Frank W. Nelte

THE POSTPONEMENT PARODY

There are people amongst the churches of God who claim that the rules for the present Calculated Jewish Calendar were given by God to Moses. That suggestion is obviously absurd, and no self-respecting Jewish scholar would ever make such a ridiculous suggestion. Since the Jewish Calendar calculations absolutely require **comparative data** that applies to the Roman Julian Calendar, therefore these Jewish Calendar calculations could not possibly have existed before Julius Caesar established his own calendar in 46 B.C. **You cannot make calculations with data that does not yet exist.**

But many people in the churches of God neither know nor understand these facts.

So when their ministers tell them that the calculations for the present Jewish Calendar were given to Moses by God, and that they therefore are a part of "the oracles of God", then they willingly accept such statements "on faith", while being blithely ignorant of **the utter impossibility** for this claim to be true.

Understand that the only possibility for the Jewish Calendar calculations to be a part of "the oracles of God" (see Romans 3:2) is for those calculations to have been given to Moses by God. If Moses did not receive those calculations from God, then there simply is no other opportunity whatsoever for those calculations to be a part of "the oracles of God". God didn't give them to Samuel, or to Elijah, or to Isaiah, or to Jeremiah, or to Ezekiel, or to Daniel, or to Ezra. And God most certainly didn't give them to Hillel II, or to any other Pharisee. **Either** Moses received them from God, **or they are not a part of "the oracles of God"**. There's no middle ground!

The people who claim that the Jewish Calendar calculations are supposedly a part of "the oracles of God", along with the Sabbath and the annual Holy Days being a part of those oracles, have never bothered to think this matter through, to the point of identifying **exactly at what point in time** these calculations supposedly became a part of those oracles. The only theoretical possibility is the time of Moses, when Moses was on the mountain with God for 40 days. But claiming that these calculations were given to Moses is a complete anachronism, like claiming that Moses used his cell-phone to stay in touch with Aaron.

This short parody is dedicated to the people who claim that God gave those calculations to Moses.

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(**Comment**: The following conversations are totally 100% fictional.)

The scene: God Almighty has called Moses up to the mountain for 40 days to give him the laws of God. In that process God has just finished giving Moses all the instructions pertaining to the three annual Feasts and the seven Holy Days. And now Moses has some questions.

Moses: Lord, You have given us specific dates for all these Holy Days in the year, except for the Feast of Weeks (i.e. Pentecost), which we have to count out. But what kind of calendar are we supposed to use to establish all these dates in the year?

God Almighty: That should be pretty easy for you. I have prepared a fool-proof calendar for you.

And because I want the tribe of Judah to preserve this calendar, therefore I am going to call it "the Calculated Jewish Calendar", or the "CJC" for short.

Moses: Yes, Lord, that sounds very good. But can You explain to me how that CJC is going to work, so that I can then explain it to the people?

God Almighty: Well, basically instead of having you go out and look for every new moon to establish the start for every new month, here are a series of calculations so that you can calculate the approximate new moons in advance. So you don't ever have to worry about looking for real new moons. And when there will be the inevitable discrepancies between the real new moons, which some people might still want to go out and observe visually, and the dates you get from the calculations I am giving you, then be sure to always go by the results produced by these calculations I am giving you, and just ignore the real new moons.

Moses: But Lord, wouldn't it be a whole lot easier if You just made every month exactly 30 days long, and every year exactly 360 days long? Then we wouldn't need any calculations.

God Almighty: Well, that actually was My original intention. But I just couldn't get the moon to take exactly 30 days to go around the earth. And then I couldn't get the earth to take only 360 days in its journey around the sun. Getting those exact times for these two circuits is not as easy as you might think. But I am giving you some pretty good calculations for determining the approximate new moons in advance. I know these calculations are not perfect, but they are pretty close most of the time. Here, Moses, take a look at them.

Moses (looking at the calculations God has given him): Lord, what's this in these calculations about "leap years"? What is a "leap year"?

God Almighty: That was the only way I could get these cycles to stay in the correct seasons. A year in My CJC isn't actually a real year. In My CJC a year is always a few days shorter than a real year. I want every year to start in the spring. But with My CJC calculations, without these leap years, years would pretty quickly regress to starting in the winter, and then in the autumn and then in the summer, etc. To avoid that regression problem, I have designated some years to be "leap years".

In a leap year I add a 13th month to the year, to stop that regressing into the winter. In that way when you have a few years that fall behind the actual annual cycle, that 13th month in the leap year gets you a few days ahead of the actual annual cycle, and **then you can again afford to fall behind** for a couple of years, before having another leap year. You follow, Moses?

Moses: Not really, Lord. I am actually rather confused. Why aren't the years in Your CJC "real years"?

God Almighty: Well, a real year is actually a few hours longer than 365 days. But I couldn't get the lunar cycles to agree with 365+ days. So in My CJC I have a few years shorter than those 365+ days, followed by a leap year that is quite a bit longer than those 365+ days. In that way I can average it out, so that in the long run for every 19 years you almost get back into agreement with the astronomical cycles. The key is for you to always pick the right years in every 19-year period for when to have the seven leap years; otherwise you'll have some years starting in the wrong season.

Moses: Lord, how do we pick the right years to be leap years? Is there a specific sequence?

God Almighty: Well, yes and no. There is a specific sequence for leap years in every 19 years, but that sequence will shift ever so slightly as the centuries and then the millennia go by. But having to change the sequence of leap years every 500 years or so is probably far too complicated for your people to implement. So here's what I will do.

I will **now** give you a sequence for the leap years, which will result in about **12 years in every 19-year cycle starting in the winter.** And you just stick with that sequence. And then 3000 - 3500 years from now **almost all** of the years will start in the spring. I can see that around 3500 years from now My people are going to be very concerned with always starting the year correctly in the spring. And so by then **only the occasional years will start in the winter**. That should be good enough for them.

The good thing about this system is that **your people can just stick with that one sequence for all time**. They won't have to worry about when to switch to a different sequence ... because of an inevitable 5-day shift every 1000 years.

That unavoidable seasonal shift for the start of every year, by approximately 5 days for every 1000-year period is due to the fact that in My CJC 19 years are actually 2 hours 6 minutes and 26 seconds **longer** than 19 years in the earth's journeys around the sun.

So after 1000 years you'll have all years in every 19-year cycle starting almost **5 days later**, in relation to the spring equinox, than they did 1000 years earlier. And another 1000 years later all the years in a 19-year cycle will start another 5 days later. **In time some years would only start after summer has begun.**

That problem I am avoiding by right now starting 12 years in the winter. It will be almost perfect 3500 years from now. And if your people are worried about those 12 years starting in the winter, then tell them to show a little concern for My people 3500 years from now. It is for a good cause that I am at this time starting 12 out of every 19 years in the winter.

Moses: I have another question, Lord.

God Almighty: Yes Moses, what is it?

Moses: What are these "postponement rules" that you have listed here? What are they for?

God Almighty: Well, I realize that it would be a terrible hardship for your people if I ever made the Day of Atonement fall on a Friday or on a Sunday. And likewise, it would be too much for Me to expect your people to keep My Feast of Tabernacles with the First Holy Day falling on a Friday or on a Sunday. So I have arranged for some pretty nifty postponement rules so that you can always avoid such inconvenient situations.

Moses: I don't understand why it would be inconvenient to have the First Day of Tabernacles fall on a Sunday. What is the problem with that?

God Almighty: Well, Moses, I want your people to have a full day to prepare for that Holy Day. But when the day before that Holy Day is a weekly Sabbath Day, then they don't have time to prepare for the Holy Day. It would be too much for Me to expect them to prepare two days in advance of a Holy Day, right? So I have figured out these postponement rules to get around such terrible hardship situations.

Moses: Lord, do you also have a rule so that the First Holy Day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread never falls on a Friday or a Sunday? You know, to avoid the same "hardships" as with the First

Holy Day of the Feast of Tabernacles?

God Almighty: No, I couldn't fit a rule like that into My CJC, because then there wouldn't have been any days in the week left for starting My Feasts. So for the Feast of Unleavened Bread your people will just have to put up with the inconvenience of having either the First Day or the Seventh Day fall on a Friday or on a Sunday.

Moses: I have another question, Lord. When You have made it so that the Feast of Weeks always falls on a Sunday, right after a weekly Sabbath Day, doesn't that cause the same kind of inconvenience?

God Almighty: Yes, it does. But that situation was unavoidable. I couldn't design My whole plan just to fit into avoiding all possible inconvenient days for your people. But these postponement rules I am giving you do at least avoid some of those inconvenient situations.

Moses: Lord, my next question is: won't these postponements mean that some months will start a day or two later than the actual new moon days? And then the connection to the new moons will be lost? Will that not be a problem?

God Almighty: That won't be a problem because I am not really all that concerned with being tied to the actual lunar cycles. Look, if I am willing to start some years in the winter, why should I be picky about the months having to be tied to the new moons? You follow?

As long as you are **more or less** in general agreement with the lunar months, with only occasional small discrepancies, that's fine with Me. My concern is that **I don't impose any unnecessary hardships on your people**, like not giving them a full preparation day before Atonement or before Tabernacles. If I make things more convenient for your people, Moses, I am hoping that they will be more willing to obey Me. You follow?

Moses: Yes, Lord, I think I understand Your thinking here. But the people are stubborn and rebellious, and I don't think that these concessions will change their rebellious natures in any way. They already rebelled against You the day after You brought us through the Red Sea. So I don't think that they are willing to change. They just don't have the heart to fear You, and I believe that concessions to avoid some inconveniences will not change that.

God Almighty: I know that. But I will try as much as possible to avoid imposing any unnecessary hardships on them. So these postponement rules are important to memorize, and to always apply when specific conditions are met. Any other questions, Moses?

Moses: Yes, Lord. I want to see if I understand this correctly. First we are to calculate very precisely when all the approximate new moon conjunctions will occur. Once we have accurately calculated the dates for those approximate conjunctions, then we are to apply the rules for 1-day or 2-day postponements to those calculated results. So with those postponements You are telling us to move either one or two days away from the meticulously calculated approximate dates. So my question is: why do we need such meticulous calculations in the first place, when we then promptly reject the results of those calculations, by postponing to different dates?

Isn't there a simpler way to do this? All Your other laws and statutes and judgments and commandments are **so easy** and straight-forward **to understand**. But these calendar calculations are so complex ... why, I myself am having a hard time understanding them. And I think that almost nobody amongst our people is going to understand them. **Is there really a problem with us going out and looking visually for each new moon, like we have always done until now?**

God Almighty: That's really too simplistic. What if I decide to give you a cloudy sky on the day of the new moon? What are you going to do then with your visual observations? These nifty calculations I am giving you take care of such situations.

Moses: Yes, Lord, whatever You want us to do, I will teach the people to do. But may I ask You some questions about these calculations?

God Almighty: Sure, go ahead.

Moses: I see that You have 24 hours in every full day. And I see that You are dividing every hour into 1080 halakim (i.e. "parts").

But **we haven't yet learned how to multiply large numbers**.

So when Your calculations tell us that "a 19-year cycle exceeds a full number of weeks by 2 days and 16 hours and 595 halakim", then we simply don't have the ability to turn that whole period of time into halakim for calculation purposes. We don't have pens and paper, and we don't have calculators and computers to perform complex multiplications and divisions like that.

You, Lord, know that 2 days plus 16 hours plus 595 halakim are equal to **69,715 halakim**. But **we don't know that**, because such complex multiplications and divisions are extremely difficult for us to work out, without access to pens and paper. Simple additions and subtractions are okay, but multiplying two large numbers by one another, or performing complex divisions with very large numbers ... that's totally beyond our present abilities.

We don't yet have any **efficient positional numbering system**, because the people in India will only invent that about 1000 years from now. **We still express all numbers either with the 22 letters in our alphabet, or we write out the names of such large numbers in full.** And that makes it extremely difficult to do calculations with large numbers like 69,715. If only we today had the positional decimal numbering system that people in India will invent about 1000 years from now ... that would already make all these calculations a lot easier.

And so, Lord, I don't think that we'll be able to cope with multiplying and then dividing numbers in the magnitude of 69,715, and then going into the hundreds of thousands. These calculations You are giving us are too complex for us to perform on our clay tablets at this present time. **Isn't there an easier way** for us to establish Your CJC?

[**Comment**: In the Roman numbering system, which was invented many centuries after Moses, and which was easier to use than the Hebrew system (the Roman system was positional and also decimal), if you wanted to multiply **4,723 by 497** you had to **multiply "IVMVIICXXIII" by "IVCXCVII"**. It was possible, but a complex process. Would you care to tackle that multiplication **using nothing but Roman numerals**? Good luck to you. Can you grasp the difficulty of trying to multiply and to divide such large numbers in a system where letters are **the only available symbols** for expressing large numbers in complex arithmetic calculations?

Yes, those calculations are possible, but what level of mathematical education does someone have to possess in order to repeatedly make such complex multiplications and divisions? And doing such calculations with Roman numerals is assuredly still easier than doing those same calculations with letters of the Hebrew alphabet.]

God Almighty: Well, you are going to have to manage somehow. And I don't want you to rely on visually looking for the new moons, because that is just too simple.

[**Comment**: We take our numbering system for granted. We have a positional numbering system, where every symbol's value is determined by **its position within the whole number**. Thus: "5" means "5" when used on its own. But in the context of "5,375,954" one "5" means "5 **million**", and one "5" means "5 **thousand**", and the third "5" means "5 **tens**", i.e. 50. That is a very efficient system. In our system the value of the digit "5" depends on its position in the greater context of the whole number.

To us this is **obvious** and self-evident. That is the power of a positional numbering system. And such a positional system absolutely requires the existence of a symbol to express "zero" as a placeholder. **It requires the "0"**. But ancient numbering systems based on letters of the alphabet **didn't have a symbol for "zero"**, because their systems didn't have a need for "0". And so none of the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet expressed the numeric value of "zero".

In ancient Hebrew, the letter "aleph" represented "1", and "jod" represented "10", and "kaph" represented "20", and "lamed" represented "30" ... and "qoph" represented "100", and "resh" represented "200", and "tau" represented "400", to list just a few values. There was no letter for any number greater than 400. But they did have the written-out word "eleph", which means the number "1000".

In the OT Hebrew text these values for the letters are not used. Rather, in the Hebrew text the names of numbers are always written out in full. Thus, when Genesis 12:4 tells us that Abram was "seventy and five years old", then the Hebrew text does **not** say that Abram was "**75 years old**". It doesn't use the Hebrew characters that would represent "75". Rather, the Hebrew text **spells out the words** for "**five and seventy**". And that is the case throughout the Hebrew text of the Old Testament. However ... at no point does the Hebrew text ever present us with any calculations that involve multiplication and division of very large numbers. The closest we get is that we have **some additions of large numbers** (e.g. "603,550" with the numbering of the tribes, see Numbers 1:46).

The fact is that with complex calculations (i.e. large numbers to multiply and divide) it would be extremely challenging to work with whole words for the numbers. **With performing calculations the Hebrews would have been forced to resort to using the numeric values attached to the letters of their alphabet**.

It was for the explicit purpose of enabling them to do numeric calculations, that they assigned numeric values to all the letters in their alphabet in the first place. And any calendar calculations in the days of Moses would of necessity have had to be performed by using letters with specific numeric values attached to each letter.

So, for example: the Hebrew letters for the number "**210**" are "**resh yod**" (i.e. **RJ** in our alphabet). And the Hebrew letters for the number "**460**" are "**tau samech**" (i.e. **TS** in our alphabet).

Now for us it is a fairly easy process to multiply **210** * **460** = 96,600. But in a Hebrew calculation, where the symbols "0-9" didn't yet exist, **multiplying RJ * TS** is way more complicated. Without a positional numbering system it becomes quite challenging to multiply symbols RJ by symbols TS.

Ancient Hebrew didn't have a "zero" as a placeholder within a number, because that written numbering system wasn't a positional decimal system. The system we today use and take for granted absolutely demands the existence of a "0" as a placeholder within numbers; but that system was only invented many, many centuries after the time of Moses.

This is a big subject which most of us have never thought about. To get a better understanding of this, you might want to look up articles on the internet that deal with "numeral systems". For example, Encyclopedia Britannica has a pretty good article on this subject. And there are others.

The point is: the multiplications and divisions of large numbers, **which are needed for the Jewish Calendar calculations,** were extremely difficult to perform at the time of Moses with the only numbering system that was available to Moses.

None of the ministers who claim that God supposedly gave these calculations for the CJC to Moses have ever considered the enormous challenges that those calculations would have presented to people at the time of Moses.

Consider that **over 95% of church members today** would not be able to correctly calculate (without computers and without electronic calculators) the molad of Tishri for any specific year ... even with the benefit of the **0-9 symbols** for numeric values, and the benefit of **a positional numbering system**. So how much more difficult would that have been over 3000 years ago, and without the benefit of the symbols "0-9"?

This is in addition to, and completely separate from, the fact that God **could not possibly have given Moses any comparative data** that applies to the Roman Julian calendar. The people who claim that God gave those calculations to Moses **either** don't have any idea exactly what sort of data is involved in the calculation of the Jewish calendar, **or** they are deliberately lying.]

Moses: I have another question, Lord. I see that You are telling us to make two separate calculations. First You are telling us how to calculate the Day of the Week for the molad of Tishri (i.e. from Sunday - Saturday). And then in a completely separate calculation You are telling us how to calculate on which day in the Roman Julian Calendar months of September or October Tishri 1 is supposed to fall (i.e. anywhere from September 1 - October 31). And then You tell us that for both of these independent calculations the number of halakim in the final results must be the same ... or there is a mistake in one or both calculations. And then we have to start all over and do those complex calculations again ... until we reach results where the number of halakim in both results agree.

My question is: **why** do they have to agree? Is it really a problem if in the results the number of halakim differ by two or three halakim (i.e. 3 halakim are exactly **10 seconds**)? I mean, if after that we are then going to postpone by one or two days with those postponement rules, **what is the problem** with the results differing by a few seconds?

God Almighty: The problem is that if your two results differ even by one single halak, it means that you have got the wrong day. Requiring the number of halakim in both calculations to be equal is a built-in safety check to confirm that you have got the correct day. The numbers of halakim themselves in these calculations are mostly not too important, as long as those numbers agree for both calculations. And at another time I will tell you more about the Roman Julian Calendar, Moses. But this should do for now. And now you need to get down to your people, because they have made themselves a golden calf, and I am considering blotting them all out.

Moses: Yes, Lord. (And Moses starts his descent from the mountain.)

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Well, hopefully we can all see even more clearly **the utter absurdity** for the claim that God supposedly gave the Jewish Calendar Calculations to Moses, and that they therefore are supposedly a part of "the oracles of God".

The only people on earth who claim that God gave these calculations to Moses are people who are willingly ignorant of the facts, and who will defend the use of that flawed calendar in spite of

God's clearly stated hatred for that calendar (see Isaiah 1:14).

We should recognize that **it is impossible on many different levels** for God to have originated those slightly flawed calculations, whose only purpose is to establish a Julian (later adapted to Gregorian) Calendar date for Tishri 1. **They serve no other purpose.** And without the existence of the Julian Calendar those calculations could not possibly exist.

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