

Prove God's CALENDAR Correct!

Prove all things! God commands us to! Against what will we check the NEW MOON dates of God's Sacred Calendar to be certain they are correct?

by Kenneth C. Herrmann

ALMANAC DATES for the new moon sometimes disagree with those on the Sacred Calendar. Here is a point that has in years past caused some church members to become upset, to begin to stumble.

One member will look for the first faint crescent of the new moon in our western sky and actually see this "new moon" a day or two *ahead of the date divinely appointed* as indicated on our Sacred Calendar. Another will look on the Roman Calendar or in an almanac.

Are these individuals justified in being skeptical of our work in publishing this calendar? Or have they failed to read the instructions that go with it?

God-Given Oracles

How did the men of Berea prove the words of Paul and Silas? First—and this is important—"they listened with all readiness of mind." They paid close attention to the instructions given. Then, they "searched the scriptures daily whether those things were so."

Again and again they compared with God's Word to see if the testimony of those men were true. The Scriptures were the standard against which the testimony of Paul and Silas would stand or fall.

Without such a standard to compare with, any attempt to prove a thing becomes futile, subject to all the weakness and vanity of human nature and subject to human misinterpretation. Think for a moment! How would you prove that a rug you bought was 9 by 12 feet? You would need a ruler, a standard to measure by. How would you know the ruler to be correct? The final word on the matter would come from the Bureau of Standards in Washington which keeps masters on hand for every weight or measurement.

Now how will you check the new moons? Are you certain the first day of the month is in the correct place or should it be a day or two earlier? Where is the master, the standard to go by?

Here is the answer! What advantage did Paul have being a Jew? "Unto them [the Jews] were committed the oracles of God" (Romans 3:1, 2). Oracles are communications from God. These must be our final authority in the problem with regard to new moon dates. The

question now arises, where is the oracle which will solve the problem of new moon dates? Is the Jewish calendar such an oracle?

Who gave the Jewish people their calendar? Suppose you found it to be the *same Person* who preached for 3½ years, chose 12 disciples to be apostles and then gave His life on the cross, to be resurrected three days later. Would you be willing to hear Him?

Notice Stephen's testimony to the High Priest concerning Moses and Christ, "This is he [Moses], that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel [or messenger—Christ] which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us" (Acts 7:38).

How to Prove It

Now consider this:

The One who became Jesus Christ spoke to Moses and Aaron (not to the entire congregation) saying, "This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you." These two men were to instruct the people to use this Sacred Calendar.

God gave the Calendar. *Man* is to use it. Is man to stand in judgment of God as to whether this divine communication, this oracle, is proper or not? Hardly.

The knowledge of the inner working of the Calendar was retained by God's appointed physical priesthood until the year 360 A.D. In that year the Jewish leaders published the information for all to know, so the broken and scattered Jewish nation (and Christians as well) would be able to continue the observance of God's Feast Days *in accordance with the new moons as calculated from Jerusalem*.

Jerusalem was always the point from which the new moons were observed and sanctified. It was the Sanhedrin, the Supreme Court in Jerusalem, that determined when the new moon was apparent. And it was *their responsibility* to notify the Jewish communities of the beginning of the months.

However, by 360 A.D. when oppression and persecution threatened the continued existence of the Sanhedrin, the Jewish leaders took an extraordinary

step to allow the scattered Jews to keep the new moons, festivals and Holy Days always at the same time. They then made public the system of calendar computations that hitherto had been an apparently guarded secret of the priesthood.

Thus, all Jews (and Christians) throughout the world could know when the new moon would occur according to Jerusalem time and consequently they could celebrate the same day all over the earth in unity.

It should be obvious now how to prove all things. Check them against the Oracles of God. What are these Oracles preserved by God through the Jewish people? Three: The Scriptures, The Sabbath, and The Calendar.

It was God's prerogative to give these communications and commands. It was God's responsibility to see that they were preserved down to our time. It was God's judgment that a stiffnecked, rebellious, unchanging Jewish people should be given the assignment to preserve His Calendar, His Sabbath, His Scripture. With God behind them you may be sure that they carried out this task.

It is our responsibility as God's people to search out these Oracles, to study and obey them.

Do the Jews Obey?

The matter of whether the Jews have obeyed these Scriptures, rested on this Sabbath, kept the correct days in the correct manner on this Calendar, is an entirely different question.

There is no need to follow the Jews in their rebellion. Stephen continues, "Our fathers would not obey, but thrust him from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt." In rejecting Moses, they rejected Christ whom he represented.

If you reject Moses today, if you reject the Oracles given through Moses, you also reject the One who sent him. The overwhelming majority of those of you who read this had ancestors who did reject Moses and Christ as their leaders and were condemned to die in the wilderness.

The real reason now becomes apparent why it is so hard for us to turn our hearts and minds to the true way that

God has given to us. We have inherited this same stiffnecked rebellious nature. Why not get back to the truth and then remain firm in it.

We Answer the Questions

Doesn't the faint crescent of the new moon become visible at an earlier time to the observer in California than to an observer in Jerusalem?

Yes, it does and for a number of reasons.

Mainly that the day travels from east to west across the globe. A day starts on the eastern coast of China or Australia (or even earlier with the islands just to the west of the International Date Line). It requires 24 hours to make a complete circuit arriving once more at the International Date Line. The moment of sunset thus travels westward across the earth. It would occur in Jerusalem 10 hours earlier than in California, which is 10,000 miles farther west.

This 10 hour difference would allow the moon to move 5 degrees eastward through the background of stars away from the sun's position. The crescent of the new moon could thus be seen one day earlier by California observers about 40 per cent of the time. What are God's instructions? If the people of Jerusalem, where God's permanent headquarters are to be, cannot see this crescent of the moon following sunset, then the entire world east and west of that city must delay beginning the month till the following sunset.

This is the ordinance as it was given by God. We are not free to begin earlier because of the way we see it.

Another 6 hour difference as to the date for the new moon is introduced by the practice of delaying the ending of a day till midnight. Your almanac and Roman calendar "new moon" dates follow this pagan practice. This factor alone would shift the date of the new moon one day earlier 25 per cent of the time. Yet this pagan source is the one that many of you have used to check God's Sacred Calendar. Isn't it time we shift our allegiance to God's Oracles and away from the customs and terminology of the heathen?

Still another factor makes this crescent of the new moon visible earlier in California. Just as the path of an eclipse of the sun moves from west to east across the earth so the moment at which the crescent would become visible (if the observer's time were just after sunset) also moves from west to east across the globe and for the same reason. Up to 6½ hours are required for this moment to cross the earth.

Thus while the day comes to us from the east, the month (or the moment the month might begin) sweeps across the

earth from the west. It is natural for the western observer to want to begin his month too early. But it is *God's Calendar* and *His month* based on that calendar that we ought to follow.

A Difference in Latitude

Another question: Does one's latitude also make a difference in his ability to see this crescent of the new moon in the west just after the sun goes down?

Yes, this also affects the problem on all except two days of the year, the day of the spring equinox (March 21) and of the autumnal equinox (September 23).

On these two days the sunset line runs straight north and south on the surface of the earth from south pole to the north. Latitude thus makes no difference in sunset time on these two days. Sunset would be six o'clock (sun time) for everyone. (The fact that standard time is commonly used for an entire time belt and is based on mean solar time would mean that the time shown by our clocks might vary up to 50 minutes and in certain localities over an hour from sun time.)

During the summer months the sunset line curves toward the northeast with a portion of the north polar region in continual sunlight. During the winter months the sunset line curves toward the northwest with a portion of the north polar region in darkness 24 hours a day. (These statements are for the northern hemisphere only. The conditions are reversed south of the equator.)

The moment at which an observer at any point on the earth might see the crescent of a new moon and want to begin his month varies widely. Even the factor of whether the moon is north or south of the ecliptic, slightly affects the ability of the observer to see the crescent, especially in the extreme latitudes.

Conjunction or Crescent

A third question: Is the new moon noted on the Roman calendar or in an almanac or astronomy book the same term as the new moon on God's Sacred Calendar? Not at all. The term "new moon" from these secular sources refers to the conjunction (or molad) of the sun and moon rather than the visible crescent which could first be seen about six hours later.

The astronomer's "new moon" is the moment an eclipse of the sun might occur. (The moon is usually above or below the sun rather than in front of it. Thus eclipses do not occur at each of these "new moons".) But remember that this conjunction occurs at least 6 hours before any observer anywhere can see the new moon crescent with his eyes.

God's new moon on the other hand is the beginning day of a month, a day that begins at sunset at least 6 hours

after this conjunction. Both the conjunction and sunset must be calculated for the Jerusalem area not for our local area. Then the first day of the new month moves west across the earth.

Delay for Preparation

A fourth question: Isn't the first day of God's Sacred Calendar sometimes delayed for special reasons?

Yes. One reason for delaying the beginning of a month is to prevent the day of Atonement (Annual Sabbath) from falling on a Friday which is a preparation day. Another is to prevent any of the autumn annual festivals from falling on a Sunday. All feasts which follow Pentecost represent the *second part* of God's Plan. They must not fall on Sunday which would represent the *first part* of God's Plan which began 1900 years ago.

Timed for the Future

A final question: Don't the Jews themselves admit that the computation of the length of the month and length of the year upon which this Sacred Calendar is based are not quite in perfect accord with the present day figures provided by the very exacting measurements of our modern astronomers?

Yes, this is true. It would be more surprising if it were not true. There are slow accumulative changes in the length of the month and year over centuries of time.

This minute variation which makes 19 Sacred Years slightly longer than 19 astronomical years is a very important clue to chronology. But that subject is too long for this article! This variation, however, does not affect the mathematical calculation of new moons.

Is it unusual that the One who planned the Sacred Calendar should be one step ahead of both the astronomers of the time of Moses and the present twentieth century? With a perfect understanding of the movements of the heavens as well as the needs of man, God looked forward over a six thousand year period and prepared a Calendar that would keep in harmony with the heavens throughout the entire time.

It was this system that was restored to the children of Israel as they were being freed from bondage and it is this system that is preserved for us today by God through the Jewish people.

No need exists for any change or alteration in the Sacred Calendar prior to Christ's return and we look for no such change from the Jewish people. The published dates of the Jews and of our Sacred Calendar which cover the entire twentieth century are absolutely correct, God's people will continue to follow them.

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CALENDAR

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Now We Ask You Questions

Now it is our turn to *ask you to prove all things*. Have *you* already proved that the Sacred Calendar which we publish is identical with that preserved by God through the Jewish people?

Are the ministers in the Church of God able, in due time, to clear up puzzling questions and seeming contradictions about the calendar? Do they "read in the book of the law of God distinctly, and give the sense and cause the people to understand the reading?"