

October 1996

Frank W. Nelte

A SUMMARY OF THE KEY POINTS ABOUT THE CALENDAR

With so much material having been presented concerning the calendar, what is now needed by the average member of God's Church is a relatively short and concise article, which clearly lays out ALL the relevant facts that pertain to the calendar. And that's what I will try to do in this article. I will state some of the relevant points without presenting all the proof which supports these points. That I have already done in other articles on this subject. Here I will simply refocus on what the important factors in this issue are.

1) BIBLICAL BACKGROUND:

The present Jewish calendar and how to calculate it is not something that is found in the Bible. Possible views therefore include: those who believe God "GAVE" Moses the correct calendar, but Moses did not make those instructions a part of the written Word of God; and those who believe that the Bible only contains THE PRINCIPLES on which the proper calendar must be based. The onus of proof rests with those who claim that God "GAVE" Moses the correct calendar. They must provide the evidence for this. There is no way that God would expect us to accept "on faith" something that is not in any way recorded or even hinted at in the Bible.

2) THE "ORAL" LAW:

The "evidence" most often appealed to is "the oral law" of the Jews. The facts are that there is no such thing as "the oral law" apart from the Jewish Talmud. Experts on the Talmud state quite clearly that the Talmud IS the oral law and that the oral law IS the Talmud. But the Talmud is an unbelievable collection of CONFLICTING AND CONTRADICTIONARY IDEAS AND OPINIONS OF MEN, many in open conflict with the clear teachings of the Bible.

Those people in the Churches of God who appeal to "the oral law" for authority have never bothered to take a thorough and detailed look into this "oral law". It is very easy to prove that it consists of nothing inspired; it represents purely the ideas of men. So any information about the calendar found in "the Talmud" does not prove any divine origin for the present calendar. But information found in the Talmud DOES PROVE that in the first century the Jews did NOT postpone the Day of Atonement away from a Friday or a Sunday.

3) THE CLAIM THAT THE JEWISH CALENDAR IS "SACRED":

This is a totally unfair and unjustified claim, intended to stack the deck in favour of the present Jewish calendar. The Jews themselves NEVER make this kind of claim for their calendar.

The only things that can be termed "sacred" are those things that God specifically points out or designates as such. Outside of what is mentioned in the Bible NOTHING qualifies to be called "sacred". Since the present Jewish calendar is not mentioned in the Bible, therefore it cannot be called "sacred". To designate the Jewish calendar as "sacred" is an attempt to bestow far more credibility on the Jewish calendar than is warranted by any evidence which is presented towards substantiating that claim. Let the calendar be tested on its own merits without any unfair bias caused by the word "sacred".

4) THE CORRECT NAME FOR THE PRESENT CALENDAR:

Is it "the Hebrew calendar" or is it "the Jewish calendar" or is it "God's sacred calendar"? The people who control this calendar, the ones whose calendar it is, usually call it "the JEWISH calendar". The Jews do NOT refer to it as either "GOD'S calendar" or even as "the HEBREW calendar". Those are terms we in God's Church have frequently assigned to this calendar, in an attempt to give it a higher status or greater prestige than simply "the JEWISH calendar". To call it only "the Jewish calendar" seems like a put-down; yet that is what it really should be called. It was devised by Jews for Jews, and history proves this.

5) WHAT HISTORICAL EVIDENCE IS THERE FOR THE CALENDAR?

The knowledge about the present calendar is based primarily on the information found in the writings of two Jewish scholars from the Middle Ages, Hai Gaon from the eleventh century and especially Moses Maimonides from around 1200 A.D., from his work "Kiddusch hachodesh". Subsequent writers refer to these two men.

These writers refer to the astronomer Samuel Yarhinai (died about 250 A.D.), whose calculations greatly influenced the subsequent calendar of Hillel II (around 358/59 A.D.). But there is no evidence available that a fixed calendar, as we have it today, existed prior to the time of Hillel II.

6)WHO WAS "HILLEL II"?

Though the priests formed the sect of the Sadducees, from the time of the Maccabees onwards the control of the priesthood actually passed to families not descended from Zadok. The Pharisees had started to explain the Bible in allegorical terms, in the process developing the "oral law", which the Sadducees rejected outright. While the Sadducees studied the writings of the Old Testament, the Pharisees focused their studies on this developing and rapidly growing body of the "oral law".

Initially the Sadducees had controlled the Sanhedrin. However, after the destruction of the Temple Simon ben Shetah, a Pharisee, triumphed over the Sadducees and managed to TOTALLY EXCLUDE all Sadducees from the Sanhedrin. That's when the development of the "oral law" really took off in a big way. No longer did the rejection of the "oral law" by the priesthood manage to retard the development of the Talmud.

Hillel II was the chief leader of the Pharisees in the 350's A.D. He was not a priest, but a non-Levitical Pharisee. And his area of concern was to cement the authority of the Talmud. There is no evidence available to indicate that at that late time (in the 350's A.D.) God was vesting any authority in this leader of the sect of the Pharisees to make decisions that would be binding on the already very scattered members of the true Church of God, who by then had no connections with the Pharisees at all. The onus of proof rests on those who claim otherwise.

As a matter of interest, in the book "Studies in Hebrew Astronomy and Mathematics" Shlomo Sternberg wrote in the introduction:

"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 {Comment: that is not the same as a binding law!} that the central court, being representative of the people {Comment: democracy or leadership from God?}, 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 THE 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 (NOTE!!) as it is that the court acts as the instrument representing the community as a whole

{Comment: does that sound like making something SACRED?}. AS SUCH, IT IS NOT EMPOWERED TO ENACT CALENDRIAL DECISIONS INTO THE FUTURE." (pages XXV-XXVI)

This Jewish author is saying that Hillel II did NOT really have the power to make his calendar binding on future generations. The next sentence reads:"Our current calendar is based LEGALLY on the fact that all Jewish residents of Israel, IN FACT, follow this calendar in practice."

So Shlomo Sternberg is saying: our calendar is legal NOT because Hillel II decided on it, but because we, the residents of Israel, CHOOSE to accept it!

7) HOW SHOULD WE APPROACH THIS QUESTION ABOUT THE CALENDAR?

One approach many have taken is this: they start out ASSUMING that the Jewish calendar is "God's calendar", and then they look for evidence to support this assumption. Their assumed premise is that God simply "MUST HAVE" given a calendar to Moses. Evidence that contradicts the Jewish calendar is either ignored or explained away. This approach is based on our historical bias in favour of the Jewish calendar.

A better approach is to start out with the Bible! Examine the Bible for any clear requirements that God reveals for the calendar. THEN objectively examine the Jewish calendar against such biblical requirements. If it meets all the biblical requirements, THEN it is the right calendar to use. If it does not meet all the biblical requirements, then this is clear proof that the Jewish calendar does not have God's approval.

The premise with this second approach is that God will not approve of a calendar which violates His own clear biblical instructions. Is that an acceptable premise or not?

8) WHAT ARE THE BIBLICAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE RIGHT CALENDAR?

The main requirements are quite simple and they are evident from a study of the Bible. They are:

- A) THE DAY starts and ends at sunset.
- B) THE WEEK starts with the sunset at the end of the Sabbath.
- C) THE MONTH starts with the new moon. Whether "new moon" must refer to the first faint visible crescent or to the invisible conjunction is a separate question.
- D) THE YEAR starts with the first new moon in the spring (Exodus 12:2).

When all these points are applied consistently, THEN:

- The year will always start LATE ENOUGH so that the barley is mature enough by the Sunday during the Days of Unleavened Bread to be available for the wave offering (Leviticus 23:10-14).
- The year will also always start LATE ENOUGH so that the Feast of Tabernacles will always occur after the autumn equinox, which is on September 23 (see Exodus 34:22).

All these conditions, which were already spelled out very clearly by Kenneth Herrmann in his calendar articles in the 1950's, must be met by the right calendar.

9) WHAT WOULD SHOW THAT A CALENDAR IS NOT THE RIGHT ONE?

If any of these conditions are not met, then such a calendar does not have God's approval as a basis for calculating when the Holy Days should be observed. Thus:

- A) A calendar which has the first month start in the summer, autumn or winter is to be rejected.
- B) A calendar which ignores actual "new moons" in favour of "theoretical new moons" is to be rejected.
- C) A calendar which would cause any part of the Feast of Tabernacles to fall before the autumn equinox is CERTAINLY to be rejected.
- D) A calendar which would clearly make it impossible to have any barley available for the wave offering by the Sunday during Unleavened Bread must also be rejected.

10) ARE THERE "19-YEAR CYCLES"?

There are no such PRECISE cycles, but it comes very close.

19 solar years (the earth's movements around the sun) are equal to 6939.601782 days.

19 lunar years with a total of 235 lunar months (the moon's movements around the earth) are equal to 6939.689531 days.

In simple terms this means that 19 lunar years, consisting of 235 lunar months, are 2 hours 6 minutes 21,5 seconds LONGER than 19 solar years. This means that the lunar years are actually 1 day LONGER for every 216.5 solar years.

For this reason any calendar based on 19-year lunar cycles will unavoidably be subject to a seasonal shift amounting to one day for every 216 years, or seven days for every 1514 years. Since the lunar cycles themselves cannot be shifted or "postponed" in any way, therefore this shift to a later date cannot be dealt with by "postponements".

11) CAN YOU PROVE THIS 1-DAY SHIFT TO A LATER DATE"?

Yes! Very easily! Here are the dates of the actual new moon conjunctions for the seventh month (called Tishri in the Jewish calendar). They are all given in the Gregorian calendar to avoid the confusion which Julian calendar dates would cause. The dates are 228 years apart, which is exactly 12 "19-year cycles" apart. From a Jewish calendar perspective this would represent the new moons of Tishri for years that occupy the same position within different 19-year periods.

The times of these actual new moon conjunctions are all given in local Jerusalem time (i.e. 2 hours 21 minutes ahead of Greenwich Mean Time). These times differ by a few hours from the calculated Jewish molads used in the Jewish calendar calculations, because those molads are not really accurate at all. The purpose here is to show the shift from astronomical evidence. However, the dates for the Jewish molads are basically the same, and they show the same drifting to later dates. But that "drifting" of the Jewish molads is largely obscured by using the Julian calendar, in which the equinox dates were also "drifting", but in the opposite direction. However, for dates after the Gregorian calendar was instituted this shifting can also be seen quite clearly for the molad dates.

400 AD = September 4 at 10:14 p.m.

628 AD = September 5 at 6:30 p.m.

856 AD = September 7 at 8:02 a.m.

1084 AD = September 8 at 2:23 a.m.

1312 AD = September 9 at 4:21 a.m.

1540 AD = September 10 at 9:20 a.m.

1768 AD = September 11 at 5:37 a.m.

1996 AD = September 13 at 1:27 a.m.

Now if there was such a thing as PRECISE 19-year cycles, then the date for the new moon conjunction, and also for the Jewish molad, in 1996 A.D. would be exactly the same as it had been in 400 A.D.. But in that period of time the conjunction for every year in the 19-year cycle in fact shifted to a time of between 7 and 8 days later in the year.

This shifting to later dates by the new moon conjunctions is a well-known fact!

12) DOES THE JEWISH CALENDAR TAKE THIS STEADY SHIFTING TO A LATER DATE INTO ACCOUNT?

No, the Jewish calendar calculations do not in any way make any provisions to counter this steady shift of the new moons to a later date in the year.

People who try to tell you that the four postponement rules are intended to address this shifting of the molads and the actual conjunctions (because the Jewish molad calculations always fluctuate from being as much as 3 hours before the conjunction to being as much as 15 hours after the actual conjunction, but within these parameters the molads do move with the actual conjunctions) are either totally clueless as to what actually happens in the Jewish calendar calculations, or they are deliberately trying to deceive you.

But the facts are that this steady shift to a later date is NOT influenced by any of the four postponement rules. Any postponements that may be applied to the present year have NO EFFECT AT ALL as to when any future conjunctions will occur. A postponement applied to the present year simply makes the previous year longer and the next year SHORTER, unless another postponement is then again invoked for some reason.

13) DOES THE CALENDAR HILLEL INTRODUCED MEET GOD'S REQUIREMENTS?

No, it does not meet the requirements as spelled out in the Bible. Specifically, from its very inception in the 350's A.D. it has caused one or two years in every 19-year cycle to fall SO EARLY that the entire seven days of Tabernacles took place before the autumn equinox, thus violating God's instructions in Exodus 34:22.

Hillel's calendar has NEVER in its over 1900 years of existence managed to start every year in a 19-year cycle in the spring. That is a clear violation of God's intention for the year to start in the spring. Even today the Jewish calendar STILL starts some years in the winter, and this is in spite of the "drifting effect", which has made the flaws less severe.

For example:

In 360 A.D., the year after Hillel had introduced this fixed calendar, this calendar started the year on March 4th, 17 FULL DAYS BEFORE THE END OF WINTER! So in 350 A.D. the Jewish calendar didn't even get the new moon that was "nearest to the equinox", never mind not starting in the winter at all!

That same year Hillel's calendar had the Seventh Day of Tabernacles occurred on September 17, A FULL SIX DAYS BEFORE THE AUTUMN EQUINOX! In the course of the next 1000 years for about NINETY DIFFERENT YEARS the entire Feast of Tabernacles would have preceded the autumn equinox, to the point where even in 1348 A.D. the Seventh Day of Tabernacles was still on September 22 Gregorian calendar, one day before the equinox.

There is no justification for a calendar which for the first 1000 years of its existence blatantly violated God's plain instructions! The year 1348 A.D. is well after the time of Moses Maimonides, the scholar to whom we owe most of our information about the Jewish calendar. The calendar was still in error 150 years after Maimonides.

THIS IS A CRUCIAL FACT WHICH NEEDS TO BE FACED AND ACKNOWLEDGED!

14) BUT DOES HILLEL'S CALENDAR MEET GOD'S REQUIREMENTS TODAY?

No, it emphatically does NOT meet God's requirements. It still starts many years in the winter. That is not right!

What started out in the 350's A.D. as TOTALLY WRONG (all 7 days of FoT sometimes falling before the equinox) is today (in regard to Tabernacles) only PARTIALLY WRONG, because today only a part of Tabernacles sometimes falls before the equinox. But many years still start in the winter.

We need to face up to the obvious intent of God's instructions in Exodus 34:22. This Scripture holds a major key! Is there any justification to claim that God's INTENTIONS for Tabernacles are fulfilled as long as at least THE SEVENTH DAY barely reaches the equinox? Such a view is nothing other than a concession to Hillel's initial error.

15) WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TABERNACLES AND THE DAYS OF UNLEAVENED BREAD?

Spring starts on March 21; autumn starts on September 23. Thus there are 186 days from the vernal equinox to the autumn equinox.

But in the present Jewish calendar from the First Day of UB (Nisan 15) to the First Day of FoT (Tishri 15) are always exactly 177 days.

Therefore the First Day of Unleavened Bread will ALWAYS be nine days later in relationship to the vernal equinox, than will be the First Day of Tabernacles in relationship to the autumn equinox. Therefore when the First Day of Tabernacles occurs on September 23, then the First Day of UB will occur on March 30 (March 21 + 9).

By never starting Nisan before the spring equinox (i.e. March 21) this will ensure that the Feast of Tabernacles will always be fully in the autumn.

16) IS THE 13TH MONTH A "POSTPONEMENT"?

NO! It is not a postponement at all! Don't let anyone fool you in this regard.

The rule for the correct calendar is that the year is to always start with THE FIRST NEW MOON IN THE SPRING! So if there are 13 new moons between one vernal equinox and the next vernal equinox, then there will be 13 months that year. If there are only 12 new moons between two successive vernal equinoxes, then there will be only 12 months that year.

The key to determining the length of a year is NOT that "a year has 12 months". The key to determining the length of a year is that it must have the same number of months as there are new moons between the two vernal equinoxes.

Exodus 34:22 very clearly REQUIRES some years to have 13 months, so that Tabernacles falls on or after the equinox. And a 13th month never moves the start of a year away from the new moons, as do the unbiblical Jewish postponement rules.

17) SO WHAT ARE THE POSTPONEMENTS?

They are arbitrary rules which the Pharisees devised to prevent the Day of Atonement and the Seventh Day of Tabernacles from falling on certain weekdays. The justification given is that these postponements supposedly avoid imposing "undue hardships" on people (i.e. Atonement falling on a Friday or on a Sunday would supposedly be an undue hardship?).

These postponements are NOT sanctioned anywhere in the Bible! This fact needs to be acknowledged! The reasoning for these postponements is NOT justified by the Bible.

18) DOESN'T A 31 A.D. CRUCIFIXION JUSTIFY THESE POSTPONEMENTS?

No! The evidence indicates that in 31 A.D. a Wednesday Passover was THE ONLY POSSIBILITY for a calendar that was established by eyewitnesses reporting having seen the new crescent, in order to determine the start of every month in the year.

And arguments about supposed dates in history NEVER constitute "biblical evidence"! They are nothing more than theoretical arguments about theoretical dates, and they carefully avoid any appeals to any Scriptures that place specific restraints upon the correct calendar.

19) WHAT ABOUT "DOUBLE-SABBATHS"?

God CLEARLY allows this to happen! He planned for a double Sabbath every year, with the Day of Pentecost on a Sunday. Also the First and the Seventh Days of Unleavened Bread frequently form "double-Sabbaths" respectively. And a "double-Sabbath" is not by any stretch of the imagination something you could call "an undue hardship".

20) CONSIDER THIS "PERMITTED" HARDSHIP:

In 1994 the Passover was on FRIDAY EVENING, March 25. The First Day of UB was on SUNDAY, March 27. The Seventh Day of UB was on SATURDAY, April 2.

Talk about hardship!

On Friday, March 25 people had to do the following preparations:

- A) Prepare for the Passover that evening.

B) Prepare for the weekly Sabbath the next day.

C) Prepare for the Night-to-be-much-observed Saturday eve.

D) Prepare for the Holy Day on Sunday.

E) Prepare to finish the delevaning of home and property ONE FULL DAY EARLIER THAN GOD INSTRUCTS, because they couldn't spend the Saturday delevaning their homes. Therefore people were virtually FORCED to observe EIGHT DAYS of Unleavened Bread.

That sure makes for a VERY busy Friday, preparing food for TWO days, preparing for the special occasions of the Passover and the Night-to-be-observed, AND having to make sure that the whole home is delevaned one day earlier than God requires. Yet that was quite acceptable by the Jewish calendar.

Compare this with the SUPPOSED "burden" of having the Day of Atonement fall on a Sunday. There people have the Friday to prepare for the weekly Sabbath. If Sunday is going to be a fast day, then there is NOTHING that needs to be prepared for Sunday. Then Sunday evening, after sunset, people can easily have some food prepared within one to two hours of sunset. And a drink of water could be available within minutes after sunset for those who are desperate.

Clearly "hardship" is a very flimsy justification for "postponing" the Day of Atonement.

21) WHAT ABOUT NEEDING FRIDAY AS A "PREPARATION DAY"?

There is absolutely no problem with preparing on a Thursday for the weekly Sabbath in those years when Atonement falls on a Friday. The supporters and defenders of the postponement rules have never explained why they could NOT use the Thursday to prepare under such circumstances. They meticulously avoid this question.

22) A VITAL FACT ABOUT THE JEWISH CALENDAR CALCULATIONS

Most people do not understand that the sole purpose of the Jewish calendar calculations is to establish a date for all the Feasts and Holy Days IN TERMS OF ANOTHER CALENDAR!

The Jewish calendar calculations do NOT establish "the molad of Tishri" in terms of the Jewish calendar. No, the sole purpose of those calculations is to establish "the molad of Tishri" in terms of THE JULIAN CALENDAR. Today that has been adapted to establish "the molad of Tishri" in terms of our Gregorian calendar.

Now what the Jewish calendar calculations tell you, and every Jewish astronomer knows this, is that they could not possibly have existed before the Julian calendar came into existence in 45 B.C.. Without the existence of the Julian calendar those calculations are totally useless! "Useless" means that YOU REALLY CANNOT USE THEM! The Jewish calendar calculations NEED the existence of the Julian calendar.

So it is impossible for the calculations of the present Jewish calendar to have predated the existence of the Julian calendar.

23) INVISIBLE MOLAD OR THE FIRST VISIBLE CRESCENT ... WHICH?

At the time of Christ's ministry the Jewish calendar was very clearly based on visibility of the first faint crescent. The historical evidence for this is quite clear.

Since Hillel's time the Jewish calendar is based on the calculation of the invisible molad. This mostly precedes visibility by one day, and sometimes by two days. Sometimes the Jewish calendar starts a month on the day AFTER the new crescent was first visible in Jerusalem.

So the Jewish molad calculations are not really correct. Sometimes they place the molad 3 hours too early, and sometimes they place the molad 15 hours too late.

SO THE MOLAD CALCULATIONS SHOULD DEFINITELY NOT BE USED BY A CORRECT CALENDAR!

What **MUST** be used is the correctly calculated time of the actual conjunction. From that accurate time for the conjunction the time of first visibility of the new crescent can be fairly accurately predicted.

However, whether we should use the correctly calculated conjunction or whether we should use the correctly determined first visibility is an unresolved question, with some positive points in favour of both possibilities. This issue needs to be addressed and resolved at a later stage.

24) WHAT IS THE ORIGIN OF THE JEWISH CALENDAR CALCULATIONS?

There are those who would have us believe that these calculations were somehow "given" to Moses by God. But there is no proof to substantiate this at all! And it is highly unlikely, to put it gently, that God gave Moses some calculations that require the existence of the Roman Julian calendar in order to be of any use. God would have had to plan for Julius Caesar to introduce his calendar in order to make sense out of the calculations for the present Jewish calendar.

Furthermore, the Jewish calculations of the new moons themselves actually contain a very small error, which works out to about one full day for every 13100 years. Not a major error at all, but it happens to be the same error which is incorporated in the calculations the Greek astronomer Hipparchus came up with around 146 B.C., about 500 years before the time of Hillel II. The Jewish calculations, as they exist today, have adapted Hipparchus' calculations for the specific application to the Julian calendar. So the Jewish calculations don't look like Hipparchus' calculations, but they are based on the premise of what Hipparchus had calculated earlier.

There is nothing wrong with the Jewish calculations utilizing Hipparchus' research, since his were the best calculations available. But that certainly shows that the Jewish calculations are not somehow "inspired". They were simply taken over from the Greeks, because they were the best calculations that were available.

25) WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STARTING DATE OF THE JEWISH CALENDAR, WHICH IS 3761 B.C.?

There is absolutely no significance at all to that starting date. It is based on the chronologically terribly flawed document known as "Seder Olam Rabbah". This document claims 3760 B.C. as the date of the creation of Adam, which is an error of over 200 years! This document also claims that the Persian period (which lasted over 200 years) was only 34 years long. It is totally unreliable.

But most people who have heard of the "Seder Olam" do not realize that the shortening of the Persian period to only 34 years was a **VERY DELIBERATE** attempt to distort the chronology for the express purpose of trying to obscure the fact that the 70-weeks prophecy of Daniel 9 points to the time of the ministry of Jesus Christ. Instead the author of the Seder Olam tried to distort the historical record in such a way that the 70-weeks prophecy would point to Simon Bar Kokhba, who led the rebellion against the Romans in the 130's A.D..

Keep in mind that the purpose of the 70-weeks prophecy is to PINPOINT the ministry of the Messiah. And the records were deliberately distorted to obscure the facts in this regard. And THAT DOCUMENT has been used to provide the foundational date for the present Jewish calendar! Does that really sound like something "God would have given Moses"?

26) WHERE DO THE NAMES OF THE JEWISH MONTHS COME FROM?

They are all Babylonian names with which Ezra replaced the old Hebrew names. The name "Tammuz" (4th month), for example, comes from a pagan god, very much like the name of our month "March".

27) WHAT IS MEANT BY "THE ORACLES OF GOD" IN ROMANS 3:2?

The Greek word here is "logion", the diminutive of the word "logos". It refers to something SMALLER than the whole Bible. The Romans Paul was writing to knew "oracles" as places where they could obtain short, brief, concise and to-the-point advice or answers to specific questions. "Logion" was not intended by Paul to refer to anything IN ADDITION TO the whole Bible. There is absolutely nothing in the rest of the epistle to the Romans to give that indication. Rather, Paul used "logion" to refer to specific parts of the Old Testament which were given to the Jews. Typically all the "thus says the LORD" statements in the prophets were equivalent to what pagans thought of as "oracles". In the context of Romans Paul seems to have had the basic doctrines in mind, which he listed in Hebrews 6:1-2.

There is no biblical support for the conjecture that "oracles" must also include the knowledge of the week and of the Jewish calendar. There is nothing in the Bible to support this speculation. Paul had neither the calendar nor the week in mind when he wrote Romans.

28) SHOULD WE NOT ACCEPT THE JEWISH CALENDAR ON FAITH?

No! In the presence of clear proof that Hillel's calendar violated God's instructions for AT LEAST 1000 years; and in the absence of any kind of proof for inspiration the Jewish calendar cannot be accepted "on faith". The postponement rules also cannot be taken on faith. The Jewish calendar STILL repeatedly starts the year in the winter, which is contrary to God's intentions.

29) HOW HAVE PEOPLE TRIED TO DEFEND AND SUPPORT THE JEWISH CALENDAR FROM THE BIBLE?

Originally Mr. Armstrong, and later also Kenneth Herrmann, tried to support the use of the Jewish calendar by appeals to biblical requirements for the correct calendar. Neither Mr. Armstrong nor Kenneth Herrmann was initially aware of the fact that the Jewish calendar has no biblical support at all. As people learned of the specific areas where the Jewish calendar violates biblical instructions and biblical requirements, so the appeals for acceptance of this Jewish calendar switched from quoting scriptural requirements to appeals for faith in this calendar.

As late as 1981 Dr. Hoeh was still willing to quote Exodus 34:22 as a biblical requirement for a correct calendar. Since in recent years it has been made clear that the Jewish calendar has ALWAYS violated the principle of Exodus 34:22, therefore this Scripture is now also no longer quoted by those who defend the Jewish calendar.

So since the 1940's there has been a steady shift away from trying to provide scriptural support for the Jewish calendar. When Mr. Armstrong and Kenneth Herrmann quoted a dozen Scriptures or more in their discussions of the calendar, modern defenders of the calendar have typically retreated to behind just one Scripture, Romans 3:2, the "oracles of God".

NOW people no longer try to prove from the Bible that the Jewish calendar is approved by God. No, now people simply appeal to HAVE FAITH THAT GOD GAVE THIS CALENDAR TO THE JEWS!

Examining all the articles the Church has published, including those by the new organizations, in their chronological sequence forcefully exposes this shift away from scriptural support and towards turning the calendar into a faith issue. This is a tacit admission that all the supposed "biblical proof" for the Jewish calendar is useless.

30) SO WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

God has not chosen to give us a "sacred" calendar, though that would certainly have made things easier. Instead God gave us sufficient guidelines to show what features a correct calendar must include and within which parameters it may function.

Could it really be simpler than this:

- 1) The DAY starts at sunset.
- 2) The WEEK starts with the sunset at the end of the Sabbath.
- 3) The MONTH starts with the new moon.
- 4) The YEAR starts with the first new moon in the spring, northern hemisphere.

If we ever get that far, then we can address whether to use the actual conjunction or whether we should use the day of first visibility to start each month.

And that about sums up most of the issues we should consider when we talk about "the calendar".

Frank W. Nelte