

Prove God's Calendar Correct!

by Kenneth C. Herrmann

Search the Scriptures from Genesis through Revelation; no place will you find the information you would need for you to produce the Calendar. Yet we do find instructions to keep God-given Holydays on such a Calendar; the existence of such instructions is proof that a God-approved Calendar exists.

But search diligently for any mention of a 19-year cycle, of any instructions when you should add an intercalary 13th month 7 times in 19 years. Search for any information as to how you are to look for the crescent of the new moon in the west just after sundown. Such information just does not exist in the Bible; yet it was the Bible (the Old Testament) that was read weekly and on Holydays, and expounded to the people.

Remember Paul's statement to Timothy, "from a child you have been acquainted with the sacred writings ... all scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching ... that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work." (2 Tim. 3:15-17) Yet those Scriptures from Genesis to Malachi lacked instructions that Timothy would have needed to produce his own calendar!

We find a command to work six days, to observe a preparation day and to enjoy the Sabbath; yet how would we of ourselves determine which day is the Sabbath? We must depend upon Authority outside the Bible for further knowledge of both Sabbath and Calendar. It was never left up to the individual person to choose for himself a "sabbath" and to calculate for himself

a "calendar" upon which to observe God's Holydays!

The Bible does, however, give many references pertaining to that Sacred Calendar, and shows mankind in possession of that Calendar from the pre-Flood world down into the time of Christ and the early days of the Church.

Notice a few surprising statements from Scripture: The children of Israel left Egypt by night "430 years ... even to the selfsame day" after the covenant to Abraham (in his 99th year). This covenant with Abraham was thus on Nisan 15 just as the Exodus was the night of Nisan 15. Both dates are obviously on the same Calendar. (Exodus 12:40,41)

The Bible also gives repeated examples of beginning the day at sunset. That is something all of us can note and follow by ourselves. And it tells of months starting with a new moon; yet if each of us did his own observing and made his own decision as to when to begin a calendar month, chaos would result. A calendar is for the unity of a people; it enables us to plan ahead and work as one team.

A Calendar change was made at the Exodus! (and there have been other God-supervised changes at other times) Notice it. "This month shall be unto you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year to you." Until this time the Calendar year had begun in the autumn. The children of Israel followed the change and they followed in unison; one Calendar, not each his own by his own observation. When the tenth of Nisan came every family selected a lamb, when the fourteenth came they were prepared to slaughter that lamb.

From Adam until Moses the calendar year had begun in the autumn (when fruit was ripe on the trees in the Garden of Eden and when the harvest was completed and put in storage on the Ark in the time of Noah). Now, in Moses' time, by God's direction, the Calendar year is to begin in spring just prior the early harvest of barley (though obviously no harvesting was done during those next 40 years).

The reasons for the changes and rituals put into operation at the time of the Exodus did not become fully apparent until the resurrection of Christ and the growth of the early Christian Church. God was showing mankind a plan of salvation tied to the harvests and to His Calendar. It is a Calendar that man is not free to tamper with.

Return for a few moments to the time of Noah. "In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month ... the windows of heaven were opened. And the rain fell ... forty days and forty nights." The time is in autumn, the harvest has been completed and is stored on the Ark. It is just after the full moon; we might call this one the "hunter's moon", and even today the rains begin in earnest then in many areas of the world.

It has been discovered in our own century that rainfall is not distributed evenly through the month, but rather that rainfall tends to be heaviest a few days after the full and new moons! Yet this account of Noah is from over 4000 years ago. Those following God's Calendar through the centuries would take advantage of the "harvest and hunter's moons" in autumn,

and with the harvest in their barns would welcome the seasonal rain that was soon to fall.

Noah continued to use God's Calendar through the dark and rainy days of the Flood. How? There would be no crescent moon to observe. By calculation of course. He counted days, and perserved a count of time. "At the end of one hundred fifty days the waters had abated; and in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, the Ark came to rest upon the mountains of Ararat." (Gen. 8:3,4)

Already we have found a Calendar given by God, supervised by God, a Calendar to serve man, a Calendar with weekly Sabbaths preceded by work and by a preparation day, a Calendar with months beginning near a new moon, with days beginning at sunset and the year beginning (since the time of Moses) in the spring.

It is important to understand that calculation is involved along with observation. Here is another example of that calculation, "Then Jonathan said to him (David), 'Tomorrow is the new moon; and you will be missed, because your seat will be empty.'" (I Sam. 20:18).

Jonathan's statement contradicts completely those self-willed individuals who deny that the day of the new moon can be predicted in advance. They are determined that only by their own observation of the crescent of that new moon will any new month begin.

If each individual or group is determined to begin his calendar month by local observation of a new moon, all would be out of step. There could be no unity in observing the Holy-

days. One would see the crescent of the new moon in the west and proclaim a new month, the other would delay a day, or two, or three. One would intercalate a 13th month. Another would go ahead with the new year.

How, we might ask these self-willed individuals, will the whole earth "come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles" in the millennium, all in unity, if each is determined to produce his own calendar?

Yet in the time of King Saul, Jonathan and David, we found that the day of the new moon was predicted, and that all would be coming together for a special dinner on that day, and that anyone not coming would be missed. It is so obvious that they were all keeping time on one Calendar.

Still another example from Scripture. In the book of Esther "the king's secretaries were summoned on the thirteenth day of the first month, and an edict ... was written ... in the name of King Ahasuerus and sealed with the king's ring. Letters were sent by couriers to all the king's provinces, to destroy, to slay, and to annihilate all Jews ... in one day, the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar." (Esther 3:12-13).

There is no calendar confusion here at all. A day was singled out eleven months in advance, a single day, and on it all people were to take action against the Jews. And this edict went out to all the provinces under the King's control. His subjects were to act in unity upon a single day! This could be calculated in advance.

If each of us reading this were to observe his own new moon crescent, and by it begin a new month, it would be like the city of Abdera in Greece, "the proverbial city of fools, (where) everyone had his own crier proclaiming a new moon for his master alone"; quoted in Bickerman's Chronology of the Ancient World p. 32 from an ancient source.

The ability to see that faint crescent will vary not only with the observer's eyesight and the local weather conditions but also with his longitude and latitude on the earth, and with the hemisphere and the month of the year, and with his altitude above sea level and the altitude in degrees of his western horizon.

The solution to this problem for God's people has been one single Calendar followed by all since the time of its inception in the pre-Flood world. The date for the beginning of the Hebrew Calendar (God's Calendar) is 3761 B.C., which is during the lifetimes of Adam and Seth, and prior to the apostacy which brought on the Flood in the time of Noah.

Deviations from this one Calendar are found repeatedly throughout history. The goal has always been the same; men wish draw off followers after themselves!

Note the example just after the death of Solomon. Ten of the tribes of Israel rebelled against the harsh rule of Solomon's son Reheboam and followed Jeroboam, the son of Nebat. To maintain this split in the nation of Israel, Jeroboam took drastic steps. Note them well for they are the same measures that have been used throughout history to cause division.

"Jeroboam said in his heart, 'Now the kingdom will turn back to the house of David; if this people go up to offer sacrifices in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem ... So the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold ... Behold your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt' ... And Jeroboam appointed a feast on the fifteenth day of the eighth month like the feast that was in Judah ... in the month which he had devised in his own heart; and he ordained a feast for the people of Israel." (I Kings 12:12-13)

The goal was to cause and maintain division, to insure that the people would follow him, not the ruling which God had laid down.

This rule of "divide and conquer" has continued throughout history in the matter of keeping time.

In the fourth century A.D. (Roman) church leaders devised a new ruling for the determination of Passover (Easter) so it would always disagree with the Passover of the Sacred Calendar. Anti-Semitism was the motive; hatred of the Jews had reached a peak after centuries of conflict between warring political and religious factions.

In the same century Sunday was set aside as a rest day and Sabbath observance denounced, again with the intention of men to separate themselves from those who were God's people by nationality as well as from the Church of God which was faithfully keeping His Sabbath.

In the seventh century Mohammed led a people away from both Sabbath and Sacred Calendar by assigning Friday as a rest

day, and by dropping out the intercalary months which the Sacred Calendar adds 7 times in 19 years. The remaining lunar calendar months follow the moon phases very closely, yet the length of the calendar year averages only 354.5 days, and is thus almost 11 days too short.

In our own day, efforts have been made to designate Sunday as the "seventh day of the week", thus moving the beginning of the week one day later. The beginning of the day had earlier been delayed from sunset to midnight, surely a move from light into darkness. '

It is the same trend that began in the days of Enos and continued through to the time of Jeroboam. The moves are always away from God's instructions and toward the ways of a man.

Observant Christians have noted that Calendar new moons will frequently follow the astronomical new moons by one, two and even three days. A portion of this delay is due to astronomical irregularities in the motion of the moon, some to the location on earth of the observer and to his time of the year. Some delays are due to the God-intended and supervised rulings that give meaning and sense and purpose to the observance of these Annual Festivals.

We do not serve the lights of heaven, rather they serve us. Nor do we serve a Calendar; it serves us. Paganism in all its varieties is more or less the enslavement of mankind to the stars, sun, moon, planets (and the biological world of plants and animals also) that should have served him.

Basically a calendar is intended to promote unity. God

ordained such a Calendar, with a weekly rest day, and with annual Holydays. Just as the weekly Sabbath is preceded by a day of preparation, so certain Annual Holydays are related to a day of preparation.

The rules for the Sacred Calendar thus take into consideration the observance of these annual festivals. Calendar new moons will be delayed a day or more at times so that certain festivals will not fall on certain days of the week. Rather than this being a cause for consternation (and remember that that word's origin comes from the pagan fear of worrying about the stars), we should understand that these "deviations" from a straightlaced subserviance to the heavens give us a "light yoke", a law of "liberty". Not a yoke of bondage (nor festivities of licentiousness) as is the pagan tradition.

The rules for producing God's Sacred Calendar are not in the Old Testament writings, nor are they in the New Testament. They were only made public after the fall of the Temple in 70 A.D. and the scattering of the Jewish people from Palestine.

Only then and certainly with great reluctance were the basic principles made public. Scattered communities were thus able to observe God's Holydays though cut off from communication with their Hebrew brethren.

God's Church followed and still to this day follows His Calendar. In no way do we produce a "sacred calendar" of our own. With great care, each Calendar we produce each year is proven correct by comparing it with the Calendar of the God-appointed guardians of His way of keeping time.

It is to the Jew that we would look if we ever became confused as to which day of the week it was. "What advantage has the Jew? ... To begin with, the Jews are entrusted with the oracles of God." (Romans 3:1,2) And it is to the Calendar they received (with God's directions for maintaining it) that we look in our own observance of His Festivals.