

February 2000

Frank W. Nelte

THE HEART OF THE MATTER CONCERNING JOHN RITENBAUGH'S CALENDAR SERMONS

Dear John,

About a week ago I responded to the two calendar sermons you had given on January 1 and January 8. My response was obviously rather long, at close to 60 pages. With such a lengthy article it is easy for the key points to be overlooked. I have also heard from people who feel your sermons made a good case for retaining the Jewish calendar. Since I obviously at this point in time don't believe that this is correct, I feel that it would be helpful to highlight the main points that apply to your defense of the present Jewish calendar. Also, since I mailed out my response to your two sermons, you have on February 5 given another sermon about the calendar, titled " Faith, Hope, and the Worship of God -- A Calendar Application". I will listen to that sermon later this week.

I am also mindful of your admonition in the Bible Study at our home on January 25, when you clearly said: "BETTER CHECK UP ON US (ministers) to see IF we are saying what our Father in heaven is saying". That is precisely the admonition I am trying to follow here. So for the sake of clarity this article will focus on the main issues involved. Here are what I believe are the main points regarding your defence of the present Jewish calendar.

1) YOUR FOUNDATION that "there is no calendar in the Bible" IS WRONG! You have used this foundation to justify IGNORING ALL BIBLICAL INSTRUCTIONS that apply to the calendar. In this approach you clearly disagree with all three of the men you have appealed to for authority, Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong as "the apostle", Kenneth Herrmann as "the mathematician and astronomer", and Dr. Hoeh as "the theologian". All three of these men have in their writings acknowledged at least SOME of the biblical requirements for a calendar. But you have deliberately ignored ALL biblical requirements.

2) You overlook that both, THE APOSTLE (i.e. Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong) and THE MATHEMATICIAN (i.e. Kenneth Herrmann) based their initial unconditional support for the present Jewish calendar on FALSELY ASSUMED PREMISES! They both wrongly assumed that the present Jewish calendar actually complies with all biblical requirements for a calendar. Regrettably, once these assumed premises were understood to be in error, they nevertheless continued to hold fast to the decisions that had been built on these wrong premises. This meant that from then onwards (i.e. from 1969 onwards) they continued to hold fast to the present Jewish calendar without any kind of foundation at all! It became a "blind faith" issue.

3) In claiming that Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's work was "blessed", YOU OVERLOOK that the blessings went ONLY UNTIL 1968! From 1969 onwards until Mr. Armstrong's death in 1986 "the Work" was not really blessed at all, if we are really going to be honest about this. From then on there were endless problems with rebellion and strife, and people attacking the Church, and the State of California putting a very heavy trial on the Church, and people taking advantage of Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong and managing to deceive Mr. Armstrong about their true motives, etc. For a time he was a virtual hostage in his home in Arizona. I wonder if the total number of those who are today still faithful to the calling of God is actually any greater than it was back in 1968/1969? I don't really believe that the Church today, taking all of the splinter-groups together, is in any way ahead of where the Church was in 1968/1969. Can YOU show me where we today are ahead when compared to 1969? Can you LIST the blessings that God poured out on Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong AFTER 1969? Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong himself clearly KNEW that God had withdrawn His blessings from then onwards (the 30% growth p.a. for 35 years).

4) You have MISINTERPRETED the expression "the logion of God" (the oracles of God), and then you have staked EVERYTHING on this wrong interpretation of this phrase in Romans chapter 3. You acknowledge that "logion" is the diminutive of the Greek word "logos". It follows that whatever the expression "THE LOGOS OF GOD" (i.e. the Word of God) means, the expression "THE LOGION OF GOD" (i.e. the oracles of God) can only refer to A PART OF, or A SCALED-DOWN VERSION OF "the logos of God"; that is what "a diminutive" is! You can NEVER make "the diminutive" LARGER than the parent-word, supposedly including MORE than the parent-word. Your claim that "the logion of God" includes things (i.e. the present Jewish calendar) that are NOT recorded in the Bible (i.e. in "the logos of God") is totally unjustified and without proof of any kind.

5) YOU IGNORE THE PRINCIPLE of "TRY the spirits whether they be of God", by refusing to test the present Jewish calendar against the calendar requirements found in the Bible.

6) Your claim that the calendar is "a biblical faith issue" CONTRADICTS your own statement that faith must be based on the Bible "AND NOTHING ELSE"! You are urging God's people to have faith in something that is NOT found in the Bible (the present Jewish calendar) rather than to have faith in what IS found in the Bible (biblical requirements for a correct calendar). That is not good.

7) THE VERY FIRST THING that has to be done in this question of the calendar is:

Let's examine what THE BIBLE tells us about a calendar! If there ARE biblical statements that will impose specific restraints on the calendar, then such statements MUST be examined before ANY calendar (Jewish or otherwise) is even looked at!

Any other approach places human reasoning and human traditions ahead of God's Word!

Kenneth Herrmann spelled out very clearly in his articles how the Bible views a day, a week, a month and a year, and when the Bible requires a year to start. Even as late as 1974 (note) the Church published a reprint article entitled "GOD'S SACRED CALENDAR" (article number 432 and also 7404, copyright dates of 1960, 1972, 1974) which stated the following on page 1, the last paragraph in column 2:

"A new year is to begin IN THE SPRING."

8) NONE of the Scriptures you have used in your sermons actually speak about the calendar, and what GOD actually expects a calendar to look like. All the Scriptures you have presented are nothing more than padding to make the subject look bigger, like a lady's permed hair when compared to what it looks like after the lady has been swimming and diving in a pool. When all your Scriptures are examined with a view to the calendar, it is obvious that "there is really no body and no substance to it".

9) Your claim that "there are not enough rules in the Bible to establish a calendar" is simply not correct! You tell us WHAT RULES ARE STILL MISSING? You tell us WHY God would possibly give us SOME rules for a calendar in the Bible, while at the same time OMITTING OTHER rules? Is God trying to create confusion in supposedly doing this? However, your reference to "not ENOUGH rules" shows that you DO understand that there are SOME rules in the Bible. Yet you have refused to examine even these.

10) Tell us WHY you have tried to present the calendar process as MORE COMPLICATED than it really is, when in the 1950's Kenneth Herrmann presented the same process IN VERY SIMPLE TERMS in his articles, concluding his description with the statement that this process is "EASY TO FOLLOW"?

11) The fact that GOD has nowhere, neither IN the Bible nor OUTSIDE OF the Bible, given anyone specific "AUTHORITY" to establish a calendar shows quite clearly that GOD does not consider the calendar to be "an authority issue"! It is presumptuous to attribute "GOD'S AUTHORITY" to anything that is not found in the Bible. It is not right for us "to reason" our way into some people supposedly "having authority given to them by God". The Catholic Church reasons that way about the Pope, but we are not supposed to do that.

12) It is not really a matter of "the Jews having made some mistakes in their past handling of the calendar". It is actually a case of the Jews TOTALLY IGNORING BIBLICAL INSTRUCTIONS for the calendar. This is clearly a case of "we ought to obey God rather than men".

13) YOU HAVE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE JEWS DON'T OBEY GOD WHEN IT COMES TO THE CALENDAR! Your statement about "the Jews having made SOME MISTAKES in their past handling of the calendar" is a clear admission that the Jews aren't doing it right, otherwise you would not have made this concession. Why do you insist on following those who, by your own admission, don't obey God in the way they have constructed their calendar?

The present Jewish calendar has been fixed since about 359 AD. It hasn't been modified in major ways since then. So your reference to "some mistakes in their PAST handling of the calendar" is an acknowledgement that some things were CHANGED between the time of the early Church in the first century AD and the time of Hillel II in the fourth century AD. Those changes were made after Christ's ministry and after the apostles had all died.

14) We need to treat "tampering with BIBLICAL REQUIREMENTS for the calendar" in exactly the same way we treat "tampering with the inspired text of the Old Testament and the New Testament"! If we find out that a text in the New Testament has been corrupted (e.g. 1 John 5:7-8), THEN WE SIMPLY DON'T ACCEPT THAT CORRUPTION! If we find that a text in the Old Testament has been corrupted (e.g. some Jewish scribe changing "Feast of Unleavened Bread" to read "Passover" in Deuteronomy 16), THEN WE ALSO DON'T ACCEPT THAT CORRUPTION! Likewise, if we find that biblical instructions for the calendar have been ignored by the Jewish calendar, then we likewise DON'T ACCEPT THAT CORRUPTION!

15) Your claim that the calendar is "a sovereignty issue" is very artificial and not in any way supported by the Bible! It is one of those very nebulous claims anyone can make without feeling a need to actually prove it. The ten commandments are "a sovereignty issue", tithing can be "a sovereignty issue", baptism is "a sovereignty issue", keeping God's Feasts and Holy Days is "a sovereignty issue", because ALL OF THESE are clearly commanded in the Bible! But things that are not even MENTIONED in the Bible, let alone "commanded" (i.e. the JEWISH calendar) are certainly NOT "a sovereignty issue"! The calendar which is referred to in the Bible is NOT the present Jewish calendar at all.

The purpose of your claim that it is "a sovereignty issue" is TO DO AWAY WITH THE NEED FOR PROOF! But other "sovereignty issues" don't do away with the need for biblical proof that they are indeed "sovereignty issues", so WHY should we accept that the present Jewish calendar is "a sovereignty issue" without being given any biblical proof to support this claim?

16) Your statement, that God turned away from the Jews and turned to the Greeks after they (the Jews) had officially rejected the New Testament in 90 AD at a little town called Jebneh in Judea, has the logical conclusion that THEREFORE God ALSO did not turn to them for devising a calendar at some point after 90 AD! You yourself said: "God turned to somebody else." By the time the present Jewish calendar was devised God had, based on the evidence of your own words, already turned AWAY from the Jews for a long time. The present Jewish calendar was developed at some point between 150 AD and 358 AD, long after God had turned away from the Jews. So let's be consistent: IF God after 90 AD turned away from

the Jews, THEN God didn't look to them to devise ANYTHING for His people after 90 AD.

17) I believe that it is extremely presumptuous, as well as highly dangerous, to claim that ANYTHING is "AN ATTACHMENT TO THE OLD TESTAMENT!" I do not believe that God permits us to "reason out" attachments to HIS Word! On top of that, the way the present Jewish calendar simply IGNORES biblical requirements makes that statement AN INSULT to the Word of God!

Further, this line of reasoning claims that "the logion of God" is AN ATTACHMENT to "the logos of God". But that is wrong. "The logion of God" must be "a small part of the logos of God", not "an attachment to it". So your claims are in conflict with one another; first you claim that the present Jewish calendar is "the logion of God" (meaning A PART OF the logos of God), and now you claim that it is "an attachment" to the logos of God, therefore NOT a part of it. This lacks consistency.

18) You are working from a wrong premise regarding how God corrects wrong teachings in the Church. God only corrects those areas where we are asking and seeking and knocking. There is no evidence that Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong EVER looked into the present Jewish calendar after his 1940 study which resulted in the WRONG date being chosen for Pentecost. Therefore God simply wasn't going to correct something where the Church wasn't looking for correction or guidance. Remember Joshua and the Gibeonites.

19) The evidence of the 1969 letter in your possession, written by Kenneth Herrmann, makes quite clear that those in the know TOTALLY CHANGED THEIR APPROACH TO DEFENDING THE PRESENT JEWISH CALENDAR FROM 1969 ONWARDS! THEY HAD SOMETHING THEY WISHED TO HIDE!

And it is a fact that God stopped blessing the Church with 30% p.a. growth from that time onwards. I see a clear connection between these things.

20) YOU KNOW THE PRESENT JEWISH CALENDAR IS SOMETIMES A FULL MONTH TOO EARLY! This knowledge is evident from the fact that you quoted the following statement from Kenneth Herrmann's letter:

"The question of whether God's Church might just be keeping God's Holy Days a day or two or a month late is not just the proper question."

The fact that you are trying to dismiss questions about the present Jewish calendar sometimes being a full month out of step, shows that you DO understand that this is actually true! So again you do have the right knowledge! I don't believe that GOD wants us to ignore such violations of His instructions.

21) It is not right to compare the desire to be as accurate as possible to "it's no different from the addictive power of any other sin", implying that it is A SIN to be accurate! But this statement is also A CLEAR ADMISSION that you know that the present Jewish calendar is certainly "NOT ACCURATE"!

It is also not logical in this regard: the present Jewish calendar itself involves considerable "mathematical technicalities"; it claims to accurately calculate the new moons to the nearest three-and-one-third seconds, which it doesn't do at all. However, you don't consider THAT "a sin", since you fully endorse it. But if someone else employs exactly the same "mathematical technicalities" to expose the errors in the present Jewish calendar, then THAT is supposedly "an addictive sin". That seems like a double standard to me.

22) You said: "Everything, including the sacrifices, the offering of the incense, all of those things, including the calendar, they have never been rescinded." But you yourself also believe that "the sacrifices and the offerings of incense" ARE NOT APPLICABLE TO US TODAY! You don't bring animal

sacrifices today, do you? So you were talking about things that have no application in this present age. How is this supposed to prove that the present Jewish calendar, which was devised well after God turned away from the Jews in 90 AD, is supposedly applicable to God's people today?

23) There is no evidence of any kind that after 1969 God "blessed" Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong or Kenneth Herrmann or Dr. Hoeh (the men you referred to in your sermon) or "the Work" as a whole any more than people who have today rejected the present Jewish calendar. Any "blessings" on the Church after 1969 are open to debate. It is highly questionable that the Church TODAY, while still holding to the present Jewish calendar, is any more blessed than was the Church before 1969, before the end of the period during which the Church had supported the Jewish calendar "in ignorance". We certainly are far more scattered today than we were in 1969, in spite of holding fast to the present Jewish calendar.

If we are REALLY going to be honest, then we'll have to admit that since 1969 "WE HAVE SOWN MUCH AND BROUGHT IN LITTLE", and that God tells us to "CONSIDER YOUR WAYS" (see Haggai 1:5-7).

So exactly how has the Jewish calendar helped us to stay unified? And what "blessings" have really accrued from adhering to the present Jewish calendar? None!

24) YOU KNOW FULL WELL THAT THE JEWISH CALENDAR WAS IN FACT THE SAME AS THE BABYLONIAN CALENDAR! This is evident from your statements:

"Who do you think revealed the calendar to the Babylonians? Well, I think we've got a pretty good indication that it was Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego who revealed it first to the Babylonians and the Babylonians said, Hey this is a better calendar than we have. And so it became their calendar, too."

Your claim that the Babylonians were talked into a new calendar by Daniel and his friends is absurd. The records that I have for the Babylonian calendar go back to before the birth of Daniel. So you now KNOW that the Jewish calendar in New Testament times was no different from the one the Babylonians had been using since before the birth of Daniel. But the Babylonian calendar has NEVER included the Jewish postponement rules, and neither was it based on some "divine revelation". Yet it was the same as the calendar used by the Jews in the first century AD.

TODAY'S JEWISH CALENDAR is different from the Babylonian calendar. It has been "modified" by the addition of the postponement rules and by the inflexible fixing of the first month as always being 177 days before the seventh month and by using "molads".

25) You yourself don't really believe what you said in the following statement:

"In other words, the tribe of Judah, Judah as a tribe, has been given that authority by God to be the chief administrator of His law."

You have NEVER believed that you should look to THE JEWS to tell you how to apply all ten of the ten commandments (that's the main part of "His Law", right?) in your life. You have never looked to the Jews to tell you how God's laws require you to treat your wife, your children, your neighbours, etc.. The Jews have not been given ANY AUTHORITY to administer God's laws AT ALL! What you said was just an empty statement, designed to stack the deck in favour of the Jewish calendar.

26) It was totally WRONG for you to compare our conscience problems with the present Jewish calendar with Abraham's conscience problem, with the explicit intent that we realize that our conscience problems

are very insignificant by comparison! This was aimed at dulling our consciences towards the fact that the present Jewish calendar actually blatantly violates clear biblical requirements. You should not have done this.

However, your statements make quite clear that YOU UNDERSTAND FULL WELL that many people will have real "conscience problems" with the present Jewish calendar. This shows again that you clearly realize that it violates biblical instructions, and that these violations are at the root of our "conscience problems" with the present Jewish calendar.

27) You have also at times made statements to the effect that postponements are an absolute necessity for any calendar that is going to be harmonized with what is going on in the heavens.

This is simply not true!

Several years ago there was one man in particular, "with a Church of God affiliation", who tried his utmost to convince people that there is supposedly a physical or mathematical reason for postponements.

But this is simply not true! A simple example should help to illustrate this. Here are the facts for 2 consecutive 19-year cycles:

A) The Jewish 19-year cycle from 1978 - 1996 had 9 years with no postponements, 9 years with 1-day postponements and 1 year with a 2-day postponement. Thus in that 19-year cycle there were 11 days of postponements.

B) The Jewish 19-year cycle from 1997 - 2015 will have 9 years with no postponements, 7 years with 1-day postponements and 3 years with 2-day postponements. Thus in that 19-year cycle there will be 13 days of postponements.

C) After these two cycles from 1978 - 2015 there will have been 24 days of postponements in the Jewish calendar. Yet those 24 days of postponements will have had NO EFFECT WHATSOEVER upon the subsequent years! The molad of Tishri for the year 2016 (after these two 19-year cycles) will be on Saturday, October 1st at 2:40:13 p.m.. When you have a calendar TOTALLY WITHOUT ANY POSTPONEMENTS, but still based completely on the calculated Jewish molads, then the molad of Tishri for the year 2016 will ALSO be Saturday, October 1st at 2:40:13 p.m..

Postponements have no influence at all on "keeping what's going on in the heavens harmonized"! This can be proved over and over and over and over again! Postponements NEVER have any effect on "what's going on in the heavens". It is IMPOSSIBLE for the postponements of the Jewish calendar to have any effect on "what's going on in the heavens". This is for the simple reason that postponements are NOT a part of the actual calendar calculations; they therefore cannot have any effect on the calculations. Postponements are simply "attached to" the date arrived at by those calculations, but THEY ARE IMMEDIATELY DROPPED AGAIN when we proceed to calculate the date of the molad for the following year. So postponements NEVER have an effect on the actual calculations of the supposed new moon conjunctions (the molads). And they certainly don't keep things "harmonized" up in the heavens! The facts CLEARLY disprove this claim.

However, what your comments about postponements show is that you are trying to find a SCIENTIFIC JUSTIFICATION for these postponement rules of the present Jewish calendar. This proves that you understand that the Jewish justifications for these postponement rules (which is that it would be a hardship to have Atonement on a Sunday, etc.) ARE NOT VALID, and therefore you are looking for a "scientific justification" for these postponement rules. The Jews themselves don't really try to find

"scientific justifications" for these rules, because any such attempts at scientific justifications are easy to disprove. They generally acknowledge quite freely that these rules only serve traditional requirements.

So your claim about the postponement rules is simply not true! The Jewish calendar DOES drift away from the seasons to the tune of 9 days for every 2000 years, and it is impossible for "postponements" to rectify this drifting away.

28) It took Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong A FULL HALF OF HIS LIFE, 47 years, from 1927 to 1974, before he finally came to a correct understanding of when Pentecost is to be observed.

AND YOU, JOHN, STILL DON'T UNDERSTAND THIS CORRECTLY!

In years when the Passover day and the Seventh Day of Unleavened Bread are Saturdays, YOU start your counting for Pentecost from the Sunday AFTER the 7 Days of Unleavened Bread! THIS IS WRONG!

The main purpose for starting the count towards Pentecost from a specific Sunday is:

THAT SUNDAY REPRESENTS WHEN CHRIST'S SACRIFICE WAS ACCEPTED BY GOD THE FATHER!

And that acceptance by the Father must be within a 7-day period following the Passover (when Christ died). It must always be on one of those 7 days after the Passover.

Furthermore, THE DAY OF THE WEEK on which the Father would accept Christ's sacrifice was always fixed to be THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK! This is because Christ was slain "from the foundation of the world", His sacrifice covering all human beings from the entire "week" that would follow, the 7000 years for humanity to be tested by God. However, that first day of the week would wander THROUGHOUT THE SEVEN DAYS OF UNLEAVENED BREAD, showing Christ's sacrifice covered the entire 7000 years of humanity that would be required by God to "deleaven their lives". In plain language: that Sunday could be the 1st or 2nd or 3rd or 4th or 5th or 6th or 7th Day of Unleavened Bread.

But it could never be "THE 8TH DAY", the day after the Seventh Day of Unleavened Bread.

Furthermore, it doesn't make sense for God to want a specific ceremony to take place DURING the Days of Unleavened Bread MOST OF THE TIME, but SOMETIMES God would want that same ceremony to take place ONE DAY OUTSIDE OF the Days of Unleavened Bread. That approach by God would indicate that the ceremony (i.e. the wave offering) really has nothing to do with the Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread, that it is a mere coincidence that "most of the time" it just happens to fall right into the Days of Unleavened Bread. I could elaborate further.

Anyway, it took the Church in this age 47 years to come to correctly count Pentecost. And YOU have now led some people AWAY FROM THIS CORRECT WAY OF COUNTING!

In 1994 you kept Pentecost one week later than the rest of God's Church today.

In 2001 you are scheduled to also keep Pentecost one week later.

In 2005 you are scheduled to also keep Pentecost one week later.

In 2008 you are scheduled to also keep Pentecost one week later.

So in the next 9 years (including this current year) you are planning to observe Pentecost ONE WEEK LATER THAN THE BIBLE INSTRUCTS ON THREE DIFFERENT OCCASIONS!

Does that indicate that you really have God's guidance in calendar matters, or are you in EXACTLY THE SAME SITUATION that Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong was in when he determined HIS WAY of "counting from ..."? In that matter Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong didn't really let the Bible tell him how to count (for 47 years that is); no, he read his own meaning into Leviticus 23:15 and then he INTERPRETED every other verse to fit in with his own ideas about "counting from ...".

You have done EXACTLY the same thing, in reading a 1-month gap into the account in Joshua 5:10-11, claiming that they simply must have kept a second month Passover in that chapter. You reason your way into a second month Passover in Joshua 5, even though THE BIBLE does not even give the vaguest of hints that this could be a second month Passover. You also reason about other Scriptures to make them fit your way of counting for Pentecost. THE REASON is that you simply don't want to accept what Joshua 5:11 states so very plainly:

"And they did eat of the old corn of the land ON THE MORROW AFTER THE PASSOVER, unleavened cakes, and parched corn in the selfsame day." (Joshua 5:11)

Coupled with Leviticus 23:14 this means that YOUR WAY OF COUNTING FROM THE SUNDAY AFTER THE SEVENTH DAY OF UNLEAVENED BREAD IS WRONG!

This is because YOU feel that if the Passover day is a Saturday, then you CANNOT have the wave offering on the next day, the First Day of Unleavened Bread. But Joshua 5:10-11 shows that a First Day of Unleavened Bread can indeed be the day of the wave offering. Consider this: WHY would God possibly want the wave offering to take place on the 2nd and 3rd and 4th and 5th and 6th and 7th Days of Unleavened Bread, BUT NEVER ON THE 1ST DAY? Rather than the 1st Day of Unleavened Bread God would want it to be THE DAY AFTER the 7th Day of Unleavened Bread. WHY?

So for 3 of the next 9 years you are scheduled to keep one of God's Feasts, the Feast of Pentecost, exactly SEVEN DAYS LATE.

29) Consider YOUR approach to changing Pentecost:

A) From 1927 - 1939 Mr. Armstrong kept it on Sivan 6. This was wrong!

B) From 1940 - 1973 Mr. Armstrong kept it on a Monday. This was also wrong, and if anything MORE SO! Sivan 6 is at least sometimes on a Sunday, the correct day; but a Monday Pentecost is NEVER on the correct day.

C) In 1974 TWO corrections were made: the observance of Pentecost was changed to a Sunday, and the starting date for the counting, when the 1st Day of Unleavened Bread is a Sunday, was changed to start the count from that 1st Day of Unleavened Bread. Finally we had Pentecost correct.

30) In your sermon YOU said:

"Now this whole issue is A QUESTION OF GOVERNMENT, whether God is capable of ruling, whether God can intervene in the affairs of His people to correct their errors. So can we have faith in God's faithfulness? Did God correct the leadership of the Worldwide Church of God regarding Pentecost? He did, didn't He? But, He had 50 years to correct the calendar while there was an apostle alive, and He did nothing! That ought to tell us something. So, what has God shown us in the way of a calendar that He is

pleased to accept?"

Yet YOU chose to change Pentecost, after having said that GOD corrected the leadership of the Worldwide Church of God in this regard. What about:

"God had 50 years to correct this wrong way of counting Pentecost (i.e. YOU feel it is being counted wrong when the 1st Day of Unleavened Bread is a Sunday!) WHILE THERE WAS AN APOSTLE ALIVE AND HE DID NOTHING! THAT OUGHT TO TELL US SOMETHING!"

John, if your way of counting is right, do you know what this means? It would mean that Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong NEVER IN HIS ENTIRE LIFE GOT THE COUNTING OF PENTECOST RIGHT! He either had Sivan 6 or he had a Monday or he had a Sunday that was sometimes one week too early, but he just NEVER had it right!

If you are right, THEN God didn't really correct "the leadership of the Worldwide Church of God regarding Pentecost". If we didn't CONSISTENTLY get it right every year, then it wasn't really corrected by God, then it was no better than Sivan 6, which sometimes also happens to be the correct day (when Sivan 6 is a Sunday). But Monday NEVER was the correct day at any time!

On what authority did you change Pentecost, John? To tell yourself that you didn't really change the calendar in the process is nothing more than A GAME IN YOUR MIND! Do you understand this?

The bottom line with your change is that you keep Pentecost (sometimes) SEVEN DAYS LATER IN THE YEAR!

You changed Pentecost because you believe THE BIBLE tells you to count your way. Someone with your line of reasoning would argue about there having been an apostle for 50 years and God having done nothing. To such a person that would be proof enough that your change is wrong.[I don't accept that line of reasoning. I reject your way of counting because THE BIBLE shows that it is wrong, not because there was an apostle for 50 years.] Yet you would defend your way of counting by an appeal to THE BIBLE telling you to count that way, rejecting the other person's appeal to an apostle being around for 50 years.

But when it comes to the calendar as a whole, you are the one who rejects appeals to the Bible, to clear biblical instructions for the calendar. Instead you now appeal to the apostle and his 50 years of leadership.

So when YOU believe you see a need to change something from the way it was done under the apostle's leadership, THEN you appeal to the Bible coming ahead of the apostle. But when someone else also appeals to the Bible as the reason for something needing to be changed, then you ignore that appeal to the Bible and appeal to the apostle instead, accepting the line of reasoning that you earlier rejected.

That is not really consistent.

This may seem like very strong speaking. But it is no stronger than the way you yourself have spoken in all your calendar sermons thus far. Recall your statement that those who strive to be exact have succumbed to "THE ADDICTIVE POWER OF SIN". I don't mean to be down on you, because when you defend the present Jewish calendar, you are basically speaking for ALL the major splits of the Church of God at this point in time. But I believe we need to face up to the facts realistically.

Well, this is a summary of the basic points that I believe apply to your stand on the calendar question.

From the things you have said in your sermons it is quite clear that YOU KNOW:

- A) the biblical requirements for a calendar
- B) that the present Jewish calendar does not really meet these requirements
- C) that the present Jewish calendar is out of step with the new moons
- D) that it is sometimes one month out of step with biblical requirements
- E) that at the time of Christ the Jews had the Babylonian calendar
- F) that the present Jewish calendar presents conscience problems for many of God's people
- G) that the Jewish justifications for the postponement rules are invalid.

Please consider all these things.

Frank W. Nelte