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### **PASSOVER DATES FOR 30 A.D. AND FOR 31 A.D.**

In this whole calendar question one of the points that has been presented as supposed "proof" for accepting the present Jewish calendar WITH its postponement rules is the claim that a 31 A.D. Wednesday Passover implies that the present postponement rules were in force back then, and that this proves that Jesus Christ endorsed the postponement rules.

The United Church of God Study Paper attempted to prove a 31 A.D. Passover by reasoning from the account found in John chapters 7-10. This reasoning is clearly flawed!

A BETTER WAY for United to have attempted to prove a 31 A.D. Passover would have been by carefully examining the data available to us regarding the new moons of Nisan for the years 30 A.D. and 31 A.D.. That is what we'll do in this article.

### **MY OWN POSITION IN THIS MATTER**

Initially I started out by discovering that the material originally presented by Dr. Hoeh in the Church's booklet on the subject did not justify the conclusion he presented, that 31 A.D. was supposed to be the year of the crucifixion. In actual fact ALL OF THE HISTORICAL EVIDENCE Dr. Hoeh presented clearly points to THE YEAR 30 A.D. as the year of the crucifixion.

An immediate consequence of this is that without a 31 A.D. crucifixion date there is nothing in the Bible itself which will allow us to even INFER OR IMPLY that at the time of Christ's ministry the Jews followed a calendar which included postponing the year in order to avoid certain Holy Days falling on inconvenient days of the week. The whole argument about a 31 A.D. crucifixion date supposedly proving that the Jews at that time used the present calendar WITH ITS POSTPONEMENTS is just so totally contrived and divorced from reality.

Now without a 31 A.D. crucifixion date to fast-track acceptance of the present Jewish calendar, it means that we will have to evaluate the present Jewish calendar ON ITS OWN MERITS, without the assumed approval of God the Father. The Jewish calendar must meet the requirements for a calendar which we see in the Bible, and these requirements cannot simply be ignored or swept aside by the sweeping statement that "a 31 A.D. crucifixion date all by itself proves that the present Jewish calendar has God's approval. Therefore what further need have we of witnesses?" (Does that remind you of Matthew 26:65?)

Since then I have come to understand that as far as the calendar is concerned, the year of the crucifixion proves NOTHING AT ALL! From all the evidence that is available, I suspect that 30 A.D. is the more likely year for when Jesus Christ was crucified. However, that may turn out to be wrong, and 31 A.D. may be the correct year after all? However, the correct year of the crucifixion does not provide any kind of proof as to what the calendar that was used at that time looked like. The correct year of the crucifixion is immaterial to the question of what type of calendar was in use. The reason for this is that THE SAME RESULTS are obtained for 31 A.D. by two totally different calendar systems, thereby not allowing any conclusions to be drawn as to which system "simply had to be used".

To focus on the year of the crucifixion in an attempt to push one calendar model over another is a **wrong focus!** It misses the point. It tries to circumvent closer scrutiny for compliance with clearly stated biblical requirements. And that is clearly a devious approach.

In this article we will examine the new moon facts for both, 30 and 31 A.D..

### SOME FACTS ABOUT THE NEW TESTAMENT TIMES

1) The Jewish evidence is abundantly clear that at the time of Christ's ministry the Jews had a calendar which was based on VISUAL SIGHTINGS of the new crescent of the new moon.

Here is a quotation from the electronic version of ENCYCLOPEDIA BRITANNICA, from the article about the "Jewish Calendar":

"In the religious calendar, THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE MONTH WAS DETERMINED BY THE OBSERVATION OF THE CRESCENT NEW MOON, and the date of the Passover was tied in with the ripening of barley. The actual witnessing of the New Moon and observing of the stand of crops in Judaea were required for the functioning of the religious calendar." (Encyclopedia Britannica)

Did the author of this Britannica article know what he was talking about or not?

I have previously also presented a number of quotations from the Talmud in this regard. These quotations from the Talmud were written at that time, though the Talmud itself was not finally edited until the time of "Rabbi", a title given to Judah ha-Nasi (i.e. "Judah the Prince"), who was the grandson of Gamaliel the Elder (at whose feet Paul had studied, Acts 22:3).

Here is a quotation about Judah ha-Nasi from "The Software Toolworks Multimedia Encyclopedia":

"Judah ha-Nasi, c.135-c.220, was the patriarch of the Jewish community in Palestine who was responsible for the final redaction of the MISHNAH (Oral Law). He was the last of the tannaim, the Jewish sages who had engaged in the compilation of the Oral Law since the time of HILLEL (fl. 30 BC-AD 10). The Mishnah, as edited by Rabbi Judah, served as the foundation of both the Palestinian and the Babylonian TALMUD."

Michael Rodkinson in "The History of the Talmud" points out in Volume 1 of his work on page 14 that this man "Rabbi" ...

"... found SIX HUNDRED SECTIONS of Mishnayoth; and even if we admit that this number is greatly exaggerated, still if even one hundred existed, it was no light task to REDUCE THEM TO SIX."

The point I wish to make here is simply that by the middle of the second century A.D. the WRITTEN RECORDS available to those who compiled the Talmud were anywhere from 10 times to 100 times greater than the present Talmud itself. There was AN ABUNDANCE of written records (dating from the 2nd century B.C. into the 2nd century A.D.) available to "Rabbi".

Note also in the quotation above that the sages had engaged in the compilation of the "oral law" SINCE THE TIME OF HILLEL. It follows that references to Gamaliel II (son of Gamaliel I and father of "Rabbi") testing witnesses who professed to have observed the first new crescent of the moon were written at the time when Gamaliel II lived. It was his son who then became a major compiler of the Talmud.

The historical accuracy of the fact that the Jews at the time of Christ's ministry **determined the calendar based on the evidence of witnesses who had SEEN the new crescent** stands beyond doubt! There are many other books which state this fact as well, that witnesses were required in order to establish the start of a new month. THIS FACT SIMPLY CANNOT BE REFUTED, even if those who support the present Jewish calendar refuse to acknowledge this.

2) A calendar based on witnesses reporting the VISIBLE new moon all by itself **precludes the possibility of postponements**. After all, what would be the point of having witnesses report the sighting of the new moon to you (e.g. the new moon of Tishri) if you then turned around and said: "this year we will actually have to postpone the start of Tishri by two days because the new moon you witnesses have seen happens to fall on an inconvenient day of the week"?

3) The quotations from the Talmud, which plainly show that the Day of Atonement DID at times fall on a Friday and at times on a Sunday, are also beyond question. This is a matter of a historical record! Judah ha-Nasi (son of Gamaliel II and grandson of Gamaliel the Elder) was without question aware of how the calendar functioned during his father's and his grandfather's time.

**Irrespective of whether Jesus Christ was crucified in 30 A.D. or in 31 A.D., this historical evidence regarding the calendar remains true! It cannot be refuted!**

4) The present Jewish calendar is interested in only one new moon (actually only the molad and not the real new moon), and that is for the seventh month. **All the other real new moons in the year are totally ignored**. But in New Testament times the Jews actually had eyewitnesses watching out for EVERY new moon in the year. You didn't need any calculations. You simply added 29 days to the time of the present new moon, and then you had people again looking for the new crescent.

If they didn't see it that evening immediately after sunset, then they would look again the following evening immediately after sunset. It was usually a pretty good guess that IF the month before the present one had been 29 days long, then the present month was fairly likely to be 30 days long, though there would be the occasional exceptions to this guideline. And IF the month before the present one had been 30 days long, then the present month was fairly likely to be 29 days long, though there would also be the occasional exceptions to this guideline. But EVERYBODY in the country (actually everybody in the entire Middle East at that time!) knew that the next new moon was going to be on one of two possible days.

We need to keep in mind that the Jews at that time were working from one month to the next. They had people watching for EVERY new moon in the year. They didn't in June or July of one particular year worry about THE DAY in March or April (by our Roman calendar) on which the next year would start! **They took every month as it came**. They didn't have the whole calendar for a year or two or three planned out ahead of time. Such planning ahead is only possible in terms of THE JULIAN CALENDAR anyway! Can you understand this?

Consider this situation.

PICTURE THE FOLLOWING SCENARIO:

You are in Jerusalem back in 28 A.D.. So you ask a priest: "On what day will the next year start?" The priest tells you: "On Nisan 1, my son." So you reply: "Yes, I know that. But WHEN is Nisan 1 going to be?" The priest replies: "It is going to be on Nisan 1. What else do you expect, my son?"

So you ask: "And when is the following year going to start?" The priest smiles: "That will also start on Nisan 1." So you ask: "What about the year after that, when will that start?". So the priest replies: "Look, my son, **EVERY YEAR starts on Nisan 1**. So that year will obviously also start on Nisan 1."

By then you are getting a little frustrated, and you say: "Yes, I know that every year starts on Nisan 1. But that doesn't really tell me **PRECISELY WHEN THAT IS** in the solar year. And I want to know the exact dates on which the next three years will start in terms of **THE SOLAR YEAR**. Can you not tell me that?"

The priest replies: "My son, we only have one calendar, and all I can tell you is that every year starts with Nisan 1. **The information you are looking for is that you want me to evaluate OUR calendar in terms of SOME OTHER CALENDAR**. You want me to tell you when Nisan 1 for the next three years is going to be **in some OTHER calendar?**"

You reply: "Yes, now you are getting it. I want to know, **IN TERMS OF ANOTHER CALENDAR**, when Nisan 1 is going to be. I know every year for the next 1000 years will start on Nisan 1. But when will Nisan 1 be in terms of a different and more accurate calendar."

The priest replies: "Are you saying that our visual observations of the new moon crescents are not accurate?"

You reply: "No, no, no. That's not what I mean. I have full confidence in the witnesses who come to you to report seeing the new crescent each month. I fully believe they are very accurate in their reports to you. But I just want to know where in the solar year Nisan 1 happens to be every year."

The priest replies: "Ah, my son. Then you need a calendar that is going to keep the four tekufoth (i.e. the two equinoxes and the two solstices) in a constant position in the yearly cycle. And **that is unfortunately not how our calendar works**. But there is a calendar that basically does achieve that result. It's the calendar the Romans introduced about 70 years ago. They call it "the Julian calendar". **Do you want to know when Nisan 1 will be IN TERMS OF THE JULIAN CALENDAR?**"

You reply: "Yes, that is what I would like to know. When, in terms of **THE JULIAN CALENDAR** will our years start for the next three years? I want to know where Nisan 1 stands in relation to the tekufah of Nisan (i.e. the spring equinox) for every year in the next three years. And since only the Roman Julian calendar gives me a clear indication where the equinox is (in 28 A.D. the equinox was still on March 23rd in the Julian calendar), therefore can you tell me the dates for Nisan 1 for the next 3 years in terms of that Julian calendar?"

The priest replies: "**For that information you will have to wait another 330 years, my son. Then one of our sages, Hillel II by name, will make public a calculation which will allow you to convert the start of every one of our years into a specific date in that Julian calendar**. But I must warn you, in that calendar the equinox will still regress by one day for every 128 years. But when they finally introduce a revision of that Julian calendar (they will then call it "the Gregorian calendar"), **THEN** you will be able to convert the start of every year in our calendar into a date in that Roman calendar, with the help of the conversion calculations Hillel II will make available 330 years from now."

You reply: "Yes, that sounds exactly like what I am looking for. But do I really have to wait another 330 years before I can have that information?"

End of conversation.

## THE CRUX OF THE JEWISH CALENDAR CALCULATIONS

The Jewish calendar calculations do exactly TWO THINGS.

### POINT #1

The first thing they do is determine THE DAY OF THE WEEK for the molad (the theoretical new moon conjunction) of the seventh month (Tishri) for the year under consideration. This calculation presupposes the existence of the weekly cycle. So those calculations tell you which day of the week the new moon will be. (For this illustration we'll ignore the errors that the Jewish calculations often produce, and we'll assume that the calculations are accurate.) This calculation is based on knowing the length of the AVERAGE lunar month.

Now if you have no other calendar, then that is all you get. YOU ALREADY KNOW the day of the month that it is going to be. It is going to be Tishri 1. So you know both, the day of the week and also the day of the month for that future Tishri 1. **The day of the month is always the same, if you only have one calendar. It is always Tishri 1, obviously.** It is only the day of the week that can change for your Tishri 1 determination.

But this calculation does not tell you WHEN IN THE SOLAR YEAR that particular Tishri 1 is going to be.

Now before the introduction of the Julian calendar, which is based on the solar year, all the nations around Israel and around Judah also used a calendar that was based on the new moons. THEREFORE before the introduction of the Julian calendar it would have been TOTALLY POINTLESS to have another calculation which might have established "the day of the month" for that molad. Any other calendar in existence BEFORE the introduction of the Julian calendar was basically identical in its workings to the calendar employed by the Israelites, and, after the Babylonian captivity, by the Jews. So there was no way that you could determine in advance WHEN IN THE SOLAR YEAR your Tishri 1 was going to fall, because you simply did not have any calendar that was based on the solar year available.

Yes, astronomers had already made very accurate calculations for the length of the solar year. In the fourth century B.C. they calculated the length of the solar year as 365,25 days. In the 140's B.C. the Greek astronomer Hipparchus further refined this to stating that the length of the solar year is 365.242 days. Today we calculate the solar year as being 365.242199 days long. This means that Hipparchus calculated the length of the solar year to within 17,2 seconds of the length we today have calculated. And he calculated that about 2150 years ago.

Furthermore, they were also fully aware of the two equinoxes and the two solstices. But there was no calendar in which those four benchmark dates were fixed. An astronomer in Jerusalem might have been able to tell you that in 57 B.C. (at that time the vernal equinox was still on March 24 according to the Julian calendar) Nisan 1 was going to be 20 days AFTER the equinox. In other words, the equinox would be on Adar 10 and 20 days later the month of Nisan would start. The next year, 56 B.C., the equinox would be on Adar 21, and 9 days later the month of Nisan would start. That is what an astronomer would have been able to tell you. But that information would not have helped you very much.

The intent of the calendar is that the equinox ALWAYS falls either in the last month of the year, or at the very latest on the very first day of Nisan. So before the existence of the Julian calendar an astronomer might have been able to tell you (had you been living in Jerusalem in the days of Ezra): "The tekufah (i.e. the equinox) is always in the month of Adar or at the very latest on Nisan 1. BUT sometimes the equinox is on Adar 10, sometimes on Adar 25, sometimes on Adar 7, sometimes on Nisan 1, sometimes on Adar 14, etc.". But there was no way of expressing the equinox as some FIXED DATE in ANY calendar in existence at that time.

So at that time it would have been useless to try to also determine a day of the month for the molad of Tishri, because the day of the month would ALWAYS be Tishri 1. You simply couldn't improve on that.

Then along came the Julian calendar in about 45 B.C. And that opened the way to make COMPARISONS between two completely different calendar systems.

## POINT #2

The second thing the calculations of the present Jewish calendar do is determine THE DAY OF THE MONTH!

**This calculation of the present Jewish calendar PRESUMES THE EXISTENCE OF THE JULIAN CALENDAR!**

Can you understand this?

This calculation requires an accurate knowledge of the length of the Julian year, and of all the specific features of the Julian calendar.

This calculation could not possibly have been devised before the Julian calendar came into existence. The express purpose of this calculation is TO CONVERT the Jewish calendar (i.e. a date for the molad of Tishri) INTO THE JULIAN CALENDAR!

The whole and sole purpose of the Jewish calendar calculations is to express dates in the Jewish year in terms of the Julian calendar (and with adjustments in terms of the Gregorian calendar today). **They serve no other purpose but to predict IN ROMAN CALENDAR TERMS when the Jewish year should start and end.**

Can you now understand that these calculations of the Jewish calendar could not possibly have been given by God to Moses? Can you understand that they could not possibly have existed before Julius introduced his calendar in 45 B.C.? Without the existence of the Julian calendar the Jewish calendar calculations are totally pointless! They serve no purpose other than establishing Julian calendar dates for the Jewish calendar. Without the existence of the Julian calendar it is meaningless to tell people that "Tishri 1 next year will be on Saturday, Tishri 1"! With THAT kind of information you will still have to go out and look for every new moon.

It is only people who do not understand the actual workings of the present Jewish calendar that will make statements like "God gave those calculations to Moses", and similar ridiculous claims!

If you have understood the above explanation, then it should be quite clear that the present Jewish calendar calculations serve only one purpose, to establish ROMAN calendar dates for the Jewish calendar; and that they could not possibly have existed before the introduction of the Julian calendar.

Now let's look at some premises.

## SOME PREMISES:

With the above understanding as background here is what I believe we should keep in mind:

1) Anyone who wishes to discuss the present Jewish calendar (which most assuredly cannot predate the

rebellion of Bar Kochba in 132-135 A.D., never mind the time of Julius Caesar's calendar) has to accept one of two premises:

A) EITHER he accepts that the calendar was based on CALCULATIONS.

B) OR he accepts that the calendar was based on OBSERVATION.

[A possible third group would be those who believe it was based on observation that was backed up by calculations. Since observation is essential to this group, for all practical purposes they form a part of group "B" above.]

2) The use of witnesses in the first century A.D. makes quite clear that IF calculations were employed, then those calculations MUST have been for FIRST VISIBILITY and not for the invisible molad. It also makes clear that those calculations would have been used for nothing more than "backup". And thus **they could not have been the calculations that are employed today.**

3) If, nevertheless, someone wishes to argue for the calculation of the INVISIBLE MOLAD, THEN the historical record in the Talmud makes quite clear that whatever dates were calculated, NO POSTPONEMENTS WERE EMPLOYED! So the days you CALCULATED for the molads were "it"! The evidence for Atonement falling on ANY day of the week is also beyond question (thus no postponements).

4) We need to understand that we are dealing with two totally independent issues here:

A) It is a case of using the visible observation of the new moon as opposed to using the calculation of the invisible molad. The historical record for visible observation is beyond question.

B) The matter that the historical record shows that Holy Days were NOT postponed away from "inconvenient" days of the week.

BOTH of these points, as proved by the historical record, contra-indicate the present Jewish calendar. And both these points are independent of one another; i.e. even if someone were able to prove that the calendar really was calculated based on the invisible molad, that still would not prove that such a calendar should therefore also employ postponements. And anyway, the above explanation should suffice to show that any calculations could not possibly predate the existence of the Julian calendar.

5) So now let's look first at the person who accepts that the calendar was based on the visible observation of the new crescent. That is an easy case!

This approach obviously finds the present Jewish calendar, based on the calculation of the invisible molad, to be wrong!

6) Next, let's consider the view of the person who accepts that the calendar was based on calculation, but the calculation being for first visibility. That is also an easy case!

This approach will also find the present Jewish calendar, with its foundational premise of invisible molads, to be wrong!

For both of the above situations **the year of the crucifixion is immaterial**, since no special deductions and conclusions will be drawn from the supposed year of the crucifixion. Therefore it doesn't really matter in which year the crucifixion took place (i.e. it doesn't matter as far as deciding which calendar we are to use is concerned).

7) That leaves us with the person who feels that the calendar was based on calculations, and that those calculations were for the invisible molad. Though this case is negated by the clear and abundant historical evidence, let us work through it for the sake of the argument. Remember, we have independent other historical evidence that the Holy Days were NOT postponed, and this historical evidence must therefore still be taken into account.

So let's now look at 30 A.D.

#### THE YEAR 30 A.D.

- 1) The calculated molad of Tishri was Saturday, 16 September at 2:19:33 a.m. at night.
- 2) No postponements were enacted because that molad did not fall on an inconvenient day of the week. Therefore Saturday, September 16 was pronounced as the Day of Trumpets.
- 3) This results in a Passover for Wednesday, April 5 (observed the previous evening after sunset).
- 4) **Thus the calculated Jewish calendar readily establishes a Wednesday Passover for 30 A.D.**
- 5) This Wednesday Passover is established by the present Jewish calendar **without any postponements** being used that year.
- 6) The **actual new moon time for the first new moon** of the year 30 A.D. was, as far as can be ascertained, on Wednesday evening at 8:09 p.m. on March 22.
- 7) As that was after sunset, therefore that was really the early part of March 23.
- 8) Since 8:09 p.m. is approximately 22 hours before the next sunset, therefore **first visibility of the new moon crescent would have been Thursday evening, March 23**, immediately after sunset.
- 9) That time of first visibility of the new crescent was thus the early part of March 24, and that was also the precise time of the spring equinox that year (which was then still on March 24 and moving towards March 23).
- 10) So in 30 A.D. the first visibility of the new moon in the spring was on the precise day of the equinox, Friday, March 24 (i.e. Thursday, March 23 after sunset). Since the new moon of the first month only falls once in every 19 years on the day of the equinox, the very first day on which the year may start, this is a rather interesting coincidence for the year 30 A.D.
- 11) However, a new moon on Thursday evening, March 23, after sunset **results in Thursday, April 6 Passover date** (observed the previous evening). **That seems unlikely** for Christ's last Passover.
- 12) TO SUMMARIZE THE YEAR 30 A.D.:  
  
A) All the historical evidence appears to point to THE YEAR 30 A.D. as the year of Jesus Christ's



crucifixion. This conclusion is strengthened by several different records independently pointing to the same conclusion.

B) The calculated Jewish calendar readily determines a Wednesday for the day of the Passover, and it does so without any postponements being involved. It follows that those who argue FOR the calculated Jewish calendar will have to admit that their calendar certainly indicates a Wednesday Passover for 30 A.D. Those who accept that calculated calendar would be forced to accept a Wednesday Passover for 30 A.D..

C) For those of us who reject the calculated calendar (i.e. including me) this data from the calculated calendar does not really provide any proof for a Wednesday Passover.

D) The actual new moon data for the year 30 A.D. that is available to us (and **dates like that are calculated back in time with the assumptions that nothing changed during that period of time, assumptions that obviously can never be verified**) implies a Wednesday Passover date from the time of the actual lunar conjunction, but a Thursday Passover from the time of the first visibility of the new crescent. Since I myself don't believe the Jewish leaders in 30 A.D. were capable of starting the year with the day of the conjunction, it follows that the available information for new moons implies a Thursday Passover for 30 A.D.

E) **This creates a conflict situation.** The **historical evidence** points to a specific year, while the **astronomical evidence** points to a specific day. If the astronomical data is correct, then it implies that the historical evidence, coming from different sources, is in some way flawed. But if the historical evidence is correct, then it implies that the astronomical evidence is flawed.

F) I understand that **the astronomical data** is supposed to be above question. But it also **is based on certain assumptions**, the main one being that present conditions can be extrapolated backwards for 2000 years without any danger of making mistakes, because nothing has supposedly changed during that period of time.

I am convinced that there were major changes, from the viewpoint of astronomy, between the time of Moses and the time of the destruction of Jerusalem almost 900 years later. Those changes astronomers are not really able to pinpoint. While I have no evidence of any kind for this, I see no reason why there could not also have been some changes in the heavens in the almost 2000 years now since the time of Christ's ministry. It is not that I wish to imply such changes, not at all. But at the same time I believe I should be open to the possibility of God perhaps also having intervened in the movements of the heavenly bodies during these past 2000 years? If that were the case, then **it would imply that our extrapolated new moon data for 2000 years ago is also incorrect.**

At the same time I am also open to the possibility of some flaw in the historical data I have examined, and the astronomical data being correct. So while I tend to feel that the historical data, from different sources, all points to a 30 A.D. crucifixion date, that may be incorrect, and 31 A.D. may turn out to have been the year of the crucifixion?

But consider the following information.

#### FACTS FROM THE ENCYCLOPEDIA BRITANNICA

Consider the following quotation from the electronic version of the ENCYCLOPEDIA BRITANNICA, from the article "Calendar":

"THE CALENDAR DATING OF HISTORICAL EVENTS AND THE DETERMINATION OF HOW MANY DAYS HAVE ELAPSED SINCE SOME ASTRONOMICAL OR OTHER OCCURRENCE ARE DIFFICULT FOR A NUMBER OF REASONS. Leap years have to be inserted, but, not always regularly, months have changed their lengths and new ones have been added from time to time and years have commenced on varying dates and their lengths have been computed in various ways." (Encyclopedia Britannica, article "Calendar")

Here the Encyclopedia Britannica points out some of the very real difficulties we have in exactly pinpointing specific days for historical events. It is in fact VERY EASY to be out by a day or two in our calculations of dates for specific biblical events. Understand that **ALL OF OUR CALENDAR PROGRAMS**, that try to establish dates of events 2000 and more years ago, **SIMPLY IGNORE THESE DIFFICULTIES**. The one exception is that they all make the adjustment from Julian to Gregorian calendar, because that particular adjustment is very well documented. And astronomy programs do exactly the same thing; they obviously ignore difficulties they are not aware of; and difficulties and changes that are not clearly documented but which they have an inkling of, they make their own personal judgments on, which may not have anything to do with what actually happened back in history.

The present Jewish calendar gives us a prime example in this regard. Those who claim that this Jewish calendar existed in B.C. times, and who try to use it to establish dates for Old Testament events, all make a change to the present Jewish calendar for calculating those B.C. dates. But they don't tell you about the change they have made! Did you know that?

For calculating B.C. dates they have CHANGED THE SEQUENCE OF LEAP YEARS for every 19-year cycle in the present Jewish calendar. Now there is no historical record that the present Jewish calendar even existed before the time of Hillel II in the 350's A.D., let alone some supposed record of a different sequence of leap years having been applied earlier to THIS PRESENT CALENDAR! But you see, when you extrapolate the present Jewish calendar back into Old Testament times **the dates for some years become TOTALLY RIDICULOUS!** That is well-known, and that is due to the shift in the present Jewish calendar of one day away from the equinox for every 216 years. This is a flaw inherent in the Jewish calendar calculations that very few supporters of the Jewish calendar are even aware of.

And so supporters of the present calendar have simply decided that there MUST have been a different sequence of leap years. **They have no evidence of any kind for this**, but they simply assume it because, well "it makes sense". Now, for example, the calendar program that was produced at Ambassador College (the filename is "hd.exe") simply ASSUMES a changed sequence for the first 211 19-year cycles of the Jewish calendar, i.e. for the years from 3761 B.C. to 248 A.D.. And then from cycle #212 (i.e. the years 249 - 267) onwards this program applies the sequence that is used in the Jewish calendar today. But in extracting data from that program **you would never know that you are dealing with CHANGED DATA** whenever you want information about years BEFORE 249 A.D.. Specifically, **the date for 31 A.D. in the Jewish calculations** (of the Ambassador College computer program) **is based on using CHANGED DATA** (i.e. a changed sequence of leap years) from what the present Jewish calendar stipulates. But there is no evidence whatsoever to justify that changed data.

For 31 A.D. **the present Jewish calendar** would in fact establish a Passover date of MONDAY, March 26! **But people don't tell you that!** No, instead they have CHANGED, without any kind of evidence in any form whatsoever, the sequence of leap years to produce DIFFERENT RESULTS. And **that is how the present Jewish calendar is able to come up with a Wednesday, April 25 Passover date for 31 A.D.** To achieve this Wednesday Passover for 31 A.D. **the present Jewish calendar calculations have to be "DOCTORED"**. You didn't know that, did you?

That's because **the present calculations** would tell you a March 26 Passover date for 31 A.D, which was a Monday. Bear in mind that in 1975 and in 1994 the Jewish calendar also had March 26 as the

Passover date, and in 2013 the Jewish calendar will have March 25 as the Passover date. BUT FOR 31 A.D. THAT MARCH 26 DATE WAS APPARENTLY NOT ACCEPTABLE? And it also wasn't a Wednesday ... and that is very important, right?

Now I personally believe a Passover date of March 26 is **always** totally unacceptable! But it was not just unacceptable in 31 A.D.! It was equally unacceptable in 1975 and in 1994, and it will be equally unacceptable in 2013. A March 26 Passover date is ALWAYS unacceptable. But the Jewish calendar calculations freely establish such early dates.

Understand that there is no authority anywhere for changing the sequence of leap years in the Jewish calendar calculations for years before 250 A.D.! **The Jews themselves have no information in this regard.** Therefore IF we look to the Jews for how to construct a calendar, THEN **we have no right to change the sequence of leap years which the Jews apply.** And we cannot push the Jewish calendar instructions around and say: "Look, fellas, for all years before 249 A.D. your sequence produces some abominable and totally unacceptable dates; therefore we will just change your sequence of leap years for all those years before 249 A.D., and THAT will then enable us to continue using your calendar for extrapolating back to specific B.C. dates."

If you are going to CHANGE in any way the calculations for the calendar the Jews have supposedly "preserved", then you are in effect REJECTING something they supposedly preserved. So **you are in effect bending the Jewish calendar instructions in a way that will suit you.**

The ENCYCLOPEDIA JUDAICA states the following in the article "CALENDAR":

"Apparent variations in the *ordo intercalationis*, i.e.(2, 5, 7, 10, 13, 16, 18), (1, 4, 6, 9, 12, 15, 17) and (3, 5, 8, 11, 14, 16, 19) by the side of the present order (3, 6, 8, 11, 14, 17, 19), which ARE MET WITH AS LATE AS THE TENTH CENTURY, are but variant styles of the selfsame order." (Encyclopedia Judaica)

Yes, the facts are that **different sequences of leap years** were used ALONGSIDE the present sequence of leap years, but **none of them applied to dates before 250 A.D.!** The time before 250 A.D. has nothing to do with the TENTH century, right?

Choosing a sequence that makes sense to us for B.C. dates is not the same as having approval from the people who supposedly preserved "the CALENDAR oracles of God"! Frankly some of those other sequences would also be better RIGHT NOW than the one that is presently used.

To be specific: The sequence of "3, 5, 8, 11, 14, 16, 19", which is mentioned in Judaica as having been used at some time, is FAR SUPERIOR TO THE PRESENT SEQUENCE! The reason for this? This sequence only makes TWO changes from the one that is presently used. Those two changes are: A) it makes year #5 instead of year #6 a leap year, B) it makes year #16 instead of year #17 a leap year. The result is that THE EARLIEST TWO YEARS in every cycle will start approximately one month later. So for the present cycle #304 (i.e. 1997 - 2015) this would mean two desirable changes:

A) For the year 2002 the molad of Tishri would move from September 7 to October 7.

B) For the year 2013 the molad of Tishri would move from September 5 to October 5.

These two theoretical changes would place all of Tabernacles into the autumn in those two years. And Judaica documents that this sequence was used at some point.

Anyway, this is not an argument in favor of using molads. The point is that **people in the Church of God, who wish to use the present Jewish calendar, will WITHOUT HESITATION and without any**

**authority or any proof whatsoever simply change the sequence of leap years when they want to determine the year of the crucifixion and all B.C. dates.** They NEED to change the sequence in order to come up with the **Wednesday Passover date for 31 A.D.** that they desire to have. But when obvious flagrant violations of God's instructions, as a result of the same sequence that they themselves willingly change for 31 A.D., are pointed out in our present age, THEN they resist any possible change to that sequence, which might go some way towards remedying those flagrant violations. That sounds like a double standard to me?

And the point I wish to make is this: As Britannica pointed out, **there is really a considerable potential for errors by a day or two when we try to establish specific dates 2000 and more years ago.** That also applies to astronomy programs, which claim to give us specific days of the week for certain specific days of a month (e.g. April 25 in 31 A.D. was a Wednesday). So I myself am open to either the historical evidence for the year of the crucifixion being in error, OR the astronomical data that is provided for the years 30 and 31 A.D. being in error. And **it doesn't make a difference to me which year will turn out to be the correct one** for the date of the crucifixion.

EITHER WAY, I know very clearly that neither year achieves anything towards proving or disproving that God has sanctioned the present Jewish calendar. **The year of the crucifixion has nothing to do with what calendar God will approve.** But for those who argue FOR the Jewish calendar it very clearly means that they must accept that 30 A.D. had a Wednesday Passover date. If you argue FOR the Jewish calendar, then you also have to accept the undesirable results that calendar may present you with.

So the fact that the astronomical data for first visibility of the new crescent implies a Thursday Passover day for 30 A.D., is of no value for those who insist on the present Jewish calendar.

Let's now look at 31 A.D..

#### THE YEAR 31 A.D.

- 1) The calculated molad of Tishri (using the unauthorized modified sequence of leap years, remember) was on Thursday, October 4 at 11:52:16 p.m., or a few seconds less than 8 minutes before midnight.
- 2) This was in the first 6 hours of Friday, October 5. The present Jewish calendar thus applies a one-day postponement, and therefore Saturday, October 6 is pronounced as the day of Trumpets.
- 3) This results in a Passover for Wednesday, April 25 (observed the previous evening after sunset).
- 4) Thus the calculated Jewish calendar, using the unauthorized modified sequence of leap years, also establishes a Wednesday Passover for **31 A.D.** The present Jewish calendar with the present authorized sequence of leap years, would produce a **Monday, March 26** Passover. But that is deemed undesirable. Therefore those who argue for the present Jewish calendar must in fact reject the authorized sequence of that present Jewish calendar and arbitrarily select a different sequence of leap years, to give them a Wednesday Passover date. And that is what they have done!
- 5) So the Wednesday Passover date for 31 A.D. is established by using the present Jewish calendar with an unauthorized changed sequence of leap years, enacting a one-day postponement for the molad of Tishri for that year (i.e. from a Friday to a Saturday).
- 6) From an astronomical point of view, the actual new moon time for the first new moon of that year was, as far as can be ascertained and ignoring the potential for errors, on Tuesday, April 10, at 1:56 p.m.

7) This was barely over 4 hours before sunset that evening. Therefore the new crescent was NOT visible Tuesday evening after sunset, at the start of Wednesday, April 11.

8) Therefore **first visibility of the new crescent** would only have been possible about 28 hours after the conjunction, on Wednesday evening immediately after sunset, which would have been the start of Thursday, April 12. On THAT evening there was absolutely no doubt about first visibility being possible, because it was already 28 hours after the conjunction.

9) **This would result in a Passover date of Wednesday, April 25.**

10) So in this particular instance the adjusted present Jewish calendar calculations actually arrive at a Passover date that is totally compatible with a calendar based COMPLETELY ON DETERMINING THE YEAR BASED ON FIRST VISIBILITY!

11) **In plain language: for the year 31 A.D. a Wednesday Passover date has nothing at all to do with the present calculated calendar! A Wednesday Passover is THE ONLY POSSIBILITY for a calendar that is based on eyewitnesses reporting having seen the first new crescent.**

12) The fact that the present calculations of the Jewish calendar ALSO arrive at that day of first visibility for the start of the month Nisan proves nothing at all! **This is a pure fluke!** The fact is that the Jewish calendar achieves the day of first visibility far LESS THAN 50% OF THE TIME!

It is not as if the Jewish calculations somehow PLANNED to determine the day of first visibility, because the Jewish calendar didn't do that for the previous year, as we have already seen. And it doesn't do that most of the time. For those who would claim that the Jewish calculations achieve the day of first visibility of the new crescent, long lists of years in which that is not the case can be presented at a moment's notice.

So for those who wish to use the theoretical year of Christ's crucifixion in their arguments for the Jewish calendar, here is what we have:

1) If you accept the present Jewish calendar, then BOTH, the years 30 and 31 A.D. had a Wednesday Passover, observed the previous evening. But the 30 A.D. date was achieved without any postponements being added, AND WITHOUT CHANGING THE SEQUENCE OF LEAP YEARS! For the year 30 A.D. the present sequence as well as the changed sequence arrive at the same dates. So even with the present sequence of leap years the Jewish calendar achieves a Wednesday Passover date for 30 A.D.. It is the data regarding first visibility that does not agree with this conclusion.

But for the Jewish calendar in 31 A.D. the Wednesday Passover date was only achieved by adding a postponement, and by changing the sequence of leap years away from the only sequence that is authorized for the Jewish calendar.

2) However, **the 31 A.D. Wednesday Passover is also the only possible date for a calendar based on eyewitnesses reporting seeing the new crescent.** So the year 31 A.D. does not in any way prove that the present calculated calendar, with the unauthorized changed sequence of leap years, had to be used to arrive at a Wednesday Passover.

3) If the Passover date was a Wednesday in 30 A.D., then it could imply the use of the present calculated calendar, because the astronomical results seem to indicate a Thursday Passover, BUT **THERE WERE NO POSTPONEMENTS THAT YEAR!**

4) If the Passover date was a Wednesday in 31 A.D., then this was achieved by eyewitnesses reporting

the first new crescent, in order to establish the start of the new month.

Thus a 31 A.D. Wednesday Passover doesn't need the calculated calendar at all, and a 30 A.D. Wednesday Passover does not in any way support the postponements.

The only possible conclusion we can draw is that the Passover in the year of the crucifixion has nothing to say about "what type of calendar" the Jews were using at that time. Neither year lends any support to the present calculated Jewish calendar. Logic dictates that arguments about specific dates 2000 years ago and longer are foolish.

But there are clear biblical statements which DO have an impact on what requirements a correct calendar must comply with. So instead of speculating about the year of the crucifixion supposedly requiring a calendar that employed postponements, we really need to FIRST examine all the BIBLICAL requirements for a correct calendar.

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