

The Essentials of God's Calendar

Most members of the Church of God have simply accepted the calendar we use because we have always used it. It is quite natural that when a suggestion is made that it contains error, we shy away from the subject because we believe it must be terribly complex.

Others have said there is no such thing as God's sacred calendar and that God based His Holy Days on a man made secular calendar. They claim that the bible contains so few instructions that we need to follow the 'oral law' – the traditions of the Jews which are not found in the bible, at all. This is what the Church of God had traditionally done by following that idea.

There is a third alternative. It is that God made the calendar so simple to follow that it needed few instructions and that these are complete within the pages of the bible. God clearly warns us against taking away from them, or adding to them as the Jews have done.

You must judge for yourself, remembering God's instruction in 1 Thessalonians 5:21 - *'Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.'* (The written word of righteousness)

The Calendar reveals the Holy Days

God's calendar was instituted at creation and because it was designed to define Holy time it is indeed sacred and not to be arbitrarily changed by men.

Exodus 31:13 *'Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the LORD that doth sanctify you.'*

Genesis 1:14 *'And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years.'*

When does God's year start ?

Exodus 12:2 *"This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you."*

Exodus 13:3-4 *'And Moses said unto the people, Remember this day, in which ye came out from Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand the LORD brought you out from this place: there shall no leavened bread be eaten. This day came ye out in the month [of the] Abib.'*

At the time of Christ the barley crop was always examined at the end of the previous month to make sure the corn was Abib. The word Abib does not mean 'green ears of corn,' Leviticus 2:14, *'And if thou offer a meat offering of thy firstfruits unto the LORD, thou shalt offer for the meat offering of thy firstfruits green ears of corn dried by the fire, even corn beaten out of full ears.'* The word 'green' does not appear in the Hebrew text here. The NIV has it: 'crushed heads of new grain roasted in the fire.' The point being the barley must be mature enough to provide a flour, when ground for the Wave Sheaf Offering during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. If the barley was not

Abib, a thirteenth month was added so that the barley would be ready for the Wave Sheaf offering during the week of unleavened bread. This kept the Holy Days in synchronization with the seasons.

The Westminster Dictionary of the Bible states on p.3, article Abib, ' Abib most nearly approaches our month of March, though in some years it's end moves some distance into April'. Around Jerusalem the barley harvest actually begins mid April.

At the time of Christ and before, the Sanhedrin chose Abib's new moon on seasonal conditions, including :-

- **The maturity of the barley harvest.**
- The severity of the winter.
- The age of the young sacrificial pigeons and lambs.
- The condition of the camping sites, roads and bridges used by the Passover pilgrims.

Obviously according to Deuteronomy 16:9 *'Seven weeks shalt thou number unto thee: begin to number the seven weeks from such time as thou beginnest to put the sickle to the corn.'* ('corn' covers all cereal crops including barley). Abib's new moon had to occur before the spring harvest began because the wave sheaf (the **first** sheaf cut) took place during Unleavened Bread, after the 14th of the month. This places the start of Abib very close to the vernal or Spring equinox.

The Westminster Dictionary of the Bible, article 'Year' states "The year began with the month of Abib or Nisan (Exodus 12:2, 23:15, Esther 3:7,) with the new moon next before or next after the vernal equinox".

However, the final determinant of the new year must remain God's requirement that harvestable barley is available for the wave sheaf offering which took place on the day after the weekly sabbath during unleavened bread, **Lev. 23:10-14.** *'Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest: 11And he shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it. 12And ye shall offer that day when ye wave the sheaf an he lamb without blemish of the first year for a burnt offering unto the LORD. 13And the meat offering thereof shall be two tenth deals of fine flour mingled with oil, an offering made by fire unto the LORD for a sweet savour: and the drink offering thereof shall be of wine, the fourth part of an hin. 14And ye shall eat neither bread, nor parched corn, nor green ears, until the selfsame day that ye have brought an offering unto your God: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.'*

When the present Hebrew Calendar was first published in the 4th century, it too aimed to begin Abib as near the Spring equinox as possible, but sadly the calculations used were not accurate and the start of the month began to drift away from the equinox so that now, 1700 years later, that calendar has drifted 17/18 days later than it would have been were it correct, and consequently it fails to match the scriptural requirements for **the start of the year**. As a result in certain years, the year is started a whole month later than it would have been at the time of Christ, quite out of season.

Fortunately, members of the Church of God yearly watch the barley in Israel at the end of the 12th month, to determine whether a 13th month, Adar 2, needs to be intercalated to ensure that abib barley would be available during Unleavened Bread. They pass this information to us as soon as it becomes available. This ensures that, as at the time of Christ, the barley harvest coincides with the

week of unleavened bread when the first sheaf was waved and that the Feast of Tabernacles occurs just after the date and fig harvests have been gathered in.

Exodus 34:22 *'And thou shalt observe the feast of weeks, of the firstfruits of wheat harvest, and the feast of ingathering at the year's end.'* (at the end of the agricultural year).

By following God's instructions like this, the Holy Days are positioned as they were at the time of Christ, from the correct start of the year. They are not arbitrarily delayed to avoid them falling on certain days (as does the Hebrew Calendar) and cannot occur a month or more late, or too early as they can with the current Hebrew Calendar.

Not only that but because the barley determines the new year there is no need to work out when to add the required leap year – it is automatically done for us ! (Because the solar year does not now equal 12 lunar months, a 13th month must be added periodically to make up the annual 11 day difference to keep the festivals in season.) This avoids the use of the flawed Metonic Cycle which was introduced only after the time of Christ.

When does God's month start ?

One of the reasons why God's day starts with the evening is so that the new rising moon (and month) can be observed, vital according to God's word, to position the Holy Days. Notice that Genesis 1:14 told us the lights are the signs of time, not the darkness.

Ezekiel 46:1 *'Thus saith the Lord GOD; The gate of the inner court that looketh toward the east shall be shut the six working days; but on the sabbath it shall be opened, and in the day of the new moon it shall be opened.'*

"New moon" in the above and throughout God's word is Hebrew 'hodesh', most often the special day on which each month begins. Psalm 104:19 *'He appointed the moon for seasons: the sun knoweth his going down.'* (seasons here is Hebrew mo'edim [appointed times] translated 'feasts' in Leviticus 3:4) Hodesh derives from the root H.D.SH meaning 'new' or to make new/renew).

The bible says each month begins with a first sighting of the new moon –

Genesis 1:14 *'God said, "I command lights to appear in the sky and to separate day from night and to show the time for seasons, special days, and years.'* **Contemporary English Version.**

'Then God said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years;' **New King James Version.**

'And God said, "Let bright lights appear in the sky to separate the day from the night. They will be signs to mark off the seasons, the days, and the years.' **New Living Translation.**

An 'astronomical new moon' (conjunction) occurs when the sun and moon are aligned with the earth. The new moon can only be seen from about 15 hours later than the conjunction. The Royal Greenwich Observatory can predict the time of the astronomical new moon at Jerusalem. Both it and the US Naval Observatory agree that **the first sighting cannot occur** for between 15 - 48 hours later, depending on conditions.

Each Holy Day in its season

Genesis 8:22 *'While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.'* - The agricultural seasons will not change, says God.

Numbers 9:2-3 *'Let the children of Israel also keep the passover at his appointed season. In the **fourteenth** day of this month, at even, ye shall keep it in his appointed season: according to all the rites of it, and according to all the ceremonies thereof, shall ye keep it.'*

Deuteronomy 16:6 *'But at the place which the LORD thy God shall choose to place his name in, there thou shalt sacrifice the passover at even, at the going down of the sun, at the season that thou camest forth out of Egypt.'*

Leviticus 23:4 *'These are the feasts of the LORD, even holy convocations, which ye shall proclaim **in their seasons**.*' (not hundreds of years in advance!) The whole chapter defines the Holy Day Calendar of God, clearly and specifically, each Holy day in its appointed time.

Leviticus 23:7 the weekly Sabbath

Leviticus 23:5 14th day of 1st month, Abib (Nisan) - Passover

Leviticus 23:6-7 15th day of 1st month, Abib (Nisan) - 1st day of Unleavened Bread

Leviticus 23:8 21st day of 1st month, Abib (Nisan) - 7th day of Unleavened Bread

Leviticus 23:15-16,21 how to count Pentecost (3rd month Sivan)

Leviticus 23:24 1st day of the 7th month Tishri (new moon) - Trumpets

Leviticus 23:27 10th day of the 7th month Tishri - Atonement

Leviticus 23:34 15th day of the 7th month Tishri - Feast of Tabernacles

Leviticus 23:36 22nd day of the 7th month Tishri - Last Great Day

God's warnings to us

Deuteronomy 4:1-2 *'Now therefore hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes and unto the judgments, which I teach you, for to do them, that ye may live, and go in and possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers giveth you. **Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.***'

Deuteronomy 12:32 *'What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: **thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.***'

Nowhere in God's word does it tell us to calculate the 7th month, delay one or two days from the new moon for the start of the month, then count back to find Abib 1; but that is how the Hebrew calendar is calculated now, though it was not at the time of Christ, or for hundreds of years after. In this way we have been led to break the specific clear instructions in Leviticus 23.

Revelation 22:18-19 *'For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, **If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.***'

Isaiah 8:20 *'To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.'*

Christ kept the True Holy Days

1 Peter 2:21 *‘For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:’*

Jesus Christ left us His example. In His day the new moon was calculated (just as we know when to look for the moon now) but confirmed when it was first sighted with the naked eye by witnesses at Jerusalem. **That is why He never needed to raise the subject** of the calendar. Christ’s perfect example shows us how to follow God’s sacred calendar directly from His written word. As in the case of Passover and Pentecost the Jews, unbeknownst to us had substituted their own traditions, which separate the true Holy Days from those on their calendar by one or two days 60% of the time, and occasionally by more than a month. Yes, today the Hebrew calendar has indeed become secular but it is quite obvious from a reading of the first few chapters of Genesis that God’s calendar existed from creation.

Mark 7:7-9,13. *‘Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. 13 Making the word of God of non effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered : and many such like things do ye ’*

Which days should WE keep ?

As the Apostle Peter said to the Jews in Acts 5:29 - ‘We ought to obey God rather than men.’

Conclusion

Many of us have quite naturally been afraid of examining this subject because it has been made to seem highly complicated by the invention of spurious additional man-made rules which are part of the Jews oral law. (See our article on the oral law) Once these inventions of men, which contradict the written word of God are removed, God’s sacred calendar is revealed just as Jesus Christ kept it, when all could simply look up to the sky and see by the moon that it was the first day of the month.

Our aim is to return to the standard set by Jesus Christ. We can only try our best to follow God’s word. The question is – do we avoid trying to remove sin from our lives just because we know we will never totally succeed? It should be noted that it was never the intention of God that we know years in advance when His Feast Days would fall. Leviticus 23:4 shows that they are to be proclaimed “in their seasons” in order that we constantly look to God, who determines the calendar through the weather conditions He ordains, rather than to the works of man.

The above is just one example of the way in which God’s people must be encouraged to be spiritually alert, for at the end-time many are asleep and ready to die spiritually, (Matthew 25:6-12,

‘While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other

virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.'

Revelation 3:15-16 *'I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.'*

Make sure you view the film 'Month of The Abib' on the Media tab, on this web site.