found the accused innocent, and yet yielded to popular pressure to pass a verdict of guilty. The evidence was crystal clear. The "jury" was given a choice between releasing a known criminal, Barabbas by name, or else releasing an innocent Man who had clearly been falsely accused. In spite of all the evidence to the contrary, the jury demanded the release of the known criminal and then returned the verdict of "guilty" for the innocent Man, and demanded the death penalty for Him.

As you ponder over that example, you realize that verdicts are influenced by far more things than just the objective facts of a case. Feelings and emotions often account for as much influence on the outcome of a trial as the actual facts of the case, and sometimes even more than the facts. So as you weigh up all the evidence before you, you try to factor in just how much of the evidence from both, the defense and the prosecution, was heavily influenced by feelings and emotions, and how much was factual and objective. A jury is easily swayed by appeals to feelings and emotions, but A JUDGE is expected to be above being manipulated by feelings. A judge must give the highest credence to the actual facts of the case that have been clearly proved, without letting subjective feelings and personal preferences dominate his judgments.

So you mentally review the whole case.

THE PROSECUTION:

- presented unemotional and factual evidence from various encyclopedias;
- called upon top astronomers as witnesses;
- always tried to openly present ALL the facts;
- never once appealed to "the right to remain silent";
- supported its claims for words like "tekufah" with statements from impartial scholars;

- supported all historical claims with statements from objective scholarly sources;
- was factually correct in the calculations it presented as supporting evidence;
- repeatedly exposed clear contradictions in the defense's presentation;
- systematically exposed 12 foundational premises used by the defense as being flawed;
- at no point appealed to dubious speculations for support;
- exposed the defense's flawed reasoning regarding intercalary years "realigning the seasons";
- clearly demonstrated the defense's flawed understanding of "first visibility";
- clearly explained WHY God did not give any laws in the Book of Psalms;
- clearly presented the scriptural requirements for a correct calendar;
- clearly disproved the supposed "evidence" of the defense's star witness, Psalm 81;
- exposed the vital damning INTERNAL EVIDENCE of the Jewish calculations;
- proved that the postponement rules do NOT have any astronomical justifications;
- demonstrated with the molads for 1989 and 2000 the Jewish calendar's total disregard for astronomical realities.

Then you start thinking about the case presented by the defense.

THE DEFENSE:

- spurned appeals to historical sources and instead attempted to prove antiquity for its client by presenting theoretical mathematical calculations;
- tried to cover up the Babylonian origin of the names of the months;
- unsuccessfully appealed to an astronomical justification for the postponement rules;
- repeatedly contradicted itself, depending on what point it was trying to defend;
- was less than honest in presenting Scriptures to support its view of "tekufah";
- presented weak arguments based on things that are NOT said;
- presented an incorrect explanation for Psalm 81;
- unsuccessfully claimed astronomical accuracy for its client;
- made a totally unjustified appeal to FULL moons;
- attempted to prove its case by arguing about "19-year cycles";

- attempted to blur the distinction between the four seasons;
- made repeated appeals to the known bias of the jury;
- presented data that contains multiple errors, with FIVE errors in one single example;
- presented incorrect data (i.e. 1040) for the number of parts in an hour;
- is clearly at odds with scriptural requirements;
- failed to present ANY evidence for its claim that God gave Moses some calculations;
- has not presented a single shred of real BIBLICAL evidence for its case;
- repeatedly made spurious claims without the slightest evidence or support for these claims from ANY source (e.g. 1-2 day delays in first visibility after God's intervention, appeals to the purpose of the calculations being to achieve maximum disc illumination, etc.).

These are the things you think about as you try to reach a judgment that is going to be fair and just and correct. As the judge you have also been able to discern THE BASIC UNDERLYING ATTITUDE for both parties. Is one party more concerned with establishing the truth than the other party? Is one party more desperate and more emotionally involved with the judgment that MUST be reached than the other? Did the two parties have similar motivations for the presentations they made, or did they have completely different motivations? Was the defense based on facts and factual data, or did the defense appeal to the emotions and to theoretical calculations which are completely hypothetical? Was the prosecution's case based on facts or on emotions?

So you, as the judge, are ready to reach your own personal judgment for the case, even as Pontius Pilate reached his own PERSONAL judgment for the case (John 19:4) almost 2000 years ago. You KNOW what is right and true in this case, and you KNOW which side is really indefensible. But you also know that the jury out there is ruled far more by emotional responses than by the strict facts of the case. So are YOU also going to be influenced by "popular demand"? Are YOU also going to CAVE IN, even as Pontius Pilate did?

WHAT JUDGMENT WILL YOU PASS?

Frank W. Nelte