

Frank W. Nelte

PASSOVER IN THE WINTER

There are people who argue that it is acceptable for the year to start in the winter "as long as the Passover itself is observed in the spring". And they can make this statement in the full assurance that TODAY the Jewish calendar never places Nisan 14 into the winter.

But that was not the case when Hillel II first instituted the present calculated calendar. It is not generally known amongst Church of God people that the present Jewish calendar, from the time of Hillel II onwards, actually repeatedly placed the Passover into the winter.

Any time before the spring equinox is still a part of winter. So any Passover observed before the spring equinox is observed in the winter. There are also a number of occasions, included in the list below, when the Jewish calendar placed the Passover on the same day as the spring equinox. In those cases the Jewish calendar placed the Passover within a few hours either before or after the actual time of the equinox, cutting it extremely fine. In those cases the Jewish calendar obviously started the year 13 or more days before the end of winter, even if the Passover was theoretically observed a few hours after the actual equinox.

I say "theoretically observed" because from the time of Hillel II onwards (and already before Hillel's time) the Jews didn't actually do anything on the 14th day. They had already shifted their entire observance to the 15th day.

Here is a list of over 20 different years when, according to the present Jewish calendar which goes back to 358/359 A.D., the Passover would have been observed in the winter, still before the spring equinox, or else it would have been observed on the actual day of the spring equinox. This list is not intended to be a complete list of all years with winter Passovers; it is only a partial list for the 500-year period under examination.

Keep in mind that for all the Gregorian calendar Passover dates below, the Passover itself would have been observed after sunset on the previous day. For example, Gregorian Passover = March 18 means that the Passover would have been observed after sunset on March 17.

Here are the years:

360 A.D.

Passover Julian calendar = March 17

Passover Gregorian calendar = March 18

Equinox Gregorian calendar = March 20

368 A.D.

Passover Julian calendar = March 19

Passover Gregorian calendar = March 20

Equinox Gregorian calendar = March 20

COMMENT: Passover observed after sunset on March 20.

379 A.D.

Passover Julian calendar = March 18

Passover Gregorian calendar = March 19

Equinox Gregorian calendar = March 21

398 A.D.

Passover Julian calendar = March 19

Passover Gregorian calendar = March 20

Equinox Gregorian calendar = March 20

COMMENT: Passover observed after sunset on March 20.

406 A.D.

Passover Julian calendar = March 19

Passover Gregorian calendar = March 20

Equinox Gregorian calendar = March 20

COMMENT: Passover observed after sunset on March 20.

417 A.D.

Passover Julian calendar = March 19

Passover Gregorian calendar = March 20

Equinox Gregorian calendar = March 20

COMMENT: Passover observed after sunset on March 20.

436 A.D.

Passover Julian calendar = March 18

Passover Gregorian calendar = March 19

Equinox Gregorian calendar = March 20

455 A.D.

Passover Julian calendar = March 18

Passover Gregorian calendar = March 19

Equinox Gregorian calendar = March 20

474 A.D.

Passover Julian calendar = March 18

Passover Gregorian calendar = March 19

Equinox Gregorian calendar = March 20

482 A.D.

Passover Julian calendar = March 19

Passover Gregorian calendar = March 20

Equinox Gregorian calendar = March 20

COMMENT: Passover observed after sunset on March 20.

493 A.D.

Passover Julian calendar = March 17

Passover Gregorian calendar = March 18

Equinox Gregorian calendar = March 19

512 A.D.

Passover Julian calendar = March 17

Passover Gregorian calendar = March 19

Equinox Gregorian calendar = March 20

550 A.D.

Passover Julian calendar = March 18

Passover Gregorian calendar = March 20

Equinox Gregorian calendar = March 20

COMMENT: Passover observed after sunset on March 20.

569 A.D.

Passover Julian calendar = March 18

Passover Gregorian calendar = March 20

Equinox Gregorian calendar = March 20

588 A.D.

Passover Julian calendar = March 17

Passover Gregorian calendar = March 19

Equinox Gregorian calendar = March 19

COMMENT: Passover observed after sunset on March 18.

607 A.D.

Passover Julian calendar = March 17

Passover Gregorian calendar = March 20

Equinox Gregorian calendar = March 21

626 A.D.

Passover Julian calendar = March 17

Passover Gregorian calendar = March 20

Equinox Gregorian calendar = March 21

664 A.D.

Passover Julian calendar = March 16

Passover Gregorian calendar = March 19

Equinox Gregorian calendar = March 20

702 A.D.

Passover Julian calendar = March 17

Passover Gregorian calendar = March 21

Equinox Gregorian calendar = March 21

COMMENT: Passover observed after sunset on March 20.

721 A.D.

Passover Julian calendar = March 17

Passover Gregorian calendar = March 21

Equinox Gregorian calendar = March 21

COMMENT: Passover observed after sunset on March 20.

740 A.D.

Passover Julian calendar = March 16

Passover Gregorian calendar = March 20

Equinox Gregorian calendar = March 20

COMMENT: Passover observed after sunset on March 20.

759 A.D.

Passover Julian calendar = March 17

Passover Gregorian calendar = March 21

Equinox Gregorian calendar = March 21

COMMENT: Passover observed after sunset on March 20.

854 A.D.

Passover Julian calendar = March 16

Passover Gregorian calendar = March 20

Equinox Gregorian calendar = March 20

COMMENT: Passover observed after sunset on March 20.

873 A.D.

Passover Julian calendar = March 16

Passover Gregorian calendar = March 20

Equinox Gregorian calendar = March 20

COMMENT: Passover observed after sunset on March 20.

Exactly how often the present Jewish calendar has placed the Passover into the winter is not important one way or the other. What is important is that the calendar which Hillel II instituted in 358/359 A.D. did clearly and repeatedly place the Passover into the winter, or sometimes on the actual day of the equinox. The fact that it did so repeatedly for the next 500 years after Hillel's time only makes this flaw more obvious. Whether his calendar would cause the Passover observance to fall into the winter or whether it would fall into the spring was simply not something Hillel II was concerned about.

The fact that today the Jewish calendar never places the Passover into the winter is not something that was planned; it is simply the consequence of the passage of time producing an inevitable shift to later dates in the annual seasons for all the days in a Jewish 19-year cycle. The passage of over 1600 years since Hillel's time has been kind to at least one of the inherent flaws of the present Jewish calendar; that's all.

And to be clear: The Passover is not the criterion for when a year is to start, because the Passover does not represent the start of a new year. Day 1 of a new year must not be in the winter. By Day 14 (the Passover) the new year is already two weeks old.

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