

December 2018

Frank W. Nelte

WHAT IS YOUR VERDICT ON THE JEWISH CALENDAR?

Over the past 20 years I have written over 60 articles about the inappropriateness of the Churches of God using the present calculated Jewish calendar for determining the dates for God's annual Feasts and Holy Days. In those articles I have examined every defense of the present Jewish calendar that has come to my attention, and exposed the flaws inherent in all those defensive articles. My 60+ articles on this subject are still all available on my website.

In those articles I have provided a vast amount of factual information that proves over and over that God does not endorse or support the use of the present Jewish calendar by His people. God in fact expresses an active hatred for the present Jewish calendar in Isaiah 1:14, a Scripture others are keen to ignore.

The present Jewish calendar has in effect been on trial and found wanting. In biblical terms we might say that concerning the present Jewish calendar God says: "I have somewhat against you", to borrow an expression from Revelation 2:4.

In that trial we have a prosecution and we have a counsel for defense.

The defense represents all those who actively support the use of the present Jewish calendar by God's people for the purpose of determining the dates for God's annual Feasts and Holy Days. The prosecution ... that's me, demolishing one argument for the Jewish calendar after another. The jury ... that's you.

You, the jury, now have to weigh up the things presented by both sides, and then you have to reach a verdict. You decide whether to accept the points presented by the defense, or whether to recognize that the prosecution has successfully exposed the flaws and the mistakes in the defense's case, to the point where the defense's position is totally lacking in credibility.

Now this trial has been long and drawn out, already going on for over two decades. The information presented to the jury by both sides has been overwhelming and at times confusing. So instead of going through the whole trial again, let's just zoom in on **the closing arguments** presented by both sides. They summarize everything that has been presented.

Undoubtedly you have already reached your own personal verdict, based on everything that has been presented to you in the course of this long trial. The closing arguments can refresh the key points in your mind, either to solidify the decision you have reached, or to help you recall certain unresolved issues that you had mentally filed away for closer scrutiny at some future point.

THE CLOSING ARGUMENTS FOR THE PROSECUTION

1) We have presented unemotional and factual evidence regarding the Jewish calendar from various **encyclopedias**.

2) We have called upon top **astronomers** as witnesses.

- 3) We have always tried to openly present **all** the facts.
- 4) We have **never** once appealed to "the right to remain silent".
- 5) We have supported our claims for words like "tekufah" with statements from the Talmud and from impartial **Hebrew scholars**.
- 6) We have supported **all historical claims** with statements from objective scholarly sources, including the Talmud and various **Jewish scholars**.
- 7) We have presented **factually correct calculations** for the examples we have presented as supporting evidence.
- 8) We have repeatedly **exposed clear contradictions** in the defense's presentations.
- 9) We have systematically **exposed the flaws in all twelve foundational premises** used by the defense.
- 10) At no point have we appealed to **dubious speculations** or to hypothetical historical dates for support. Such hypothetical dates have only been presented to rebut claims put forward by the defense, but not as primary support for our position. Our position is independent of the placement of Holy Days for any specific year in human history.
- 11) We have exposed the defense's flawed reasoning regarding **intercalary years** supposedly "realigning the seasons".
- 12) We have clearly demonstrated the defense's flawed understanding of "**first visibility**".
- 13) We have clearly explained why God did not give any laws in **the Book of Psalms**.
- 14) We have clearly presented **the scriptural requirements** for a correct calendar. They are the same ones Mr. Armstrong and Mr. Kenneth Herrmann appealed to over 60 years ago.
- 15) We have emphatically disproved the supposed "evidence" of one of the defense's star witnesses, **Psalms 81**.
- 16) We have exposed the vital damning **internal evidence** of the flaws in the Jewish calculations, when compared to astronomical realities.
- 17) We have exposed that **the Jewish calculations depend on the existence of the Julian calendar**, and that those calculations are impossible to use if the Julian Calendar (or the Gregorian Calendar) did not exist.
- 18) We have proved conclusively that **the postponement rules** do not have any astronomical justifications. They are purely designed to avoid "inconvenient days of the week", a fact Jewish authorities have always readily acknowledged.
- 19) We have clearly demonstrated with the molads for 1989 and for 2000 the Jewish calendar's total disregard for astronomical realities, by exposing the errors produced by the molad calculations for those specific years.
- 20) We still appeal to and use most of the Scriptures that Mr. Herbert Armstrong appealed to almost 80

years ago. Those Scriptures still mean what they meant 80 years ago, and they are just as applicable today as they were then.

21) We have also totally debunked the false claims asserted for the defense's other star witness, **Romans 3:2**. "The oracles of God" do not in any way refer to or apply to the Jewish calendar calculations.

22) We have exposed that the present Jewish calendar calculations repeatedly caused the **Passover** to fall **in the winter**, and also repeatedly caused the entire **Feast of Tabernacles** to be observed **in the summer** during the past 16 centuries (i.e. since the time of Hillel II).

23) We have insisted on a correct calendar being consistently **linked to the seasons**, so that Passover is always in the spring, and Tabernacles is always in the autumn. We have insisted that the year may never start in the winter.

24) We have presented evidence that during **the first century A.D.** the Jews did not use a calculated calendar. The historical evidence shows that the calendar during Christ ministry was based on **eye witnesses** reporting the sighting of the first new crescent of the moon. Eye witnesses and calculations are mutually exclusive. The calculated calendar only started about 300 years later, with Hillel II.

25) We have shown **the Greek origins** of the calculations employed in calculating the Jewish molads.

26) We have proved that there are no exact **19-year cycles**. These "cycles" are only **an approximation**, which approximation produces an error of drifting away from the equinox by close to 5 full days for every 1000 years.

27) It is clear that when God altered **the arrangement of the heavenly bodies** at the time of King Hezekiah (2 Kings 20:11), that the monthly cycle and the annual cycle were also unavoidably changed. Therefore the length of a month and the length of a year must have been different in the days of Moses, when compared to the time of Christ's ministry and to our time today. So any rules that might have applied to the calendar at the time of Moses could not possibly apply to the correct calendar today, because of the changed astronomical realities.

28) We have also shown that during the first two centuries A.D. the Day of **Atonement** repeatedly fell **on Fridays and on Sundays**, proving that the postponement rules had at that time not yet been established.

And with these 28 points the prosecution rests its case.

AN EVALUATION OF THE CLOSING ARGUMENTS FOR THE DEFENSE

1) The defense **spurned appeals to historical sources** and instead attempted to prove antiquity for its client by presenting **theoretical mathematical calculations** going back into antiquity.

2) The defense tried to cover up the **Babylonian origin** of the names of the months in the Jewish calendar.

3) The defense **unsuccessfully** appealed to an astronomical justification for the postponement rules.

4) The defense repeatedly **contradicted itself**, depending on what point it was trying to defend.

- 5) The defense was **less than honest** in presenting Scriptures to support its view of "tekufah", attempting to tell the court what this word supposedly does not mean. Their views were firmly contradicted by experts in the Hebrew language.
- 6) The defense presented weak arguments based on **things that are not said**, without showing any interest regarding **what actually is said** in those Scriptures. Arguing from omission is not real proof.
- 7) The defense presented **an incorrect explanation** for Psalm 81.
- 8) The defense **unsuccessfully** claimed astronomical accuracy for its client. These claims are contradicted by real astronomers.
- 9) The defense made a totally unjustified appeal to **full moons**. This is a red herring as full moons do not feature in determining a correct calendar. And full moons also easily provide a fudge factor.
- 10) The defense attempted unsuccessfully to prove its case by arguing about "19-year cycles". Since those cycles are only approximations with an unavoidable drifting away from the equinoxes, this line of reasoning **lacked credibility**.
- 11) The defense attempted unsuccessfully to blur the distinction between the four seasons, claiming that God supposedly only recognizes two seasons for the year. This was presented explicitly in an attempt to destroy the known meaning of the Hebrew word "tekufah".
- 12) The defense made repeated and blatant appeals to the known bias of the jury.
- 13) The defense presented data that contains multiple errors, with **five errors in one single example** that was presented.
- 14) The defense presented incorrect data (i.e. "1040") for the number of halakim in an hour.
- 15) The defense is clearly **at odds with scriptural requirements** for the calendar.
- 16) The defense failed to present **any** evidence for its claim that God supposedly gave Moses some calculations for the calendar.
- 17) The defense has not presented a single shred of real **biblical evidence** for its case. For the most part they have **dropped all appeals to any Scriptures** except to Romans 3:2, for which verse they assert totally false claims.
- 18) The defense has 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.).
- 19) When challenged by facts that they could not refute, the defense has **repeatedly appealed to the Fifth Amendment**, the right to refuse to answer questions in order to avoid incriminating their own client, the present Jewish calendar.
- 20) They have turned acceptance of the Jewish calendar into **a faith issue**, so that they can avoid having to deal with uncomfortable facts that contradict the faith they demand.
- 21) The defense attempted **unsuccessfully** to build its case on some theoretical and totally hypothetical dates for the events discussed in **John 8-10**. In the process the defense failed to admit that a calendar

based on first visibility of the new crescent would have achieved the identical results in those years.

22) **The way the defense attempts to defend its client** makes clear that the defense is fully aware of the major problems with the Jewish calendar. The defense **knows** how and where its client violates scriptural requirements. But the defense refuses point-blank to acknowledge the facts that it is aware of.

And with these 22 points we have evaluated the closing arguments for the defense.

The majority of the above 50 points are discussed in my rather lengthy 2003 article entitled "The Jewish Calendar: A Bird With Scales", while the remaining points are dealt with in various other articles about the calendar.

I have not attempted to present the proof for any of the above 50 points. The proof has been readily available out there for over a decade. And you can easily find that proof in the numerous calendar articles on my website. Here in the closing arguments I have simply listed the main issues.

So what judgment will you pass?

Frank W Nelte