

THE STONES CRY OUT

THE CHANGING OF
TIMES AND SEASONS

PART 1

JOSEPH F DUMOND

**Yes, I said I would shut up and
go away if you can prove me
wrong about when the
Sabbatical and Jubilee Years
are.**

**I am the same ministry,
Sightedmoon.com,
that has been saying since 2005,
if nothing happened in 2020,
I would shut down my ministry.**

**Something BIG happened in
2020!**

COVID Happened!

**And It Shut Down the Entire
World!**

**We then began to warn you
about 2023.**

**Again, another huge event took
place: The October 7 slaughter
in Israel.**

**The Tombstones are crying out.
The Sabbatical and Jubilee
Years are the Key to
understanding all end-time
prophecy. Why is no one paying
more attention to them?**

**We have over 40 Tombstones
that are Crying Out.**

WHY DOES NO ONE LISTEN?

**We have a Total of 78 Proofs
Showing When the Sabbatical
and Jubilee Years Are in History**

**The Stones are Crying Out
Just Before Our Redeemer
Comes:**

**Our King Is Coming!
Our Messiah Is Coming!**

28 And saying these things, He went in front, going up to Jerusalem. 29 And it happened as He drew near Bethphage and Bethany, toward the mount called Mount of Olives, He sent two of the disciples, 30 saying, Go into the village across from you, and having entered, you will find a colt tied up, on which no one of men has yet sat. Untie it and bring it. 31 And if anyone asks you, Why are you untying it? You will say this to him, Because the Lord has need of it. 32 And going, those who were sent found as He had said to them. 33 And as they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, Why are you untying the colt? 34 And they said, The Lord has need of him. 35 And they brought him to Jesus. And they threw their garments on the colt. And they set Jesus on it. 36 And as He went, they spread their clothes in the way. 37 And when He had come near, even now at the descent of the Mount of Olives, all the multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works which they had seen, 38 saying, Blessed is the King coming in the name of the Lord! Peace in Heaven and glory in the highest! 39 And some of the Pharisees from the crowd said to Him, Teacher, rebuke your disciples. 40 And He answered and said to them,

I tell you that if these should be silent, the stones would cry out. (Luke 19:28-40)

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Dedication

As I have done in all my books; I will dedicate this work to God, the Creator of all things whose name is Yehovah. His true name has been removed from the Bible 6,827 times. I will be using His great and awesome name, and I will not apologize for using it.

It is only by His grace and His mercy that I have come to understand all the things I have been able to share in all my books. This book should have been the first book I wrote as it explains each of the Sabbatical years and how they all align with one another.

From the time Yehovah began to call me in 1981, He has led me into an ever-deepening understanding of His truths. This understanding began to snowball between 2004-2005 and has gained unprecedented traction since. The more I have read, meditated upon, and obediently put into practice what He has shown me, the more faithfully He has revealed to me profound insights from His Holy Word. Because of this, I consider myself especially blessed.

I would also like to make a special point to once again, thank my wife, my children, and my grandchildren who have not understood my passion for history and to understand this most misunderstood book. At great personal cost, I have made every effort to be able to prove beyond all doubt—and in the face of all objections—the veracity of the truths to be gleaned from this book. That much I have been able to do. But most importantly, I never once stopped loving all of you through it all and sincerely hope that one day, you too, will pick up Yehovah's Word, read it from cover to cover, and then take all the time that is needed to understand these other points as well.

Acknowledgments

I would like to now take the time to thank the following individuals, in no particular order, for their invaluable assistance—both individually and as a team effort—in not only making this book possible, but also, in making all key precepts in this book come to life:

- In the summer of 2023, I discovered a footnote in one of the tombstone articles which told me about still more tombstones. At that time I was busy trying to complete **The 10 Days of Awe** book, and a number of people were asking me how they could help.

So, I asked Ella Morgan, along with Adam Parker, Janet Chappel, and Eileen Espinosa to look for this manuscript and see if they could find any more tombstone dates, we did not already know about.

Within three weeks Ella wrote back to say they had 100 tombstones and out of them there are about 16 we did not currently know about. I was ecstatic. The second book in this two-book series, in part, is a result of their research. I want to have all the proofs in one place so everyone in the future can find them for their own research and to add any new discoveries yet to be discovered.

- I want to thank Adam Parker who has sorted out and documented all the tombstones in the charts we will include in book II.
- Once again Pauline Reardon has designed and produced another beautiful cover for this book and the next one. First impressions are what the cover is all about and Pauline does great work in this regard, drawing the eyes in to the subject at hand. We are indebted to her once again.
- Eileen Espinosa is another brilliant lady who has been assisting me in this book, as well as with respect to the previous one. I want to also thank her for her amazing research skills in uncovering things I had no idea anyone knew existed. She has instrumentally assisted in many of the word connections and word discoveries in this book. We are indebted to her for her valued assistance in digging up so many gems. I also must

thank her for her most generous foreword she has written about this work.

- This work is going to quote at length a number of other authors in both the subject matter and via footnotes. I am doing this to present you with the most accurate information about the calendar and the Sabbatical and Jubilee years all in one place. I must thank Dr. Nehemia Gordon, of nehemiaswall.com, Natan Lawrence of hoshanarabbah.org, Qadesh La Yahweh Press, of Yahweh.org, Schalk and Elsa Klee, of setapartpeople.com, Brian C. Hoeck, of truthontheweb.org and Larry and June Acheson, of ponder scripture.org for all their research some of which we will be sharing with you.
- James Relf is yet another vitally important member of our team who oversees the technology side of our organization by making everything work smoothly and seamlessly online so we can continue to share, without interruption, what we have with all of you. In addition to all the tech support he provides, he has also become a good friend and confidant, allowing me to vent and debrief with him whenever I need to.
- I also want to thank those who faithfully help to sustain and support this work on a monthly basis allowing me to travel around the world presenting these truths to small groups who could not otherwise afford to have me come. Thank you so very much.
- Finally, I want to individually thank you, the reader. You have, in earnest, undertaken the monumental task of (and a genuine interest in) setting out to gain a thorough understanding of the Sabbatical and Jubilee Years and everything they represent and reveal. You are, for what may be the very first time, discovering these most precious pearls of knowledge, applying them to your lives, and then sharing these revelations with others. And for that, I cannot thank you enough and am forever in your debt. You now know: the Sabbatical and Jubilee Years are the KEY to understanding End-Times' Prophecy and with these two books, you can now prove when they are overwhelmingly. So AGAIN, thank YOU!

Foreword

Joseph (*God shall add to*) Frederick (*peaceful rulership*) Dumond (*of the world*), a Nobel Peace Prize nominee and author, gave me the immeasurable honor of dotting the i's and crossing the t's in his latest book, **The Stones Cry Out**. Joseph demonstrates his expertise on all the calendars being promoted today and how each one developed over the past two millennia. Little by little, deception and misunderstandings crept in to distort the Biblical calendar. The confusion that developed in the calendar also spread to the Jubilee years. **Part 1** of this book explains history chronologically, so you can understand when, how and why the Sabbatical and Jubilee years became so corrupted. **Part 2** lists and explains every known Sabbatical and Jubilee year with 78 (and counting!) undeniable historical facts and hard evidence.

By reading this book, you will arm yourself with the necessary information and knowledge from the scriptures to properly identify the Biblical yearly calendar from the counterfeits, such as the false Hillel, Enoch and Zadok calendars. We need the sighted crescent moon to begin the months, barley to start the year, and sometimes a 13th month to meet Yehovah at the proper times for the sacred days and years. The reason for the urgency to publish the first half of this book is the recent conversion of many brethren to the Zadok calendar. The information in this book will allow you to detect any deception and defend the truth with ease. You will also definitively prove the Sabbatical and Jubilee-year calendar. True liberty and freedom are found in keeping the Sabbath years and the yearly calendar according to the written Torah—with nothing added or subtracted.

Please take a stroll down memory lane and contemplate all the amazing truths that Joseph has unlocked for us these past two decades: the 120-year Jubilee calendar; Daniel's 70 weeks; the days of Noah, Lot and Joseph; the seven-year cycles of judgment; the day and hour no one knows; and all end-time prophecy. He nailed 2020 as "the middle of the week" and the subsequent 1290 days—even warning the State of Israel before the horrific and violent attack on October 7, 2023. He was the only one in the world trying to warn people of something big about to happen!

The contributions that Joseph has given to mankind cannot be overstated. His restored Sabbatical and Jubilee-year calendar allows

us to once again turn our hearts to our Father and keep the holy years at their proper times. He is also the only one showing us prophetic messages according to the Jubilee cycles! Everything he has taught has now become common knowledge.

Joseph comes from a long line of Sabbath-keeping Huguenots from the late 1500s, who have passed the torch of faith down to today. Their family name, LeMaistre, indicates they came from the High Priestly line, who were called “The Master.” One of his ancestors in the 1600s even had the name of Eliazar Rigaud—a most non-Catholic name. Also, one of his ancestral branches from Ireland is the McGowans—another form of Kohen (High Priest)—who are descendants of the Kohen line.

Dr. Nehemia Shalom Gordon, a Hebrew scholar and author, is also restoring the barley to begin the sacred year and the sighting of the moon to begin each month, along with researching and revealing the name of our God, Yehovah! The Gordons are descendants of the Kohen family lineage; the Gordon name is also associated with Dumond’s DNA haplotype R1b. These two cousins have been the most instrumental on the planet—hands down—as gifts to the world through their restorative ministries in these last days. These are the Two Witnesses, I believe, who have come in the spirit of Elijah!

The 21 days the angel was held up in Daniel 10 are a prophecy for 21 years. Yehovah showed Joseph these Jubilee prophecies at Passover in 2005, after which he started his ministry; 21 years later brings us to 2026—the year the Two Witnesses will begin their prophetic ministry. Before 2026, both Dumond and Gordon have been restoring all things as Yeshua said they would be. Gordon has been shouting—warning—since 1996, and Dumond since 2005.

The Philippine people have also recognized Joseph as a set-apart prophet and presented him with a Certificate of Ordination on August 31, 2022. He continues to share with them the commandments and make them ready for their special end-time role. Do you also recognize Elijah today?

Eileen Espinosa, July 2024

Preface

Shalom and welcome back once again.

Many of you will have already read many of our other books and by now you should completely understand just how much the Jubilee Cycles reveal End-Time Prophecy. You should now know “***The Key To Understanding ALL Prophecy Is the Jubilee Cycles.***” It is only through the Jubilee Cycles—combined with a deep, intimate understanding of each of the Holy Days found in Leviticus 23—that you can truly understand End-Times’ Prophecy. You are no longer taking shots in the dark but are, like me, able to connect the dots and inerrantly string together the clues given to us in prophecy.

At the back of the second book in this series, you will not only find all 120 Jubilee cycles from the creation of Adam up to our time now in 2024, but also every Sabbatical and Jubilee year going to the end of the 7th millennium as well.

You will have a record for the entire 7th millennium of when the Sabbatical and Jubilee years are, and historical proofs from history to know exactly when they are.

We are also going to have to explain—so that you can understand the two calendar systems in use—when they developed and how they were implemented in order to understand some of the tombstone dates we are going to present to you. The lack of understanding about the calendars is why many of the Jubilee experts dismissed so many of the facts they had before them. We will explain this with each stone so that you also will understand.

As we list each historical fact that contributes to the overall understanding of exactly when the Sabbatical and Jubilee years are, we will by necessity have to explain how the calendar went awry as both the calendar, and the Sabbatical years are connected to one another.

Some proofs will be undeniable, while others will be weak if they have to stand on their own.

It is with a great sense of pride that I share with you what I have been able to document and what we currently know about the Sabbatical and Jubilee proofs in our possession.

Ladies and Gentlemen, this book should have actually been the first book I presented. When I began to understand the Sabbatical and Jubilee years in 2005, at that time I only had 11 Sabbatical years as a

reference as provided by Qadesh La Yahweh Press. From just these 11, I was able to prove a second Jubilee year. Considering we only knew about one prior to this discovery, I was excited to be able to prove it in the chronology. With just these 12 proofs, I have come to understand all the prophecies I have shared with you over the years in all our books.

The Prophecies of Abraham, written in 2010, was my first attempt at explaining the deep meanings hidden in the Jubilee cycles. So many people could not understand what I was saying at that time, as no one was teaching this, so they had no basis upon which to build. This required me to then write **Remembering the Sabbatical Year of 2016**, published in 2013.

I wrote this book as simply as possible, answering every question being raised about the Sabbatical and Jubilee years and how to prove when they are.

To explain the rest of what people could not understand in **The Prophecies of Abraham**, I then wrote **The 2300 Days of Hell**, published in 2014, which dealt with the 70 weeks of Daniel and the midst of the week being the year 2020. The 70 weeks are 70 Jubilee cycles which you can prove with the Jubilee charts and once you do, end-time prophecy jumps off the pages of your Bible at you. This book was and is key to unlocking the timing of end-time events, once Daniel 9:24-27 is understood as Jubilee Cycles and not weeks.

I was not trying to set any dates. But once you understand the Jubilee cycles the dates just jump off the pages at you. The tsunami of people yelling *no man can know the day or the hour* grew, until finally James Relf and Pauline Reardon, part of the sightedmoon.com team, told me I had to write another book to explain this Hebrew expression no one understood. After writing **The 2300 Days of Hell**, I did not want to write another book. After all, the cost to publish these three books already had cost me almost US\$40,000, and my book sales at that time certainly did not cover the cost or justify writing any more books. But the voices of opposition grew until 2019 when I then addressed this Hebrew idiom and wrote **It Was A Riddle Not A Command**, explaining the thief in the night as well as what Yehshua spoke: how no man could know the day or the hour. He was actually telling those who obey and keep the laws—those who understand the Holy Days—

exactly when He was going to come back, as well as when the judgment on the world would begin.

This book then caused still more people to think about the Rapture. Because so many did not grasp this, I then set about explaining how the Rapture was a Jewish ideology found in the scriptures of Leviticus 23, but not fully explained until Yehshua came out of the grave in 31 A.D. **The Mystery of the Jewish Rapture 2033** was then published in 2021.

Again, all of these books, all of this understanding was only possible because of the understanding gained from the knowledge revealed through the Sabbatical and Jubilee cycles. It truly is the foundation or KEY to understanding all end-time prophecy.

Even as I wrote **The Mystery of the Jewish Rapture 2033**, the seeds of our next three books had already germinated in my mind. As I explained these books each week in my weekly newsletter, again I discovered how little people understood these points. I began to write one book and I soon realized it had to be at least three and should have been four. But we managed to squeeze the three books into **The Elijah Trilogy**, beginning with **The Restoration of All Things** published in 2022.

This book explained all those things that had been lost since Yehshua walked the earth, and the very same things Elijah would be restoring at the end of this age. Everyone is looking for Jesus and no one is looking for Elijah who must come first.

The revelations that we explained in **The 2300 Days of Hell** warned us that something big was about to happen in 2020. We knew this in 2005. What we did not know was that the curse coming in 2020 was the plague of COVID. The curse for this cycle was war, plague and famine. And I had focused on the war aspect. I had assumed the word for sword meant war. In 2022 I was told to look at that word by my friend Judith Dennis and was blown away to see it actually meant dry place or parched lands—exactly the very thing happening around the world since 2018, with many major rivers around the world drying up in 2022. But the sword aspect of this 4th Sabbatical cycle reared its ugly head in the Shmita year of 2023, once again showing our understanding for this 4th Sabbatical cycle was in fact correct. We now stand on the cusp of WW III since the end of 2023 with Russia invading and continuing to attack Ukraine since February 2022. The European Union

along with the USA under the umbrella of N.A.T.O. are supporting Ukraine and pushing back the Russians. Then on October 7, 2023, Hamas attacked and slaughtered 1400 civilians in Israel, after which Israel went into Gaza and vowed to utterly destroy Hamas. This has brought on antisemitic attacks and protests around the world with Hezbollah, Syria, Iraq, the Houthi and Iran all taking shots at Israel during this time of crisis. These events have revealed the four horsemen of Revelation—the white, red, pale and black horses riding around the Western world wearing the Palestinian flag.¹

These events galvanized those powers mentioned in the Book of Revelation, coming in the Great Tribulation, namely Russia, China and Iran.

Even as I wrote these books, an evil had taken hold of the messianic brethren as well as most of the world. In **The Restoration of All Things**, I had explained how Simon Magus had syncretised the truth he had gained from the Apostles with the ancient Babylonian religion and magic, forming what became known as The Universal Church, now called the Catholic Church, from which all these other modern churches have descended. As I wrote **The Abomination That Makes Desolate**, I kept this syncretism in mind showing the brethren how they, at the end of this age, were also syncretising the truth of the Torah with pagan ideas and false teachings. The brethren were now making the false teachings their main teaching points and they had relegated the Torah to the back burners of the pulpit. Many do not like to be told they are sinning, and they grew angry with me over this book.

Then in 2023 and yet again in 2024, three major Messianic groups switched from both the Hillel calendar and the crescent moon and barley calendar to begin to follow the Zadok calendar—the Zadok calendar being nothing more than an improved Enoch and Jubilee calendar. Because of this development I felt it necessary to publish this

¹ Even Mosab Hassan Yousef - the son of a senior Hamas leader! - has continuously warned the West about Hamas:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ndDBMHJh4>

But I know people who, after listening to Mosab, still don't see. It reminds me of this scripture:

31 And he said to him, If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded, even though one rose from the dead. (Luke 16:31)

If people won't even hear the son of Hamas, they will not be persuaded by anyone!

book now, in order to expose where these false teachings have come from. I could not wait until I had completed all the Sabbatical year entries. This is why we have made this a two-part series, so you can have access to the first half explaining about the calendar now.

Knowing just how close we are to the end of this age, it should not surprise us, and yet it does, that many will fall away. Paul warned us it was coming:

7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already working, only he is now holding back until it comes out of the midst. 8 And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the breath of His mouth and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming, 9 whose coming is according to the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, 10 and with all deceit of unrighteousness in those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, so that they might be saved. 11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, 12 so that all those who do not believe the truth, but delight in unrighteousness, might be condemned. (2 Thessalonians 2:7-12)

As Elijah said to the people in his day, I say to you now: If the conspiracy teachings are true, if the Zadok calendar is true and from God then worship them; but if not, then return to the Torah and begin anew to worship Yehovah using the Torah only.

Our third book in **The Elijah Trilogy** was **The 10 Days of Awe**, which is a deep look at the time from the Feast of Trumpets to the Day of Atonement. More specifically, they are the concluding 10 days of the 40 Days of Repentance which begin on the 1st day of the 6th month. Instead of days, this 10-day period is actually 10 years of judgment beginning in 2024 until 2033 when Satan will be locked away on the Day of Atonement.

Those having read all three of our books in **The Elijah Trilogy** now have a firm grasp on exactly where we are in these very last days of the 120 Jubilee cycles. If you have not already done so, you also need to read **The 2300 Days Of Hell, It Was A Riddle, Not A Command**, and **The Mystery of the Jewish Rapture 2033**.

Each book individually—and all aforementioned books collectively—explain how the Holy Days reveal a clear understanding of each of the major events Yehovah is about to set in motion or has already brought to pass in His plan of salvation. These Holy Days and

Sabbatical years are found in Leviticus 23 & 25 and are explained throughout the Bible.

Yehovah, the God of Israel, is directly involved in the affairs of His chosen and the world as we speak—and in a manner the nightly news can clearly attest to.

Yehshua spoke of the Parable of the 10 Virgins in Matthew, Chapter 25 and how sadly mistaken the foolish were in assuming they were ready for the great Wedding Feast. Five of them were shocked to learn they were not ready at all upon arriving late, only to be turned away. They even went to buy more oil on what they should have known was a Holy Day, the Feast of Trumpets, which is the day the Bridegroom is going to come on. This act alone demonstrates how they did not know the One they called their Groom. In the pages of this book and all our books, you will learn how to discern between the foolish and the wise ones.

The Feast of Trumpets requires you to be ready for a future day and hour that no one can know. The good news is, Paul assures us we will at least know the precise season. Therefore, there is a sense in which we actually do know when the Messiah will come. The wise virgins knew. They knew because they understood the meanings of each Holy Day and the Jubilee cycles. It is in the Jubilee cycles that the end-time prophetic patterns are revealed. The foolish virgins never bothered to learn of such things and only at the very last moment when they realized they were not ready, did they then seek the oil—albeit in vain—that they so unequivocally needed to be able to be welcomed by the King and enter therein.

As we enter this time of judging, which we state begins in 2024, there are more and more who blatantly copy those things we have written in our books, claiming that they are the ones who discovered these truths. They then urge you not to buy our books or learn the truth here, but rather go and buy their books which are filled with all the conspiracies you can think of. They have syncretised what we have taught with every conspiracy out there, polluting Yehovah's truths once again. I will leave it up to you to judge which ones are from Yehovah, and which ones are spun off from Satan.

We are now going to list every known Sabbatical and Jubilee year chronologically for you so that they are all in one place. We will also list all the sources in our appendage at the back of the book so everyone can have all this information here in one place.

Once you know when the Sabbatical and Jubilee years are and can easily prove them, then we can begin to keep the Shmita in worship of Yehovah. Everyone around the world would be able to worship Him at the proper times all together. We must keep the Appointed Times at the right time, all the time. Once you have plotted them out then you will realize there is only one way to count them.

We are going to quote large sections of Qadesh La Yahweh Press and their excellent research. They were the original ones I discovered who had correctly identified the first 11 Sabbatical years, which we then began to build upon. Since 2005 when I first learned these truths from Qadesh La Yahweh Press, I have now accumulated approximately 80 Sabbatical and Jubilee years in total from scriptures, history and artifacts.

I am now excited to share with you all the proofs I have found and set them alongside Qadesh La Yahweh Press' discoveries so you the researcher now have a complete reference all in one place.

Introduction

As mentioned in our Preface, we have released this book as Part 1 now instead of waiting to complete all the Sabbatical year dates.

Originally, I was only going to explain each Sabbatical and Jubilee year date and how to prove them. It was very quickly determined I could not do that without repeatedly explaining how the times and seasons had been changed. In fact, they have been so confused today that it seems almost impossible to figure out what happened. With an historical review starting with the Hasmonaeans and then following this history all the way to Rambam, it is possible to understand how, when and why times and seasons were changed.

25 And he shall speak words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and plot to change times and laws. And they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and one-half time. (Daniel 7:25)

Many assume this to be a warning about the Sunday law or the changing of the Sabbath via Constantine's edict in 325 A.D. Few will consider what we are about to show you in this historical recount, exactly how much was changed and when. Although I am primarily writing about the Sabbatical years, they are intricately connected to the calendar which was also affected over time and not by Emperor Constantine.

I just quoted 2 Thessalonians and must remind you again, that these changes come about because they did not believe the truth when they had it, so Yehovah gave them over to the lie they were and are today entertaining. That is correct. Yehovah is going to send these people strong delusional thinking, until they get their fill of the false teachings because they are more excited about these silly ideas than they are about learning the Torah and studying His words.

11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, 12 so that all those who do not believe the truth, but delight in unrighteousness, might be condemned. (2 Thessalonians 2:11- 12)

When we read about the five foolish virgins, we are told they too are workers of unrighteousness.

*21 Not everyone who says to Me, Lord! Lord! shall enter the kingdom of Heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in Heaven. 22 Many will say to Me in that day, Lord! Lord! Did we not prophesy in Your name, and through Your name throw out demons, and through Your name do many wonderful works? 23 And then I will say to them **I never knew you!** Depart from Me, those working lawlessness!* (Matthew 7:21-23)

We are going to search out this history starting with the Hasmonaeans, to discover year by year how they slowly moved away from the truth. In the same way an airplane being off course by just one degree can and will end up hundreds and hundreds of miles off course the further in time it travels. Each little increment of change contributes to the overall error that is plainly seen in retrospect only at the end.

As these truths are revealed to you, make a promise to yourself that you will return to the original Torah set out in the first five books—that you will begin to obey Yehovah in celebrating His Moedim when He said to do so—the weekly Sabbaths, the 7 annual Holy Day as well as the Sabbatical and Jubilee years.

Spotting the Counterfeit

3 Even as I begged you to remain at Ephesus, when I was going to Macedonia, that you might charge some that they teach no other doctrine, 4 nor to give heed to fables and endless genealogies (which provide doubts rather than the nurture of God in faith). 5 But the end of the commandment is love out of a pure heart, and a good conscience, and faith unfeigned, 6 from which some, having swerved, have turned aside to foolish talking, 7 desiring to be teachers of the law, neither understanding what they say nor that which they affirm. 8 But we know that the law is good if a man uses it lawfully, 9 knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous one, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, 10 for fornicators, for homosexuals, for slave-traders, for liars, for perjurers, and anything else that is contrary to sound doctrine, 11 according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust. (1 Timothy 1:3-11)

Before we can present the historical facts and our evidence, it is necessary to understand how the confusion surrounding the Sabbatical and Jubilee years began. This is also true of the calendar issues. Once this is comprehended, once you grasp how the changes began and with whom, then and only then will you be able to dismiss those erroneous teachings and focus on the true facts of history.

John MacArthur wrote in his 1994 book, **Reckless Faith: When the Church Loses Its Will To Discern**,² the following:

“Federal agents don’t learn to spot counterfeit money by studying the counterfeits. They study the genuine bills until they master the look of the real thing. Then when they see the bogus, they recognize it.”

Countless other teachers have used this same explanation since, and they and I do because it is an obvious fact. To spot the counterfeit you must first learn what the real McCoy looks like.

² Reckless Faith: When the Church Loses Its Will To Discern, by John MacArthur 1994 <https://www.amazon.com/Reckless-Faith-Church-Loses-Discern/dp/0891077936>

In this book, I am going to present you with the historical proofs, identifying all the currently known Sabbatical and Jubilee years.

To unravel these truths, it is necessary to understand how the Hebrew calendar caused these artifacts to be hidden by what appears to be confusing information that did not make sense. Even some of the chronological experts who had examined some of the tombstones, which we will soon share with you, dismissed these artifacts because those “experts” had been deceived by the false narrative they had fallen into—yes, and they also dismissed other facts because they did not match the theory these experts subscribed to.

The false narratives they had been deceived by are the same ones most today, assume always were—that the Hillel calendar has been in existence since the creation of Adam. This is not true and causes many to be confused about history when they assume the Hillel calendar can be used in historical calculations. The Hillel calendar is a man-made mechanism of dating holy days created in 358 C.E., that is still in common use today which is often in error by over a month. It is a counterfeit—a very good counterfeit, but a counterfeit, nonetheless.

I know this may shock many of you and if you will allow me, I will show you the facts and then let you decide. We are going to present all the facts, even those that do not match our understanding. We will not hide anything that does not fit.

It is necessary to go through the calendar issues as controversial as they now are, because in so doing we will be able to show you how they influenced and changed the understanding of the Sabbatical and Jubilee years.

We are now about to begin to look at the original calendar as shown to us by Yehovah, but I must first explain some things that are causing some of the confusion.

I must also warn you that there are at least three people, and I am hearing about a fourth person, who have taken the liberty to copy our work word for word and then claim it as their own work, given to them directly from Jesus himself. They then twist it here and there, mixing it with many conspiratorial teachings to suit their own misleading doctrines. Their only purpose is to gain a following after themselves and do not credit me as their source by which others can come and do their own research. Be aware of those who Paul says ought not to be teachers.

The Maccabees

I was about to begin with Genesis and explain how Yehovah has not changed, but then asked myself the questions some of you are asking and quickly realized how many of you get sidelined with so much information. Let's work through the disinformation slowly and methodically so that you can understand.

First of all, Yehovah does not change. He did not command for the Sabbath to be kept and then later change His mind. He did not create Sabbaths, Holy Days, and Sabbatical and Jubilee years that were only to be kept by the Jews in the land of Israel. He has been and is the same today as He was in the beginning, and He is never going to change. And neither does His calendar.

5 And I will come near you to judgment. And I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those who extort from the hired laborer's wages, and turning away the widow, and the orphan, the alien, and not fearing Me, says Jehovah of Hosts. 6 For I am Jehovah, I change not. Because of this you sons of Jacob are not destroyed. 7 From the days of your fathers, you have turned aside from My statutes, and have not kept them. Return to Me, and I will return to you, says Jehovah of Hosts. But you say. In what way shall we return? (Malachi 3:5-7)

7 Remember those leading you, who have spoken to you the Word of God, whose faith follow, considering the end of their conduct: 8 Jesus Christ the same yesterday and today and forever. (yesterday is hayah; today is hoveh; forever is yihyeh = combined: Yehovah) 9 Do not be carried about with different and strange doctrines, for it is good for the heart to be established with grace, not with foods, in which those who have walked in them were not helped. (Hebrews 13:7-9)

49 There shall be one law to the native, and to the visitor that stays among you. (Exodus 12:49)

22 One judgment shall be for you whether an alien or a native; for I am Jehovah your God. (Leviticus 24:22)

29 And you shall have one law for him who acts through ignorance; for him that is native among the sons of Israel and for the alien that resides among them. (Numbers 15:29)

29 Or is He the God of the Jews only, and not also of the nations? Yes, of the nations also, (Romans 3:29)

How did the calendar get changed?

To answer this, we must go back to the time when Alexander the Great conquered the entire known world and came to Jerusalem in 332 B.C., after defeating the Persian Empire. The leaders in Jerusalem informed Alexander how Daniel the prophet, around 600 B.C., had written about how the Greeks would be the third nation to conquer the world.³ The Jews at this time were enamoured at seeing Alexander and this prophecy coming true before their eyes. The prophecy of Daniel 7:6 did not fully come to pass until Alexander died and his empire divided amongst his four generals.

Greek culture, governance, religion, education and philosophy began to spread and was adopted throughout the empire. Upon the death of Alexander in 323 B.C., his empire was divided up between his four generals in the Wars of Diadochi (Diadochi meaning Successors), during which Seleucus I Nicator founded the Seleucid Empire in the region of Syria and Judea. Judea had Greek culture over them for about 165 years. Consider just how long a time this is. This would be comparable to us looking back to a similar length of time from about 1860 to 2024.

After 165 years of Greek rule, in the year of 167 B.C., Antiochus IV Epiphanes outlawed all Jewish customs, resulting in the Maccabean Revolt, led by the Hasmonaean family.

We can read in 2 Maccabees 4:7-10:9, how they came to power after many successful victories over the Seleucid Empire. Many of the family members were killed during this time, but with victory came rulership over the nation of Judah. During this time, the Maccabees combined the role of King with High Priest.

However, not everyone was happy with Hasmonaean rule. The Kingship in Israel was to be held by a descendant of King David's tribe, Judah. During this period, the high priest had to derive from the

³ Daniel 2:1-49 and again in Daniel 7:1-28

descendants of Zadok, the last high priest under the reign of Solomon. The Hasmonaeans could not claim to be of Davidic line or of the Aaronic line.

Far too many people focus on the lighting of the menorah and how it supposedly stayed lit for eight days with only one day's worth of oil. Searching through the four books of the Maccabees, you will discover not one person recorded such an event. This story was only added when the Talmud was written about 180 A.D. or almost 400 years after the events.⁴

Here is the account in the Books of Maccabees:

⁴¹ Then Judas detailed men to fight against those in the citadel until he had cleansed the sanctuary. ⁴² He chose blameless priests devoted to the law, ⁴³ and they cleansed the sanctuary and removed the defiled stones to an unclean place. ⁴⁴ They deliberated what to do about the altar of burnt offering, which had been profaned. ⁴⁵ And they thought it best to tear it down, so that it would not be a lasting shame to them that the nations had defiled it. So they tore down the altar ⁴⁶ and stored the stones in a convenient place on the temple hill until a prophet should come to tell what to do with them. ⁴⁷ Then they took unhewn^[e] stones, as the law directs, and built a new altar like the former one. ⁴⁸ They also rebuilt the sanctuary and the interior of the temple and consecrated the courts. ⁴⁹ They made new holy vessels and brought the lampstand, the altar of incense, and the table into the temple. ⁵⁰ Then they offered incense on the altar and lit the lamps on the lampstand, and these gave light in the temple. ⁵¹ They placed the bread on the table and hung up the curtains. Thus they finished all the work they had undertaken.

⁵² Early in the morning on the twenty-fifth day of the ninth month, which is the month of Chislev, in the one hundred forty-eighth year, ⁵³ they rose and offered sacrifice, as the law directs, on the new altar of burnt offering that they had built. ⁵⁴ At the very season and on the very day that the nations had profaned it, it was dedicated with

⁴ Nehemia Gordon also says it was made up after 70 CE:

The alleged miracle of 8 days of oil was not originally part of Hanukkah. It is not mentioned in the two books of Maccabees written shortly after the events. It was only made up after the altar was destroyed by the Romans in 70 CE, to give the holiday new purpose. The real miracle of Hanukkah is the victory of a band of ill-equipped and untrained farmers and priests defeating a world super-power that had tried to force them to eat pig and give up circumcision and the Sabbath.

<https://www.nehemiaswall.com/hanukkah-fact-fiction>

songs and harps and lutes and cymbals. ⁵⁵ All the people fell on their faces and worshiped and blessed heaven, who had prospered them. ⁵⁶ So they celebrated the dedication of the altar for eight days and joyfully offered burnt offerings; they offered a sacrifice of well-being and a thanksgiving offering. ⁵⁷ They decorated the front of the temple with golden crowns and small shields; they restored the gates and the chambers for the priests and fitted them with doors. ⁵⁸ There was very great joy among the people, and the disgrace brought by the nations was removed.

⁵⁹ Then Judas and his brothers and all the assembly of Israel determined that every year at that season the days of dedication of the altar should be observed with joy and gladness for eight days, beginning with the twenty-fifth day of the month of Chislev. (1 Maccabees 4:41-59)

7 In the reign of Demetrius, in the one hundred sixty-ninth year, we Jews wrote to you, in the critical distress that came upon us in those years after Jason and his company revolted from the holy land and the kingdom 8 and burned the gate and shed innocent blood. We prayed to the Lord and were heard, and we offered sacrifice and grain offering, and we lit the lamps and set out the loaves. 9 And now see that you keep the Festival of Booths^[a] in the month of Chislev, in the one hundred eighty-eighth year. (2 Maccabees 1:7-9)

18 Since on the twenty-fifth day of Kislev we shall celebrate the purification of the temple, we thought it necessary to notify you, in order that you also may celebrate the festival of booths and the festival of the fire given when Nehemiah, who built the temple and the altar, offered sacrifices. (2 Maccabees 1:18)

16 Since, therefore, we are about to celebrate the purification, we write to you. Will you therefore please keep the days? 17 It is God who has saved all his people, and has returned the inheritance to all, and the kingship and the priesthood and the consecration, 18 as he promised through the law. We have hope in God that he will soon have mercy on us and will gather us from everywhere under heaven into his holy place, for he has rescued us from great evils and has purified the place. (2 Maccabees 2:16-18)

Purification of the Temple. ¹ When Maccabeus and his companions, under the Lord's leadership, had recovered the temple and the city, ² they destroyed the altars erected by the foreigners in the

marketplace and the sacred shrines.³ After purifying the temple, they made another altar. Then, with fire struck from flint, they offered sacrifice for the first time in two years,^[a] burned incense, and lighted lamps. They also set out the showbread.⁴ When they had done this, they prostrated themselves and begged the Lord that they might never again fall into such misfortunes, and that if they should sin at any time, he might chastise them with moderation and not hand them over to blasphemous and barbarous Gentiles.⁵ On the anniversary of the day on which the temple had been profaned by the foreigners, that is, the twenty-fifth of the same month Kislev, the purification of the temple took place.⁶ The Jews celebrated joyfully for eight days as on the feast of Booths, remembering how, a little while before, they had spent the feast of Booths living like wild animals in the mountains and in caves.⁷ Carrying rods entwined with leaves,^[b] beautiful branches and palms, they sang hymns of grateful praise to him who had successfully brought about the purification of his own place.⁸ By public decree and vote they prescribed that the whole Jewish nation should celebrate these days every year.⁹ Such was the end of Antiochus surnamed Epiphanes. (2 Maccabees 10:1-9)

I am making a point here about the Maccabees and Chanukah, which is the celebration that is derived from it. Almost all modern references about this festival come from—or you are referred to—the Talmud to learn about the Feast of Chanukah. Rarely are you sent back to read about these events in the Books of Maccabees. And for good reason—there is no miracle about the lighting of the menorah for eight days recorded in the Books of Maccabees. History is recorded by the victor, and in this case those victors are the Pharisaic Rabbis after the Temple was destroyed.

*As recorded in the **Talmud**, the Maccabees found just enough pure oil in the Temple to kindle the menorah for a single day. As they had done so many times before, they threw reason to the wind and placed their trust in G-d. They lit the menorah, and a miracle occurred: the oil burned for 8 days until more could be obtained. They declared that these 8 days be celebrated as the Festival of Lights, commonly known as Chanukah (“dedication”).⁵*

⁵ Chabad.org Who Were the Maccabees?

https://www.chabad.org/holidays/chanukah/article_cdo/aid/4588772/jewish/Who-

Miracle of the cruse of oil (Hebrew: נֵר פֶּתִיחַ הַמָּצוֹת), or the Miracle of Hanukkah, is an Aggadah⁶ depicted in the Babylonian⁷ Talmud⁸ as one of the reasons for Hanukkah. In the story, the miracle occurred after the liberation of the Temple in Jerusalem during the Maccabean

Were-the-

Maccabees.htm#:~:text=As%20recorded%20in%20the%20Talmud%2C%20the%20Maccabees%20found,for%208%20days%20until%20more%20could%20be%20obtained.

⁶ Aggadah (Hebrew: אֲגָדָה 'Aggādā or חֲגָגָה Haggādā; Jewish Babylonian Aramaic: אַגְגָּדָה 'Aggādōtā'; "tales, fairytale, lore") is the non-legalistic exegesis which appears in the classical rabbinic literature of Judaism, particularly the Talmud and Midrash. In general, Aggadah is a compendium of rabbinic texts that incorporates folklore, historical anecdotes, moral exhortations, and practical advice in various spheres, from business to medicine.

⁷ Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Shabbat 21b

⁸The Talmud (/ˈtɑːlməd, məd, ˈtæl/; Hebrew: תַּלְמוּד, romanized: Talmūd, lit. 'teaching') is the central text of Rabbinic Judaism and the primary source of Jewish religious law (halakha) and Jewish theology. Until the advent of modernity, in nearly all Jewish communities, the Talmud was the centerpiece of Jewish cultural life and was foundational to "all Jewish thought and aspirations", serving also as "the guide for the daily life" of Jews.

The term Talmud normally refers to the collection of writings named specifically the Babylonian Talmud (Talmud Bavli), compiled in the 5th century by Rav Ashi and Ravina II. There is also an earlier collection known as the Jerusalem Talmud (Talmud Yerushalmi). It may also traditionally be called Shas (ש"ס), a Hebrew abbreviation of shisha sedarim, or the "six orders" of the Mishnah.

The Talmud has two components: the Mishnah (משנה, c. 200 AD), a written compendium of the Oral Torah; and the Gemara (גמרא, c. 500 AD), an elucidation of the Mishnah and related Tannaitic writings that often ventures onto other subjects and expounds broadly on the Hebrew Bible. The term "Talmud" may refer to either the Gemara alone, or the Mishnah and Gemara together. Talmudic traditions emerged within a literary period that can be bracketed between the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE until the Arab conquest in the early seventh century.

The entire Talmud consists of 63 tractates, and in the standard print, called the Vilna Shas, there are 2,711 double-sided folios. It is written in Mishnaic Hebrew and Jewish Babylonian Aramaic and contains the teachings and opinions of thousands of rabbis (dating from before the birth of Christ through to the fifth century AD) on a variety of subjects, including halakha, Jewish ethics, philosophy, customs, history, and folklore, and many other topics. The Talmud is the basis for all codes of Jewish law and is widely quoted in rabbinic literature. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Talmud>

Revolt, and it describes the finding of a jug of pure oil that was to be enough to light the lamp for one day, but that lasted for eight days.⁹

Returning now back to the Hasmonaeans, the supposed miracle of the menorah took place in the third year of the war. The war itself lasted another five to seven years. By the third year when this miracle was to have taken place, Matisyahu (the father of the Hasmonaeans/Maccabees) and Johanan (the oldest brother) were already dead. One year after the menorah was lit (the miracle), Judah the Maccabee (the third brother) was also dead—all of them killed in battle. Three years after the lighting of the menorah, Eleazar (the fourth brother) was killed in battle when an elephant he attacked and wounded fell and crushed him.

Five years after “the miracle,” Jonathan and Simon were the only two surviving Maccabees. Jonathan was appointed High Priest, but he did not assume the mantle of kingship. Although defeated, the Greeks continued to try and subvert the Jewish government through attempted assassinations. Jonathan was betrayed at a party and later publicly executed.¹⁰

Simon was not only the king, but after his brother Jonathan’s death, he became the High Priest as well. This dual role signified a major historical change, and not a positive one. The leading rabbis told him, in a nice way, that a king of Israel had to come from the tribe of Judah, as the verse says, “The staff shall not depart from Judah...” (*Genesis* 49:10). Besides the open verse, it was simply not good for a system of checks and balances to have both positions held by one person.

As we mentioned earlier, not everyone was happy with Hasmonaean rule. The Kingship in Israel was to be held by a descendant of King David's tribe, Judah. During this period, the high priest had to derive from the descendants of Zadok, the last high priest under the reign of Solomon. Simon was not from either line, and yet was both king and high priest. The people and the rabbis both liked

⁹ Miracle of the cruse of oil

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Miracle_of_the_cruse_of_oil

¹⁰ Jewish History, The Hasmonaeans <https://www.jewishhistory.org/the-hasmonaeans/#:~:text=Five%20years%20after%20the%20miracle%20of%20Chanukah%20the,he%20did%20not%20assume%20the%20mantle%20of%20kingship.>

Simon, who was a great and righteous person, and they allowed this because the threat from the Greeks was still very real.

Simon began to remove all things Greek from Jewish society and got along famously by bowing to the authority of Rabbis Joshua ben Perachiah and Nitai Ha'Arbeli, who were the second pair of Zugot¹¹ and heads of the Sanhedrin.

It was also during Simon's rule that he made an alliance with Rome, who deployed the Tenth Legion to Caesarea to counter the Greeks in the Middle East. Rome was just beginning to become a superpower.

Simon's son was John Hyrcanus who went on to conquer the Idumeans in the south around 107 B.C. and forced them to convert to Judaism. It is from these same Idumeans that Herod the Great (37 B.C.-1 B.C.) will come in just a few years' time from this point in history.

John Hyrcanus became King and High Priest in 134 B.C. when Simon was assassinated by his son-in-law. John made Judah great under his reign and expanded the territory.

I have to say here right now that my source for some of the information I am writing about is found in footnote number eight about Jewish history. As I mentioned, the victor is the one who writes the history and, in this case, there is very little about the Sadducees and their works which were destroyed at the same time as the Temple in 70 A.D. Those recording the Jewish history from that point on were the Pharisees who seem to not have anything good to say about those who opposed them.

Origin of the Sadducees

¹¹ Name given to the leading teachers of the Law in the time preceding the Tannaim. The period of the Zugot begins with Jose b. Joezer and ends with Hillel. The name "Zugot" (comp. Latin "duumviri") was given to these teachers because, according to the tradition in *Hagigah*, two of them always stood at the same time at the head of the Sanhedrin, one as president ("nasi") and the other as vice-president or father of the court ("ab bet din"; see *Sanhedrin*). There were five pairs of these teachers: (1) Jose b. Joezer and Jose b. Johanan, who flourished at the time of the Maccabean wars of independence; (2) Joshua b. Perahyah and Nittai of Arbela, at the time of John Hyrcanus; (3) Judah b. Ṭabbai and Simeon b. Sheṭaḥ, at the time of Alexander Jannæus and Queen Salome; (4) Shemaiah and Abtalion, at the time of Hyrcanus II.; (5) Hillel and Shammai, at the time of King Herod.

<https://jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/15293-zugot>

I will let you read what JewishHistory.org has to say about the beginning of the Sadducees:

One of the great Torah leaders in the early days of the Second Temple was Antigonus of Sokho. He was wont to say, "Do not be like servants who serve God on the condition of receiving reward. Rather, be like servants who serve God without expecting reward" (Avos 1:3).

Antigonus had two followers named Zadok and Boethus who interpreted his words as meaning that there was no reward or punishment, no World-to-Come (Avos D'Rabbi Nathan 5). If you do God's will, fine. If you do not, nothing bad will happen to you. God does not reward or punish.

That was also a basic idea of Hellenism. Events happened at random. There was no reward or punishment; what you did made no difference in the long run. Eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die, because what is the difference?

Zadok and Boethus' interpretation aligned with Hellenistic tendencies, not Judaism. The belief in the Hereafter is central to Judaism, which posits a God who cares and who dispenses ultimate reward and punishment in a World-to-Come. A person's soul does not just end at bodily death. Zadok and Boethus rejected those basic Jewish ideas.

It was one thing to have those ideas, but it was another thing to initiate a whole movement based on those ideas and call it "Judaism." Their followers became known as the Sadducees (after Zadok) or the Boethusians (after Boethus).

The three planks of their party platform were:

- *No life hereafter; no reward and punishment*
- *There is no such thing as the Oral Tradition*
- *The priestly class is the ruling class.*

The second thing they said was that there was no such thing as the Oral Tradition. It was an invention of the rabbis and every generation had the right to reinterpret it. Of course, it was a catch-22: if they could throw what their predecessors held sacred, then those after them could do the same with their interpretations — which is what will happen. From Christianity onward the Written Torah will become the most re-interpreted, and, at the same time, misinterpreted book in history. Christianity itself would spawn countless factions, each claiming to possess the gospel truth, the divine interpretation.

Islam would also come along and claim to have trumped the Christians, possessing the true interpretation.

The Sadducees started a whole domino effect of human interpretations which took the meaning of the text away from its Divine origins. They had an agenda in doing so. Undermining the authority of the Oral Torah undermined the authority of the Torah sages and the Sanhedrin. That fit in with their next ideological plank, which was that the control of the government should lie not in the hands of the Sanhedrin, but in hands of the priestly class.

Basically, the Sanhedrin was democratic, because Torah is democratic. One does not require a pedigree to be a scholar. Respect for Torah is not dependent upon wealth or status. In fact, the Talmud says: "Be careful regarding the poor because from them Torah will emerge." Torah comes from the humble classes. Torah is egalitarian. It is open for anyone who wants it bad enough. Some of the greatest scholars in Jewish history were converts and people living well below the poverty level. The Sages of Israel were not born with a golden spoon in their mouths.

On the other hand, the Sadducees preached the philosophy of the aristocracy. The upper classes were the only ones that knew enough to run the country. The masses did not know anything. You did not have to ask their opinion. In that regard, they became heirs of the Hellenists, who preached the same ideology.¹²

As I research for the history of the Sadducees, I am confronted with a very strong bias against them from many historical¹³ and modern Pharisaical Jewish perspectives. Dr. Rebecca I. Denova has this to add to our understanding:

The Sadducees¹⁴ were part of the upper-class aristocrats and provided much of the priesthood, categorized through the lineage of priestly houses. They served on the Sanhedrin, the city council that organized law courts and regulations, which were established

¹² Jewish History, The Hasmonaeans <https://www.jewishhistory.org/the-hasmonaeans/#:~:text=Five%20years%20after%20the%20miracle%20of%20Chanukah%20the,he%20did%20not%20assume%20the%20mantle%20of%20kingship.>

¹³ NITTAI OF ARBELA: <https://jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/11565-nittai-of-arbela> Nittai of Arbela was one of the second sets of Zugots as our previous footnote pointed out.

¹⁴ Rebecca I. Denova, Ph.D. is Emeritus Professor of Early Christianity in the Department of Religious Studies, University of Pittsburgh. She has recently completed a textbook, "The Origins of Christianity and the New Testament" (Wiley-Blackwell) <https://www.worldhistory.org/Sadducees/>

throughout Israel. The Sadducees were a distinct sect of Judaism from roughly 200-150 BCE to 70 CE, when the Temple complex in Jerusalem was destroyed by Rome.

The sources for the Sadducees are some references in the Dead Sea Scrolls (the Essenes), the writings of the 1st-century CE Jewish historian Flavius Josephus (36-100 CE), the New Testament, and the writings of 2nd-century CE rabbis. All of these sources are historically problematic because no literature from the Sadducees survived the destruction of the Second Temple by Rome. It is difficult to obtain a clear picture because all of these sources were written by opponents who were critical of the Sadducees and the way in which they were operating the Temple.

Allow me to continue to quote JewishHistory.org¹⁵ so you can read in their own words the bias they have towards the Sadducees even to this day. As you read the following, take note of what is written in the Talmud, the book written by the victors.

The Turning of John Hyrcanus

During the reign of John Hyrcanus the Sadducees began to become strong. And he helped strengthen them. He believed that he was so great and his faith so strong that he was above influence.

He was dead wrong.

The Sadducees worked on him for years. They told him that the Torah sages were out to get him; that they did not think he should be king; that they would not let his son reign, and so forth. He listened because he thought it would not affect him, and meanwhile he would use the opportunity to inspire them toward his point of view.

The Talmud (Kiddushin 66a) records the key incident that changed him. He threw a banquet where members of the Sanhedrin were in attendance. One of them accused him of being illegitimate; that his mother had been raped when she was in captivity for a short period of time.

Furious, he demanded an inquiry. The rabbis reviewed the details and cleared his mother; he was legitimate. However, from that point onward John Hyrcanus heard the echo of the poison that the Sadducees had fed him. All the years of good feeling between him and the sages of the Sanhedrin began to wane. Little by little suspicion replaced trust.

¹⁵ Sadducees and Pharisees <https://www.jewishhistory.org/sadducees-and-pharisees/>

The Beginning of a Century of Internal Conflict

This was the beginning of the conflict between the Sadducees and Pharisees. The Pharisees were the Torah sages, the traditional Jews. The Hebrew word for Pharisee, Perushim, means to separate, because they separated themselves from the Hellenists and all outside influences. They attempted to remain in a pristine, unique state of Judaism.

Later, the Christian Gospels would paint some very negative images of the Pharisees, which would become embedded in Western and World culture. However, they were the great leaders of Israel. Hillel, Rabbi Akiva and others that even many in the non-Jewish world recognize as the epitome of benevolent, sagely people were Pharisees through and through.

In addition, Josephus and others point out how the majority of the Jews sided with the Pharisees, about 75-80% of them. However, the Sadducees were a very powerful minority. They were part of the wealthy, aristocratic class and strategically placed in government. They also dominated the Temple and served as its priests. In short, they held a disproportionate amount of power.

The situation would lead to an all-out war between Jewish factions; a very uncivil civil war. It would be a political-religious struggle conflict that would last a hundred years and generate enough enmity to tear apart the Jewish State from the inside in ways outside enemies could not.

It would be so horrific that it can be said if the Jewish people survived that they could survive anything.

Sadducees and Pharisees

The seeds of strife planted earlier took root as the Hasmonaean era produced sacrilegious heirs and pitted Jew vs. Jew in a bloody civil war.

The Sadducees, who were the heirs of the Hellenists, formed a very potent and powerful force in Jewish society, but they subscribed to a philosophy that was essentially non-Jewish, to a Greek view of the world.

The rabbis did not take it lying down. They understood that if the Sadducees prevailed there would be no Jewish people.

Throughout Jewish history there have always been groups who arose to espouse some type of non-Jewish “Jewish” philosophy — and they

have always been met with a great deal of antagonism. On the surface, it looked like the establishment had no tolerance for them. However, that would be a bad over-simplification, because these groups represented an ideological threat that put at risk the very survival of the Jewish people.

The Jewish people could not have survived under the reign of the Sadducees. Indeed, the Sadducees themselves would cease to exist after the Roman persecution. The only thing of theirs that has survived is that which was recorded by the Pharisees. It was as though an unseen hand came and erased them.

In the final analysis, theirs was not an ideology connected to anything eternal. Rather it was a non-ideology couched in flowery words and pledging allegiance to some vague idea they called Judaism, changeable to whatever prevailing winds of culture would help them maintain and consolidate their status, wealth, power and pleasure.

We will see this story repeated over and over and over again in Jewish history. We will also see that the “race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the mighty.” It will always look like Traditional Judaism will be on the way out. Yet, somehow they will be the only ones who will survive.

John Hyrcanus came under the influence of the Sadducees in the latter part of his reign and the government of Israel officially became a Sadducee government. He removed members of the Sanhedrin who were Pharisees and replaced them with Sadducees. He also did away many of the rabbinic ordinances and replaced them with the ways of the Sadducees – and imposing them with a police force and the army.

The animosity here is palpable. I feel it oozing out of the words put down on the paper by the author. I hope you can see it. What is being said here is that anything other than Pharisaical Judaism is Hellenistic in nature and must be done away with.

Alexander Jannaeus

John Hyrcanus died in 104 B.C. having two heirs to the throne, the younger being Alexander Jannaeus (or Alexander Yannai), and Judah Aristobulus who was the oldest. Judah married Salome Alexandra (called Shelomtzion in the Talmud). Her brother was Rabbi Simon, son of Shatah (Shimon ben Shatach).

When Judah Aristobulus ascended to the throne, he had his brother arrested and put in prison. However, he became ill a year later and died,

which made Alexander the new king and high priest. He also had to marry his brother's widow under the law, to give her an heir because she did not have any children from the first marriage.

From the time of the Hasmonaeans until now, the king who was both king and high priest was careful to avoid being called a king due to the sensitivity of this subject. Alexander Jannaeus had no such inhibitions and made sure everyone knew he was king.

Alexander was a very successful military leader, driving out the Greeks in much of Judea, but the cost of wars with the loss of Jewish life and finances took a toll on his popularity. The Pharisees, led by Simon son of Shatah, did not like him for this and for his promoting of the Idumeans to leadership roles within the military, and Simon was not afraid to tell his displeasure to the king.

At Sukkot one year, Alexander was acting as the high priest and did something a Sadducee would have done to provoke the crowd of Pharisees, who responded by throwing their citron at him. Alexander in anger responded by bringing in his mercenary army to the Temple where they slaughtered 6000 Jews during the Feast of Sukkot. He then pursued those who escaped and had 800 of them nailed to crucifixes in one day along the road outside Jerusalem and slew their wives and children in front of them as they slowly died on the crucifix.

Alexander Jannaeus saw the debacle he caused and called for a truce with the Pharisees. Through the efforts of his wife, Queen Salome, both sides came to compromise: Alexander Jannaeus would run the government, but the Pharisees would run the people. He would take care of secular matters and they would take care of religious matters.

Rabbi Simon, son of Shatah came out of hiding thanks to the urging of his sister, the Queen. He took over the Sanhedrin and promptly kicked out all the Sadducees. He also winnowed them out of the Priesthood. Most importantly, the educational system of the country returned to the hands of the Pharisees.

Though they would last for another 200 years, the Sadducees would never again reach the position of influence and power that they enjoyed under the early years of Alexander Jannaeus. He died in the year 76 B.C.

He left two young children as heirs: Hyrcanus II and Aristobulus II. The Pharisees pressed upon Salome to take charge—which she did.

Salome was afraid that if Aristobulus became King he would lead the Jewish people astray, align himself with the Sadducees returning to Greek culture and initiate a replay of the whole civil war. In order to avoid that, Salome agreed to become Queen. She appointed Hyrcanus the High Priest and gave Aristobulus a few fortified cities. She hoped these would placate both sons.

Aristobulus further fortified the cities, trained a militia and waited for his mother to die, which she did in the year 67 B.C., after ruling for nine years.

Allow me to once again quote the Jewish History people as they explain how the Hasmonaean rule changed to the Herodian rule.

The End of the Hasmonaeans, The Rise of Rome¹⁶

The decline of the Hasmoneans coincided with the rise of Rome, but it wasn't coincidence, for the once great Jewish family had become a shell of its holy roots.

In the year 67 BCE, Queen Salome Alexandra (also known as Queen Shelomtzion) died. With her death, the dynasty of the Hasmoneans began a steady decline. Over the next 20-25 years it would fall apart completely.

Queen Salome left two sons: Hyrcanus and Aristobulus. Hyrcanus was weak, but as the older son had been appointed the High Priest during his mother's life and then became King after her death. Aristobulus had all of the charisma and fierce, leadership qualities of his father, Alexander Jannaeus. However, he also had a great deal of the negative qualities, including being very headstrong, opinionated, temper-prone and violent. And his attitudes were more in line with the Sadducees than the Pharisees.

As long as their mother was in charge, she kept the lid on the pot, so to speak. However, the moment she died the two were literally at each others' throats for the right to succession.

War... Again

In 65 BCE, after feeble attempts at an accommodation, Aristobulus' army attacked Hyrcanus'. They battled outside of Jericho.

¹⁶ <https://www.jewishhistory.org/end-of-hasmoneans-rise-of-rome-4/>
<https://www.jewishhistory.org/crash-course/>

Aristobulus won and captured Hyrcanus. As terms of the ransom for his release, Hyrcanus agreed to relinquish the throne.

The agreement lasted about six weeks. It was undermined by an advisor of Hyrcanus named Antipater, an Idumean convert who would become the father of Herod. A couple of generations earlier the Idumeans had been forcibly converted, against the will of the rabbis, and now it would come back to haunt the Jewish people.

Antipater was as talented an administrator as he was ambitious. He is the one who really stirred the pot and convinced Hyrcanus that he had a chance to become the king again. Always scheming, he organized Hyrcanus' army – but one that was loyal to him, bringing in mercenaries and organizing the officer corps out of his own Idumean compatriots.

Antipater then led this army against Aristobulus, routed it and forced the remnants to retreat to the Temple area. The rest of Jerusalem and the entire country now came under the domain of Hyrcanus.

The Pig that Shook the World

The Western Wall (or Wailing Wall) is one of the most famous symbols of Judaism today. However, it is only a remnant of a much larger wall that surrounded the courtyard of the Temple.

On the Temple Mount itself was the Fortress of Antonius, which was a virtually impregnable fortress. Whoever controlled it controlled the Temple area.

Aristobulus and the remnants of his army now took up residence there. As long as they held this fortress, they were capable of repelling all attacks and holding out for a long time.

As strange as it seems, despite their animosity toward each other, the two sides made an agreement to make sure that the twice-daily sacrifice was offered. Every day, the army on the outside would send up the necessary sheep to be slaughtered. The priests inside the Temple, who were neutral, continued doing all their daily deeds.

The siege lasted months and showed no sign of ending. One day, an advisor convinced Hyrcanus to send up a pig instead of a sheep. The Talmud said that when the pig scraped its hooves against the walls of the Temple the Land of Israel shook for 400 miles. It was one of the low points in Jewish history. The Hasmoneans had initiated their rebellion when the Greeks forced Jews to sacrifice a pig to their gods and now their descendants were killing each other and sending up a pig to the Temple!

Enter Rome

This led the entrance of Rome into Jewish life, one of the major turning points in Jewish history.

It came in on the sword of a General by the name of Pompey, who in his modesty called himself, "Pompey the Great." In the year 70 BCE he conquered Spain for Rome. He then came east and conquered Greece. He then came further east and conquered the Parthians (who inhabited modern-day Turkey and Iran). And then he turned his attention south to the Mediterranean basin.

He was a talented, ruthless general, as well as an extremely shrewd man. He was the first Roman leader to understand that Rome could not successfully control the Middle East if it did not control Judea. Even if Judea was merely a neutral independent it would serve as a wedge between the Northern Empire (Syria) and the Southern Empire (Egypt). Therefore, he looked for a way to get himself in power in Judea.

Ideally, he did not want to do it through war, because the Jews – the Hasmoneans/Maccabees – had a fearsome reputation. The Romans referred to the Jews as "porcupines." Just as a porcupine is an animal that even great predators avoid, so too the Jews. Even if you ate it you would be sorry. Therefore, Pompey wanted to control the Jews without somehow going to war. The civil war between Hyrcanus and Aristobulus presented a golden opportunity. It was the key that would allow Rome into Jerusalem.

Of course, once Rome was allowed in it would never leave. Its influence would grow exponentially over next century until the Jews would have enough and mount a rebellion.

Pompey's Compromise

In the year 64 BCE, Pompey appeared in Damascus. The Jews sent three delegations: first Hyrcanus and then Aristobulus. Each argued why Rome should side with them. A third group was sent by the Sanhedrin, who told Pompey to ignore both groups; let the Sanhedrin, the rabbis, run the country. All three groups apparently agreed that some type of Roman intervention would be welcomed.

Pompey took his time responding. In the year 63 BCE, he arrived in Jerusalem. Hyrcanus and his army promptly withdrew. Aristobulus surrendered and was sent along with his family to Rome where they were degraded in the Roman proconsular triumph. Nevertheless, his forces fought on against Pompey and Hyrcanus. However, after two

months the Romans broke through their stronghold and massacred some 12,000 of the Jews defending the Temple.

According to Josephus, Pompey stepped into the Holy of Holies, the innermost sanctum of the Temple. However, he did not take any booty or otherwise interrupt the Temple service. The next day he withdrew the Roman army from the Temple Mount and returned it to the authority of the Jews.

Nevertheless, for all practical purposes, Judea was now under Roman domination.

Pompey let Hyrcanus remain the High Priest and even call himself king, but the title was nominal. Before he left, he had the walls of Jerusalem leveled, making it defenseless. He also imposed harsh taxes. Six years later, in 57 BCE, Pompey appointed a governor in Syria (Gabinus) who would have ultimate control of the affairs in Judea. This cemented the fact that Hyrcanus was king only in name, not in deed.

His work done in Jerusalem, Pompey went home to Rome expecting to be made emperor.

Enter Julius Caesar

However, he had strong competition for the job from a man by the name of Julius Caesar, who was a great general in his own right. He did in the West what Pompey did in the East, subduing the peoples in what is today England, France and the Rhineland of Germany.

These two great Roman generals had an agreement between them: Rome would be run by a Triumvirate, i.e. a committee of three. However, the Triumvirate did not last. After five years it fell apart, which left Pompey and Caesar jockeying for control.

The Rome Senate backed Pompey, but Caesar boldly marched his army across the Rubicon, the river that marked the boundary between Italy proper and its provinces to the north. Roman law forbade a Roman army to cross the river. In doing so, Caesar was committing an act of war.

As Caesar's army entered Rome, Pompey and the Senate fled for their lives. Caesar declared himself emperor and pursued Pompey all the way to Egypt. Once there, he committed a rare tactical blunder and found himself and his army besieged in Alexandria by Pompey and his allies.

Hyrcanus had been an official ally of Pompey. However, the shrewd Antipater now convinced Hyrcanus to switch sides and declare his allegiance to Caesar. They then committed over 3,000 Jewish soldiers

to an expeditionary force that invaded Egypt and helped raise the siege of Alexandria.

Thus, when the Roman civil war ended in Julius Caesar's complete victory Hyrcanus was in a fortuitous position, and on the verge of realizing his lifelong dream of becoming the king.

Caesar Ends the Hasmonaean Era

Indeed, Caesar showed the Jews his gratitude for their help. He revoked the harsh decrees and burdensome taxation imposed by Pompey. He also allowed the walls and fortifications of Jerusalem to be rebuilt and restored Jaffa as well as a number of other coastal cities to Jewish rule.

He even gave Hyrcanus the position of High Priest. However, in a surprise move he did not give him the title of king. Even if he had it would have been in name only, because he gave the real power a Roman Legate or Procurator who would make all the crucial decisions in the land of Judea. That person was none other than Antipater, the scheming non-Jewish general of Hyrcanus' army! For all practical purposes, the real power now lay with Antipater.

This is how the rulership of the country passed from the Hasmoneans to people who claimed to be Jewish but were not Jewish, people who would do the bidding of the Romans. Caesar's transfer of power to Antipater was in effect the end of the Hasmonean Era.

The Sages on Politics

In perfect hindsight, we can wonder at the naiveté – the stupidity – of Hyrcanus and the other protagonists in this real-life soap opera. Having learned early on what it meant to get the Romans involved in local politics how could they have continued to do so?

However, Hyrcanus was under the spell of Antipater, as well as blinded by his own lust for power. Because he wanted to be the king at all costs he made one tactical error after another.

The two greatest Jewish scholars of the time, Shamaya and Avtalyon, commented obliquely on the matter in their exhortations to ethical behavior in Judaism's primary volume on the subject, Ethics of the Fathers (Pirkei Avot).

Shamaya said (ibid. 1:10): "Hate power and do not make yourself known to the government." In other words, keep a low profile, because what is destroying the Jewish people is the lust for power, as demonstrated by its political leaders.

Avtalyon said (ibid. 1:11): "Rabbis, be careful with your words. Perhaps you will be exiled...." Rabbis, he warned, do not make statements on political matters. Your words will become known to the ruling power, you will be sent into exile and your disciples will be leaderless and come to ruin.

These two cryptic statements reveal the tenor of the times. In essence, the rabbinic approach was to withdraw from political activity when one could do nothing about it anyway. The focus should be on the root of the problem, which was the lust for power. If those in power were beyond hope, then implant in future generations lessons that would pre-empt the horrible excesses caused by hubris and lust for power.

In so doing, the great Torah leaders Shamaya and Avtalyon transcended the issues of their days and provided eternal lessons that echo in the ears of all generations down to our days. As we will see, Shamaya and Avtalyon's disciple Hillel took their approach to the next level.

It is after this period of time when the house of Shammai and the house of Hillel, two schools of thought, began to debate. I have read how when Yehshua was 12 he was speaking to both Rabbi Shammai and Rabbi Hillel in this debate, but I cannot prove this to be true.¹⁷

41 And His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. 42 And when He was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the Feast. 43 And fulfilling the days, as they returned, the boy Jesus stayed in Jerusalem. And Joseph and His mother did not know. 44 But they, supposing Him to have been in the company, went a day's journey. And they looked for Him among the kinsfolk and acquaintances. 45 And when they did not find Him, they turned back to Jerusalem, seeking Him. 46 And it happened that after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both hearing them and questioning them. 47 And all who heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers. 48 And seeing Him, they were amazed. And His mother said to Him, Child, why have you done so to us? Behold, your father and I have looked for you, greatly distressed. 49 And He said to them, Why did you look for Me? Do you not know that I must be about My Father's business? (Luke 2:41-49)

¹⁷ Why Jesus was Killed: House of Hillel vs House of Shammai
<https://preachi.com/why-jesus-was-killed-house-of-hillel-vs-house-of-shammai/>

It is also from these debates that Yehshua drew a number of his arguments in the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John against both the Sadducees and the Pharisees. Here is one example Rabbi Hillel is recorded to have said and then what Yehshua spoke in the Gospels:

A gentile once asked the great Rabbi Shammai if he could teach him the whole Torah while he the gentile stood on one foot. Shammai became very angry with him and rejected his request. But when he came to rabbi Hillel, the man, full of love and tolerance said to the gentile: "That which is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow. That is the entire Torah, and the rest is its commentary. Now go and study." The gentile went away happily and later became a Jewish proselyte. This is also the origin of the golden rule.¹⁸

12 Therefore all things, whatever you desire that men should do to you, do even so to them; for this is the Law and the Prophets. (Matthew 7:12)

The Sadducees also had aligned themselves with more of the zealots and the administration as we draw closer to the time when the Temple would be destroyed in 70 A.D. For this reason, it is my belief, as to why we have so little information about them. After the Temple is destroyed the Pharisees would become the dominant force in Judaism.

Then after the failure of the Bar Kochba revolt in 133 A.D., the realization that they were being driven out of the land began to set in and a drive to collect and record everything about the Temple service was begun. Most of the records about the Sadducees were now going to be written by Pharisees.

The Boethusians

Another group that emerged at the end of the Hasmonaean rule and the start of the Herodian rulership are the Boethusians. I again mention that those recording history are the Pharisaic sect. After the destruction

¹⁸ Why Jesus was Killed: House of Hillel vs House of Shammai
<https://preachi.com/why-jesus-was-killed-house-of-hillel-vs-house-of-shammai/>

of the Temple, the sect of the Sadducees and the sect of the Boethusians did not survive, only the sect of Pharisees did.

*BOETHUSIANS*¹⁹, a religious and political sect which existed during the century preceding the destruction of the Second Temple. According to rabbinic tradition the Boethusians and the Sadducees were named after two disciples of *Antigonus of Sokho, Zadok and Boethus. They misinterpreted the maxim of their teacher, "Be not like servants who serve their master in order to receive a reward" as meaning that there was no reward for good works, and thus they denied the doctrine of resurrection and the world to come. They thereupon established the two sects named after them (arn¹ 13b). Modern scholars however consider this account to be legendary and they ascribe the origin of the Boethusians to the high priest Simeon b. Boethus who was appointed high priest by Herod the Great in 24 b.c.e. (Jos., Ant., 15:320), in succession to Joshua b. Phabi, in order to afford him a suitable status, as he desired to marry Herod's daughter, Mariamne ii. Although in their theological views they closely resembled the Sadducees, some scholars regard them merely as a branch of them (see *Sadducees), and are always mentioned together with them, they did not share their aristocratic background, and whereas the Sadducees supported the Hasmonean dynasty, the Boethusians were loyal to the Herodians. It is they who are apparently referred to in the New Testament as Herodians (Mark 3:6; 12:13). The Boethusians were regarded by the Talmud as cynical and materialistic priests. **They hired false witnesses to delude the Pharisees about the new moon** (rh 22b; tj, rh 57d; Tosef., rh 1:15). **They maintained that the Omer (Men. 10:3) was to be offered on the first Sunday after Passover, and not on the morrow of the first day and,** as a result, differed as to the date of Shavuot which according to them must always fall on a Sunday (Hog. 24). They held special views on the preparation of incense on the Day of Atonement (tj, Yoma 1:39a; Tosef., Yoma 1:8). In terms of the Sabbath ritual, they were not even considered as Jews (Eruv. 68b). The high priestly "House of Boethus" is criticized in the Talmud for its oppression, "Woe is me because of the House of Boethus, woe is

¹⁹ Boethusians <https://www.encyclopedia.com/religion/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/boethusians#:~:text=Although%20in%20their%20theological%20views%20they%20closely%20resembled,dynasty%2C%20the%20Boethusians%20were%20loyal%20to%20the%20Herodians.>

me because of their staves" (with which they beat the people – Pes. 57a; cf. Tosef., Men. 13:21).

I must point out right here and now before you read over it and miss what you have just been told. First was that the Boethusians were accused of bribing false witnesses as to when they saw the crescent moon.²⁰ In the same Tractate Rosh Hashanah 22, both the Gemara and

²⁰ <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/tractate-rosh-hashana-chapter-2>

MISHNA: If the witness was unknown another was sent with him to testify to his character. In former times they would receive evidence (about the appearance of the moon) from anyone; but when the Boëthusians commenced to corrupt the witnesses the rule was made, that evidence would only be received from those who were known (to be reputable).

GEMARA: What is meant by "another" (in the above Mishna)? Another pair (of witnesses). It seems also to be so from the statement of the Mishna. "If the witness was unknown? Shall we assume that it means one (witness)? Surely the evidence of one was not received, for this transaction was called "judgment" [Psalms, lxxxi.] (and two witnesses are necessary)? What, then, does "the witness" mean? That pair; so also here, "another" means another pair. Is, then, the evidence of one not accepted? Have we not learned in a Boraita: It once happened that R. Neherai went to Usha on the Sabbath to testify (to the character) of one witness? He knew that there was one witness in Usha, and he went to add his evidence (and thus make two witnesses). If that is so, what does it tell us? One might suppose that, as there was a doubt (that he might not meet the other witness), he ought not to have profaned the Sabbath (by travelling to Usha as a single witness); therefore he comes to teach us (that even in such a case of doubt the Sabbath might be violated).

When Ula came (to Babylon, from Palestine), he said: They have already consecrated the new moon in Palestine. Said R. Kahana: (In such a case) not only Ula, who is a great man, is to be believed, but even an ordinary man. Why so? Because men will not lie about a matter that will become known to every one.

"In former times they would receive evidence from anyone, etc." The rabbis taught: How did the Boëthusians corrupt the witnesses? They once sought to deceive the sages, and they bribed, with four hundred zuz (silver coins), two men, one belonging to their party and one to ours. The former gave his evidence and went out, to the latter they (the Beth Din) said, "Tell us what was the appearance of the moon?" "I went up," replied he, "to Maale Adumim, I and I saw it crouching between two rocks. Its head was like a calf, its ears like a goat, its horns like a stag, and its tail was lying across its thigh. I gazed upon it and shuddered, and fell backwards; and if you do not believe me, behold, here I have two hundred zuz bound up in my cloth." "Who induced you to do this?" they asked. "I heard," he replied, "that the Boëthusians wished to deceive the sages; so I said to myself, I will go and inform them, lest some unworthy person may (accept their bribe), and come and deceive the sages." Then said the sages: "The two hundred zuz may be retained by you as a reward, and he who bribed

you shall be taken to the whipping-post (and be punished)." Then and there they ordained that testimony should be received only from those who were known (to be of good character).

MISHNA: Formerly bonfires were lighted (to announce the appearance of the new moon); but when the Cutheans² practiced their deceit, it was ordained that messengers should be sent out. How were these bonfires lighted? They brought long staves of cedar wood, canes, and branches of the olive tree, and bundles of tow which were tied on top of them with twine; with these they went to the top of a mountain, and lighted them, and kept waving them to and fro, upward and downward, till they could perceive the same repeated by another person on the next mountain, and thus, on the third mountain, etc. Whence did these bonfires commence? From The Mount of Olives to Sartabha, from Sartabha to Grophinah, from Grophinah to Hoveran, from Hoveran to Beth Baltin; they did not cease waving the burning torches at Beth Baltin, to and fro, upward and downward, until the whole country of the captivity appeared like a blazing fire.

GEMARA: The rabbis taught: Bonfires were only lighted to announce the new moon that appeared and was consecrated at the proper time (after twenty-nine days). And when were they lighted? On the evening of the thirtieth day. Does this mean to say that for a month of twenty-nine days the bonfires were lighted, but not for a month of thirty days? It should have been done for a month of thirty days, and not at all for a month of twenty-nine days. Said Abayi: That would cause the people a loss of work for two days (because they would wait to see if the bonfires would be lit or not and thus lose a second day). 1

"How were these bonfires lighted? They brought long staves of cedar wood," etc. R. Jehudah says: There are four kinds of cedars: the common cedar, the Qetros, the olive tree, and the cypress. Qetros says Rabh is (in Aramaic) Adara or a species of cedar. Every cedar, said R. Johanan, that was carried away from Jerusalem, God will in future times restore, as it is written [Isa. xli. 19]: "I will plant in the wilderness the cedar tree," and by "wilderness" He means Jerusalem, as it is written [Isa. lxiv. 19]: "Zion is (become) a wilderness." R. Johanan says again: Who studies the law, and teaches it in a place where there is no other scholar, is equal to a myrtle in the desert, which is very dear. The same says again: "Woe to the Romans, for whom there will be no substitution," as it is written [Isa. lx. 17]: "Instead of the copper, I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood, copper, and for stones, iron." But what can He bring for R. Aqiba and his comrades (who were destroyed by Rome)? Of them it is written [Joel, IV. 21]: "I will avenge (but for) their (Aqiba's and his comrades') blood I have not yet avenged."

"And whence did these bonfires commence?" From Beth Baltin. What is Beth Baltin? "Biram," answered Rabh. What (does the Mishna) mean by the captivity? Said R. Joseph, "Pumbeditha." And how was it that the whole country looked like a blazing fire? We learn that each Israelite took a torch in his hand and ascended to the roof of his house.

MISHNA: There was a large court in Jerusalem called Beth Ya'azeq, where all the witnesses met, and where they were examined by the Beth Din. Great feasts were

made there for (the witnesses) in order to induce them to come frequently. At first they did not stir from there all day (on the Sabbath), 1 till R. Gamaliel, the elder, ordained that they might go two thousand ells on every side; and not only these (witnesses) but also a midwife, going to perform her professional duties, and those who go to assist others in case of conflagration, or against an attack of robbers, or in case of flood, or (of rescuing people) from the ruins (of a fallen building) are considered (for the time being) as inhabitants of that place, and may go (thence on the Sabbath) two thousand ells on every side. How were the witnesses examined? The first pair were examined first. The elder was introduced first, and they said to him: Tell us in what form thou sawest the moon; was it before or behind the sun? Was it to the north or the south (of the sun)? What was its elevation on the horizon? Towards which side was its inclination? What was the width of its disk? If he answered before the sun, his evidence was worthless. After this they introduced the younger (witness) and he was examined; if their testimony was found to agree, it was accepted as valid; the remaining pairs (of witnesses) were asked leading questions, not because their testimony was necessary, but only to prevent them departing, disappointed, and to induce them to come again often,

GEMARA: Do not the questions (asked by the Mishna), "was it before or behind the sun?" and "was it to the north or to the south?" mean the same thing? Answered Abayi: (The Mishna asks) whether the concave of the crescent was before or behind the sun, and if (the witness said) it was before the sun, his evidence was worthless, for R. Johanan says: What is the meaning of the passage [Job, xxv. 2]: "Dominion and fear are with him; he maketh peace in his high places?" It means that the sun never faces the concave of the crescent or the concave of a rainbow.

"What was its elevation on the horizon? Towards which side was its inclination?" In one Boraitha we have learned: If (the witness) said "towards the north," his evidence was valid, but if he said, "towards the south," it was worthless; in another Boraitha we have learned the reverse. It presents no difficulty; in the latter case it speaks of the summer, while in the former it refers to the winter.

The rabbis taught: If one (witness) said its elevation appeared about as high as two ox-goats and another said about as high as three, their testimony was invalid, but either might be taken in conjunction with a subsequent witness (who offered similar testimony). The rabbis taught (If the witnesses say): "We have seen the reflection (of the moon) in the water, or through a metal mirror, or in the clouds," their testimony is not to be accepted; or (if they say we have seen) "half of it in the water, and half of it in the heavens, or half of it in the clouds," their evidence carries no weight. Must they then see the new moon again (before their testimony can be accepted)? Said Abayi: "By this is meant that if the witnesses testify that they saw the moon accidentally, and they then returned purposely and looked for it, but they saw it not, their evidence is worthless." Why so? Because one might say they saw a patch of white clouds (and they thought it was the moon).

MISHNA: The chief of the Beth Din then said: "It (the new moon) is consecrated," and all the people repeated after him: "It is consecrated; it is consecrated." Whether the new moon was seen at its proper time (after twenty-nine days) or not, they used

to consecrate it. R. Elazar b. Zadok said: If it had not been seen at its proper time it was not consecrated, because it had already been consecrated in heaven (i.e., of itself).

GEMARA: Whence do we deduce this? Said R. Hyya b. Gamda quoting Rabbi, in the name of R. Jose b. Saul: It is written [Lev. xxiii. 44]: "Moses declared unto the children of Israel the feasts of the Lord," from which we deduce that (as Moses, who was the chief in Israel, declared the feasts to Israel, so also) the chief of the Beth Din should announce the words, "It is consecrated."

"All the people repeated after him: It is consecrated; it is consecrated." Whence do we deduce this? Said R. Papa: It is written [Lev. xxiii. 2]: "Shall proclaim." "Othom" (them). Do not read "Othom," but Athem (ye)--i.e., which ye, all the people, shall proclaim. R. Na'hman b. Itz'hak, however, said: We know it from the words [ibid.]: "These are my feasts," i.e., (these people) shall announce my feasts. Why are the words "It is consecrated" repeated? Because in the scriptural verse just quoted we find it written "holy convocations" (literally, announcements, and the minimum of the plural expression is two).

"R. Elazar b. Zadok said: If it had not been seen at its proper time it was not consecrated," etc. We have learned in a Boraitha, Pelimo I said: If the new moon appear at its proper time it was not customary to consecrate it, but if it appeared out of its proper time they used to consecrate it. R. Eliezer, however, said: In neither case would they consecrate it, for it is written [Lev. xxv. 10]: "And ye shall consecrate the fiftieth year;" years should be consecrated, but not months. Said R. Jehudah in the name of Samuel: "The halakhah prevails according to R. Elazar b. Zadok. Said Abayi: There can be a support to this from the following Mishna, viz.: "If the Beth Din and all Israel saw the new moon (on the thirtieth day) and if the examination of the witnesses had already taken place, and it had become dark before they had time to announce 'It is consecrated,' the month (just passing) is intercalary." That (the month) is intercalary is mentioned (by the Mishna), but not that they said "It is consecrated." It is not clear that this is a support for Abayi's argument, for it was necessary to say that it was intercalary, or we would not have known that the next day was the intercalary day. One might have thought that, since the Beth Din and all Israel saw the new moon, it was apparent to all, and that the month does not become intercalary; therefore he teaches us that (nevertheless the month becomes intercalary).

MISHNA: R. Gamaliel had on a tablet, and on a wall of his upper room, illustrations of the various phases of the moon, which he used to show to the common people, saying: "Did you see the moon like this figure or like this?"

GEMARA: Is this permitted? Have we not learned in a Boraitha that the words "Ye shall not make anything with me" [Ex. xx. 20] mean, ye shall not make pictures of my ministers that minister before me, such as the sun, moon, stars or planets? It was different with R. Gamaliel, for others made it for him. But others made one for R. Jehudah, yet Samuel said to him: "Thou, sagacious one, destroy that figure!" 2 In the latter case the figure was embossed, and he was afraid that one might suspect the owner (of using it as an idol). Need one be afraid of such suspicion? Did not that synagogue in Shephithibh of Neherdai have a statue (of the king), yet Rabh,

Samuel and Samuel's father and Levi went there to pray and were not afraid of being suspected (of idolatry)? It is a different case where there are many. Yet R. Gamaliel was only one. Yea, but he was a prince, and there were always many with him; And if you wish you may say that he had them made for the purpose of instruction, and that which is written [Deut. xviii. 9], "thou shalt not learn to do," means but thou mayest learn, in order to understand and to teach.

MISHNA: It happened once that two witnesses came and said: We saw the moon in the eastern part of the heavens in the morning, and in the western part in the evening. R. Jo'hanan b. Nouri declared them to be false witnesses; but when they came to Yamnia, Rabbon Gamaliel received their evidence as valid. (On another occasion) two other witnesses came and said: We saw the moon on its proper day, but could not see it on the next evening of the intercalary day. R. Gamaliel accepted their testimony, but R. Dosa b. Harkhenas said: They are false witnesses; for how can they testify of a woman being delivered (on a certain day) when on the next day she appears to be pregnant? Then R. Jehoshua said unto him: I approve your opinion. Upon this R. Gamaliel sent him (R. Jehoshua) word, saying: "I order thee to appear before me on the Day of Atonement, according to your computation, with your staff and with money." R. Aqiba went to him (R. Jehoshua) and found him grieving. He then said to him: I can prove that all which R. Gamaliel has done is proper, for it is said: "These are the feasts of the Lord, holy convocations which ye shall proclaim," either at their proper time, or not at their proper time, only their convocations are to be considered as holy festivals. When he (R. Jehoshua) came to R. Dosa b. Harkhenas, the latter told him: "If we are to reinvestigate the decisions of the Beth Din of R. Gamaliel, we must also reinvestigate the decisions of all the tribunals of justice which have existed from the time of Moses till the present day; for it is said [Ex. xxiv. 9] Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and seventy elders went up (to the Mount)." Why were not the names of the elders also specified? To teach us that every three men in Israel that form a Beth Din are to be respected in an equal degree with the Beth Din of Moses. Then did R. Jehoshua take his staff and money in his hand, and went to Yamnia, to R. Gamaliel, on the very day on which the Day of Atonement would have been according to his computation, when R. Gamaliel arose and kissed him on the forehead, saying: "Enter in peace, my master and disciple! My master--in knowledge; my disciple--since thou didst obey my injunction."

GEMARA: We have learned in a Boraita that R. Gamaliel said to the sages: "Thus it has been handed down to me from the house of my grandfather (Zamalill the elder) that sometimes the new moon appears elongated and sometimes diminished. R. Hyya saw the old moon yet on the morning of the twenty-ninth day, and threw clods of earth at it, saying: "We should consecrate thee in the evening, and thou art seen now? Go, hide thyself!"

Said Rabbi to R. Hyya: "Go to Entob and consecrate the month and send back to me as a password I 'David, the King of Israel, still lives.'"

The rabbis taught: Once it happened that the heavens were thick with clouds and the form of the moon was seen on the twenty-ninth of the month (of Elul), so that the people thought that New Year's Day should be then proclaimed, and they (the Beth

the Mishnah talk about the Samaritans, also called the Cutheans, lighting bon fires on the wrong day to indicate the moon was seen on the 29th or the 30th day of the month. This is important because the new crescent moon was used to determine when the month began and only then would they be able to count to each of the Holy Days in the 1st and 7th months.

For this reason, I have included this very long footnote number 21 to show you the discussions around 130 A.D. Before Rabbi Akiva is martyred, they were discussing the new crescent moon to begin the month and how to announce it. The entire footnote is about the crescent moon. It never once spoke about the conjunction moon or a 30-day solar month. There was not even a hint of that.

The Boethusians, also known as the Sadducees or a sect of them, also disputed with the Pharisees over the start date of Shavuot and the counting of the Omer.²¹

Din) were about to consecrate it. Said R. Gamaliel to them: Thus it has been handed down to me by tradition, from the house of my grandfather, the consecration of the moon cannot take place at a period less than twenty-nine and a half days, two-thirds and .0052 (i.e., seventy-three 'Halaqim), of an hour. On that self-same day the mother of Ben Zaza died and R. Gamaliel delivered a great funeral oration, 2 not because she specially deserved it, but in order that the people might know that the new moon had not yet been consecrated by the Beth Din.

"R. Aqiba went to him, and found him grieving." The schoolmen propounded a question: "Who found whom grieving?" Come and hear. We have learned in a Boraitha: "R. Aqiba went to R. Jehoshua and found him grieving, so he asked him: 'Rabbi, why art thou grieving?' And he answered: 'Aqiba, I would rather lie sick for twelve months than to have this order issued for my appearance.' Rejoined R. Aqiba: 'Rabbi, permit me to say one thing in thy presence which thou thyself hast taught me.' R. Jehoshua granted him permission, and R. Aqiba proceeded: 'It is written [Lev. xxiii. 2, 4 and 37]: Three times 'shall proclaim Othom (them), which should, however, not be read Othom (them), but Athem (ye), which would make the verse read, "Ye shall proclaim." Now the threefold "ye" signifies that even if ye were deceived by false pretences and changed the day of the festivals, or even if ye did it purposely, or even if ye were held to be in error by others--once the dates had been established they must so remain.' With the following words R. Jehoshua answered R. Aqiba: Aqiba, thou hast comforted me; Aqiba, thou hast comforted me."

²¹ *The Boethusian Dispute, Parshas Emor, by Rabbi Yitzchak Etshalom*
<https://torah.org/torah-portion/mikra-5767-emor/>

THE DISPUTE-Megillat Ta'anit (the Tannaitic record of festivals marking salvations during the Second Commonwealth) records that

The Boethusians incident, as mentioned in footnote number 21 is demonstrating the calendar system in use at this time when Herod was king, before the birth of Yehshua, was the calendar using the crescent moon to begin the month and the barley to begin the year. It was not the Zadok, Enoch or Jubilee calendars they were fighting over. No! They were not arguing over when the month began, either by crescent moon or calculated because all of them used the crescent moon to begin

'From the eighth of the same until the close of the Festival [of Passover], during which time the date for the Feast of Weeks was re-established, fasting is forbidden'. For the Boethusians held that the Feast of Weeks must always be on the day after the Sabbath.

The Mishnah (Menahot 10:4) records that the Boethusian challenge necessitated that the cutting of the Omer's worth of barley be done with great fanfare and a responsive formula of command-compliance between the Beit-Din and the person cutting the barley.

The Boethusians were allies of the Hellenized Sadducees; there is a theory that the origin of the group dates to Herod's appointment of Shim'on ben Boethus as Kohen Gadol in 24 BCE (an appointment made so that Herod's could marry Boethus's daughter Mariamme). The evidence of material found in the Dead Sea Scrolls points to an earlier beginning of this sect. In any case, they were likely an offshoot of the Sadducees. The chief point of departure between the Pharisees (Rabbinic community) and the Sadducees and their allies was the validity of the Oral Tradition in determining the meaning and proper interpretation of Scripture. Whether the Sadducees had their own methodology of interpretation or were "strict literalists" is subject to scholarly debate – what is clear is that they rejected the Torah sheBa'al Peh and the authority of the Hakh'mei haM'sorah.

Although there is a series of disputes between Haza"l and the Sadducees regarding the proper understanding and application of Halakhah, it seems that the establishment of the date of the Omer-offering (and, consequently, of Shavu'ot) was the most significant and noteworthy controversy which highlighted this schism.

It is possible that the Sadducees exercise significant control over the operation of the Beit haMikdash for a lengthy period during the first century BCE into the millennium (cf., inter alia, Mishnah Yoma 1:5), such that their interpretation regarding matters of offerings would have a profound and broad impact on national religious celebrations.

What is particularly difficult about this debate is that a simple, straightforward read of the text does lead us to the conclusion maintained by the Boethusians – or, at least, it would seem to. The Torah indicates that the offering is to take place "on the day after the Shabbat", which should comfortably be understood as Sunday.

In order to understand the dynamics of the dispute – and the Rabbinic position – we need to analyze the various possibilities of interpretation. We will find that no single explanation of the phrase Mimmohorat haShabbat will be "easy" and that the information provided by the Torah demands careful and thoughtful analysis in order to arrive at a proper appreciation of the meaning of the text.

the month at this time. They were arguing over whether the barley Omer count began on the morrow after the Sabbath or after the 16th of Nisan.²² It was for this reason the Pharisees made sure to cut the barley

²² *In late Second Temple times there was a famous debate between three different Jewish factions about the meaning of the Hebrew phrase “morrow of the Sabbath” and hence about the timing of Shavuot. All three factions agreed that the “morrow of the Sabbath” was associated with the Feast of Unleavened Bread, although the precise connection led to the festival being observed on different days. The seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread runs from the 15th day to the 21st day of the First Hebrew Month (Nissan) and marks the Exodus from Egypt, as well as the beginning of the barley harvest in Israel. All three factions connected the “morrow of the Sabbath” with the Feast of Unleavened Bread, but differed as to the exact timing and connection. The three factions who argued over the timing of Shavuot were the Pharisees who wrote the Mishnah and the Talmud, the Essenes who wrote the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the Sadducees who made up the Temple Priesthood.*

The Pharisees argued that Shavuot is to be counted from the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which they designated a “Sabbath.” According to the Pharisees, “morrow of the Sabbath” means the “morrow of the 1st day of Unleavened Bread.” The ancient Pharisees and their modern-day successor the Orthodox rabbis begin the 50-day count to Shavuot on the second day of Unleavened Bread, which is always the 16th day of the First Hebrew Month. As a result, the Pharisee Shavuot always fell out in ancient times from the 5th to the 7th day of the Third Hebrew Month (Sivan). After the destruction of the Temple, the Pharisees became the predominant surviving faction among the Jewish leadership and their interpretation is followed by most Jews until this very day. In 359 CE, the Pharisee leader Hillel II established a pre-calculated calendar and ever since the Pharisee Shavuot has always been observed on the 6th of Sivan.

The Essenes who wrote the Dead Sea Scrolls began the 50-day count to Shavuot on a different Sabbath from the Pharisees. In their reckoning, the Omer offering was to be brought on the morrow of the weekly Sabbath, in modern terms: “Sunday.” The Essenes began their count on the Sunday after the seven-days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. As a result, they always began their count on the 26th day of the First Hebrew Month. The Essenes had a 364-day solar calendar, which began every year on a Wednesday and had fixed lengths for each month. Based on the Essene calendar, Shavuot always fell out on the 15th day of the Third Hebrew Month. The Essenes are presumed to have been wiped out when the Romans invaded Judea in 66-74 CE and only their documents survive today.

The third faction, the Sadducees, agreed with the Essenes that Shavuot must be counted from a weekly Sabbath, but disagreed as to which one. The Sadducees believed the 50-day count must begin on the weekly Sabbath that falls out during the seven-days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. According to their reckoning, the counting towards Shavuot could begin anywhere from the 15th to the 21st day of the month, depending on what day of the week the Feast of Unleavened Bread began. If

even if the 16th day of Nisan was on the Sabbath, in order to demonstrate their sovereignty over the Boethusians who did not believe in the Oral Torah and who argued to cut the barley after the Sabbath day, at sunset which was the start of Sunday.²³

Do not forget who is recording the history here—it is the Pharisees. They are painting everyone who has a different view about any of their teachings as heretics. In the last few footnotes, we are showing you how the Boethusians were arguing with the Pharisees about the start of the month and with the start of the counting of the Omer. This is the exact same things the Karaites, Messianic and Orthodox Jews argue over

Unleavened Bread began on a Sunday, the count would begin on the 15th day of the month. If Unleavened Bread began on a Saturday, the count would begin on the 16th day of the month, and so on. Based on this counting, Shavuot could fall out from the 4th to the 12th of the Third Hebrew Month. Karaite Jews have accepted the Sadducee reckoning as the only one to be consistent with the plain meaning of the biblical text. The Sadducees and Essenes agreed that the 50-day count to Shavuot had to always begin on the morrow of a weekly Sabbath. They only differed as to whether this referred to the Sunday during the Feast of Unleavened Bread or the Sunday following the Feast of Unleavened Bread. In contrast, the Pharisees believed the 50-day count must begin with an annual “Sabbath,” rather than a weekly Sabbath. According to the Torah, work is forbidden on the 1st day and the 7th day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The Pharisees began their count from the morrow of the 1st day of Unleavened Bread. Although work is forbidden on this day, it is never referred to in the Hebrew Bible as a “Sabbath.” The only annual feast day to ever be referred to in the Hebrew Bible as a Sabbath is the Day of Atonement, on the Tenth day of the Seventh Hebrew Month. Work is forbidden on six other annual feast days, but the days are never referred to in the Tanakh as Sabbaths.

The Truth About Shavuot by Nehemia Gordon

<https://www.nehemiaswall.com/truth-shavuot>

²³ *If the sixteenth of Nisan occurs **on Shabbat**, the court emissary says to the assembled: Shall I cut the sheaves on **this Shabbat**? The assembly says in response: **Yes**. The emissary repeats: On **this Shabbat**? The assembly says: **Yes**. The court emissary says to those assembled: **Shall I cut the sheaves? And they say to him in response: Cut**. The emissary repeats: **Shall I cut the sheaves? And they say to him: Cut**. The emissary asks **three times with regard to each and every matter, and the assembly says to him: Yes, yes, yes**. The mishna asks: **Why do I need those involved to publicize each stage of the rite to that extent?** The mishna answers: It is **due to the Boethusians, as they deny the validity of the Oral Law and would say: There is no harvest of the omer at the conclusion of the first Festival** day of Passover unless it occurs at the conclusion of Shabbat. The publicity was to underscore that the sixteenth of Nisan was the proper time for the omer harvest.*

Mishnah Menachot 10:3-4 - Sefaria

https://www.sefaria.org/Mishnah_Menachot.9.9?lang=bi

today, as we all try to obey the Torah. Yesterday's Pharisees, Sadducees and Boethusians are today's Orthodox Jews, Karaites, and Messianics!

I must also point out in the footnote how some of the confusion began over the timing as to when to count the Omer.²⁴

In 2024 we have two groups of Karaites who determine the start of the year by the barley with two different standards to begin the year.

²⁴ *But basically, what we're seeing is, Leviticus 23 is telling us, don't eat the new produce of the land until the morrow after the Shabbat. And here it says they ate the produce of the land on the morrow after the Passover. Now, when we read our verse in Numbers 33, verse 3, in our current Torah portion, it explains that the morrow after the Passover is equivalent to the 15th day of the first month. Now, remember, the rabbis say you can't eat the new produce every single year until the 16th day of the first month. And this actually refutes their position.*

There's a really interesting discussion in the writings of a rabbi named Ibn Ezra, who was a brilliant rabbi, even though he was an oral law rabbinical Jew; but he was a brilliant Bible commentator. When he came to this verse, he said, "We blew it here. This uncovers us. If only we could explain away and say that this was the old produce of the land," even though it doesn't say that, and it doesn't make sense in the context. Well, here's the really interesting thing - if you read in the King James Version in Joshua 5:11, what do you find? You find as follows, it says, "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." Now, the word "old" doesn't appear on the text, it doesn't appear in the Hebrew, and in fact...

Jono: I don't have it in the English, either.

Nehemia: Well, you're in the New King James. I'm in the old King James.

Jono: Oh, okay. Sorry. Keep going.

Nehemia: So, the New King James doesn't have it. But the old King James from 1611 says, "And they did eat of the old corn of the land on the morrow after the Passover." Now, where did they get the word "old?" They got it from the rabbis who taught them Hebrew.

The rabbis who taught them Hebrew saw this in Ibn Ezra, who was saying, "I wish it said old. It doesn't, but I wish it did." And from the 'wishing it did', it then ended up in the translation from the stupid Christians who didn't know any better. Sorry, Keith. But they were misled by the rabbis who taught them Hebrew, and they end up with... rabbinical wishing has now turned into translation in the King James Version. The bottom line is it doesn't say that. That doesn't even make sense in the context. I guarantee you the people who were translating this in the King James Version in the 1600s, they had no idea that they were throwing themselves in the middle of an age-old debate that goes back thousands of years in Judaism between when to begin the 50-day count of Pentecost... but that's... it's amazing; you can't blame them that... they had this agenda. But someone had the agenda and fed it to them, and they didn't know any better.

<https://www.nehemiaswall.com/torah-pearls-masei>

One must have a field of ripe brown barley and the other must have a nation full of fields of ripe brown barley by the end of the 12th month of the year. One Christian group must have ripe brown barley by the end of the 12th month along with lambs being born, grapes and figs budding and the storks migrating. Another Christian group must have fields of barley by the 10th day of the 1st month, or it is an Adar Bet month. I and those who follow our teachings must have green ears of barley capable of being roasted and turned into flour by Wave Sheaf Day during the days of Unleavened Bread.

Even amongst these five groups in 2024, evil is spoken of the other groups who do not agree with their own understanding. We are no different today than the various Jewish sects during the times we have been covering. The main difference today is we do not have political power to enforce our views as they did then.

Calendric issues then, as they are today, are very divisive issues and cause many groups to split apart and make defaming accusations against those who do not agree with them. Everyone wants to keep the Holy Days at the proper time. This is why it is important to get the start of the month correct and why it is passionately argued over.

These are all calendar issues debated before Yehshua was born, which will eventually affect when the Sabbatical and Jubilee years are to be kept and are the reason for my explaining this issue now at the start of this book.

The Karaites

Let me now share with you what the Karaites have recorded about the Sadducees and the Pharisees to get another perspective. And to be transparent, I was introduced to Nehemia Gordon, whom I have already quoted in this book, in 2005 and I have been following him and many of his teachings since that time. We do not agree on all points, but we do agree on many.

Nehemia was raised as an Orthodox Pharisaic Jew and in his early adult life began to follow the Karaite teachings.

*Karaite Judaism*²⁵ (/ˈkɛərə.aɪt/) or *Karaism* (/ˈkɛərə.ɪzəm/, sometimes spelt *Karaitism* (/ˈkɛərə.ɪtɪzəm/; Hebrew: קראית ידות *Yahadut*

²⁵ Karaite Judaism https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karaite_Judaism

Qara'it); also spelt *Qaraite* Judaism, *Qaraism* or *Qaraitism*) is a Jewish religious movement characterized by the recognition of the written *Tanakh* alone as its supreme authority in *halakha* (Jewish religious law) and theology.^[11] Karaites believe that all of the divine commandments which were handed down to Moses by God were recorded in the written Torah without any additional Oral Law or explanation. Unlike mainstream Rabbinic Judaism, which regards the Oral Torah, codified in the Talmud and subsequent works, as authoritative interpretations of the Torah, Karaite Jews do not treat the written collections of the oral tradition in the Midrash or the Talmud as binding.

Karaite interpretation of the Torah strives to adhere to the plain or most obvious meaning (*peshat*) of the text; this is not necessarily the literal meaning of the text—instead, it is the meaning of the text that would have been naturally understood by the ancient Hebrews when the books of the Torah were first written—without the use of the Oral Torah. By contrast, Rabbinic Judaism relies on the legal rulings of the Sanhedrin as they are codified in the Midrash, Talmud, and other sources to indicate the authentic meaning of the Torah.^[b] Karaite Judaism holds every interpretation of the Torah to the same scrutiny regardless of its source, and teaches that it is the personal responsibility of every individual Jew to study the Torah, and ultimately to decide personally its correct meaning. Karaites may consider arguments made in the Talmud and other works, but without exalting them above other viewpoints.

According to the Karaite Mordecai ben Nissan (born 1650), the ancestors of the Karaites were a group called *Benei Sēdeq* during the Second Temple period.^[12] Historians have argued over whether Karaism has a direct connection to the Sadducees dating back to the end of the Second Temple period (70 CE) or whether Karaism represents a novel emergence of similar views. Karaites have always maintained that while there are some similarities to the Sadducees due to the rejection of rabbinical authority and of the Oral Law, there are major differences.

According to Rabbi Abraham ibn Daud, in his *Sefer ha-Qabbalah* (written c. 1160), the Karaite movement crystallized in Baghdad in the Gaonic period (c. 7th–9th centuries) under the Abbasid Caliphate in present-day Iraq. This is the view universally accepted among Rabbinic Jews. However, some Arab scholars claim that Karaites were already living in Egypt in the first half of the seventh century, based on a legal document that the Karaite community in Egypt had in its possession until the end of the

19th century, in which the first Islamic governor ordered the leaders of the Rabbinite community against interfering with Karaite practices or with the way they celebrate their holidays. It was said to have been stamped by the palm of Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ as-Sahmī, the first Islamic governor of Egypt (d. 664), and was reportedly dated 20 AH (641 CE).^{[13][14]}

Arguments among Jewish sects regarding the validity of the Oral Law date back to the Hellenistic period, the 2nd and 1st centuries BCE. Accordingly, some scholars trace the origin of Karaism to those who rejected the Talmudic tradition as an innovation. Judah Halevi, an 11th-century Jewish philosopher and rabbi, wrote a defense for Rabbinic Judaism entitled *Kuzari*, placing the origins of Karaism in the first and second centuries BCE, during the reign of Alexander Jannaeus ("King Jannai"), king of Judaea from 103 to 76 BCE:

After him came Judah b. Tabbāi and Simon b. Shētaḥ, with the friends of both. At this period arose the doctrine of the Karaites in consequence of an incident between the Sages and King Jannai who was a priest. His mother was under suspicion of being a 'profane' woman. One of the Sages alluded to this, saying to him: 'Be satisfied, O king Jannai, with the royal crown, but leave the priestly crown to the seed of Aaron.' His friends prejudiced him against the Sages, advising him to browbeat, expel, and scatter or kill them. He replied: 'If I destroy the Sages what will become of our Law?' 'There is the written law,' they replied, whoever wishes to study it may come and do so; take no heed of the oral law.' He followed their advice and expelled the Sages and among them Simon b. Shētaḥ, his son-in-law. Rabbinism was laid low for some time. The other party tried to establish a law built on their own conception, but failed, till Simon b. Shētaḥ returned with his disciples from Alexandria, and restored tradition to its former condition. Karaism had, however, taken root among people who rejected the oral law, and called all kinds of proofs to their aid, as we see today. As regards the Sādōcaeans and Boēthosians, they are the sectarians who are anathemised in our prayer.'^[19]

Abraham Geiger, a 19th-century German scholar who founded Reform Judaism, posited a connection between the Karaites and a remnant of the Sadducees, the 1st-century Jewish sect that followed the Hebrew Bible literally and rejected the Pharisees' notion

of an Oral Torah even before it was written.^[20] Geiger's view is based on comparison between Karaite and Sadducee halakha: for example, a minority in Karaite Judaism do not believe in a resurrection of the dead or afterlife, a position also held by the Sadducees. The British theologian John Gill (1767) noted,

In the times of John Hyrcanus, and Alexander Janneus his son, sprung up the sect of the Karaites, in opposition to the Pharisees, who had introduced traditions, and set up the oral law, which these men rejected. In the times of the said princes lived Simeon ben Shetach, and Judah ben Tabbai, who flourished AM 3621, these two separated, the latter from the former, because he could not embrace his inventions which he formed out of his own brain; and from him the Karaites sprung, who were first called the society or congregation of Judah ben Tabbai, which was afterwards changed into the name of Karaites.^[21]

Gill also traces the Karaite sect to the split between the schools of Hillel the Elder and Shammai in 30 BCE.^[22]

Rabbi Gamaliel

Returning to the House of Shammai and Hillel, it is reported that Hillel lived to be 120 years of age, dying in the year 10 A.D. and that his son Simeon took over, but he too died that same year. Simeon's son's name was Gamaliel who was born in the year 20 B.C., became head of the Sanhedrin when his father died, and became the most respected rabbi in the Sanhedrin during all the years of Yehshua's life and the rise of the sect of the Netzarenes.

It is speculation but interesting nonetheless, that Yehshua would have been 12 years old²⁶ in the year 9 A.D. and could have been talking

²⁶ 41 And His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. 42 And when He was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the Feast. 43 And fulfilling the days, as they returned, the boy Jesus stayed in Jerusalem. And Joseph and His mother did not know. 44 But they, supposing Him to have been in the company, went a day's journey. And they looked for Him among the kinsfolk and acquaintances. 45 And when they did not find Him, they turned back to Jerusalem, seeking Him. 46 And it happened that after three days they found Him

to all three of these men in the Temple when all of them would have been at the Temple for the Feasts. The rabbis were all amazed at His understanding and answers of the Law.

We next read about Rabbi Gamaliel when he comes to the defence of the Apostles. Note that he is referred to as a Pharisee and of the House of Hillel. He was also Nasi or President of the Sanhedrin and there are some who say he also was a secret follower of Yehshua, which is possibly why so little is recorded of him in the Mishnah, but I admit this is speculation.

Annas the High Priest sought to utterly destroy this sect of the Netzarenes as they continued to spread the Gospel. When the counsel of the Sanhedrin met and then heard the Apostles whom they had arrested speak, they wanted to kill them all, but then Rabbi Gamaliel got up and spoke.

Being the great leader he was, he reminded the House of Shammai and the Sanhedrin the tolerant and liberal approach of his grandfather Hillel was the best approach and that Yehshua should not have been killed. Listen carefully to the words he speaks as he tells the Sanhedrin, or both the Sadducees and the Pharisees, that Yehshua could have been from Yehovah. Read what he says in verse 38: that if these men be from God, then the Sanhedrin would possibly be fighting against God. And by implication, if they are from God then they are guilty of having killed Yehshua who also might have been from God.

*33 But those hearing were cut to the heart, and they took counsel to kill them. 34 Then there stood up one in the sanhedrin, **a Pharisee named Gamaliel**, a doctor of the Law honored among all the people. And he commanded the apostles to be put outside a little space. 35 And he said to them, Men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what you intend to do regarding these men. 36 For before these days Theudas rose up, boasting himself to be somebody; a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves to him; who was slain. And all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered and brought to nothing. 37 After*

in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both hearing them and questioning them. 47 And all who heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers. 48 And seeing Him, they were amazed. And His mother said to Him, Child, why have you done so to us? Behold, your father and I have looked for you, greatly distressed. 49 And He said to them, Why did you look for Me? Do you not know that I must be about My Father's business? (Luke 2:41-49)

this one, Judas of Galilee rose up in the days of the Registration, and drew away considerable people after him. Yet that one perished; and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered. 38 And now I say to you, Withdraw from these men and let them alone. For if this counsel or this work is of men, it will come to nothing. 39 But if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it, lest perhaps you be found even to fight against God. 40 And they obeyed him. And calling the apostles, beating them, they commanded not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. 41 Then indeed they departed from the presence of the sanhedrin, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to be shamed for His name. (Acts 5:33-41)

Gamaliel is supposed to have died in 52 A.D., and we hear about Paul being arrested about the year 64 A.D. and stating proudly how he was taught by Gamaliel himself.

27 And when the seven days were about to be completed, the Jews who were from Asia, having seen him in the temple, stirred up all the crowd and laid hands on him, 28 crying out, Men, Israelites, help! This is the man who teaches all everywhere against the people and the Law and this place. And even he brought Greeks into the temple and has polluted this holy place. 29 (For they had seen Trophimus the Ephesian with him in the city before, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.) 30 And all the city was moved, and the people ran together. And laying hands on Paul, they drew him outside of the temple. And immediately the doors were shut. 31 And as they were seeking to kill him, the news came to the chiliarch of the cohort, that all Jerusalem was in an uproar. 32 He immediately took soldiers and centurions, and ran down to them. And seeing the chiliarch and the soldiers, they quit beating Paul. 33 Then going near, the chiliarch laid hold on him, and commanded him to be bound with two chains. And he demanded who he was and what he had done. 34 And others cried something else in the crowd, and not being able to know the certainty on account of the uproar, he commanded him to be carried into the fortress. 35 And when he came on the stairs, it happened that he was carried by the soldiers, because of the violence of the crowd. 36 For the multitude of the people followed after, crying, Away with him! (Acts 21:27-36)

Paul Speaks to the People

37 And as Paul was about to be led into the fortress, he said to the chiliarch, Is it lawful for me to say a thing to you? And he said, Do you know Greek? 38 Then are you not the Egyptian who before these days caused a riot, and led four thousand men of the assassins out into the wilderness? 39 But Paul said, I am a man, a Jew of Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no small city. And I beseech you, allow me to speak to the people. 40 And he allowing him, standing on the stairs, Paul signaled with his hand to the people. And much silence taking place, he spoke in the Hebrew dialect, saying: (Acts 21:37-40)

1 Men, brothers and fathers! Hear my defense now to you. 2 And hearing that he spoke to them in the Hebrew dialect, they all the more kept silence. And he said, 3 I am truly a man, a Jew born in Tarsus in Cilicia, yet **brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, taught according to the exactness of the Law of the fathers, being a zealous one of God, as you all are today.** 4 **I persecuted this Way as far as death, binding and delivering both men and women into prisons; 5 as also the high priest bears witness to me, and all the elderhood. And receiving letters from them to the brothers, I traveled into Damascus indeed to lead those being bound to Jerusalem, in order that they might be punished.** (Acts 22:1-5)

The Destruction of the Temple 70 A.D.

I want to allow Dr. Rebecca Denova to continue with this history as we come to the time when the Temple was destroyed along with the majority of the Sadducees. Those who survived this horrendous destruction were the Pharisee sect of Judaism. You may recall that it is this Rabbi Zakkai who argued successfully for the count to Shavuot to begin on the 16th of Nisan.

From the 30s to the 60s,²⁷ the Roman government sent a series of corrupt and inept magistrates to the region, which resulted in a revolt against Rome led by the sect of Jews known as Zealots. The revolt ended in disaster when the Roman emperor Vespasian's (r. 69-79 CE) son, Titus (r. 79-81 CE), laid siege to Jerusalem and destroyed the Second Temple complex. According to the Jewish historian Flavius

²⁷ Rebecca I. Denova, Ph.D. is Emeritus Professor of Early Christianity in the Department of Religious Studies, University of Pittsburgh. She has recently completed a textbook, "The Origins of Christianity and the New Testament" (Wiley-Blackwell) <https://www.worldhistory.org/Pharisees/>

Josephus (36-100 CE) and later Rabbinic traditions, a Pharisee by the name of Yohanan ben Zakkai negotiated with Vespasian to leave the city in a coffin (along with others). Claiming that the Pharisees only wanted peace with Rome, he established a school at the town of Yavne along the coast. With the Temple gone, he taught that Jews should focus on the teachings of Moses, stressing prayer over sacrifices. Other Pharisees settled in Galilee and developed similar schools.

An historical problem with the study of the ancient Pharisees is that prior to the destruction of the Temple, very little literature has survived from their early history. The early Rabbinic literature dates to the 2nd century CE. In those writings, the rabbis claim spiritual descent from the Pharisees. However, when they discuss specific teachings and issues, we cannot determine which ones were relative for the earlier period.

There is one Pharisee whose writings did survive the destruction of the Temple and they are the letters of Paul, who was taught by Gamaliel.

Yeshua and the Scriptures

Before we move on, I need to point out to you that our Bible today was not always this way. At the time when Yeshua was teaching, from 28 A.D. to 31 A.D. the year he was crucified, the scriptures were made up of the first five books of the Bible: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. These are the books of the Law and they have been written and passed down since Israel heard Yehovah speak at Mount Sinai.

What we call the Old Testament is also called the Tanakh, which comes from the first letter of the three sections: the Torah, the Nevi'im (Prophets) and the Ketuvim (Writings).²⁸

²⁸ So we've got three fields of knowledge here: the Torah, the Prophets, and the wisdom. If you think about it, Tanakh really is Torah, Prophets, and wisdom. So we've got the Torah, that's a no-brainer. The Prophets is a second section, it's called that. The third field of information starts with Proverbs and it has Ecclesiastes. And then you ask the question, why isn't Daniel... in the Hebrew Bible, why isn't it in the Prophets? The answer, for me, is obvious. Daniel is not in the Prophets because it's a wisdom book. It starts off talking about how he was trained in wisdom, and yes, he

The Torah consists of the first five books. The second division is from the Prophets. This section is then subdivided into the Former Prophets (four volumes)—Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings—and the 'Latter Prophets' (three volumes)—Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel—and the Twelve Minor²⁹ Prophets (which were included in one book).

The third division is called the Writings, and these again were subdivided into three groups. When we read about Rabbi Akiva shortly, you will see that this second division of the writings was still being debated in his day which was 70 years after Yehshua.

This third division was made up of the poetical Books of the Psalms, Proverbs, and Job. This next section called the Rolls or Readings (seven volumes), was not approved until Rabbi Akiva's time—Solomon's Song, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, and one volume containing Ezra and Nehemiah; and, lastly, in a

had prophecies, but primarily it's not prophecy in what we call the classical prophet sense.

Eze 7:26 Disaster on disaster shall come, and rumor to rumor shall be. And they shall seek a vision from the prophet; but the law shall perish from the priest, and wisdom from the elders.

a vision from the prophet = Prophets

the law from the priest = Torah

wisdom from the elders = Wisdom

<https://www.nehemiaswall.com/prophet-pearls-vayeira>

²⁹ *Nehemia: Yes. Can I just say one more thing about the phrase that you focused on? "Vehayah bayom hahu," "And it shall come to pass on that day." So I'm looking 32 times that appears, that exact phrase, and the first time it appears is Isaiah. Then it appears in Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Micah, Zephaniah, and Zachariah. And what do all those have in common? So in Hebrew, we have this block of books called, The Latter Prophets. We're doing Prophet Pearls, and we have Torah, Nevi'im, Ketuvim.*

Keith: The Latter Prophets.

Nehemia: We have Torah, Nevi'im, Ketuvim - Torah, or instruction, Prophets, and Writings. But among the Prophets, there is a division in the Hebrew between the Former Prophets and the Latter Prophets. The Former Prophets are the history books, Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings. And then you have the Latter Prophets. There are four Latter Prophets just like there's four Former Prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Twelve. And the Twelve in Hebrew is actually one scroll. It's twelve books, but it's one scroll.

Keith: It's funny, in our tradition we call them the Minor Prophets.

Nehemia: Well, the Minor - because they're small, I guess.

Keith: They're small, yes, but they're not minor. [laughing]

<https://www.nehemiaswall.com/prophet-pearls-balak>

separate book, Chronicles. Thus, the whole Scriptures were contained in twenty-four books.

It was not until the Greek translation was made, that the books were grouped in the order in which we have them now, and at the same time their number was increased to thirty-nine by taking the writings of each of the prophets separately and treating Ezra and Nehemiah as different books.³⁰

What is called the Septuagint is also known as the LXX or the Greek translation of the Old Testament.

The Septuagint is the earliest extant Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible from the original Hebrew. The full Greek title derives from the story recorded in the Letter of Aristeas to Philocrates that "the laws of the Jews" were translated into the Greek language at the request of Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285–247 BCE) by seventy-two Hebrew translators—six from each of the Twelve Tribes of Israel. Biblical scholars agree that the first five books of the Hebrew Bible were translated from Biblical Hebrew into Koine Greek by Jews living in the Ptolemaic Kingdom, probably in the early or middle part of the third century BCE. The remaining books were presumably translated in the 2nd century BCE. Some targums translating or paraphrasing the Bible into Aramaic were also made during the Second Temple period.³¹

When Yehshua was responding to the Sadducees or the Pharisees, He was always quoting what many today call the Old Testament. In Mark, Yehshua is arguing with the Pharisees who were then bringing the traditions or Oral laws that were not yet codified. Remember there were these ongoing debates between the House of Shammai and the House of Hillel.

10 For Moses said, "Honor your father and your mother." And, "Whoever curses father or mother, let him die the death." 11 But you say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, Corban! (that is, A gift to God, whatever you may profit by me) 12 and you no longer allow him to do anything toward his father or mother, 13 making the

³⁰https://biblehub.com/library/duff/the_bible_in_its_making/chapter_viii_the_bible_in.htm

³¹ Septuagint <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Septuagint>

Word of God of no effect through your tradition³² which you have delivered. And you do many such things. (Mark 7:10-13)

We have another example in Matthew:

1 Then the scribes and Pharisees who were from Jerusalem came to Jesus, saying, 2 Why do your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread. 3 But He answered and said to them, Why do you also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? 4 For God commanded, saying, "Honor your father and mother"; and, "He who speaks evil of father or mother, let him die by death." 5 But you say, Whoever says to his father or mother, Whatever you would gain from me, It is a gift to God; 6 and in no way he honors his father or his mother. And you voided the commandment of God by your tradition. 7 Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, 8 "This people draws near to Me with their mouth, and honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. 9 But in vain they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." (Matthew 15:1-9)

If you recall, the Sadducees did not believe in life after death and to this Yehshua responded:

23 On that day the Sadducees came to Him, who say that there is no resurrection. And they asked Him, 24 saying, Master, Moses said, If a man dies, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife and raise up seed to his brother. 25 Now there were with us seven brothers. And the first, when he had married a wife, died. And, having

³² Traditions here is *paradosis*, which shows this oral transmission - not yet codified. G3862 (Thayer) παράδοσις *paradosis*

Thayer Definition:

1) giving up, giving over

1a) the act of giving up

1b) the surrender of cities

2) a giving over which is done by word of mouth or in writing, i.e. tradition by instruction, narrative, precept, etc.

2a) objectively, that which is delivered, the substance of a teaching

2b) of the body of precepts, especially ritual, which in the opinion of the later Jews were orally delivered by Moses and orally transmitted in unbroken succession to subsequent generations, which precepts, both illustrating and expanding the written law, as they did were to be obeyed with equal reverence

no issue, he left his wife to his brother. 26 The second also did likewise, and the third, to the seventh. 27 And last of all the woman also died. 28 Therefore in the resurrection, whose wife shall she be, of the seven? For they all had her. 29 Jesus answered and said to them, You err, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God. 30 For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in Heaven. 31 But regarding the resurrection of the dead, have you not read that which was spoken to you by God, saying, 32 "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?" God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. 33 And when the crowd heard this, they were astonished at His doctrine. (Matthew 22:23-33)

Now when you read the things Yeshua spoke about from the Scriptures, you will understand which books He was referring to, which are the three divisions we spoke about earlier.

44 And He said to them, These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and in the Prophets and in the Psalms about Me. (Luke 24:44)

27 And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. (Luke 24:27)

39 You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life. And they are the ones witnessing of Me, 40 and you will not come to Me that you might have life. 41 I do not receive honor from men. 42 But I know you, that you do not have the love of God in you. 43 I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me. If another shall come in his own name, him you will receive. 44 How can you believe, you who receive honor from one another and do not seek the honor that comes from God only? 45 Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father; there is one who accuses you, Moses, in whom you trust. 46 For if you had believed Moses, you would have believed Me, for he wrote of Me. 47 But if you do not believe his writings, how shall you believe My Words? (John 5:39-47).

Rabbi Akiva—Canonization of The Scriptures

Rabbi Akiva³³ was born as Aqiba ben Yosep about 50 A.D. and died on September 28, 135 A.D., when he was killed by the Romans for teaching Torah in the aftermath of the Bar Kokhba revolt. He was a leading Jewish scholar and sage, a tanna³⁴ of the latter part of the first century and the beginning of the second century. Rabbi Akiva was a leading contributor to the Mishnah and to Midrash halakha. He is referred to in the Talmud as Rosh la-Hakhamim - "Chief of the Sages".

In our chronology of the development of both the Scriptures and those who influenced how they came down to us today, Rabbi Akiva and his contribution to what is now taught about the Torah is HUGE. This is about 100 years after Yeshua and 60 years after the Temple was destroyed. And just so you can relate, 100 years ago for us was the Roaring Twenties and Ford Model T cars, while 60 years ago for us was the Cuban Missile Crisis, Sputnik and the J.F.K. assassination, followed by John Glenn, who was the third American in space and the first to circle the earth in a rocket.

During this interlude between the time when Yeshua was killed in 31 A.D. and the time Rabbi Akiva was killed in 135 A.D., all of the Apostles were also now murdered with the last one, John dying about 100 A.D. The Temple too was destroyed in 70 A.D. Before Akiva's death, the Jewish sect of the Netzaranes was spreading quickly and being persecuted by the Jews. During this time another Jewish sect began to develop, who were called Christians, and they were being persecuted by Rome. This was between the years 60 to 68 A.D. when it is believed Paul was killed during the time of Nero, but we do not know the exact date. We do know that Nero was savagely persecuting the Christians when he was Emperor.

³³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rabbi_Akiva

³⁴ Tannaim (Amoraic Hebrew: Hebrew: תַּנַּיִם [tanna'im] "repeaters", "teachers", singular tanna תַּנַּי [tan'ni:], borrowed from the Aramaic) were the rabbinic sages whose views are recorded in the Mishnah, from approximately 10–220 CE. The period of the Tannaim, also referred to as the Mishnaic period, lasted about 210 years. It came after the period of the Zugot "Pairs" and was immediately followed by the period of the Amoraim "Interpreters".

The root tanna (תנא) is the Aramaic equivalent of the Hebrew root shanah (שנה), which also is the root word of Mishnah. The verb shanah means "to repeat [what one was taught]" and is used to mean "to learn."

The Mishnaic period is commonly divided into five periods according to generations. There are approximately 120 known Tannaim.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tannaim#>

19 Then, indeed, they who were scattered abroad by the persecution that rose about Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, preaching the Word to no one except the Jews. 20 And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene; who, when they had come to Antioch, spoke to the Hellenists, preaching the gospel of the Lord Jesus. 21 And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord. 22 And the Word was heard in the ears of the church in Jerusalem. And they sent out Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch; 23 who was glad when he had come and had seen the grace of God. And he exhorted all with purpose of heart to remain near to the Lord. 24 For he was a good man and full of the Holy Spirit and faith. And many people were added to the Lord. 25 And Barnabas went out to Tarsus to seek Saul. 26 And finding him, he brought him to Antioch. And it happened to them a whole year they were assembled in the church. And they taught a considerable crowd. And the disciples were first called Christian in Antioch. (Acts 11:19-26)

Simon Magus would become a chief leader in the Christian movement, being deified as God by Emperor Tiberius Claudius Caesar Augustus who ruled from 41 to 54 A.D., after which Nero would become Emperor.

We have explained this in detail in our book *The Restoration of All Things*³⁵ and will let you go there to learn more about Simon and how his syncretizations were brought into and replaced the Torah.

Rabbi Akiva was involved in the canonization of the Hebrew Scriptures which were being debated in his lifetime. At this same time, he was fighting against both the Jewish Netzarene as well as the Jewish and Hellenistic Christian sects.

*Rabbi Akiva*³⁶ declared that those who read non-canonical books would not share in the afterlife. But, according to Bacher and Grätz, Akiva was not

³⁵ The Restoration of All Things, by Joseph F Dumond
https://www.amazon.com/Restoration-All-Things-Elijah-Trilogy/dp/B0B9L89H7V/ref=pd_bxgy_img_d_scc1_2/136-0473788-4998709?pd_rd_w=FFoJL&content-id=amzn1.sym.2b132e63-5dcd-4ba1-be9f-9e044543d59f&pf_rd_p=2b132e63-5dcd-4ba1-be9f-9e044543d59f&pf_rd_r=WV1DMY4YEN77SFHAXVQW&pd_rd_wg=rAx2w&pd_rd_r=b0db143c-1404-4c57-8f4b-ca10d97b712f&pd_rd_i=B0B9L89H7V&psc=1
³⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Development_of_the_Hebrew_Bible_canon

*opposed to a private reading of the Apocrypha, as is evident from the fact that he himself makes frequent use of Sirach.*³⁷

They also debated the status of Ecclesiastes and Song of Songs concluding like the tradition of Rabbi Simeon ben Azzai that they are holy. Akiva stoutly defended, however, the canonicity of the Song of Songs, and Esther. But Heinrich Graetz's statements respecting Akiva's attitude toward the canonicity of the Song of Songs are misconceptions, as I.H. Weiss has to some extent shown. He was antagonistic toward the Septuagint text family and the apocryphal books contained therein, since Christians drew so heavily from them.

The Mishnah, compiled at the end of the 2nd century CE, describes a debate over the status of some books of Ketuvim, and in particular over whether or not they render the hands ritually impure. Yadaim 3:5 calls attention to a debate over Song of Songs and Ecclesiastes. The Megillat Ta'anit, in a discussion of days when fasting is prohibited but that are not noted in the Bible, mentions the holiday of Purim. Based on these, and a few similar references, Heinrich Graetz concluded in 1871 that there had been a Council of Jamnia (or Yavne in Hebrew) which had decided Jewish canon sometime in the late 1st century (c. 70–90). This became the prevailing scholarly consensus for much of the 20th century.

Some scholars argue that the Jewish canon was fixed earlier by the Hasmonean dynasty. Jacob Neusner published books in 1987 and 1988 that argued that the notion of a biblical canon was not prominent in 2nd-century Rabbinic Judaism or even later and instead that a notion of Torah was expanded to include the Mishnah, Tosefta, Jerusalem Talmud, Babylonian Talmud and midrashim. Thus, there is no scholarly consensus as to when the Jewish canon was set.

I must now let Wikipedia describe the rest of Rabbi Akiva's work. I do not want to appear biased in my views. I am just trying to provide the facts on how things came to be, before I can explain them in the next section.

Akiva and Biblical Canon³⁸

³⁷ The Book of Sirach (/ˈsaɪræk/, Hebrew: סֵפֶר בֶּן-סִירָא, romanized: Sēper ben-Sirā'), also known as The Wisdom of Jesus the son of Sirach or Ecclesiasticus (/ɪˌkliːziˈæstɪkəs/, and abbreviated Ecclus.) is a Jewish work, originally written in Biblical Hebrew. The longest extant wisdom book from antiquity, it consists of ethical teachings, written approximately between 196 and 175 BCE by Yeshua ben Eleazar ben Sira (Ben Sira), a Hellenistic Jewish scribe of the Second Temple period. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Sirach

³⁸ Akiva https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rabbi_Akiva

Akiva was instrumental in drawing up the canon of the Tanakh. He protested strongly against the canonicity of the Apocrypha, the Wisdom of Sirach, for instance, in which passages קורא is to be explained according to Kiddushin 49a, and בר"י according to its Aramaic equivalent בר"י; so that Akiva's utterance reads, "He who reads aloud in the synagogue from books not belonging to the canon as if they were canonical," etc. But he was not opposed to a private reading of the Apocrypha, as is evident from the fact that he himself makes frequent use of Sirach. Akiva stoutly defended, however, the canonicity of the Song of Songs, and Esther. Grätz's statements respecting Akiva's attitude toward the canonicity of the Song of Songs were viewed as misconceptions by I.H. Weiss.

Aquila, meanwhile, was a disciple of Akiva and, under Akiva's guidance, gave the Greek-speaking Jews a rabbinical Bible. Akiva probably also provided for a revised text of the Targums; certainly, for the essential base of the Targum Onkelos, which in matters of Halakha reflects Akiva's opinions completely.

Akiva as Systematiser

Akiva worked in the domain of the Halakha, both in the systematization of its traditional material and in its further development. The condition of the Halakha, that is, of religious praxis, and indeed of Judaism in general, was a very precarious one at the turn of the 1st century of the common era. The lack of any systematized collection of the accumulated halachot rendered impossible any presentation of them in a form suitable for practical purposes. Means for the theoretical study of the Halakha were also scant; both logic and exegesis—the two props of the Halakha—being differently conceived by the various ruling Tannaim, and differently taught. According to a tradition (which has historical confirmation), it was Akiva who systematized and arranged the "Mishna" (the halakhic codex); the "midrash" (the exegesis of the Halakha), and the "halachot" (the logical amplification of the Halakha). The Mishna of Akiva, as his pupil Rabbi Meir had taken it from him, became the basis of the Six Orders of the Mishna.

The δευτερώσεις τοῦ καλουμένου Παββὶ Ακιβᾶ (Mishnah of the one called "Rabbi Akiva") mentioned by Epiphanius, as well as the "great Mishnayot of Akiva", are probably not to be understood as independent Mishnayot (δευτερώσεις) existing at that time, but as the teachings and opinions of Akiva contained in the officially recognized

Mishnayot and Midrashim. At the same time, it is fair to consider the Mishnah of Judah ha-Nasi (called simply "the Mishnah"), as well as the majority of all halakhic Midrashim now extant, as derived from the school of Akiva.

According to Johanan bar Nappaha (199–279),

"Our Mishnah comes directly from Rabbi Meir, the Tosefta from R. Nehemiah, the Sifra from R. Judah, and the Sifre from R. Simon; but they all took Akiva for a model in their works and followed him." One recognizes here the threefold division of the halakhic material that emanated from Akiva: (1) The codified halakhah (i.e. Mishnah); (2) the Tosefta, which in its original form contains a concise logical argument for the Mishnah, somewhat like the Lebus of Mordecai Jafe on the Shulchan Aruch; and (3) the halakhic Midrash.

The following halakhic Midrashim originating in Akiva's school: the Mekhilta of Rabbi Shimon on Exodus; Sifra on Leviticus; Sifre Zutta on Numbers; and the Sifre to Deuteronomy, the halakhic portion of which belongs to Akiva's school.

What was Rabbi Akiva like? - A worker who goes out with his basket. He finds wheat – he puts it in, barley – he puts it in, spelt – he puts it in, beans – he puts it in, lentils – he puts it in. When he arrives home, he sorts out the wheat by itself, barley by itself, spelt by itself, beans by themselves, lentils by themselves. So did Rabbi Akiva; he arranged the Torah rings by rings.

Akiva's Halakha

Admirable as is the systematization of the Halakha by Akiva, his hermeneutics and halakhic exegesis—which form the foundation of all Talmudic learning—surpassed it.

The enormous difference between the Halakha before and after Akiva may be briefly described as follows: The old Halakha was (as its name indicates) the religious practice sanctioned as binding by tradition, to which were added extensions and (in some cases) limitations of the Torah, arrived at by strict logical deduction. The opposition offered by the Sadducees (which became especially strenuous in the first century BC) led to the development of the halakhic midrash, whose purpose was to deduce these amplifications of the Law, by tradition and logic, out of the Law itself. It might be thought that with the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem—which event made an end of Sadduceeism—the halakhic Midrash would also have disappeared, seeing that the Halakha could now dispense with the Midrash. This probably would have been the

case had not Akiva created his own Midrash, by means of which he was able "to discover things that were even unknown to Moses." Akiva made the accumulated treasure of the oral law—which until his time was only a subject of knowledge, and not a science—an inexhaustible mine from which, by the means he provided, new treasures might be continually extracted.

If the older Halakha is to be considered as the product of the internal struggle between Phariseeism and Sadduceeism, the Halakha of Akiva must be conceived as the result of an external contest between Judaism on the one hand and Hellenism and Hellenistic Christianity on the other. Akiva no doubt perceived that the intellectual bond uniting the Jews—far from being allowed to disappear with the destruction of the Jewish state—must be made to draw them closer together than before. He pondered also the nature of that bond. The Bible could never again fill the place alone; for the Christians also regarded it as a divine revelation. Still less could dogma serve the purpose, for dogmas were always repellent to rabbinical Judaism, whose very essence is development and the susceptibility to development. Mention has already been made of the fact that Akiva was the creator of a rabbinical Bible version elaborated with the aid of his pupil, Aquila (though this is traditionally debated), and designed to become the common property of all Jews.

But this was not sufficient to obviate all threatening danger. It was to be feared that the Jews, by their facility in accommodating themselves to their surroundings—even then a marked characteristic—might become entangled in the net of Grecian philosophy, and even in that of Gnosticism. The example of his colleagues and friends, Elisha ben Abuyah, Ben Azzai, and Ben Zoma strengthened him still more in his conviction of the necessity of providing some counterpoise to the intellectual influence of the non-Jewish world.

From the above quote, you can now understand how the views of the Pharisees were not wiped out by the Romans as much as the Sadducees were, because the Sadducees were written out of history by Akiva's own words in his Halakhot, and at the same time, it was Akiva who enshrined the Oral Torah.

The Halakha of Akiva is the external contest between Judaism on the one hand, and Hellenism and Hellenistic Christianity on the other. His Halakha was the intellectual bond uniting the Jews and drawing them closer together to counteract the influence of the Hellenists.

Rabbi Yose Ben Halafta³⁹

The next person I want to familiarize you with is Rabbi Yose Ben Halafta, who was a very special student of Rabbi Akiva. It is Rabbi Yose's work in the book he wrote titled, *Seder Olam Rabbah* (The Great Order of the world) that I will next bring to your attention. Some of his work is the primary cause that has confused the dating of the Sabbatical and Jubilee years.

*YOSE BEN HALAFTA (mid-second century c.e.), tanna; the R. Yose mentioned in the Talmud without patronymic. Yose was one of the leaders of the generation after the persecutions which followed the Bar Kokhba War. He was born in *Sepphoris, where his father was one of those who instituted takkanot⁴⁰ there after the destruction of*

³⁹ bibliography: Frankel, Mishnah (1923), 174ff.; M. Yoel, in: mgwj, 6 (1857), 83ff.; B. Ratner, Mavo le-Seder Olam Rabha (1896); Bacher, Tann, 2; Epstein, Tanna'im, 126ff. [Shmuel Safrai]

<https://www.encyclopedia.com/religion/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/yose-ben-halafta>

⁴⁰ *A takkanah (Hebrew: תקנה, romanized: taqqānā, plural takkanot) translated as 'improvement', is a major legislative enactment within halakha, the normative system of Judaism's laws. A takkanah is an enactment which revises an ordinance that no longer satisfies the requirements of the times or circumstances, or which, being deduced from a biblical passage, may be regarded as new. A takkanah is enacted by rabbinical decree or ordinance, issued to improve and preserve religious life. It is, therefore, the antithesis of the gezerah (Hebrew: גזירה, romanized: gəzērā. The term is applied also to the institution provided for in the enactment.*

Takkanot were enacted even in the time of the Second Temple, those of unknown origin being ascribed to earlier leaders, and they have been promulgated at all subsequent periods of Jewish history.

Classical Jewish law granted rabbinic sages wide legislative powers. There are two powerful legal tools within the halachic system:

Gezeirah: "preventive legislation" of the classical rabbis, intended to prevent violations of the commandments.

Takkanah: "positive legislation", practices instituted by the rabbis not based (directly) on the commandments as such, e.g. rabbinical mitzvot.

However, the general term "takkanah" is used to refer to either gezeirot or takkanot. Takkanot, in general, do not affect or restrict observance of Torah mitzvot. However, the Talmud states that in exceptional cases, the Jewish sages had the authority to make a gezeirah even if it would "uproot a matter from the Torah". In Talmudic and classical halakhic literature, this authority refers to the authority to prohibit some things that would otherwise be biblically sanctioned (shev v'al ta'aseh). Rabbis may

rule that a Torah mitzvah should not be performed, e.g. blowing the shofar on Shabbat, or blessing the lulav and etrog, on Shabbat. These gezeirot are executed out of fear that some might otherwise carry the mentioned items between home and the synagogue, thus inadvertently violating one of the 39 Melakhot, a greater sin than neglecting the banned mitzvah.

Another rare and limited form of takkanah involved overriding Torah prohibitions. In some cases, the sages allowed the temporary violation of a prohibition in order to maintain the Jewish system as a whole. This was part of the basis for Esther's relationship with Ahasuerus.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Takkanah>

Gezerah is the very thing Peter was accused of by Paul for not eating with the Roman Gentiles.

11 But when Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he was to be blamed. 12 For before some came from James, he ate with the nations. But when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those of the circumcision. 13 And the rest of the Jews also dissembled with him, so as even Barnabas was led away with their dissembling. 14 But when I saw that they did not walk uprightly with the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before all, If you, being a Jew, live as a Gentile, and not as the Jews, why do you compel the nations to judaize? (Galatians 2:11-14)

Yehovah also corrected Peter concerning this matter:

15 And the voice spoke to him again the second time, What God has made clean, you do not call common. (Acts 10:15)

28 And he said to them, You know that it is an unlawful thing for a man, a Jew to keep company with or to come near to one of another nation. But God has shown me not to call any man common or unclean. (Acts 10:28)

A rabbinical enactment issued as a guard or preventive measure; also a prohibition or restriction generally; from the root "gazar" (to cut; to decide). The term is especially applied to a negative ordinance ("takkanah" being applied to a positive one) which, the Rabbis instituted as a guard or a fence ("geder") to a Biblical precept. A gezerah was instituted when occasion demanded, either on account of internal laxity with regard to the laws or because of some external danger that threatened neglect in the observance of Biblical injunctions. Thus, on one occasion at a meeting of rabbis eighteen gezerot or restrictions were ordained, some of which aimed at a better observance of the laws of cleanliness, while others had as their aim the restraining of too close a contact with the Gentiles. Among these gezerot were included prohibitions against tasting the bread, oil, or wine of the Gentiles, and against intermarriage or improper relations between Jews and non-Jews (Shab. 17a; 'Ab. Zarah 36a). An individual rabbi with his court sometimes saw fit to institute a gezerah; but such an ordinance was not always universally accepted by the people, and repeated enactments had to be made in order to enforce it (Hul. 6a, with regard to the prohibition against the use of the wine of the Kuthites). The Palestinian rabbis, because they wished to make the laws uniform for all Israel ('Ab. Zarah 35a),

the Temple (Tosef., Ta'an. 1:14). Yose studied under his father and transmitted some of his teachings (Kelim 26:6; et al.). He also studied under *Johanan b. Nuri in Galilee (Tosef., Kelim, bk 6:4; et al.), and under *Tarfon in Judea (ibid., Shev. 4:4). His main teacher, however, was *Akiva in whose name he frequently transmits halakhot, and it was said generally: "R. Akiva his teacher" (Pes. 18a). The Babylonian Talmud numbers him among his last pupils who "reestablished the Torah" (Yev. 62b) and according to one tradition he was ordained by *Judah b. Bava (Sanh. 14a). Other traditions report that he participated in all the conventions of scholars "at the close of the period of persecution," in the valley of Bet Rimmon, in Usha, and in Jabneh (tj, Hag. 3:1; Ber. 63b). During the persecutions he endangered his life to fulfill the precept of circumcision and fled to Asia or to Laodicea (bm 84a: tj, Av. Zar. 3:1). He followed in the footsteps of his father in Sepphoris in introducing takkanot⁴¹ (Sanh. 19a), in giving practical instruction (see Er. 86b), and in preaching in public (Sanh. 109a).

Yose's bet din in Sepphoris was reckoned among the most outstanding in Erez Israel (Sanh. 32b). Yose and Judah are frequently found together with the nasi, Simeon b. Gamaliel both at Usha and during his various travels (Tosef., Ber. 5:2; ibid., Suk. 2: 2; et al.), and Simeon b. Gamaliel quotes him (Meg. 6b). His influence was still felt in the council chamber during the time of Judah ha-Nasi, the son of Simeon, who withdrew his own view in favor of that of Yose (Shab. 51a), and spoke of him with exceptional respect (Git. 67a). The

withheld for twelve months the reason for their restrictions, so that the gezerah might first go into force and be commonly observed even by those to whom the reason for its enactment did not apply.

Gezerah <https://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/6646-gezerah>

⁴¹ 2 You shall not add to the Word which I command you, neither shall you take away from it, so that you may keep the commands of Jehovah your God which I command you. (Deuteronomy 4:2)

32 All the things I command you, be careful to do it. You shall not add to it, nor take away from it. (Deuteronomy 12:32)

6 Do not add to His Words, lest He reprove you and you be found a liar. (Proverbs 30:6)

1 Then Jesus spoke to the crowd and to His disciples, 2 saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. 3 Therefore whatever [he, Moses] tells you to observe, observe and do. But do not do according to their works (takanot); for they say, and do not do. (Matthew 23:1-3)

(Works) G2041 (**Strong**) ἔργον ergon er'-gon

From ἔργω ergō (a primary but obsolete word; to work); toil (as an effort or occupation); by implication an act: - deed, doing, labour, work.

*Talmud states that the halakhah was established in accordance with the view of Yose wherever his associates disagreed with him (Er. 46b). Yose is mentioned several times in all the tractates of the Talmud with the exception of Bikkurim, Hagigah, Horayot, and Me'ilah, and in the beraitot his halakhot are frequently given. His sayings in the aggadah are not numerous. Some 16 conversations with gentiles have been ascribed to him, especially those with "a certain matron." Many aggadic sayings quoted in his name deal with theological and cosmological problems, and noteworthy in this connection is his explanation of the name Makom ("place") for God: "The Holy One is the place of the world, but the world is not His place" (Gen. R. 68:9). Among others are his sayings: "The Divine Presence never descended to earth, nor did Moses and Elijah ever ascend on high" (Suk. 5a); "On what does the world rest? On the pillars... the pillars upon the waters... the waters upon the mountains... the mountains on the wind... the wind upon the tempest... the tempest is suspended on the arm of the Holy One" (Hag. 12b). In opposition to the view of others, Yose held that "man is judged each day" (Tosef., rh 1:13). Yose transmitted many reminiscences and historical traditions of the generations close to him and of the time of the Temple. In his aggadah too an important place is given to determining the chronology of the events in Scripture and to the interpretation of the historical material of the scriptural books. **The baraita, *Seder Olam, dealing with chronology, apparently had its origin in his school, as testified by Johanan (Yev. 82b).** Many traditions record his unpretentious ways and his relations with his fellow men, as well as his piety (Shab. 118b; tj, Ber. 3:4). Yose is the earliest scholar of whom it is related that he was worthy of having the prophet Elijah reveal himself to him regularly in order to teach him (Ber. 31; et al.). Of his private life, it is reported that he obtained his livelihood by tanning (Shab. 49a-b). He left five sons, all scholars, the best known of them being *Ishmael and *Eleazar.*

I do not want you to miss a very important point here in footnote numbers 40 and 41. Rabbi Yose's father was the one to institutionalize takanot right after the destruction of the Temple. This is the time when the debates and thoughts go from discussions, to being written down, to becoming part of the institution and religion. Then just as Yehshua said, this led to the breaking of the commandments of God in order to keep their own traditions.

Rabbi Yose and the Messiah Fever

One of the greatest changes to the Torah took place within the pages of the Seder Olam about 160 C.E. From it these changes were adopted and accepted as undisputable facts. His chronology was used to confirm Simon bar Kochba as the Messiah in 133 C.E. We must pause here and understand what took place and how these changes affected when the Sabbatical years would be kept, as well as the chronology of the world.

As noted, Rabbi Yose was a student and admirer of Rabbi Akiva, who was executed by the Romans at the end of the Bar Kochba disaster in 135 C.E. He was flayed to death and as he died, he finished saying the Shema with his last breath.

Before and during the times of Akiva, the entire Middle East was in expectation of the coming of the Messiah. They were looking for the Messiah to deliver them from the oppression of the Roman Empire, who now occupied their lands. Old Testament prophecies made reference to the Messiah.

Alfred Edersheim made mention of the many references to the coming Messiah in his book *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, book II, chapter V.

For example, Simeon and Anna in Luke chapter 2, both understood the importance of Yehshua's birth, and Simeon in particular detailed the Messiah's role as "a light of revelation to the Gentiles." In Matthew 2, when the Magi arrived, the scholars in Israel directed them to Bethlehem as the Messiah's birthplace.

In John 1:20, John the Baptist, answering to the priests and Levites, immediately confesses he is not the Messiah.

Again, in John 1:41, Andrew tells his brother Peter, "We have found the Messiah." In John 4:25 we are told by the Samaritan woman at the well that she knows the Messiah will come, and the crowds listening to Yehshua were not arguing about the reality of a Messiah, but His place of origin and what signs were appropriate in John 7:27-31.

In Acts 5:36-38, Gamaliel also talks about those who supposed themselves to be the Messiah and how if it was of men, this current fever would soon pass. Gamaliel spoke of two other men who had risen up before the time of Yehshua and had gathered a following by

claiming to be the Messiah. Neither, however, could fulfill the prophetic requirements, and consequently their followers dispersed.

The great Roman historian, Tacitus, writes that there were many omens among the Jews during these days:

*Few interpreted these omens as fearful; the majority firmly believed that their ancient priestly writings contained the prophecy that this was the very time when the East should grow strong and that men starting from Judaea should possess the world.*⁴²

Sixty years after the Temple was destroyed in 70 C.E., and the Jewish people were being scattered throughout the world, another man was being promoted as the Messiah by Rabbi Akiva. The timing was perfect, as the Jubilee year was about to begin 134 C.E., and by showing Simon Bar Kochba as the Messiah, he could effectually shut down the growing voices proclaiming Yehshua as the Messiah.

There is a famous passage in the Jerusalem Talmud where Akiva proclaims Bar Kochba as the Messiah. He has been criticized for it. But we can read his statement, “This one is the King Messiah”, differently. Perhaps his emphasis was not on the word “Messiah” but on the phrase “this one.”

During the Bar Kochba revolt, the Talmud records that Akiva used the Numbers 24:17 scripture about the star prophecy, “There shall come a star out of Jacob,” as proof that Simon was the true Messiah.

Based on identification of the Hebrew word for star, *kokhav*, and his name, *bar Kozeva*⁴³ (Shimon Bar Kosiba), Rabbi Akiva identified Shimon Bar Kosiba as the Jewish messiah, and gave him the surname "Bar Kochba" meaning "Son of a Star" in Aramaic, from the star prophecy verse from Numbers 24:17. By doing this, Rabbi Akiva had announced the era of the redemption of Israel.

The Politically Motivated False Teaching

With this Messiah fever as the backdrop to this time in history, Rabbi Akiva needed more evidence from the Torah besides Numbers 24 to prove Simon was the Messiah.

⁴² Tacitus, Hist., 5:13.

⁴³ The Jerusalem Talmud (Ta'anit 4:5) and the Babylonian Talmud (Sanhedrin 93b and 97b) mention him by the name of Bar Kozeva.

The chronology put forth in the Seder Olam originated with the followers of the Bar Kochba Revolt. They used the Daniel 9 prophecy of 70 weeks to demonstrate Simon was the Messiah and create political support for that cause.

This claim was based upon the interpretation of the prophecies contained in the book of Daniel, specifically the 70 weeks prophecy, which the followers of Bar Kochba interpreted to mean 490 years. The prophecies were rearranged, and certain historical periods were “shortened” in such a way as to make it seem that when Bar Kochba made his appearance, he was the prophesied coming of the messiah. Bar Kochba proved to be false, yet the erroneous chronology built to justify his messiahship has remained with us until this day, being referred to as the “Years Since the Creation” for the Jewish calendar.

It is this very chronology put forward by Rabbi Yose in the Seder Olam that has caused many to wonder if the Temple was destroyed in 69 C.E. or 68 C.E. We will show overwhelming proof that it was in fact 70 C.E.

The Chronology of Rabbi Yose

Most chronologists who use the Hebrew calendar do not realize the current Hebrew year stems from Seder Olam Rabbah, written by Rabbi Yose, who establishes a timeline from Adam’s creation to the end of the Bar Kochba revolt. Even though Simon was proven not to be the Messiah, this same erroneous chronology became the ubiquitous dating system in the Jewish community from 160 C.E. until the present time. To claim in the latter half of 2024, that it is the Jewish year of 5785 is false and it is because of the misinformation in the Seder Olam, yet almost no one understands this.

The Seder Olam records that the time between the destructions of the two Temples lasted 420 years. From 70 C.E.- 420 years = 351 B.C. The completion of the 490-year Daniel prophecy would have been the year 140 C.E.- 7 years brings us back to 133 C.E. and the start of the Bar Kochba Revolt. 140 C.E. is 490 years from 351 B.C.

However, secular history records that the destruction of the first Temple took place in 586 B.C., and that the destruction of the second Temple occurred in 70 C.E.; this leaves us with a period of 655 years. The Gregorian calendar does not include a year 0; year 1 B.C. is

succeeded immediately by year 1 C.E. Thus, there is a discrepancy of 165 years between Seder Olam and secular history!

Rabbi Yose and I agree up until the birth of Abraham at 1948 After Creation. He then states correctly that Abraham was 100 when Isaac was born and then goes on to add 400 years to this date to get the year of Exodus as 2448 A.C. This is his first mistake. He has not allowed for the 430 years from the year the covenant was made in 2028 A.C., nor has he considered the age of Isaac as being weaned at 10 in 2058 A.C. The 400 and the 430 years both end at the Exodus which is 2458 A.C. We have explained all of this in our book ***Remembering the Sabbatical Year of 2016***, Chapter 15 | The Chronology From Adam To Entry Into the Promised Land.

The Rabbi then steps on the 1 Kings 6:1 landmine using the 480 years without acknowledging the complexity of this verse. We have explained all of this in great detail in our book ***Remembering the Sabbatical Year of 2016***, Chapter 25 | The 480 Years Explained.

Using the Rabbi's numbers, we then add 480 to 2448 to get 2928 from the creation of Adam to the 4th year of Solomon's reign.

I am going to risk not quoting all of my Chapter 25 which explains just how complex and confusing this one scriptural date has been to every Biblical historian I could find. I am going to take the final few paragraphs of this chapter of my book and add them here to this section to explain the 480 years are actually 410.

(The only number that works for all of this confusion is that instead of the number in 1 Kings 6:1 being 480 years it is in fact 410 years.

Concerning this verse, Clarkes commentary has the following to say:

In the four hundred and eightieth year - The Septuagint has the four hundred and fortieth year. It need scarcely be noticed, that among chronologists there is a great difference of opinion concerning this epocha. Glycas has 330 years; Melchior Canus, 590 years; Josephus, 592 years; Sulpicius Severus, 588; Clemens Alexandrinus, 570; Cedrenus, 672; Codomanus, 598; Vossius and Capellus, 580; Serarius, 680; Nicholas Abraham, 527; Maestlinus, 592; Petavius and Valtherus, 520. Here are more than a dozen different opinions; and after all, that in the common Hebrew text is as likely to be the true one as any of the others.

You can read of the difficulties many others have had in sorting this out. As you have just seen, it is an extremely difficult subject. So instead of figuring out what most have not been able to and none agree, we have left the 480 years as a variable in our equation.

Once again let me do the math for you in another way.

120 Jubilee cycles totals 5880 years.

That is $120 \times 49 = 5880$

5880 – 2458 from Adam to the Exodus – 967 which is the total years B.C. and the 4th years of Solomon's reign – 2044 which is the 49th year of this the last Jubilee cycle counting from year 1 of this Common Era, C.E. There is no year zero between 1 B.C. and 1 C.E.

$5880 - 2458 - 967 - 2044 - 1 = 410$ as the total number of years that I Kings 6:1 should be reporting.)

I have Solomon's 4th year as 2870 while Rabbi Yose has it as 2928. A difference of 58 years so far.

Rabbi Yose then begins to add up all the regnal years of the kings from Solomon's fourth year until the end of Zedekiah's reign in 586 B.C. or 3251 A.C. according to my counting. The Rabbi adds 410 years to his counting from 2928 and is in the year 3338 and we are now 87 years different.

The Missing 165 Years of the Persian King

Allow me to quote Torah Academy⁴⁴ on the Seder Olam's chronology:

After the Beit HaMikdash's destruction, the records become much less comprehensive. There is no book that details a continuous history or provides dates in a larger context. All of the post-Churban Sifrei Tanach (like many of their earlier counterparts) give exclusively regnal dates. Nothing informs us how long a king ruled, or even who directly succeeded him.

When the second Beit HaMikdash begins to be built in the second year of the Persian king Daryavesh, Zecharyah retrospectively references a period of 70 years (Zecharyah 1:12). This refers to the destruction of the Beit HaMikdash and Yerushalayim and the

⁴⁴ Torah Academy, The Hebrew Calendar and its Missing Years- Part One by Reuven Herzog and Benjy Koslowe <https://www.koltorah.org/halachah/the-hebrew-calendar-and-its-missing-years-part-one-by-reuven-herzog-and-benjy-koslowe>

subsequent exile (with no mention of Babylonian rule, as this prophecy comes many years after the Babylonian empire fell). Therefore, the second year of Daryavesh and the beginning of the construction of the second Beit HaMikdash was in year $3338+70=3408$ of Seder Olam. Construction took four years (Ezra 6:15), finishing in Daryavesh's sixth year, year 3412.

From this point on everything becomes much murkier. There are no "anchor dates" like in Yirmiyahu 25. The few dates mentioned after the construction of the second Beit HaMikdash are only in reference to the king of the time, and we do not even know for sure the order of succession, much less for how long each Persian king ruled.

The latest date recorded in Tanach about Daryavesh is his sixth year, the year in which the second Beit HaMikdash was completed. The next date we have is that of Ezra's Aliyah to Eretz Yisrael, in the seventh year of king Artachshasta (Ezra 7:7). Seder Olam assumes that these two names refer to the same king, so these two events are only one year apart. The last reference we have to Daryavesh/Artachshasta is during the governorship of Nechemyah, in his 32nd year (Nechemyah Perek 12). This can be calculated to be year 3438 of Seder Olam.

This is the latest concrete date that can be found in Tanach. However, a hint to later events can be found in a vision of Daniel. In Perakim 10 and 11, in the third year of Koresh, Daniel receives a long, prophetic, colorful, and obscure description of much of the future political history from an angel. At the beginning of the history the angel states, "Hinei Od Sheloshah Melachim Omedim LeParas," "Behold, three more kings will stand for Persia" (Daniel 11:2); the fourth of the line will be tremendously rich, and he will be conquered by an extremely powerful king of Greece. Seder Olam assumes this king to be Alexander the Great, and thus the king succeeding Daryavesh/Artachshasta is Alexander. In addition, Seder Olam twice references that the Persians ruled over Israel for 52 years, which leads to the deduction that Daryavesh/Artachshasta ruled for 36 years. (This extra time is hinted at in Sefer Nechemyah, where Nechemyah mentions that he was in Persia during Artachshasta's 32nd year, and he took leave to return to Israel after a long period of time (Nechemyah 13:6).) Koresh took control in 3390; hence, Alexander's reign over the Persian Empire begins in year 3442 of Seder Olam.

Seder Olam follows Alexander's reign with a summary of the rulership until the Second Beit HaMikdash's destruction (and then to the Bar Kochba (alt. Ben Koziba) Revolt) in a succinct teaching

of Rabi Yosi: 34 years of Persian rule during the existence of the Beit HaMikdash, 180 years of Greek rule, 103 years of the Chashmona'i dynasty, and 103 years of the Herodian dynasty – totaling 420 years. Bar Kochba's rebellion was 52 years later.

The calendric calculation⁴⁵ of Seder Olam, which we have seen, becomes dubious when compared to the accepted conventional history. These historic accounts are supported by the vast majority of historians. Steles and other archaeological findings from both Persia and Greece, who were classically enemy empires, as well as works from Ptolemy and other Egyptian sources, all support the following account of history:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Start of Reign</u>	<u>End of Reign</u>
Cyrus II the Great	550 BCE	530 BCE
<i>Conquest of Babylonia and Cyrus Proclamation 539 BCE</i>		
Cambyses II	530 BCE	522 BCE
Darius I the Great	522 BCE	486 BCE
Xerxes I	485 BCE	465 BCE
Artaxerxes I	465 BCE	424 BCE
Xerxes II	424 BCE	424 BCE
<u>Sogdianus</u>	424 BCE	423 BCE
Darius II	423 BCE	404 BCE
Artaxerxes II	404 BCE	358 BCE
Artaxerxes III <u>Ochus</u>	358 BCE	338 BCE
Artaxerxes IV	338 BCE	336 BCE
Darius III	336 BCE	330 BCE

There are three main points of disagreement between Seder Olam and the accepted conventional history. These variances, taken

⁴⁵ Torah Academy, The Hebrew Calendar and its Missing Years- Part Two by Reuven Herzog and Benjy Koslowe, <https://www.koltorah.org/halachah/the-hebrew-calendar-and-its-missing-years-part-two-by-reuven-herzog-and-benjy-koslowe?rq=the%20missing%20years%20part%20two>

all together, generate for Seder Olam roughly 165 “missing years” during the Second Temple period.

1. Seder Olam describes the chronological order of kings as Koresh, followed by Achashveirosh, followed by Daryavesh. In fact, Daryavesh is said to be the son of Achashveirosh and Esther. Secular sources disagree, instead placing Darius chronologically before Xerxes (as well as recording a king, unnamed in Tanach, between Cyrus and Darius).

Historians believe that the Persian king who took control over the Babylonian empire was Cyrus. After him ruled Cambyses, then Darius, and then Xerxes. Cyrus is consistent with Koresh from Tanach, both narratively – the Cyrus Cylinder is clear evidence for the Biblical Koresh’s proclamation – and linguistically – the names are very similar. Likewise, Darius is naturally identified to be Daryavesh. Pinpointing the character of Achashveirosh is trickier. Seder Olam describes that Achashveirosh was king in between Cyrus (Koresh) and Darius (Daryavesh). However, the name Achashveirosh sounds nothing like Cambyses, whom historians say was the second king of this Persian line.

Of all the kings mentioned, Xerxes is the likeliest candidate to be Achashveirosh. The name “Xerxes” is a Greek translation of the Persian name “Chashyarsha” (“חשיארש”). Interestingly, at the end of Megilat Esther (10:1), Achashveirosh’s name is spelled with a Keri UKetiv (a word that is spelled differently than it is read) that is written as though it should be read like “Chashirash” (“חשיארש”). There is additional evidence from Sefer Ezra as to Achashveirosh and Xerxes being one and the same. In Ezra 4:5-6 we have a list of Persian monarchal genealogy. Pasuk 5 mentions Koresh and Daryavesh, after which Pasuk 6 mentions Achashveirosh. The simple read of the Pesukim indicates that Achashveirosh was king after Daryavesh. This also suggests that Achashveirosh is Chashirash/Xerxes.

Thus, while conventional history places Achashveirosh as king after Daryavesh, Seder Olam places Achashveirosh as king before Daryavesh. This is one discrepancy.

2. Seder Olam writes that Daryavesh and Artachshasta are the same person. This claim is based on Sefer Ezra. In Perakim 1-6 the king is Daryavesh, whose role in the story ends during his sixth year when the Second Temple is built (Ezra 6:15). In the next Perek the Persian king is called by the name “Artachshasta,” and it is his

seventh year as king (Ezra 7:7). It is in this year that Ezra arrives in Israel and emerges as the leader of his generation. Seder Olam claims that Daryavesh and Artachshasta are the same person – this king sees the completion of the Temple construction in his sixth year, and then Ezra arrives in Israel in his seventh.

Seder Olam's account differs very much from conventional history. Conventional history shows that Artaxerxes (i.e. Artachshasta) was crowned king more than 20 years after the death of Darius. In between Darius and Artaxerxes is the king Xerxes (whom we identified above as Achashveirosh). This is another discrepancy between the two calendars.

3. Both Seder Olam and conventional history agree that Alexander the Great defeated a Persian king named Darius. However, Seder Olam and conventional history disagree as to which Darius this was. According to Seder Olam, this king was the Darius who saw the construction of the Second Temple (and who was alternatively called "Artachshasta"). According to conventional history, this king is identified as Darius III, who lived 150 years after Darius I (the character in Tanach). Conventional history identifies several Persian kings in between Darius I and Alexander's defeat of Darius III. Seder Olam skips them all.

Because Seder Olam moves Xerxes, morphs Darius with Artaxerxes, and equates Darius I with the king who was killed by Alexander the Great, Seder Olam winds up with roughly 165 fewer years of history than the conventional account.

Another challenge with Seder Olam is that the Chanukat HaBayit-Ezra jump (achieved by identifying Daryavesh with Artachshasta) seems to clash with the narrative of Sefer Ezra. When Ezra arrives in Israel, the entire Jewish population is intermarried with the local idol-worshippers. This would be a truly stunning turn of events only a year after the dedication of the second Beit HaMikdash. Furthermore, Chaggai and Zechariah, the two central Nevi'im during the construction of the Beit HaMikdash, are nowhere to be found during Ezra's time; if this is only a year later, as Seder Olam claims, what happened to them? Furthermore, would they have not stopped the people from intermarrying? It seems clear that there must have been a long period without leaders between the two events.

In summary, as we see from the timeline of conventional history, it is commonly deduced that the Persian kings ruled for a total of 220 years. This contradicts the Seder Olam account, which assumes 52

years of Persian rule under only three (or four) kings. This is a discrepancy of approximately 165 years (this approximation is due to slight differences in calculations, which can be explained based on overlapping kings' years). These are the missing years.

Now I hope you can appreciate the difficulties of using the Seder Olam as your foundational source for the chronology of the world. And yet, all of the Jewish world does use this erroneous chronology even as we write. People know it has many errors and yet they continue to use it.

This year of the latter half of 2024 is according to Seder Olam starting on Tishri 1 (October 3, 2024) the beginning of the year 5785. According to the Sabbatical and Jubilee cycles, it is the year 5860 until Aviv 1 in 2025, (about March 2025). After all the errors found in Seder Olam of adding or leaving out key dates, they are still just behind the Jubilee cycles chronology by 75 or 76 years depending on whether you are before or after Tishri 1.

Again, I ask, if the chronology of the Seder Olam is so easily proven in error, why do all the Jews and many others still use it today?

Yose and Daniel 9

Let me not mislead you into thinking Rabbi Yose just made some clerical errors in his chronology.

As we have shown you in our book ***Remembering the Sabbatical Year of 2016***, Zuckermann, Wacholder, Schurer, and Marcus have all shown a bias towards their own theories, leaving out information that did not match what they believed. They all based their research upon the faulty foundational research of the chronology written by Rabbi Yose as found in the Seder Olam—faulty foundations lead to faulty conclusions. Is Rabbi Yose any different? Does he have a bias?

Rabbi Akiva was endorsing Simon Bar Kochba to prove that Yehshua was not the Messiah and had Rabbi Yose write the Seder Olam with the faulty chronology and falsified historical dates used to justify their position—all of which were proven false when compared to known historical data.

We later have the respected Amoraim, Savoraim and Geonim (the Jewish sages from about 200 to 1100 C.E.) dismiss the false messiah, Simon Bar Kochba, but hold to the faulty chronology and Rabbi Yose's

false teaching about Daniel's 70 Weeks. There were some like Rabbi Judah who looked at the facts stating the first Temple was not destroyed in a Sabbatical year as Yose claimed. He would be outvoted by the majority at that time. Here is what Qadesh La Yahweh Press says about these events:

Not everyone agreed. For example, the Babylonian Arakhin reports that Rabbi Judah calculated that "it could not have happened the first time (the temple was destroyed) at the end of septennate (7-year Sabbath cycle)" or, "in the year following the end of a septennate" (System "B" translation), based upon each respective interpretation of the term yaxwm (mutzai).

The text continues:

But according to Rabbi Judah you must count the 17 years of the 17 jubilee (cycles), and add them to these (other numbers), so that it happened in the 3rd year of a 7-year cycle.⁴⁶

Nevertheless, all of these calculations are spurious, being built out of a faulty and imagined chronology invented by the rabbis during the 2nd century C.E. In reality, the First Temple was destroyed in the 11th year of King Zedekiah of Judah (586/585 B.C.E., Abib reckoning) while the Sabbath year actually took place in his 9th year (589/588 B.C.E., Abib reckoning). The destruction of the First Temple, therefore, took place in the 3rd year of a Sabbath cycle, Nisan reckoning. It would fall in the 3rd year of System "B," Tishri reckoning, but in the 2nd year of System "C," Tishri reckoning.

Second, using a distorted interpretation of the prophecy in Daniel, 9:24–27 (i.e., 70 weeks being understood by the rabbis to mean 70 weeks of years—490 years),⁴⁷ their chronology was built upon the supposition that the Second Temple stood for 420 years, being destroyed in the 421st year. Under this construct, the Second Temple began to be erected in 351 B.C.E.. It is obvious from reading the Seder Olam (29–30) that Rabbi Jose's chronology is based entirely upon this rabbinical interpretation of the prophecy from Daniel and

⁴⁶ B. Arak., 12b. Rabbi Judah got it right. It was in the 3rd year of Sabbatical Cycle.

⁴⁷ Daniel's prophecy literally means a period of 490 days. There is nothing in the prophecy to even suggest 490 years (e.g., as with Num., 14:34; Ezek., 4:6). To demonstrate, the expressions "70 weeks" and the "middle of the week" are used along with other references to weeks (Dan., 9:24–27). This detail clearly indicates that Daniel was counting by days forming weeks and not by days counted as years. The Jews, who originally twisted this prophecy so that it spoke of years, did so in an attempt to justify their own interpretations of when the messiah would appear.

that he purposely makes the destruction of the First Temple built by Solomon and the Second Temple (enhanced by King Herod) conform to its premise. According to the prophecy in Daniel, 69 weeks (7 weeks plus 62 weeks) would pass before the appearance of the messiah, which was understood to mean 483 years—i.e., the messiah would appear in the 484th year. The 421st year of this chronology brings us to the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 C.E., the 484th year becomes 133 C.E., the actual beginning of the Bar Kochba revolt.

During this revolt some of the important rabbis of that period declared Simeon bar Kochba to be the messiah. The drift of this evidence leads one to suspect that the chronology advocated by Rabbi Jose was in truth originally devised to support the claim of Bar Kochba as the messiah. After Bar Kochba failed, his claim as the messiah died, but the chronology which had been made popular during that time continued with a life of its own. Unfortunately, Rabbi Jose's arrangement is impossible since the book of Ezra places the completion of the Second Temple in the 6th year of King Darius I of Persia (515 B.C.E.).

14 And the elders of the Jews built, and they were blessed through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. And they built and finished it according to the command of the God of Israel, and according to the command of Cyrus, and Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia. 15 And this house was finished on the third day of the month Adar, in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the king. (Ezra 6:14-15)

Ezra and Nehemiah, noted for their involvement in the activities of the Second Temple, lived in the 5th century B.C.E., long before 351 B.C.E. Furthermore, as history reveals, Bar Kochba was not the messiah, as many other rabbis of Bar Kochba's time had themselves argued. Nevertheless, the chronology continued as if it had been valid.

Three divergent opinions were also expressed among the Jews as to what year represented the first celebration of a Sabbath and Jubilee after the Israelites entered the land of Kanaan under Yahushua (Joshua) the son of Nun. These opinions colored their interpretation

*of chronology and their understanding of which years represented Sabbath years.*⁴⁸

*There has been a failure to recognize the motive of the rabbis who originated the chronology system upon which popular rabbinic chronology is built. These rabbis were supporters of Bar Kochba, a man who claimed to be the promised messiah and who had a large following among the masses. Bar Kochba's supporters read into the Second Revolt a fulfillment of the prophecy in Daniel, 9:24–27, which states that the messiah would come AFTER 483 weeks (incorrectly interpreted to mean 483 years), i.e., in the 484th year of the building of the Second Temple. In their calculations, the destruction of Jerusalem (70 C.E.) took place in the 421st year of this era.*⁴⁹

*Since the 421st year of this period equals 70 C.E., the rabbis began this era in 351 B.C.E. (cf. Chart C). In reality, this construct is impossible. The era starts when the command went forth to build the Second Temple; yet the first stages of the Second Temple were already completed in the 6th year of King Darius I of Persia (515 B.C.E.). Therefore, the early construction of the Second Temple was actually completed some 164 years before the rabbis calculated that the work to build it had even started. Neither can the rabbinic understanding be a reference to a later building phase, for the Second Temple was not enlarged until the 18th year of King Herod (20/19 B.C.E.).*⁵⁰

*The clear intent of the contrived chronology from this period is to prove that Bar Kochba was the promised messiah. The 484th year of this era, the year in which their messiah was to appear, becomes 133/134 C.E. This date, therefore, proves that the Second Revolt would have actually begun in 133 C.E. not 132 C.E. (133 C.E. being the year in which the messiah's appearance was expected). Other contemporary rabbis and later rabbis dismissed the Bar Kochba messianic attachment to the chronology but inaccurately continued its use as if it was a factual framework for the past.*⁵¹

⁴⁸ Qadesh La Yahweh Press, Chapter 1 Flaws in the Systems “B” and “C” Reconstructions, Errors in Chronology, <https://www.yahweh.org/publications/sjc/sj-01Chap.pdf>

⁴⁹ B. Arak., 12b; TSCJ, pp. 39–43; etc.

⁵⁰ Jos., Antiq., 15:11:1

⁵¹ Qadesh La Yahweh Press, Chapter 30 Addressing the Opposing View <https://www.yahweh.org/publications/sjc/sj-30Chap.pdf>

In Book 2 of this series, we will show you that the year 133 C.E. was the 49th year which was a Sabbatical year, making the 50th year 134 C.E. the Jubilee or Yovel year in which Simon Bar Kochba as the Messiah was expected to take over from the Romans.

Zuckermann would base his research upon the supposed facts of the Seder Olam. Wacholder would also use the Seder Olam as his starting point, but change it by one year based on a different translation of chapter 30.

The Seder Olam gives the year that both Temples were destroyed as ve-motsae sheviit (ומוצאי שבעיית) Guggenheimer's recent translation renders this phrase as "... at the end of a Sabbatical Year," thus unambiguously supporting the Wacholder Calendar that starts a Sabbatical Year in the fall of 69 C.E. The problem, however, is that many translations of the Seder Olam render the phrase as "... in the year after a Sabbatical Year" or its equivalent. This was the sense adopted by Zuckermann when citing the Seder Olam as supportive of his calendar of Sabbatical Years.⁵²

So, you have all the researchers basing their research, to one extent or another, upon Rabbi Yose who rewrote a historical chronology in support of Rabbi Akiva's claim that Simon Bar Kochba was that rising star and the Messiah spoken of in Numbers 24.

Rabbi Yehuda Ha Nasi

We have now arrived at that point in history when things begin to change, and those changes grow over time. What was formerly debated is now about to be cemented into the culture as fact, whether it is Torah or not. It has been said that Rabbi Yehuda Ha Nasi was born on the very same day Rabbi Akiva was martyred. Yehuda was the son of Simeon ben Gamaliel II, the president of the Great Sanhedrin. Simeon ben Gamaliel II began to collect and compile the works of Rabbi Akiva. Simeon believed that because the Jews were being persecuted and driven out of the land of Israel, the Oral traditions of the Pharisees from the Second Temple period, until the destruction of the Temple (516

⁵² Seder Olam, chapter 30, translation by Heinrich W. Guggenheimer, Seder Olam: The Rabbinic View of Biblical Chronology (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2005).

B.C. - 70 C.E.), would be forgotten and lost. Yehudah helped his father and in total, took about 50 years to complete the collection and redacting of the Mishnah. During this time, he also served as Nasi over the Sanhedrin in Beit Shearim and Sepphoris.

According⁵³ to Abraham ben David, the Mishnah was compiled by Rabbi Judah the Prince in 3949 AM, or the year 500 of the Seleucid era, which corresponds to 189 CE.

The Mishnah contains many of Judah's own sentences, which are introduced by the words, "Rabbi says."

The Mishnah was Judah's work, although it includes a few sentences by his son and successor, Gamaliel III, perhaps written after Judah's death. Both the Talmuds assume as a matter of course that Judah is the originator of the Mishnah—"our Mishnah," as it was called in Babylon—and the author of the explanations and discussions relating to its sentences. However, Judah is more correctly considered redactor of the Mishnah, rather than its author. The Mishnah is based on the systematic division of the halakhic material as formulated by Rabbi Akiva; Judah following in his work the arrangement of the halakot as taught by Rabbi Meir (Akiva's foremost student).

Judah felt especial reverence for Jose ben Halafta, the student of Akiva's who had the closest relations with Simon ben Gamaliel. When, in later years, Judah raised objections to Jose's opinions, he would say: "We poor ones undertake to attack Jose, though our time compares with his as the profane with the holy!" Judah hands down a halakhah by Jose in Menachot 14a.

I included this last quote about Rabbi Yose ben Halafta to show how much respect was given to him by Rabbi Yehudah. We have more to say about Rabbi Yose later in our book.

The Jerusalem and Babylonian Talmuds

Although Rabbi Yehudah finished redacting the Mishnah, it soon became the subject of commentaries by scholars both in Palestine and in Babylon, the two leading centers of Judaism. This debate went on in

⁵³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judah_ha-Nasi

Palestine until the end of the 4th century, but continued in Babylon until the early 6th century. These sages were known as the Amoraim.⁵⁴

These commentaries became known as Gemara, meaning "completion." Each Gemara, along with the Mishna, makes up a separate Palestinian and Babylonian Talmud. Begun by students of Judah ha-Nasi in the 3rd century, the two Gemara were not completed until early in the 6th century. Work on the Gemara was done by scholars in various academies known as yeshivas in both Palestine and Babylonia. Schools that teach the Torah and Talmud and other rabbinic learning are still called yeshivas.

By the end of the 4th century, Palestine had become a largely Christian area, and the academies ceased to exist. Compilation of the Palestinian Talmud, therefore, came to an end. The work in Babylonia, however, went on, and it is this Talmud that became the standard text of Jewish law and religion. By orthodox believers it is considered divinely inspired, and in modern yeshivas it is still a major object of study.⁵⁵

The work on the Talmud was not yet finished. There is one more major edit that was completed by another one of Judah's great sages, but we must first stop and look at another sage who had a great deal of influence on the Jewish people and how they worship Yehovah.

The Creation of the Sanhedrin

We now come to a very critical time in our history of the men who shaped and formed what most believe is now the Torah. But the Torah as we have shown you is actually the first five books of the Bible. It is in understanding and implementing the Torah into our daily lives that these men have added to or removed certain things over the centuries,

⁵⁴ *Amoraim* (Jewish Babylonian Aramaic: *âîâðàéî[ʔamora'ʔim]*, singular *Amoraâîâðâ[ʔamo'ra]*; "those who say" or "those who speak over the people", or "spokesmen") refers to Jewish scholars of the period from about 200 to 500 CE, who "said" or "told over" the teachings of the Oral Torah. They were primarily located in Babylonia and the Land of Israel. Their legal discussions and debates were eventually codified in the Gemara. The Amoraim followed the Tannaim in the sequence of ancient Jewish scholars. The Tannaim were direct transmitters of uncoded oral tradition; the Amoraim expounded upon and clarified the oral law after its initial codification. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amoraim>

⁵⁵ Talmud <https://kids.britannica.com/students/article/Talmud/277256>

which is now called the Talmud. Most Christians wrongly assume the Torah is the Talmud.

I do not for one moment suspect these learned sages did any of this maliciously. But step by step it became necessary to make rulings about certain situations that arose during their lifetime: the removing of Hellenistic influences, being pure in a biblical sense after the Temple was destroyed, and remembering all the details of the Temple service 50 and 100 years after the fact. How do you comply with commandments when you have no Temple, no priesthood, and no altar to sacrifice?

And now a new problem arises and is solved in the year 358 C.E. This is 288 years after the Temple was destroyed, accompanied with more persecutions and driving the Jewish people further and further away in all directions out of the Land of Israel. How were they supposed to know the proper timing of each month or when to add a leap year (13th month) in order to keep the Holy Days as commanded in the Torah, when they are spread around the earth? How would they do this when the Sanhedrin is being demolished? How would Jews in various parts of the world know when to keep the Holy Days, when no one was allowed to be in the Land of Israel or for them to have a Sanhedrin?

It is now time to review the history of the Sanhedrin, now that we have covered the history of many of the prominent men during this time in an effort to draw it all together, before we continue.

*The Sanhedrin*⁵⁶ (Hebrew and Aramaic: סַנְהֶדְרִין from Koinē Greek: Συνέδριον, synedrion, 'sitting together,' hence 'assembly' or 'council') was a legislative and judicial assembly of either 23 or 71 elders, existing at both a local and central level in the ancient Land of Israel.

There were two classes of Rabbinite courts which were called Sanhedrin, Great Sanhedrin, and Lesser Sanhedrin. A lesser Sanhedrin of 23 judges was appointed to sit as a tribunal in each city, but there was only supposed to be one Great Sanhedrin of 71 judges, which among other roles acted as a supreme court, taking appeals from cases which were decided by lesser courts. In general usage, the Sanhedrin without qualifier normally refers to the Great Sanhedrin, which was presided over by the Nasi, who functioned as its head or

⁵⁶ Sanhedrin <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sanhedrin>

representing president, and was a member of the court; the Av Beit Din or the chief of the court, who was second to the nasi; and 69 general members.

In the Second Temple period, the Great Sanhedrin met in the Temple in Jerusalem, in a building called the Hall of Hewn Stones. The Great Sanhedrin convened every day except festivals and the sabbath day (Shabbat).

After the destruction of the Second Temple and the failure of the Bar Kokhba revolt, the Great Sanhedrin moved to Galilee, which became part of the Roman province of Syria Palaestina. In this period the Sanhedrin was sometimes referred as the Galilean Patriarchate or Patriarchate of Palaestina, being the governing legal body of Galilean Jewry. In the late 200s CE, to avoid persecution, the name Sanhedrin was dropped and its decisions were issued under the name of Beit HaMidrash (house of learning). The last universally binding decision of the Great Sanhedrin appeared in 358 CE, when the Hebrew calendar was established. The Great Sanhedrin was finally disbanded in 425 CE after continued persecution by the Eastern Roman Empire.

Over the centuries, there have been attempts to revive the institution, such as the Grand Sanhedrin convened by Napoleon Bonaparte, and modern attempts in Israel.

Hebrew Bible

In the Hebrew Bible, Moses and the Israelites were commanded by God to establish courts of judges. They were also commanded to establish a "supreme court" located at the central sanctuary (after arriving in the Land of Israel), to handle cases too difficult for local courts.

When Moses declared that the task of leading the people was too difficult for him, God had him appoint 70 elders (zekenim) to share the burden of leadership with him. According to the Mishnah, these 70 elders plus Moses himself are the source for the 71 judges of the "Great Sanhedrin".⁵⁷ These elders are described as "the elders of the

⁵⁷ 14 I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me. 15 And if You are going to part this way with me, I beg You to kill me at once, if I have found favor in Your sight, and let me not see my misery. 16 And Jehovah said to Moses, Gather to Me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people, and the officers over them. And bring them to the tabernacle of

people and its officers", according to a midrash, they were the same officers who were beaten in Egyptian slavery for failing to meet Pharaoh's quota of bricks, and after the Exodus were rewarded with membership on the first Sanhedrin.

The 23 judges of the "Lesser Sanhedrin" are derived from the following exegesis: it must be possible for a "community" to vote for both conviction and exoneration (Numbers 35:24–5). The minimum size of a "community" is 10 men, thus 10 vs 10. One more is required to achieve a majority (11 vs. 10), but a simple majority cannot convict (Exodus 23:2), and so an additional judge is required (12 vs. 10). Finally, a court should have an odd number of judges to prevent deadlocks; thus 23 rather than 22.

History of the Early Sanhedrin

The first historic mention of a Synedrion (Greek: Συνέδριον) occurs in the Psalms of Solomon (17:49), a Jewish religious book translated into Greek.

The Hasmonean court in Judea, presided over by Alexander Jannaeus, until 76 BCE, followed by his wife, Queen Salome Alexandra, was called Synhedrion or Sanhedrin. The exact nature of this early Sanhedrin is not clear. It may have been a body of sages or priests, or a political, legislative and judicial institution. The first historical record of the body was during the administration of Aulus Gabinius, who, according to Josephus, organized five synedra in 57 BCE as Roman administration was not concerned with religious affairs unless sedition was suspected. Only after the destruction of the Second Temple was the Sanhedrin made up only of sages.

Josephus describes a synhedrion for the first time in connection with the decree of the Roman governor of Syria, Aulus Gabinius (57 BCE), who abolished the constitution and the then existing form of government of Palestine and divided the country into five provinces, at the head of each of which a synhedrion was placed; Jerusalem was the seat of one of these. Later, Josephus describes Herod (at the time governor of Galilee) as being summoned before the synhedrion, led by High Priest Hyrcanus II, due to having executed alleged criminals

the congregation so that they may stand there with you. 17 And I will come down and talk with you there. And I will take of the spirit on you, and will put it on them, and they shall bear the burden of the people with you so that you do not bear it yourself alone. (Number 11:14-17)

without permission from the synhedrion. Eventually, though, Herod would go on to kill many members of this synhedrion.

The Mishnah describes the Sanhedrin in this period further. The Great Sanhedrin met in the Hall of Hewn Stones in the Temple in Jerusalem. It convened every day except festivals and Shabbat. Its members included priests, Levites, and ordinary Jews whose families had a pure lineage⁵⁸ such that their daughters were allowed to marry priests.

⁵⁸ *Regular priest:*

7 They shall not take a wife who is a whore, or defiled. Neither shall they take a woman put away from her husband. For he is holy to his God. (Leviticus 21:7)

High priest:

14 He shall not take a widow or a divorced woman, or profane, or a harlot, but he shall take a virgin of his own people to wife. (Leviticus 21:14)

Nehemia: So, the term “defiled woman” is somewhat of a controversial term. Rabbinical tradition teaches that a “defiled woman” is a woman who comes from the line of being a Kohen, but her father married someone he wasn’t allowed to marry. So, her father was a Kohen who married a divorced woman, or her father was a Kohen who married a former prostitute, or her father was someone who committed adultery, and she’s the product of adultery. In all of those cases, she would be considered a “defiled woman,” and the Kohen wouldn’t be allowed to marry her.

Now the question is, is that what it really means? And it’s not clear if that’s what it means. You could maybe say that from verse 15, because verse 14 talks about the high priest not marrying these various people; the widow, and the divorced woman, and the defiled woman, and the prostitute. Then it says, “And he shall not defile his seed among his people for I Yehovah sanctify them.” So that’s really where they get that from, from understanding verse 15 as being the outcome of verse 14.

But that’s not entirely clear if that’s the case. It’s possible that a “defiled woman” is simply a woman who has defiled herself through prostitution. In other words, you could read verse 7 as, “they shall not take a defiled prostitute,” and that’s actually very common in Hebrew, where it’ll say the same thing in two different ways. It’ll say, “void and without form,” and really that’s the same thing; it’s one amplifying the other. So that’s one possible interpretation of it; she’s not defiled by something her father did, because you don’t punish the children for what the parents did, but that she’s defiled by something she did.

The other possibility, of course, is that, like I said, tradition certainly says that it’s the line that becomes defiled then, which then raises the question of, can anyone really serve as a Kohen today? Because we don’t know who, ten generations ago, or twenty generations ago, married a widow.

Keith: That’s why we wait for the Kohen to be set up and that’s why we wait...

Nehemia: Amen.

The trial of Jesus, and early Christianity

A Synhedrion is mentioned 22 times in the Greek New Testament, including in the Gospels in relation to the trial of Jesus, and in the Acts of the Apostles, which mentions a "Great Synhedrion" in chapter 5 where rabbi Gamaliel appeared, and also in chapter 7 in relation to the stoning death of Saint Stephen. This body is described as a court led by the High Priest or leading priests, as well as the "elders" and/or Pharisees.

During Jewish–Roman Wars

*After the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE, the Sanhedrin was re-established in Yavneh, with reduced authority, by agreement between Yochanan ben Zakai and Roman Emperor Vespasian. Vespasian agreed in part due to the perception that the Pharisees had not participated in the first revolt to the extent that other groups had. **Thus the Sanhedrin in Yavneh was comprised almost exclusively of pharisaic scholars.** The imperial Roman government recognized the Sanhedrin. They regarded the head of the Sanhedrin as their own paid government official with the status of a prefect. Roman legislation severely reduced the scope of its authority, but confirmed the body's ultimate authority in religious matters. **In an attempt to quash revolutionary elements, Rome in effect declared one form of Judaism to be the only recognized form of religion.** This led to*

Keith: ...for the Mashiach to come.

Nehemia: Well, so there is a possibility...you had to get the Mashiach in there, didn't you, Keith? You always work him in there somehow, don't you? But there is a passage that talks about...if we can turn over to Malachi...

Nehemia: ...Malachi chapter 3, verse 3. God talks about how he's going to send the messenger. It says, "And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto Yehovah an offering in righteousness."

So, the implication there is that really no one, up until that time, until that happens, can offer the offerings in righteousness and in purity. So, one possible reason of why they can't today, until the messenger comes, is because of this issue of the defiled women.

The other possibility, of course, is the issue of Numbers 19, which we'll get to, which is the whole issue of purity of the dead. Or impurity; being tamei from the dead. The only way to purify from that is the ashes of the red heifer...

<https://www.nehemiaswall.com/torah-pearls-emor>

persecution of sectarian groups, and attempts by these groups to find fault with the Sanhedrin before the Roman government.

I am led to believe that this is another reason the Sadducees, Boethusians and the newest sect on the scene during this time, the Netzarenes, were persecuted until they disappeared. The Netzarenes did not disappear, but were hidden in and amongst another sect called the Christians. This persecution of all other groups continued until the time of Constantine who came down on the side of the Christians in order to rule his empire. It was during this time that the Christians began to persecute the Jews. More about Constantine's role in a moment, but let's continue with the history of the Sanhedrin:

The seat of the Patriarchate moved to Usha under the presidency of Gamaliel II in 80 CE. In 116 it moved back to Yavneh, and then again back to Usha.

After Bar Kokhba Revolt

Rabbinic texts indicate that following the Bar Kokhba revolt, southern Galilee became the seat of rabbinic learning in the Land of Israel. This region was the location of the court of the Patriarch which was situated first at Usha, then at Bet Shearim, later at Sepphoris and finally at Tiberias.

The Great Sanhedrin moved in 140 C.E. to Shefaram under the presidency of Shimon ben Gamliel II, and subsequently to Beit She'arim and later to Sepphoris, under the presidency of Judah ha-Nasi (165–220). Finally, it moved to Tiberias in 220, under the presidency of Gamaliel III (220–230), a son of Judah ha-Nasi, where it became more of a consistory, but still retained, under the presidency of Judah II (230–270), the power of excommunication.

During the presidency of Gamaliel IV (270–290), due to Roman persecution, it dropped the name Sanhedrin; and its authoritative decisions were subsequently issued under the name of Beth HaMidrash.

Constantine and the Council of Nicaea 325 C.E.

In 306 C.E., Constantine the Great came to power in Rome, and he worked to stop the persecution of Christians. In 329 C.E., he issued

laws prohibiting Jews from owning Christian slaves. He also prohibited mixed marriages and punished by death anyone converting to Judaism.

At the Council of Nicaea in 325, in the determination of when to keep Easter, Constantine stated:

"... it appeared an unworthy thing that in the celebration of this most holy feast we should follow the practice of the Jews, who have impiously defiled their hands with enormous sin, and are, therefore, deservedly afflicted with blindness of soul ... Let us then have nothing in common with the detestable Jewish crowd; for we have received from our Saviour a different way."

According to Mark DelCogliano, "it was not the quartodeciman practice that Constantine sought to eliminate, but rather the so-called 'Protopaschite' practice which calculated the paschal full moon according to the Jewish lunar calendar and not the Julian solar calendar".

I must point out right now that the calendar that was in use by the Jews at this time, was the lunar calendar. The Jews had continued to sight the moon each month and to determine the start of the year by the ripeness of the barley and to send out messengers to the major diaspora centers at that time, in order for all of them to keep the Holy Days in unison. The Julian calendar was created by Julius Caesar on January 1, 45 B.C.

Continuing with Constantine's edicts:

Theodoret's Ecclesiastical History records; The Epistle of the Emperor Constantine, concerning the matters transacted at the Council, addressed to those Bishops who were not present:

"It was, in the first place, declared improper to follow the custom of the Jews in the celebration of this holy festival, because, their hands having been stained with crime, the minds of these wretched men are necessarily blinded. ... Let us, then, have nothing in common with the Jews, who are our adversaries. ... Let us ... studiously avoiding all contact with that evil way. ... For how can they entertain right views on any point who, after having compassed the death of the Lord, being out of their minds, are guided not by sound reason, but by an unrestrained passion, wherever their innate madness carries them. ... lest your pure minds should appear to share in the customs of a people so utterly depraved. ... Therefore, this irregularity must be corrected, in order that we may no more have any thing in common

*with those parricides and the murderers of our Lord. ... no single point in common with the perjury of the Jews."*⁵⁹

A Change Develops

With these developments being handed down by Constantine, Rabbi Hillel, Nasi of the Sanhedrin, had to do something, and it was something they had been considering now for a while.

Continuing with the history of the Sanhedrin, we read about a major change that is going to take place as a result of these ongoing persecutions and the spreading further abroad of the Jewish people:

In the year 363, the emperor Julian (r. 355–363 CE), an apostate from Christianity, ordered the Temple rebuilt. The project's failure has been ascribed to the Galilee earthquake of 363, and to the Jews' ambivalence about the project. Sabotage is a possibility, as is an accidental fire. Divine intervention was the common view among Christian historians of the time. As a reaction against Julian's pro-Jewish stance, the later emperor Theodosius I (r. 379–395 CE) forbade the Sanhedrin to assemble and declared ordination illegal. Capital punishment was prescribed for any Rabbi who received ordination, as well as complete destruction of the town where the ordination occurred.

However, since the Hebrew calendar was based on witnesses' testimony, which had become far too dangerous to collect, rabbi Hillel II recommended change to a mathematically based calendar that was adopted at a clandestine, and maybe final, meeting in 358 CE. This marked the last universal decision made by the Great Sanhedrin.

Gamaliel VI (400–425) was the Sanhedrin's last president. With his death in 425, Theodosius II outlawed the title of Nasi, the last remains of the ancient Sanhedrin. An imperial decree of 426 diverted the patriarchs' tax (post excessum patriarchorum) into the imperial treasury. The exact reason for the abrogation of the patriarchate is not clear, though Gamaliel VI, the last holder of the office who had been for a time elevated by the emperor to the rank of prefect, may have fallen out with the imperial authorities.

⁵⁹ Constantine the Great and Judaism

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constantine_the_Great_and_Judaism

*Thereafter, Jews were gradually excluded from holding public office.*⁶⁰

Many people will refer to this last meeting of the Sanhedrin in 358 C.E. and then claim they cannot make any changes until the Sanhedrin is once again brought together to rule on religious matters. This is of course a very false statement. Allow me to remind you of what you have just read from our historical sources:

The Hasmonean court in Judea, presided over by Alexander Jannaeus, until 76 BCE, followed by his wife, Queen Salome Alexandra, was called Synhedrion or Sanhedrin. The exact nature of this early Sanhedrin is not clear. It may have been a body of sages or priests, or a political, legislative and judicial institution. The first historical record of the body was during the administration of Aulus Gabinius, who, according to Josephus, organized five synedra in 57 BCE as Roman administration was not concerned with religious affairs unless sedition was suspected. Only after the destruction of the Second Temple was the Sanhedrin made up only of sages.

The first semblance of a Sanhedrin is mentioned in the Hasmonaean time period and was presided over by Queen Salome who it is said everyone loved. The first historical records we have of a Sanhedrin, according to Josephus, was in 57 B.C. and it was a Roman administration set up to look after religious affairs.

Yes, I do believe there was some sort of 71 elders who ruled over Israel from the time of Moses down to the Hasmonaean time period. But, if I want to prove it, I am left with no factual information—they left no supreme court rulings on any given matter, no precedents to build upon in future disputes—nothing.⁶¹

⁶⁰ Sanhedrin <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sanhedrin>

⁶¹ *1 And He said to Moses, Come up to Jehovah, you and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel. And bow yourselves afar off. (Exodus 24:1)*

9 And Moses went up, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel. (Exodus 24:9)

16 And Jehovah said to Moses, Gather to Me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people, and the officers over them. And bring them to the tabernacle of the congregation so that they may stand there with you. (Numbers 11:16)

Where did this notion that the office of the Sanhedrin descended down from the time of Moses? It came from the Oral laws that were developed during these midrashim starting in the Hasmonaean time period and promoted thereafter, continuing down through the House of Hillel and Shammai debates being instituted in the minds of the sages at that time.

As you are about to read, there were a number of attempts to adjust the calendar long after Hillel II first presented it in 358 C.E., and it was adjusted at times and at others it was not adjusted. There is no mention of the need of a Sanhedrin to rule on those issues at that time. Yet today in 2024, according to many, we cannot fix some of the most blatant calendric errors unless we have a Sanhedrin. And yet once again, we have people like the Karaites and others who follow them, who do make those changes in spite of what the majority⁶² say. They do what the Bible says in order to obey Yehovah. But I digress...

Determining the New Month in the Mishnaic Period

In 325 C.E. the Nicaean council changed the method of how to determine Passover, which was now going to become known as Easter. Up until this time they were totally dependent on the Jews to tell them when Passover was; this was what made Constantine upset and why he called for the Nicaean council to find another way, which they did.

The question we must ask ourselves is: What calendar did the Jews keep until this time? And was the calendar being kept in 325 C.E., the same as that which was given at Mount Sinai?

In Numbers we are told to blow the trumpets at the beginning of our months:

10 Also in the day of your gladness, and in your solemn days, and in the beginnings of your months, you shall blow with the trumpets over your burnt offerings, and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings.

24 And Moses went out and told the people the words of Jehovah, and gathered the seventy men of the elders of the people, and set them all around the tabernacle. 25 And Jehovah came down in a cloud and spoke to him, and took of the spirit on him and gave it to the seventy elders. And it happened when the Spirit rested upon them, they prophesied. But they never did so again. (Numbers 11:24-25)

⁶² *2 You shall not follow a multitude to do evil. Neither shall you speak in a cause in order to follow many in order to wrest judgment. (Exodus 23:2)*

And they shall be to you for a memorial before Jehovah. I am Jehovah your God. (Numbers 10:10)

11 And in the beginning of your months you shall offer a burnt offering to Jehovah: two young bulls, and one ram, seven lambs of the first year without spot, (Numbers 28:11)

In Exodus we again have this word Chodesh for the English month, which is the new moon. When we go to the original Hebrew language, we can see exactly what the new moon is each month:

2 This month shall be to you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year to you. (Exodus 12:2)

H2320 (Strong) חֹדֶשׁ chôdesh kho'-desh
From H2318; the new moon; by implication a month: - month (-ly), new moon.

H2318 (Strong) חָדַשׁ châdash khaw-dash'
A primitive root; to be new; causatively to rebuild: - renew, repair.

H2320 (Ancient Hebrew)

H2320 = AHLB# 2151 (g)

2151) חֹדֶשׁ (חֹדֶשׁ HhDSh) ac:

Renew co: **New moon** ab: **New:** The first crescent of the moon as the renewal of the moon, the first day of the month. [from: חֹדֶשׁ - restoration]

V) חֹדֶשׁ (חֹדֶשׁ Hh-DSh) - **Renew:** To make something like new through repair, restoration, or replacement. [freq. 10] (vf: Hitpael, Piel) |kjb: renew, repair| {H2318}

N^m) חֹדֶשׁ (חֹדֶשׁ Hh-DSh) - **New:** Something that is new, renewed, restored or repaired. [freq. 54] |kjb: new, fresh| {H2319, H2323}

g^m) חֹדֶשׁ (חֹדֶשׁ HhW-DSh) - **New moon:** The first crescent of the moon as the renewal of the moon, the first day of the month. [freq. 276] |kjb: month, new moon, monthly| {H2320}

The new moon, upon which the trumpets are to be blown, is when the new crescent moon is first seen. This is exactly what the Mishnah tells us:

According to the Mishnah and Tosefta, in the Maccabean, Herodian, and Mishnaic periods, new months were determined by

the sighting of a new crescent, with two eyewitnesses required to testify to the Sanhedrin to having seen the new lunar crescent at sunset. The practice in the time of Gamaliel II (c. 100 CE) was for witnesses to select the appearance of the moon from a collection of drawings that depicted the crescent in a variety of orientations, only a few of which could be valid in any given month. These observations were compared against calculations.

*At first the beginning of each Jewish month was signaled to the communities of Israel and beyond by fires lit on mountaintops, but after the Samaritans began to light false fires, messengers were sent. **The inability of the messengers to reach communities outside Israel before mid-month High Holy Days (Succot and Passover) led outlying communities to celebrate scriptural festivals for two days rather than one, observing the second feast-day of the Jewish diaspora because of uncertainty of whether the previous month ended after 29 or 30 days.** It has been noted that the procedures described in the Mishnah and Tosefta are all plausible procedures for regulating an empirical lunar calendar. Fire-signals, for example, or smoke-signals, are known from the pre-exilic Lachish ostraca. Furthermore, the Mishnah contains laws that reflect the uncertainties of an empirical calendar. Mishnah Sanhedrin, for example, holds that when one witness holds that an event took place on a certain day of the month, and another that the same event took place on the following day, their testimony can be held to agree, since the length of the preceding month was uncertain. Another Mishnah takes it for granted that it cannot be known in advance whether a year's lease is for twelve or thirteen months. Hence it is a reasonable conclusion that the Mishnaic calendar was actually used in the Mishnaic period.*⁶³

The Mishnah has recorded that the new moon to begin the month was a crescent moon. It even has charts and procedures on how to interrogate the witnesses. The Mishnah states they had to have two witnesses to sight the moon with their own eyes and report it to the Sanhedrin. They knew! They know!

The Mishnah, redacted about 180 C.E., was operating under a 29- or 30-day month with a 13th month added every so many years. It was common knowledge. They were not debating Zadok, Enoch or any such solar calendars.

⁶³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hebrew_calendar

In 325 C.E. Christians were dependent upon the Jews to let them know when Passover would be. They were dependent on the Sanhedrin to determine if the barley was Aviv and if the crescent moon had been found by two witnesses to begin the month and the year. There were no calculations being done. They were not going by the solar calendar. They needed the Jewish Sanhedrin in order to determine when to keep Easter. Constantine was upset being dependent upon the Jews and the Sanhedrin for this information. For this reason, he convened the Nicaean council which changed the method of how to determine Passover/Easter.

This is clear proof that the Mishnah and the Jews up until 325 C.E. were using the lunar calendar. So, what happened? Why are they not doing it today? What else has been changed?

It was also during this same time the Quartodeciman⁶⁴ controversy was raging and resolved by the Nicaean Council.

We have already shown you how the start of the count of the Omer⁶⁵ was changed in the dispute between the Boethusians and the Pharisees. The Pharisees would eventually become the dominant group and enforce their own beliefs.

I have now shared with you the history of the Sanhedrin from the Hasmonaean period down to about 425 C.E. with the death of the last Nasi, Gamaliel VI. This was a period of time of about 600 years. I have only briefly mentioned Hillel who was Nasi from 320 to 385 C.E. It is now time to look at what took place during his tenure as Nasi and how he fixed the calendar by using a calculated formula to determine each holy day and each leap year.

The Seeds of the Calculated Calendar Before 358 C.E.

I have now briefly laid out the history of the Torah and the arrival of the Mishnah and the political parties that led to its development. I also hope that I have conveyed to you that there was an ongoing persecution of the Jews and this way of life since the Hasmonaean times until 358 C.E., the time period we are now going to talk about. It is

⁶⁴ Quartodecimanism <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quartodecimanism>

⁶⁵ *They maintained that the Omer (Men. 10:3) was to be offered on the first Sunday after Passover, and not on the morrow of the first day and, as a result, differed as to the date of Shavuot which according to them must always fall on a Sunday (Hog. 24).*

important to remember these things and to realize that decisions were made in reaction to world events going on around them and against them.

Although Rabbi Hillel is often credited with the creation of the Hillel calendar also known as the Hebrew calendar, it is not exactly correct:

Between 70 and 1178 CE, the observation-based calendar was gradually replaced by a mathematically calculated one.

The Talmuds indicate at least the beginnings of a transition from a purely empirical to a computed calendar. Samuel of Nehardea (c. 165–254) stated that he could determine the dates of the holidays by calculation rather than observation. According to a statement attributed to Yose (late 3rd century), Purim could not fall on a Sabbath nor a Monday, lest Yom Kippur fall on a Friday or a Sunday. This indicates that, by the time of the redaction of the Jerusalem Talmud (c. 400 CE), there were a fixed number of days in all months from Adar to Elul, also implying that the extra month was already a second Adar added before the regular Adar. Elsewhere, Shimon ben Pazi⁶⁶ is reported to have counseled "those who make the computations" not to set Rosh Hashana or Hoshana Rabbah on Shabbat. This indicates that there was a group who "made computations" and controlled, to some extent, the day of the week on which Rosh Hashana would fall.⁶⁷

As you see, the calculations were already being done before 254 C.E. by Samuel of Nehardea and Rabbi Yose. They were already recording laws (takanot) for the postponing of the Holy Days so that they do not land on certain days.

By the time Rabbi Hillel becomes Nasi, the calculated calendar is already known, but to the best of my understanding, it was not yet a universal law implemented upon all the diasporas. In fact, once we

⁶⁶ Rabbi Shimon ben Pazi, also known as Rabbi Simon, was an amora of the third generation. He was a student of Johanan bar Nappaha and Joshua ben Levi. He is commonly called "Rabbi Shimon ben Pazi" in the Babylonian Talmud and "Rabbi Shimon" in the Jerusalem Talmud and midrashim. He lived in the south of the Land of Israel but also visited Tiberias, where he studied with Johanan bar Nappaha. He was the first to enumerate God's Thirteen Attributes of Mercy and the first to use the technical theological phrase *tiqqun soferim* "scribal correction".

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shimon_ben_Pazi

⁶⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hebrew_calendar

begin to study the tombstones of Zoar, they will show us the years when the transition from the sighting of the moon and using the barley to begin the year changed to a calculated mathematical calendar in their area.

Hillel II, also known simply as Hillel, was an amora of the fifth generation in the Land of Israel. He held the office of Nasi of the Sanhedrin between 320 and 385 CE. He was the son and successor of Judah III.

He⁶⁸ is traditionally regarded as the creator of the modern fixed Jewish calendar. This tradition first appears in a responsum of R. Hai Gaon (written in 992) cited by R. Abraham bar Hiyya in his Sefer Ha'ibbur (written in 1123). The citation explicitly refers to the year that this event happened, 670 of the Seleucid era, which corresponds to 358/9 CE.

However, a number of documents have been found that indicate the calendar was not fully fixed in Hillel's time; most famously a letter found in Cairo Geniza (from the year 835/6) indicates that the holidays were observed on different dates from those predicted by the current calendar. The calendar did not reach its exact modern form until at least the years 922–924. According to modern scholar Sacha Stern, Hai Gaon only attributed the establishment of a 19-year cycle, and not other details of the calendar, to Hillel.

The fixed calendar was of great benefit to Jews of his and subsequent generations. The Jewish calendar is lunisolar. That is, its months are synchronized with the phases of the moon, but its average year length approximates the mean length of a solar year.

The Sanhedrin declared new months based on observations of the new moon, and added a 13th lunar month to certain years to ensure that holidays would continue to fall in the same seasons of the solar year. But Constantius II, following the precedents of Hadrian, prohibited the holding of such meetings as well as the vending of articles for distinctly Jewish purposes. The worldwide Jewish community depended on the calendar sanctioned by the Judean Sanhedrin to observe Jewish holidays on the correct dates. However, danger threatened the participants in that sanction and the messengers who communicated their decisions to distant congregations. Temporarily, to relieve the foreign congregations, Huna ben Abin once advised Rava not to wait for the official intercalation: "When you are convinced that the winter

⁶⁸ Hillel II https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hillel_II

quarter will extend beyond the sixteenth day of Nisan declare the year a leap year, and do not hesitate". But as the religious persecutions continued, Hillel decided to provide an authorized calendar for all time to come, though by doing so he severed the ties which united the Jews of the diaspora to their mother country and to the patriarchate.

Please pause and read this section one more time. It is quite the stunning bit of information. Because of the edicts declared by Constantine beginning in 325, opposition towards the Jews was once again increasing to the point where Hillel created and approved a calculated calendar to protect the Jewish people from having to deliver it by messengers, so they could all keep the Holy Days around the world at the same time.

*There⁶⁹ is a tradition, first mentioned by Hai Gaon (died 1038 CE), that Hillel II was responsible for the new calculated calendar with a fixed intercalation cycle "in the year 670 of the Seleucid era" (i.e., 358–359 CE). Later writers, such as Nachmanides, explained Hai Gaon's words to mean that the entire computed calendar was due to Hillel II in response to persecution of Jews. **Maimonides (12th century) stated that the Mishnaic calendar was used "until the days of Abaye and Rava" (c. 320–350 CE), and that the change came when "the land of Israel was destroyed, and no permanent court was left."** Taken together, these two traditions suggest that Hillel II (whom they identify with the mid-4th-century Jewish patriarch Ioulos, attested in a letter of the Emperor Julian, and the Jewish patriarch Ellel, mentioned by Epiphanius) instituted the computed Hebrew calendar because of persecution. H. Graetz linked the introduction of the computed calendar to a sharp repression following a failed Jewish insurrection that occurred during the rule of the Christian emperor Constantius and Gallus.*

Saul Lieberman argued instead that the introduction of the fixed calendar was due to measures taken by Christian Roman authorities to prevent the Jewish patriarch from sending calendrical messengers.

Again, I want to emphasize that the calendar was not 100% completed under Hillel and that last council meeting of the Sanhedrin. Before the implementing of the Hillel calendar, the Mishnaic calendar was being utilized. **The Mishnaic calendar used the first sliver of the**

⁶⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hebrew_calendar

crescent moon to begin the month and the barley to begin the year. There is no hint or mention of anything resembling the Enochian, Jubilee, or Zadokian calendars, which are becoming all the rage to some in our time now. Indeed, even the postponement rules added to the Hillel calculated calendar were being adjusted and changed over a number of centuries.

Both⁷⁰ the tradition that Hillel II instituted the complete computed calendar, and the theory that the computed calendar was introduced due to repression or persecution, have been questioned.

Furthermore, two Jewish dates during post-Talmudic times (specifically in 506 and 776) are impossible under the rules of the modern calendar, indicating that some of its arithmetic rules were established in Babylonia during the times of the Geonim (7th to 8th centuries). Most likely, the procedure established in 359 involved a fixed molad interval slightly different from the current one, Rosh Hashana postponement rules similar but not identical to current rules, and leap months were added based on when Passover preceded a fixed cut off date rather than through a repeated 19-year cycle. The Rosh Hashana rules apparently reached their modern form between 629 and 648, the modern molad interval was likely fixed in 776, while the fixed 19-year cycle also likely dates to the late 8th century.

*Except for the epoch year number (the fixed reference point at the beginning of year 1, which at that time was one year later than the epoch of the modern calendar), the calendar rules reached their current form by the beginning of the 9th century, as described by the Persian Muslim astronomer Muhammad ibn Musa al-Khwarizmi in 823. Al-Khwarizmi's study of the Jewish calendar describes the 19-year intercalation cycle, the rules for determining on what day of the week the first day of the month Tishrei shall fall, the interval between the Jewish era (creation of Adam) and the Seleucid era, and the rules for determining the mean longitude of the sun and the moon using the Jewish calendar. **Not all the rules were in place by 835.***

In 921, Aaron ben Meïr proposed changes to the calendar. Though the proposals were rejected, they indicate that all of the rules of the modern calendar (except for the epoch) were in place before that date. In 1000, the Muslim chronologist al-Biruni described all of the modern rules of the Hebrew calendar, except that he specified three

⁷⁰ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hebrew_calendar

different epochs used by various Jewish communities being one, two, or three years later than the modern epoch.

In 1178, Maimonides included all the rules for the calculated calendar and their scriptural basis, including the modern epochal year, in his work Mishneh Torah. He wrote that he had chosen the epoch from which calculations of all dates should be as "the third day of Nisan in this present year ... which is the year 4938 of the creation of the world" (22 March 1178). Today, these rules are generally used by Jewish communities throughout the world.

This proves beyond all debate that the calendar was in flux and being adjusted up until 921 A.D. They were at this time still willing to entertain changes to the calendrical calculations. The calendar only became standardized in the Mishneh Torah by Maimonides (Rambam) in 1178 A.D. There was no Sanhedrin at this time. To state as a matter of fact, that you cannot change the calendar and go back to the sighting of the moon and using the barley to declare the new year, unless you have a Sanhedrin, is a false argument. History as I have just shown you, proves the calendar could be changed and was changed over about 600 years, without a Sanhedrin.

Today there is a Sanhedrin, and we have Rabbis⁷¹ searching for the new crescent moon each month preparing for the time when they do

⁷¹ *For over a thousand years, the Hebrew calendar has been fixed by calculation. Today, the Hebrew calendar does not match that fixed by observing the Moon. Even though the gap between the two calendars continues to increase, we do not have the authority to alter the calendar until a new Sanhedrin (religious high court) is reestablished and is widely recognized. While sanctification of the month according to observation is not practiced today it is important to carry out calculations and practice observing the New Moon in order to be ready for when the Sanhedrin is reestablished. Likewise, there is increasing involvement in the Temple, red heifer, etc. Of course, we are not intending to change the current calendar (this is a task for an authorized Sanhedrin) but just to increase involvement in and embellish the Torah.*

In recent years, a number of individuals and groups have begun to observe the Moon each month to practice for the commandment of observing the Moon and for determining criteria for the limits of visibility. There is still plenty of room to improve on the existing criteria using observations and analyzing them in relation to physical, meteorological and physical parameters. We, the Israeli New Moon Society, are

change back. It is called the Israeli New Moon Society. I am including in the footnote a link to the video in which Rabbi Roy Hoffman of the Israeli New Moon Society is showing the Sanhedrin how to search for the new moon.

Were There Dehiyyah Rules in the Mishnah?

We must now pause here and explain the *Dehiyyah* or what we call in English the Postponement Rules.⁷² Once you see why they were

asking the public at large to join us by trying to observe the New Moon at the beginning of each month. The Israeli New Moon Society was founded for this purpose by Rabbi Dr. Nachum Rabinovitch, head of Yeshivat Birkat Moshe, Maale Adumim. The society works with the Institute for Kiddush Hachodesh Studies and includes scientists and rabbis from Universities, Yeshivot and elsewhere.

The Israeli New Moon Society presents the subject from the point of view of Rabbinical Orthodox Judaism. Those interested in the use of new Moon sighting from different religious viewpoints should refer to the Moslem, Karaite, Christian and religious ideas that have evolved from a combination of Christianity and Judaism.

<https://moonsocil.blogspot.com/p/english.html>

https://www.geocities.ws/royh_il/

Mar 12, 2013

We take you to the moon, or at least to a proper scientific/halachic sighting of the new moon, just as it was done two thousand years ago, and as all authorities agree it will be done again in the near future. Dr. Roy Hoffman, the founder of the Israel New Moon Society describes the correct way of sighting and reporting the new moon to the Sanhedrin, and the preparations being made today for the renewal of Torah commandment of announcing each new month based on the testimony of eyewitnesses. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hx40R8i4BY8>

⁷² The following are the principles regulating the Jewish calendar: (1) The length of the astronomical lunar month is 29 days, 12 hours, 793 parts. (2) A synodical month has 29 or 30 days, and is accordingly "haser" (defective), or "male" (full). (3) The first of Tishri is the day on which the "molad" (conjunction) of Tishri has taken place, except: (a) When the molad is at noon or later ("Molad Zaken"). (b) When the molad is on a Sunday, Wednesday, or Friday ("Adu"). (c) When the molad in a common year is on Tuesday, 204 parts after 3 A.M. ("Gaṭrad"). (d) When the molad is on Monday, 589 parts after 9 A.M., in a year succeeding a leap-year ("Beṭutakpa"). The exceptions ("dehiyyot" = postponements) were introduced to provide that the Day of Atonement should not be on Sunday or Friday ('Ar. l.c. p. 20), and that the seventh day of Tabernacles should not be on Saturday. Maimonides ("Yad," Kiddush ha-Hodesh, v. 7) attempts to explain these exceptions astronomically. The exception of Molad Zaken provided that the first of Tishri should at least include six hours of the

made, then you will be able to understand what they supported originally.

We examine these rules because of the crisis they create. If it did not matter, then you could keep the Holy Days on any day. Because it does matter and is extremely important that we show up to meet Yehovah at the proper time, it behoves us to learn and understand how these things came about and when.

Yehshua never commented on them, and they are not mentioned at all from the time of Moses at Mount Sinai until Yehshua. Allow me to share with you some of the work Brian Hoeck has researched from Truth on the Web Ministries:

“The dehiyyot [postponements] are as follows:

- (a) If the Tishri molad falls on day 1, 4, or 6, then Tishri 1 is postponed one day. [This postponement is often referred to as ADU, which is an acronym formed from the Hebrew letters alef (1 for Sunday), daled (4 for Wednesday), & vov (6 for Friday)]*

There are seven rules to the Postponements, but we are only going to explain the first four. The other three have to do with the benedictions. If you would like further information on the benedictions, you can find it in your local library.

The First Rule:

This rule explains that Trumpets (Rosh Hashanah), the first day of the (Jewish) New Year, may not occur on Sunday, Wednesday, or Friday. If Trumpets (Rosh Hashanah) was on Sunday, Hosha’na Rabbah (the 7th Day of the Feast of Tabernacles) would be on Saturday, and this must be avoided because it would prevent the proper celebration of the Festival of Willows. If Trumpets (Rosh Hashanah) was on Wednesday, Atonement (Yom Kippur) would be on a Friday,

new astronomical month, in accordance with R. H. 20: "if the molad takes place before noon, the moon can be seen the same day near sunset"; and that same day was declared to be the first of Tishri. There was at least the possibility of experts discovering the small sickle of the moon six hours after the conjunction; and this possibility justified the authors of the calendar in fixing the day of the molad as the first of the new month, if the molad took place before noon.

<https://jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/3921-calendar>

and this would cause undue hardship because there would be two days in a row with severe restrictions. If Trumpets (Rosh Hashanah) was on a Friday, Atonement (Yom Kippur) would be on a Sunday and, again, we would have two days in a row with severe restrictions. Therefore, if the new moon (molad conjunction) is on either Sunday, Wednesday or Friday, the first day of Tishri (7th month) is postponed to the following day.

(b) If the Tishri molad occurs at or after 18 hours (i.e., noon), then Tishri 1 is postponed one day. If this causes Tishri 1 to fall on day 1, 4, or 6, then Tishri 1 is postponed an additional day to satisfy dehiyyah (a).

The Second Rule:

If the New Moon (molad) of Tishri (the 7th month) occurs at noon or later, New Moon (Rosh Hodesh) is declared to be the following day. Thus, if the molad (new moon) is Monday at noon or later, Tuesday is declared to be Rosh Hodesh (New Moon). ***The reason is that if the molad (new moon) is before noon, it is certain that the new crescent will be visible in some part of the world before sunset of the same day.*** If however, the new moon (molad) occurs after midday, the new crescent will not be visible before sunset of the same day. If the following day is Sunday, Wednesday, or Friday on which the first day of Tishri may not occur, it is further postponed to the next following day, so that the first of Tishri is the third day counting from, and including, the day of the molad (new moon).

You need to pause and read this again. Rule number two is telling you that if the conjunction occurs at noon or later, then the day is postponed in order that the crescent moon is not seen in another part of the world before it is seen in Israel. I believe the postponements were originally created in order to preserve the sighting of the crescent moon. But with no Temple for the witnesses to come to and testify, this rule became part of the other postponements that developed over time.

(c) If the Tishri molad of an ordinary year (i.e., of twelve months) falls on day 3 at or after 9 hours, 204 halakim, then Tishri 1 is postponed two days to day 5, thereby satisfying dehiyyah (a).

The Third Rule:

If the molad of Tishri in an ordinary year is on Tuesday at 3:204/1080 A.M. or later, the first of Tishri is postponed to Thursday. It cannot be on Tuesday because then the next year's New Moon (molad) of Tishri would be on Saturday afternoon and new moon (Rosh Hodesh) would have to be postponed to Sunday. This would make the year in question 356 days long, which is more than the statutory limit of 355 days.

(d) If the first molad following a leap year falls on day 2 at or after 15 hours, 589 halakim, then Tishri 1 is postponed one day to day 3.

The Fourth Rule:

This occurs if the New Moon (molad) of Tishri, in a year succeeding a leap year, is on a Monday after 9:00 A.M. (i.e. the fifteenth hour from the beginning of the night before) and 589/1080 parts. If this year was to begin on Monday, Trumpets (Rosh Hashanah) of the preceding year would have fallen on Tuesday noon, and would have been postponed to Wednesday. This would make the current year 382 days in length, which is lower than the statutory limit of 383 days.

Days of the week on which Holy Days cannot occur, or “Forbidden Days” according to the postponement rules:

Days of the Week	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
PASSOVER		x		x		x	
TRUMPETS	x			x		x	
ATONEMENT	x		x			x	
TABERNACLES	x		x			x	

The Holy Day arrangement for the year is determined by rules that aim to prevent Yom Kippur (Atonement) from occurring either before or after the Sabbath.⁷³

3.1.2 Reasons for the Dehiyyot

⁷³ The Comprehensive Hebrew Calendar by Arthur Spier, page 10 & 15, 1986 edition

Dehiyyah (a) prevents Hoshana Rabba (Tishri 21) from occurring on the Sabbath and prevents Yom Kippur (Tishri 10) from occurring on the day before or after the Sabbath.

Dehiyyah (b) is an artifact of the ancient practice of beginning each month with the sighting of the lunar crescent. It is assumed that if the molad (i.e., the mean conjunction) occurs after noon, the lunar crescent cannot be sighted until after 6 P.M., which will then be on the following day.

Dehiyyah (c) prevents an ordinary year from exceeding 355 days. If the Tishri molad of an ordinary year occurs on Tuesday at or after 3:11:20 A.M., the next Tishri molad will occur at or after noon on Saturday. According to dehiyyah (b), Tishri 1 of the next year must be postponed to Sunday, which by dehiyyah (a) occasions a further postponement to Monday. This results in an ordinary year of 356 days. Postponing Tishri 1 from Tuesday to Thursday produces a year of 354 days.

Dehiyyah (d) prevents a leap year from falling short of 383 days. If the Tishri molad following a leap year is on Monday, at or after 9:32:43 1/3 A.M., the previous Tishri molad (thirteen months earlier) occurred on Tuesday at or after noon. Therefore, by dehiyyot (b) and (a), Tishri 1 beginning the leap year was postponed to Thursday. To prevent a leap year of 382 days, dehiyyah (d) postpones by one day the beginning of the ordinary year.”⁷⁴

There is not one place in the Torah where these postponement rules can be found...not one.

We have already documented the history of the Mishnah and when we examine it, we will discover that the postponement rules had not yet been developed and were not in use during the Mishnaic period. We know this is true because there are many comments in the Mishnah concerning what to do on those Holy Days falling on either Friday or Sunday:

The Mishnah states:⁷⁵

“R. [If] the Day of Atonement coincides with the Sabbath, the loaves [of the showbread in the Temple] are divided in the evening.

⁷⁴ Explanatory Supplement to the Astronomical Almanac, P. Kenneth Seidelmann, editor; document online at: <http://astro.nmsu.edu/~lhuber/leaphist.html>

⁷⁵ <https://www.truthontheweb.org/postpone.htm#1>

S. [If] it coincided with the even of the Sabbath [i.e., Friday], the goat of the Day of Atonement is eaten in the evening.”⁷⁶

“Footnote (16) If it were of immediate importance, the shebuth would have been permitted. But in any case when the Day of Atonement falls on a Friday, the vegetables, even if trimmed, cannot be cooked on the Sabbath.” (Mas. Shabbath 114b)

“Footnote (12) The Day of Atonement. Where the Day of Atonement fell on a Friday, the Shewbread was then baked on a Thursday.” (Mas. Menachoth 100b)

“...if his menstruant wife and his sister were with him in his house and he united, in error, 9 with one of them and does not know with which, or if Sabbath and the Day of Atonement [followed each other] 10...”

“Footnote (10) i.e., when the Day of Atonement fell upon a Friday or Sunday.” (Mas. K’rithoth 19a)

As shown above, even well after Christ’s time in the flesh, the Day of Atonement was still being observed on both Fridays and Sundays which cannot be done under modern Calculated Rabbinic Rules (CRC) rules.

Further readings from the Mishnah provide historical proof that other Appointed Times likewise were not postponed:

“The bones and sinews [of the Jewish Passover—the 15th] and what remains over must be burnt on the 16th. If the 16th falls on a Sabbath they must be burnt on the 17th, since they override neither the Sabbath nor a festival day”⁷⁷

This shows the “Passover festival” (i.e., the first day of the Feast of Unleavens) occurring on a day not allowed by the current CRC (i.e., Friday). Also, utilizing the current fixed calendar, an Abib 16 Sabbath occurrence would put Sivan 6 (which is the post-Mishna rabbinical reckoning of Pentecost) on the Sabbath. This is yet another CRC no-no.

“During the Second Commonwealth down to the fourth century C.E. [at the earliest], the festival of Passover could fall on any day of the week including Friday.”⁷⁸

We do not observe the fasts added by the Jews, we shall look at one of them here now in the context of this study. The fast of the ninth of

⁷⁶ Rabbi Jacob Neusner, *The Mishnah, a New Translation*, “The Fifth Division: Holy Things,” under “Menahot,” p.758

⁷⁷ *The Mishnah*, translated by Danby, p.146, Pesahim 7:10

⁷⁸ Dr. Solomon Zeitlin, “The Judean Calendar During the Second Commonwealth and the Scrolls,” *Jewish Quarterly Review*, July 1966

Av is never allowed to occur upon a Friday under the rules of the current CRC. However, in Bible times, and on through the Mishnaic period, this was not so:

*"They may not decree a public fast on the first day of a month or during [the Feast of] the Dedication or at Purim. But if they had begun they may not interrupt the fast. [Said] Rabban Gamaliel. R. Meir said: Although Rabban Gamaliel has said, 'They may not interrupt the fast,' he admitted that they need not fast the whole day. So, too, with the Ninth of Av if it fell on the eve of a Sabbath [i.e., a Friday]."*⁷⁹

The Mishnah also records the following concerning the Day of Shouting ("Trumpets"), which is the day that these Postponement rules are based around:

*"A child can be circumcised on the eighth, ninth, tenth, eleventh, or twelfth day, but never earlier and never later. How is this? The rule is that it shall be done on the eighth day; but if the child was born at twilight the child is circumcised on the ninth day; and if at twilight on the eve of Sabbath, the child is circumcised on the tenth day; if a Festival-day falls after the Sabbath the child is circumcised on the eleventh day; and if the two Festival-days of the New Year fall after the Sabbath [that is, on Sunday and Monday] the child is circumcised on the twelfth day."*⁸⁰

This Mishnaic quote shows that "Festival-days" can immediately follow Sabbath. It likewise clearly states that specifically "Rosh HaShanah" (Tishri 1) could fall on the first day of the week, and thus it is seen that the postponement of this Day of Shouting (a.k.a. "Feast of Trumpets")/"Rosh HaShanah") from Sunday to Monday was not yet established during Temple times nor in the Mishnaic period.

Why is it that the first day of Ethanim (a.k.a. "Tishri") is not allowed to fall on a Sunday according to the rabbinical calendar anyway?

*"If Rosh Hashanah fell on a Sunday, Hoshanah Rabbah would fall on the Sabbath and would call for the elimination of certain rituals which the pharisaic rabbis did not want to forgo."*⁸¹

"Sunday is considered unfit, because with Rosh ha-Shanah falling thereon, the seventh day of the Feast of Tabernacles (Hosha'na

⁷⁹ *The Mishnah, Danby, p.197, Taanith 2:10*

⁸⁰ *The Mishnah, Danby, p.117, Shabbath 19:5*

⁸¹ *Jewish Quarterly Review, Vol 25, No 1, 1997; Article by Rabbi Saul Leeman, "Why is Pesach So Late This Year?"*

Rabbah) on which the ceremony of “beating the willow-twigs”⁸² is an important part of the service, would fall on the Sabbath, and the observance of the ceremony could not be permitted.”⁸³

“Rosh Hashana never falls on a Sunday because that would mean that Hoshana Rabba (the last day of Sukkot, which always falls on 21 Tishri) would fall on a Saturday, which would not be desirable. In talmudic times, Hoshana Rabba was regarded as a day much like Yom Kippur. It brought to an end the long holiday period beginning with Rosh Hashana, and was considered to be the one final opportunity to reverse an unfavorable decree issued against the individual on the High Holidays. If Hoshana Rabba were to fall on the Sabbath, this would interfere with the ceremony of beating a bunch of hoshanot (willows) during the synagogue services, an action forbidden on the Sabbath [Both the action of beating the willow-twigs, and the forbiddance thereof on the Sabbath, are by later rabbinical decree, not by God]. Beating the willows was an act of self-flagellation and a sign of remorse, similar to the malkot ceremony practiced on Yom Kippur.”⁸⁴

Do you agree that we should not observe “Trumpets” on the correct day because of this rabbinical tradition and reasoning? How many of the CRC-observant brethren are even aware that this is why “Trumpets” is never observed on a Sunday within the so-called “Hebrew calendar”?

The following Mishnaic quote proves that Ethanim 21 (“HoShana Rabba”) was not postponed from falling upon the Sabbath in the Temple and, at the least, pre-Talmudic times, and thereby likewise further shows that “Trumpets” was not postponed from being observed on the first day of the week:

“4:1 A. [The rites of] the lulav and the willow branch [being carried around the altar by the priests] are for six or seven [days]...

“4:3 A. The willow branch rite is for seven days: How so?

B. [If] the seventh day of the willow branch coincided with the Sabbath, the willow branch [rite] is for seven days...

“4:5 F. And on that day [i.e., “the seventh day of the willow branch” (Ethanim 21)] they walk around the altar seven times...

⁸² I must point out that this ceremony of beating the willow twigs is not found in the Torah or the Mishnah. It is a tradition that has developed to which no one can ascertain when it began or why. <https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/why-beat-the-willow/> And for this reason, so they can beat the willow twigs the postponement rule was created at some time during the Middle Ages.

⁸³ Henry Malter, *Saadia Gaon: His Life and Works*

⁸⁴ Alfred J. Kolatch, *The Jewish Book of WHY*, p.228

*"4:6 A. As the rite concerning it [is performed] on an ordinary day, so the rite concerning [is performed] on the Sabbath."*⁸⁵

The following historical records of the Jews, also from the Talmudic period, show that the 1st day of the seventh new moon was not postponed from occurring on a Friday:

"1. IN THE SEVENTH MONTH, IN THE FIRST DAY OF THE MONTH SHALL BE A SOLEMN REST (XXIII, 24). 1 This bears on what is written in Scripture:

For ever, O Lord, Thy word standeth fast in heaven (Ps. CXIX, 89). 2 It was taught in the name of R. Eliezer: The world was created on the twenty-fifth of Elul. The view of Rab agrees with the teaching of R. Eliezer. For we have learned in the Shofar Benediction 3 composed by Rab: 'This day, on which was the beginning of work, is a memorial of the first day, for it is a statute for Israel, a decree of the God of Jacob. Thereon also sentence is pronounced upon countries, which of them is destined to the sword and which to peace, which to famine and which to plenty; and each separate creature is visited thereon, and recorded for life or for death.' 4 Thus you are left to conclude 5 that on New Year's Day, in the first hour the idea of creating man entered His mind, in the second He took counsel with the Ministering Angels, in the third He assembled Adam's dust, in the fourth He kneaded it, in the fifth He shaped him, in the sixth He made him into a lifeless body, in the seventh He breathed a soul into him, in the eighth He brought him into the Garden of Eden, in the ninth he was commanded [against eating of the fruit of the tree of knowledge], in the tenth he transgressed, in the eleventh he was judged, in the twelfth he was pardoned. 'This,' said the Holy One, blessed be He, to Adam, 'will be a sign to your children. As you stood in judgment before Me this day and came out with a free pardon, so will your children in the future stand in judgment before Me on this day and will come out from My presence with a free pardon.' When will that be? In the seventh month, in the first day of the month.

(1) New Year's Day; the day on which God sits in judgment upon the world. The exposition that follows is intended to explain why the first day of the year was chosen as the day of judgment.

(2) The bearing is not clear. In Pes. R. XL, 2 this verse is expounded as showing that mercy governs God's attitude in His judgment of man

⁸⁵ Rabbi Jacob Neusner, *The Mishnah, a New Translation*, "The Second Division: Appointed Times," pp.286-287, *Sukkah* 4:1,3,5,6

and that this was so in the case of Adam who was judged on the first day of the year.

(3) I.e. in the second of the special passages inserted in the Additional Service on New Year's Day. This second benediction is now known as Zikronoth, remembrance.

(4) V. A.P.B., p. 250.

(5) The conclusion is only that Adam was created on New Year's Day, the first of Tishri, this being the sixth day from the twenty-fifth of Elul." (Midrash Rabbah – Leviticus 29:1)

The Talmud likewise claims that Adam was created on Ethanim I (aka, "Tishri I"):

*"He was created on New Year's Day, the first of Tishri, and all that is related of him occurred on that very day. In the first hour his dust was assembled; in the second he was rough-hewn; in the third his limbs were articulated; in the fourth the soul was breathed into him; in the fifth he stood erect; in the sixth he gave names to all creatures; in the seventh Eve was brought to him; in the eighth they begot Cain and Abel; in the ninth they were forbidden to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; in the tenth they sinned; in the eleventh sentence was passed; and in the twelfth they were driven out of Eden (Sanh. 38b; cf. also Lev. R. 29:1)."*⁸⁶

Now we, as the rabbinic Jews who authored the material above, are quite aware what day Adam was created, aren't we? The Book of Genesis explains clearly to us that he was created on the sixth day—the day before the Sabbath (Gen. 1&2). This being the fact, it is clear that the "rabbis" who authored these Midrash and Talmudic quotes did not believe Ethanim I was to be postponed from occurring on the day before the weekly Sabbath (that is, on Friday).

The Origin of Postponements

We have examined the Scriptural and historical records and have found them replete with proof that the postponement rules of the CRC were not in use in either the 1st or 2nd Temple periods, nor thereafter during the Mishnaic period.

So when did these man-made rules come into place? Did Hillel II institute them in 358/359 C.E. when he published the, up til then, "secret" astronomical information which had been used by the

⁸⁶ *Encyclopaedia Judaica, Volume 2, article: Adam, pp.236,237*

Sanhedrin to determine if the witnesses who came to testify of their sighting of the fresh crescent were lying or not?

“The plain fact is that, as seen by recent scholars, the system of the fixed calendar was not developed until fully three or four centuries after the close of the Talmudic period, about A.D. 485. [therefore, around the eighth or ninth century C.E.] ...Nor can anything be found in the Talmud about the weighty calendaric matters as the regulated succession of full and defective months within the year, the four postponements of New Year’s Day, the 19-year cycle, or the number and succession of intercalated years in this or any cycle.”⁸⁷

“There is...unimpeachable evidence from the works of writers with expert knowledge of the calendar that the present ordo intercalationis [sequence of intercalations—the 19 year cycle] and epochal molad were not intrinsic parts of the calendar of Hillel II, these being seen still side by side with other styles of the ordo intercalationis and the molad as late as the 11th century. Also the four dehiyyot [postponement rules] developed gradually. ...By the tenth century the Jewish calendar was exactly the same as today.”⁸⁸

While we cannot be positively sure as to when the postponement rules were added alongside the other man-made rules of the then-developing calculated rabbinical calendar, we know with complete confidence that these rules were not in use, nor even conceived of and known, during Jesus’ day. There are some indications that the initial elements of these postponements began to creep in near the end of the Talmudic period, but as the Encyclopaedia Judaica quote states above, these rules developed gradually, along with the rest of the rabbinic calendar rules, over the course of many years.

Pushed Off for Preparation?

It is claimed that we need this “ADU” postponement to block Sabbath and annual Holy Days from occurring back-to-back, lest there be no day of preparation in between to prepare for the second of the two Appointed Times. Is this claim genuine in God’s eyes?

The concept of “preparation day” stems from Exodus 16 with:

⁸⁷ *The Code of Maimonides, Book Three Treatise Eight, SANCTIFICATION OF THE MOON, translated from the Hebrew by Solomon Ganz; Introduction by Julian Obermann, Astronomical Commentary by Otto Neugebauer, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1956, p xli-xlii*

⁸⁸ Cecil Roth, editor, *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, Vol. 5, p.50, article: Calendar

“...on the sixth day they shall prepare that which they bring in; and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily...bake what you shall bake, boil what you shall boil, for tomorrow is the Sabbath.” (Exodus 16:5,23)

What preparation is needed for Atonement (a day of fasting) that its observation is to be moved from a Sunday to Monday on such years, as in 2000, when it rightfully is to be observed Sunday?

What are we “baking and boiling” for the Day of Atonement that one must bump it over one day to have a preparation day in its rightful place when nothing is eaten on this God-appointed fast day anyway???

The fallacy of such a rule is further disproved by this very fact: God specifically declared one of His appointed times to occur on “the morrow after the Sabbath”!

IF God is truly against Sabbaths and annual Holy Days being back-to-back, and He feels and understands that they are “impractical” for us humans to keep, why then did He Himself ordain at least one back-to-back Sabbath/Holy Day every year (i.e., the seventh Sabbath of the count from Elevation Sheaf Day followed by Pentecost—Leviticus 23:15-21)?

Facts are facts, brethren. Through the whole of Scripture, there are no indications of postponements rules. Through the late 2nd Temple (Jesus’ day) and early post-2nd Temple records, we find significant evidence against postponements being used or even known.

It has been claimed by many who hold to the CRC that the burden of proof to change from it lies upon those of us who already have left it—that we need to present the evidence to them. But the Biblical fact is this: We are each admonished through the apostle Paul to prove all things—not to others, but to our own selves. We, individually, are to put all doctrines and the like to the test BEFORE we hold fast to them. Dear friends, how many of us can claim we have done such testing and proving of this so-called Hebrew Calendar?

FOOTNOTES:

This Mishnaic quote below, in agreeance with Shabbat 19:5 and other historical quotes given, shows that Festival days can occur immediately following Sabbath:

“The Two Loaves were consumed never earlier than the second and never later than the third day. Thus if they were baked on the eve of the Festival-day and consumed on the Festival-day, that would be the second day. If the Festival-day fell on the day after the Sabbath, they must be consumed on the third day.” (Menahoth 11:9)

Rambam and the Mishneh Torah (written 1168-1178 C.E.)

There are a few more calendric subjects to address before we can begin the Jubilee cycles, which I will get to once we have allowed Rabbi Maimonides to explain to you in his own words what he has done. We began this study by showing you how the Pharisees came to dominate the scene and decide what was to be recorded from their midrashes. When they were redacted, it was called the Mishnah and now, about 1000 years later, Rambam has called his work the Mishneh Torah.

In our lead off quote, I want to point out one stunning statement—that the Rambam decided what was to be included and what was not deemed worthy to stay by his own judgments:

Maimonides⁸⁹ composed the Mishneh Torah (literally, a “repetition” or “second” Torah) over a 10-year period, continuing to edit it until his death. Comprising 14 books and nearly 1,000 chapters, it was the first ever comprehensive code of halakha (Jewish law). In writing the MT, Maimonides drew from earlier sources, such as the Mishnah, Tosefta, Midrash and Talmud, with an encyclopedic memory and considerable attention to both intertextuality and literary aesthetics. His admiration for these works notwithstanding, he designed the MT to be so exhaustive and accurate that it would make all but the Torah itself obsolete. In his introduction, he instructs, “One should read the written Torah and then read [the MT]. Then he will know the oral Torah in its entirety, without needing to read any other text beside.”

*In order to make the Mishneh Torah accessible to the entire Jewish world, Maimonides organized it topically and composed it in clear, concise Hebrew. In a radical departure from tradition, **Maimonides omitted from the MT both the names of earlier scholars and most of their opinions, preserving only those rulings he deemed correct.** Critics attacked him for this decision, spawning an even greater literature that grows even to this day. Among his fiercest critics was Abraham ben David, the Ravad, (c. 1125-1198) a great Provençal Talmudist who criticized Maimonides for omitting his sources, among other things. Nonetheless, the Mishneh Torah inspired important scholars such as Rabbi Jacob ben Asher (c. 1269 – 1343)*

⁸⁹ <https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/maimonides-rambam/>

and Rabbi Joseph Caro (c. 1488 – 1575), two of the most important later codifiers, changing the landscape of Jewish thought forever.

Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon⁹⁰ was a Talmudist, Halachist, physician, philosopher and communal leader, known in the Jewish world by the acronym "Rambam" and to the world at large as "Maimonides." He is one of the most important figures in the history of Torah scholarship; on his gravestone were inscribed the words, "From Moses to Moses, none arose as Moses."

Today, many hospitals and schools across the globe are named after Maimonides; and to this day, students worldwide pore over his scholarly works.

Moshe was born in Cordoba, Spain, on the 14th of Nissan (the eve of Passover) of the year 4895 (1135 C.E.). His father Maimon, a direct descendant of King David, was a judge in the city's rabbinical court. His mother passed away when he was yet a small child, some suggesting that his younger siblings were born after Maimon remarried.

At the age of thirteen, his family was forced to flee Cordoba when a fanatic Islamic sect took control of the city; the Jews were attacked by rioters and many synagogues were destroyed.

Moshe and his family traveled from place to place looking where to relocate. Not finding anything suitable in Spain, he and his father and younger brother, David, moved to Fez, Morocco, for five years. In 4925 (1165 C.E.), he visited the land of Israel and then moved to Alexandria, Egypt. Later, he settled in Fustat, today known as Old Cairo, where he lived until his passing.

In Egypt, Maimonides was supported by his brother David, a merchant who imported diamonds from India. His financial support gave Maimonides the ability to devote himself to the study of Torah and to author his scholarly work on the Mishnah, the 2nd century seminal work on Jewish law.

Tragedy befell him when his father, wife and two of his sons died within a span of two years, starting in 1166. Several years later, in 1171, his brother David drowned when his ship sunk en route to India.

Without the support of his brother, he began practicing medicine and struggled to support himself and his brother's family.

⁹⁰ Maimonides: His Life and Works

https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/75991/jewish/Maimonides-His-Life-and-Works.htm

In his mid-fifties, Maimonides was appointed as a personal physician by a royal courtier and then to Saladin, the sultan of Egypt and Syria. His new appointments and duties gave him financial stability and more – albeit still very limited – time to devote to his writing. His son and faithful student, Abraham, was his only remaining immediate family member. Maimonides passed away on the 20th of Tevet of the year 4965 (1204 C.E.) and was buried in the city of Tiberias in the Holy Land.

You are now about to read in Maimonides' own words about how the Oral Torah, or the Oral laws were derived from the scriptures at Mount Sinai. I am going to add only some of the footnotes along the way which you should read. I have included all of them at the end of the introduction for you. The English word commandment is the Hebrew word mitzvah (plural of mitzvah is mitzvot). Then with subtle ease Rambam makes the word mitzvah change into the Oral Torah. Once you accept this change, then you will accept all the Oral Torah including the postponements, Metonic cycles, which we have yet to discuss, doing away with the Jubilee years, and many other oral laws that contradict the Torah.

The Rambam's Introduction to the Mishneh Torah⁹¹

"In the name of God, Lord of the world"⁹² (Genesis 21:33)

"Then I will not be ashamed when I gaze at all Your mitzvot"⁹² (Psalms 119:6).

⁹¹ Introduction to Mishneh Torah

https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/901656/jewish/Introduction-to-Mishneh-Torah.htm

⁹² *The Rambam introduces every one of the books of the Mishneh Torah by quoting an appropriate verse from the Bible. It is possible to explain that he chose this verse for the introduction to the entire text in reply to objections he knew would arise to the Mishneh Torah. The Rambam's conception of his work as "a compilation of the entire Oral Law" would not be acceptable to many. Therefore, he begins by emphasizing that his actions were not presumptuous. There is no need for him to be "ashamed" at taking such a step. Since he can "gaze at all Your mitzvot" - i.e., has the knowledge of the entire Oral Law - he is obligated to try to communicate that knowledge to others, as stated in Hilchot Talmud Torah 5:4 (Yayin Malchut).*

The mitzvot given to Moses at Mount Sinai were all given together with their explanations,⁹³ as implied by [Exodus 24:12]: "And I will give you the tablets of stone, the Torah, and the mitzvah."

"The Torah" refers to the Written Law; "the mitzvah," to its explanation. [God] commanded us to fulfill "the Torah" according to [the instructions of] "the mitzvah." "The mitzvah" is called the Oral Law.

Moses, our teacher, personally transcribed the entire Torah before he died. He gave a Torah scroll to each tribe and placed another scroll in the ark as a testimonial, as [Deuteronomy 31:26] states: "Take this Torah scroll and place it [beside the ark...] and it will be there as a testimonial."

"The mitzvah" - i.e., the explanation of the Torah - he did not transcribe.⁶ Instead, he commanded it [verbally] to the elders, to Joshua, and to the totality of Israel,⁷ as [Deuteronomy 13:1] states: "Be careful to observe everything that I prescribe to you." For this reason, it is called the Oral Law.

The Passing Down of the Oral Law by Name

Even though the Oral Law was not transcribed, Moses, our teacher, taught it in its entirety in his court to the seventy elders. Elazar, Pinchas, and Joshua received the tradition from Moses.

[In particular, Moses] transmitted the Oral Law to Joshua, who was his [primary] disciple, and instructed him regarding it.

Similarly, throughout his life Joshua taught the Oral Law. Many elders received the tradition from him.⁹⁴ Eli received the tradition

⁹³ By emphasizing that, at the revelation at Sinai, the mitzvot were given "together with their explanations," the Rambam stresses that the Written and Oral Laws cannot be viewed as two separate entities, but rather as two dimensions of a single whole. See also the Rambam's Introduction to his Commentary on the Mishnah, where he elaborates on the same concept.

⁹⁴ The footnote for this is interesting. By leaving out the names of the sages who created such oral laws, decisions, or traditions, Rambam is claiming or stating again very subtly that all of them were passed down from Moses in an unbroken chain. By listing the entire chain of tradition, the Rambam demonstrates how the Oral Law was transmitted in a continuous chain and was not the invention of the later Sages. However, beyond this obvious intent, the Rambam had another goal in mind. In his Introduction to Sefer HaMitzvot (where he outlines some of his deliberations about the composition of the Mishneh Torah), the Rambam writes:

from the elders and from Pinchas. Samuel received the tradition from Eli and his court. David received the tradition from Samuel and his court.

Achiah of Shiloh was one of those who experienced the exodus from Egypt.¹⁰ He was a Levite and heard [teachings] from Moses. He was, however, of low stature in Moses' age. Afterwards, he received the tradition from David and his court.

Elijah received the tradition from Achiah of Shiloh and his court. Elisha received the tradition from Elijah and his court.

Yehoyada, the priest, received the tradition from Elisha and his court. Zechariah received the tradition from Yehoyada and his court. Hoshea received the tradition from Zechariah and his court. Amos received the tradition from Hoshea and his court. Isaiah received the tradition from Amos and his court. Michah received the tradition from Isaiah and his court. Yoel received the tradition from Michah and his court. Nachum received the tradition from Yoel and his court. Chabbakuk received the tradition from Nachum and his

I chose to omit the supports and proofs [for the laws], and instead mention the major figures who transmitted the tradition. Thus, I will not say "These are the words of Rabbi ---," or "Rabbi --- says such and such" regarding each particular matter. Instead, I will mention all the sages of the Mishnah and the Talmud, of blessed memory, in general at the beginning of the text. I will state that all the judgments of the Torah - i.e., the Oral Law - were received and transmitted from so and so to so and so, until Ezra and until Moses. I will mention together with [the leading sage of the generation], who received the tradition, the other well-known personalities in his generation whose position in the chain of tradition is equivalent to his. All this [will be done] out of a desire for brevity.

The Rambam's willingness to sacrifice the mention of the sources for his decisions in favor of a brief and clear text became a major issue with regard to the acceptance of the Mishneh Torah by other rabbis. The Ra'avad writes:

This author abandoned the practice of all the previous authors, who would bring supports for their statements and quote them in the name of their sources. This was of great benefit because, at times, a judge would presume to forbid or permit [something] based on a specific source. If he knew that a greater authority holds a different opinion, he would retract his. However, in this instance, I do not know why I should retract from the tradition I received and my sources because of [the statements] in this work by this author.

Afterwards, the Rambam himself regretted his original decision. In a responsum, he wrote that he desired to add the sources on which the decisions of the Mishneh Torah were based. Unfortunately, the Rambam himself never succeeded in composing such a text, and the task of discovering these sources has been left to the sages of subsequent generations.

court. Tzefaniah received the tradition from Chabbakuk and his court.

Jeremiah received the tradition from Tzefaniah and his court. Baruch ben Neriya¹¹ received the tradition from Jeremiah and his court. Ezra and his court received the tradition from Baruch and his court.

[The members of] Ezra's court are referred to as *Anshei K'nesset Hagedolah* (the men of the great assembly). They included Chaggai, Zechariah, Malachi, Daniel, Chananiah, Mishael, Azariah, Nechemiah ben Chakaliah, Mordechai the linguist, Zerubavel and many other sages - 120 elders in all.¹²

The last [surviving] member of this group was Shimon the Just. He was included among the 120 elders and received the Oral Law from all of them. He served as the High Priest after Ezra.

Antignos of Socho and his court received the tradition from Shimon the Just and his court.

Yosse ben Yo'ezer of Tzreidah and Yosef ben Yochanan of Jerusalem¹³ and their court received the tradition from Antignos and his court. Yehoshua ben Perachiah and Nittai of Arbel and their court received the tradition from Yosse ben Yo'ezer and Yosef ben Yochanan and their court. Yehudah ben Tabbai and Shimon ben Shatach and their court received the tradition from Yehoshua ben Perachiah and Nittai of Arbel and their court. Shemayah and Avtalion, who were righteous converts,¹⁴ and their court received the tradition from Yehudah and Shimon and their court.

Hillel and Shammai and their court received the tradition from Shemayah and Avtalion and their court. Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai and Rabbi Shimon, the son of Hillel the elder, received the tradition from Hillel [and Shammai] and his [their] court[s].¹⁵

Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai had five students [who were] great sages and received the tradition from him. They were: Rabbi Eleazar the great, Rabbi Yehoshua, Rabbi Yosse the priest, Rabbi Shimon ben Netanel and Rabbi Elazar ben Arach. Rabbi Akiva ben Yosef received from Rabbi Eleazar the great. Yosef, his father, was a righteous convert.

Rabbi Yishmael and Rabbi Meir, a son of righteous converts, received the tradition from Rabbi Akiva. Rabbi Meir and his colleagues also received the tradition from Rabbi Yishmael.

The colleagues of Rabbi Meir include Rabbi Yehudah, Rabbi Yosse, Rabbi Shimon, Rabbi Nechemiah, Rabbi Elazar ben Shamu'a, Rabbi Yochanan the shoemaker, Shimon ben Azzai, and Rabbi Chananiah ben Teradion.¹⁶

Similarly, Rabbi Akiva's colleagues also received the tradition from Rabbi Eleazar the great. Rabbi Akiva's colleagues include Rabbi Tarfon - the teacher of Rabbi Yosse of the Galil - Rabbi Shimon ben Elazar, and Rabbi Yochanan ben Nuri.

Rabban Gamliel the elder received the tradition from Rabban Shimon, his father - the son of Hillel the elder. Rabban Shimon, his son, received the tradition from him. Rabban Gamliel, his son, received the tradition from him and Rabban Shimon, his son, received the tradition from him.

Rabbi Yehudah, the son of Rabban Shimon and referred to as Rabbenu Hakadosh ("our saintly teacher"),¹⁷ received the tradition from his father, from Rabbi Elazar ben Shamu'a, and from Rabban Shimon and his colleagues.

Rabbenu Hakadosh composed the Mishnah. From the days of Moses, our teacher, until Rabbenu Hakadosh, no one had composed a text for the purpose of teaching the Oral Law in public. Instead, in each generation, the head of the court or the prophet of that generation would take notes of the teachings which he received from his masters for himself, and teach them verbally in public. Similarly, according to his own potential, each individual would write notes for himself of what he heard regarding the explanation of the Torah, its laws, and the new concepts that were deduced in each generation concerning laws that were not communicated by the oral tradition, but rather deduced using one of the thirteen principles of Biblical exegesis and accepted by the high court.

Collecting the Oral Law for the Mishnah

This situation continued until [the age of] Rabbenu Hakadosh. He collected all the teachings, all the laws, and all the explanations and commentaries that were heard from Moses, our teacher, and which were taught by the courts in each generation concerning the entire Torah. From all these, he composed the text of the Mishnah. He taught it to the Sages in public and revealed it to the Jewish people, who all wrote it down. They spread it in all places so that the Oral Law would not be forgotten by the Jewish people.

Why did Rabbenu Hakadosh make [such an innovation] instead of perpetuating the status quo? Because he saw the students becoming fewer, new difficulties constantly arising, the Roman Empire¹⁸ spreading itself throughout the world and becoming more powerful, and the Jewish people wandering and becoming dispersed to the far ends of the world. [Therefore,] he composed a single text

that would be available to everyone, so that it could be studied quickly and would not be forgotten.¹⁹ Throughout his entire life, he and his court taught the Mishnah to the masses.

These are the great Sages who were part of the court of Rabbenu Hakadosh and who received the tradition from him: His sons, Shimon and Gamliel, Rabbi Effess, Rabbi Chanina ben Chama, Rabbi Chiyya, Rav, Rabbi Yannai, bar Kafra, Shemuel, Rabbi Yochanan, Rabbi Hoshai. Thousands and myriads of other sages received the tradition from [Rabbenu Hakadosh] together with these great sages. Even though all of the eleven sages mentioned above received the tradition from Rabbenu Hakadosh and attended his study sessions, [there are differences between them. At that time,] Rabbi Yochanan was of lesser stature. Afterwards, he became a disciple of Rabbi Yannai and received instruction from him. Similarly, Rav received the tradition from Rabbi Yannai, and Shemuel received the tradition from Rabbi Chanina ben Chama.²⁰

The Sifra, Sifre and Tosefta

Rav composed the Sifra and the Sifre to explain the sources for the Mishnah. Rabbi Chiyya composed the Tosefta²¹ to explain the subjects [discussed in] the Mishnah. Rabbi Hoshai and bar Kafra composed baraitot to explain the matters [discussed in] the Mishnah. Rabbi Yochanan composed the Jerusalem Talmud in Eretz Yisrael approximately three hundred years after the destruction of the Temple.²²

Among the great sages who received the tradition from Rav and Shemuel were:²³ Rav Huna, Rav Yehudah, Rav Nachman, and Rav Kahana. Among the great sages who received the tradition from Rabbi Yochanan²⁴ were: Ravvah bar bar Channah, Rav Ami, Rav Assi, Rav Dimi, and Rav Avin.

Among the Sages who received the tradition from Rav Huna and Rav Yehudah were Rabbah and Rav Yosef. Among the sages who received the tradition from Rabbah and Rav Yosef were Abbaye and Ravva. Both of them also received the tradition from Rav Nachman. Among the Sages who received the tradition from Ravva were Rav Ashi and Ravina. Mar bar Rav Ashi received the tradition from Rav Ashi, his father, and from Ravina.

The 40 Generations of Sages

Thus, there were forty generations from Rav Ashi back to Moses, our teacher, of blessed memory. They were:

- 1) Rav Ashi [received the tradition] from Ravva.*
- 2) Ravva [received the tradition] from Rabbah.*
- 3) Rabbah [received the tradition] from Rav Huna.*
- 4) Rav Huna [received the tradition] from Rabbi Yochanan, Rav, and Shemuel.*
- 5) Rabbi Yochanan, Rav, and Shemuel [received the tradition] from Rabbenu Hakadosh.*
- 6) Rabbenu Hakadosh [received the tradition] from Rabbi Shimon, his father.*
- 7) Rabbi Shimon [received the tradition] from Rabban Gamliel, his father.*
- 8) Rabban Gamliel [received the tradition] from Rabban Shimon, his father.*
- 9) Rabban Shimon [received the tradition] from Rabban Gamliel, the elder, his father.*
- 10) Rabban Gamliel, the elder, [received the tradition] from Rabban Shimon, his father.*
- 11) Rabban Shimon [received the Tradition] from Hillel, his father, and Shammai.*
- 12) Hillel and Shammai [received the tradition] from Shemayah and Avtalion.*
- 13) Shemayah and Avtalion [received the tradition] from Yehudah and Shimon [ben Shatach].*
- 14) Yehudah and Shimon [received the tradition] from Yehoshua ben Perachiah and Nittai of Arbel.*
- 15) Yehoshua and Nittai [received the tradition] from Yosse ben Yo'ezer and Yosef ben Yochanan.*
- 16) Yosse ben Yo'ezer and Yosef ben Yochanan [received the tradition] from Antignos.*
- 17) Antignos [received the tradition] from Shimon the Just.*
- 18) Shimon the Just [received the tradition] from Ezra.*
- 19) Ezra [received the tradition] from Baruch.*
- 20) Baruch [received the tradition] from Jeremiah.*
- 21) Jeremiah [received the tradition] from Tzefaniah.*
- 22) Tzefaniah [received the tradition] from Chabbakuk.*
- 23) Chabbakuk [received the tradition] from Nachum.*
- 24) Nachum [received the tradition] from Yoel.*
- 25) Yoel [received the tradition] from Michah.*
- 26) Michah [received the tradition] from Isaiah.*

27) Isaiah [received the tradition] from Amos.
 28) Amos [received the tradition] from Hoshea.
 29) Hoshea [received the tradition] from Zechariah.
 30) Zechariah [received the tradition] from Yehoyada.
 31) Yehoyada [received the tradition] from Elisha.
 32) Elisha [received the tradition] from Elijah.
 33) Elijah [received the tradition] from Achiah.
 34) Achiah [received the tradition] from David.
 35) David [received the tradition] from Shemuel.
 36) Shemuel [received the tradition] from Eli.
 37) Eli [received the tradition] from Pinchas.
 38) Pinchas [received the tradition] from Joshua.
 39) Joshua [received the tradition] from Moses, our teacher.
 40) Moses, our teacher, [received the tradition] from the Almighty.
 Thus, [the source of] all these people's knowledge is God, the Lord of Israel.

All the sages who were mentioned were the leaders of the generations. Among them were heads of academies, heads of the exile, and members of the great Sanhedrin. Together with them in each generation, there were thousands and myriads that heard their [teachings].

The Babylonian Talmud

Ravina and Rav Ashi were the final generation of the Sages of the Talmud.

Rav Ashi composed the Babylonian Talmud in Shin'ar approximately one hundred years after Rabbi Yochanan composed the Jerusalem Talmud.²⁵ The intent of both the Talmuds is to elucidate the words of the Mishnah, to explain its deeper points, and [to relate] the new matters that were developed by each court from the era of Rabbenu Hakadosh until the composition of the Talmud.

From the entire [body of knowledge stemming from] the two Talmuds, the Tosefta, the Sifra, and the Sifre, can be derived the forbidden and the permitted, the impure and the pure, the liable and those who are free of liability, the invalid and the valid as was received [in tradition], one person from another, [in a chain extending back] to Moses at Mount Sinai.

Fencing the Torah

Also, [the sources mentioned above] relate those matters which were decreed by the sages and prophets in each generation in order to "build a fence around the Torah." We were explicitly taught about [this practice] by Moses, as [implied by Leviticus 18:30]: "And you shall observe My precepts," [which can be interpreted to mean]: "Make safeguards for My precepts."²⁶

Similarly, it includes the customs and ordinances that were ordained or practiced in each generation according to [the judgment of] the governing court of that generation.²⁷ It is forbidden to deviate from [these decisions], as [implied by Deuteronomy 17:11]⁹⁵: "Do not deviate from the instructions that they will give you, left or right."

⁹⁵ *And so, for both of those, I look at the precedents in the Bible, and this passage is actually... I've got to say, Deuteronomy 17:8-13, in my upbringing, this was the most important passage in the entire Bible in many respects. The reason it was the most important passage, where this was drummed into me over and over and over, is that this is the source of rabbinical authority. This passage, Deuteronomy 17:8 and on; this is talking about the rabbis. That's what I was taught. And it was quoted to me repeatedly. They would quote me verse 10, "according to all that they teach you," "you shall diligently do according to all that they teach you." Who? The rabbis. Then I was told, "and you shall not turn from the matter which they tell you, right or left." One of the things they taught me is, even if they say right is left and left is right, you still must obey them. You're allowed to know they're wrong, but they've got the authority. God gave them the authority in this passage, and if you don't obey them, you are actually subject to the death penalty. This is actually something they said that's really interesting. They said, "if you violate the Torah, the word of God, you get lashes. If you violate the teachings of the rabbis, you are put to death." Now, today they don't put anybody to death, but the principal there is to show you which is more important, which is more severe, what you need to be more careful about.*

*It's really interesting. I was watching a documentary last night that my mother told me to watch, and she said, "Nechemia, you've got to watch this documentary because it reminds me of you." It was a documentary on Channel 8, which is the Israeli Discovery Channel, or something like that. She had recorded it for me, and it was called, *Trouble in Amish Paradise*. It was about this Amish guy who started reading the Bible. And he was shocked to find out that all these rules and regulations they were living their lives based on had nothing to do with the Bible; that God didn't command them to dress a certain way and not to use technology and all the things that they do. These were interesting cultural things, he said, but this isn't commanded to us by God, and my salvation isn't dependent on this.*

So, he went to the elders and they said, "it doesn't matter what the Bible says, you've got to obey us." And my mother made the observation, "this sounds like you, Nechemia, this is what happened to you." And obviously, I was dealing with different issues than the Amish guy, because he's dealing with, obviously, the New Testament,

It also includes marvelous judgments and laws which were not received from Moses, but rather were derived by the courts of the [later] generations based on the principles of Biblical exegesis. The elders of those generations made these decisions and concluded that this was the law. Rav Ashi included in the Talmud this entire [body of knowledge, stemming] from the era of Moses, our teacher, until his [own] era.

The Sages of the Mishnah also composed other texts to explain the words of the Torah. Rabbi Hoshiaia, the disciple of Rabbenu Hakadosh, composed an explanation of the book of Genesis.²⁸ Rabbi Yishmael [composed] an explanation beginning at "These are the names" [the beginning of the book of Exodus,] until the conclusion of the Torah. This is called the Mechilta. Rabbi Akiva also composed a Mechilta.²⁹ Other Sages of the following generations composed other [collections of the] interpretations [of verses] (Medrashim). All of these works were composed before the Babylonian Talmud.

Thus, Ravina, Rav Ashi, and their colleagues represent the final era of the great Sages of Israel who transmitted the Oral Law. They passed decrees, ordained practices, and put into effect customs. These decrees, ordinances, and customs spread out among the entire Jewish people in all the places where they lived.³⁰

Enforcing the Talmud

After the court of Rav Ashi composed the Talmud and completed it in the time of his son, the Jewish people became further dispersed throughout all the lands, reaching the distant extremes and the far removed islands. Strife sprung up throughout the world, and the paths of travel became endangered by troops. Torah study decreased and the Jews ceased entering their yeshivot in the thousands and myriads, as was customary previously.

Instead, individuals, the remnants whom God called, would gather in each city and country, occupy themselves in Torah study, and [devote themselves] to understanding the texts of the Sages and learning the path of judgment from them.

and I was coming from the rabbis. But the principle is the same. They're falling back on it. It's about authority. It's not about truth. We've got the authority and you've got to obey us whether we're right or wrong, whether we tell you right is left, and left is right. You could be right about that. You've got to obey us. It's not about facts; it's about our authority.

<https://www.nehemiaswall.com/torah-pearls-shoftim>

Every court that was established after the conclusion of the Talmud, regardless of the country in which it was established, issued decrees, enacted ordinances, and established customs for the people of that country - or those of several countries. These practices, however, were not accepted throughout the Jewish people, because of the distance between [their different] settlements and the disruption of communication [between them].

Since each of these courts were considered to be individuals - and the High Court of 71 judges had been defunct for many years before the composition of the Talmud - people in one country could not be compelled to follow the practices of another country, nor is one court required to sanction decrees which another court had declared in its locale. Similarly, if one of the Geonim interpreted the path of judgment in a certain way, while the court which arose afterward interpreted the proper approach to the matter in a different way, the [opinion of the] first [need] not be adhered to [absolutely]. Rather, whichever [position] appears to be correct - whether the first or the last - is accepted.

These [principles apply regarding] the judgments, decrees, ordinances, and customs which were established after the conclusion of the Talmud. However, all the matters mentioned by the Babylonian³¹ Talmud are incumbent on the entire Jewish people to follow. We must compel each and every city and each country to accept all the customs that were put into practice by the Sages of the Talmud, to pass decrees paralleling their decrees, and to observe their ordinances, since all the matters in the Babylonian Talmud were accepted by the entire Jewish people.

The [Talmudic] Sages who established ordinances and decrees, put customs into practice, arrived at legal decisions, and taught [the people] concerning certain judgments represented the totality of the Sages of Israel or, at least, the majority of them. They received the tradition regarding the fundamental aspects of the Torah in its entirety, generation after generation, [in a chain beginning with] Moses, our teacher.

All the Sages who arose after the conclusion of the Talmud and comprehended its [wisdom] and whose prowess gained them a reputation are called the Geonim.

All these Geonim that arose in Eretz Yisrael, Babylonia, Spain, and France taught the approach of the Talmud, revealing its hidden secrets and explaining its points, since [the Talmud's] manner of expression is very deep. Furthermore, it is composed in Aramaic, with

a mixture of other tongues. This language was understood by the people of Babylonia in the era when the Talmud was composed.

However, in other places, and even in Babylonia in the era of the Geonim, a person cannot understand this language unless he has studied it.³²

The inhabitants of each city would ask many questions of each Gaon who lived in their age, to explain the difficult matters that existed in the Talmud. They would reply to them according to their wisdom. The people who had asked the questions would collect the replies and make texts from them, so that they could consider them in depth.³³ Also, the Geonim of each generation composed texts to explain the Talmud. Some of them explained only certain halachot. Others explained selected chapters that had created difficulty in their age. Still others explained entire tractates and orders.

*Also, [the Geonim] composed [texts recording] the decisions of Torah law regarding what is permitted and what is forbidden, when one is liable and when one is free of liability, with regard to subjects that were necessary at the time, so that they would be accessible to the grasp of a person who could not comprehend the depths of the Talmud.³⁴ **This is the work of God, which was performed by all the Geonim of Israel from the completion of the Talmud until the present date, 1108 years after the destruction of the Temple, 4937 years after the creation of the world.**⁹⁶*

At this time, we have been beset by additional difficulties, everyone feels [financial] pressure, the wisdom of our Sages has become lost, and the comprehension of our men of understanding has become hidden. Therefore, those explanations, laws, and replies which the Geonim composed and considered to be fully explained material have become difficult to grasp in our age, and only a select few comprehend these matters in the proper way.

Rambam Organized the Sifra, Sifre, Tosefta, Jerusalem and Babylonian Talmuds

⁹⁶ For the purpose of this book, this is an extremely important note to be highlighted as we will refer back to it in due time.

This corresponds to the year 1177 C.E. Apparently, the Rambam composed the Mishneh Torah over a number of years, constantly revising his work. Thus, in Hilchot Kiddush HaChodesh 11:16, he mentions the date of the composition of the text as 4938, one year later, and in Hilchot Shemitot V'Yovalot, he mentions the date 4936, one year earlier.

Needless to say, [there is confusion] with regard to the Talmud itself—both the Jerusalem and Babylonian Talmuds—the Sifra, the Sifre, and the Tosefta, for they require a breadth of knowledge, a spirit of wisdom, and much time, for appreciating the proper path regarding what is permitted and forbidden, and the other laws of the Torah.

Therefore, I girded my loins - I, Moses, the son of Maimon, of Spain.³⁶ I relied upon the Rock, blessed be He. I contemplated all these texts and sought to compose [a work which would include the conclusions] derived from all these texts regarding the forbidden and the permitted, the impure and the pure, and the remainder of the Torah's laws, all in clear and concise terms, so that the entire Oral Law could be organized in each person's mouth without questions or objections.

Instead of [arguments], this one claiming such and another such, [this text will allow for] clear and correct statements based on the judgments that result from all the texts and explanations mentioned above, from the days of Rabbenu Hakadosh until the present. [This will make it possible] for all the laws to be revealed to both those of lesser stature and those of greater stature, regarding every single mitzvah, and also all the practices that were ordained by the Sages and the Prophets.

To summarize: [The intent of this text is] that a person will not need another text at all with regard to any Jewish law. Rather, this text will be a compilation of the entire Oral Law, including also the ordinances, customs, and decrees that were enacted from the time of Moses, our teacher, until the completion of the Talmud,³⁷ as were explained by the Geonim in the texts they composed after the Talmud.

The Mishneh Torah Unveiled

Therefore, I have called this text, Mishneh Torah ["the second to the Torah,"³⁸ with the intent that] a person should first study the Written Law, and then study this text³⁹ and comprehend the entire Oral Law from it, without having to study any other text between the two.

I saw fit to divide this text into [separate] halachot⁴⁰ pertaining to each [particular] subject, and, within the context of a single subject, to divide those halachot into chapters. Each and every chapter is divided into smaller halachot so that they can be ordered in one's memory.

[Regarding] the halachot which pertain to specific subjects: Some of the halachot contain the laws governing only one mitzvah, this being

a mitzvah that has many matters of the tradition [associated with it] and is a subject in its own right. Other halachot contain the laws governing many mitzvot, since they deal with the same subject matter, for I have divided this text according to topics, not according to the number of mitzvot, as will become clear to the reader.⁴¹

The number of mitzvot which are incumbent on us at all times⁴² is 613. 248 are positive commandments; an allusion to their [number], the number of limbs in the human body.⁴³ 365 are negative commandments (prohibitions); an allusion to their [number,] the number of days in a solar year.⁴⁴

FOOTNOTES

1. The heading "Introduction" is not found in any of the manuscript editions of the Mishneh Torah and appears to be a printer's addition. Note Hilchot Shechitah 1:4, where the Rambam refers to "...the Oral Law, which is called 'the mitzvah,' as we explained in the beginning of this text."

By referring to these passages as "the beginning" of the text and not "the introduction to the text," the Rambam implies that the subject matter contained in these passages is an essential part of the Mishneh Torah and not merely an author's preamble.

2. Though this verse is omitted by many printed editions of the Mishneh Torah, it is included in the manuscript editions. It is also found at the beginning of the Rambam's other works, the Commentary on the Mishnah, Sefer HaMitzvot, and the Guide to the Perplexed. The Rambam's intention is to clarify that he does not see this work as an expression of his individual efforts alone, but that it was composed "In the name of God, the Lord of the world."

3. The Rambam introduces every one of the books of the Mishneh Torah by quoting an appropriate verse from the Bible. It is possible to explain that he chose this verse for the introduction to the entire text in reply to objections he knew would arise to the Mishneh Torah. The Rambam's conception of his work as "a compilation of the entire Oral Law" would not be acceptable to many. Therefore, he begins by emphasizing that his actions were not presumptuous. There is no need for him to be "ashamed" at taking such a step. Since he can "gaze at all Your mitzvot" - i.e., has the knowledge of the entire Oral Law - he is obligated to try to communicate that knowledge to others, as stated in Hilchot Talmud Torah 5:4 (Yayin Malchut).

4. By emphasizing that, at the revelation at Sinai, the mitzvot were given "together with their explanations," the Rambam stresses that the Written and Oral Laws cannot be viewed as two separate entities, but rather as two dimensions of a single whole. See also the Rambam's Introduction to his Commentary on the Mishnah, where he elaborates on the same concept.

5. See *Emunah V'De'ot* (Discourse 3, Chapter 3), where Rav Sa'adiah Gaon explains at length how the oral tradition is necessary to understand how to fulfill the mitzvot.

6. Note Gittin 60b, which prohibits writing down the teachings of the Oral Law. Nevertheless, from the Rambam's statements here and in the Introduction to his Commentary on the Mishnah, it appears that the prohibition only applies to the composition of a text from which to teach, and not writing down notes for one's personal study.

7. See the Rambam's Introduction to his Commentary on the Mishnah, where he quotes Eruvin 54b which describes the order in which Moses would teach Aharon, his sons, the elders, and then the entire Jewish people.

8. I.e., regarding its transmission to others (*Sifre*, Pinchas).

9. By listing the entire chain of tradition, the Rambam demonstrates how the Oral Law was transmitted in a continuous chain and was not the invention of the later Sages. However, beyond this obvious intent, the Rambam had another goal in mind. In his Introduction to *Sefer HaMitzvot* (where he outlines some of his deliberations about the composition of the *Mishneh Torah*), the Rambam writes:

I chose to omit the supports and proofs [for the laws], and instead mention the major figures who transmitted the tradition. Thus, I will not say "These are the words of Rabbi ---," or "Rabbi --- says such and such" regarding each particular matter. Instead, I will mention all the sages of the Mishnah and the Talmud, of blessed memory, in general at the beginning of the text. I will state that all the judgments of the Torah - i.e., the Oral Law - were received and transmitted from so and so to so and so, until Ezra and until Moses. I will mention together with [the leading sage of the generation], who received the tradition, the other well-known personalities in his generation whose position in the chain of tradition is equivalent to his. All this [will be done] out of a desire for brevity.

*The Rambam's willingness to sacrifice the mention of the sources for his decisions in favor of a brief and clear text became a major issue with regard to the acceptance of the *Mishneh Torah* by other rabbis. The Ra'avad writes:*

This author abandoned the practice of all the previous authors, who would bring supports for their statements and quote them in the name of their sources. This was of great benefit because, at times, a judge would presume to forbid or permit [something] based on a specific source. If he knew that a greater authority holds a different opinion, he would retract his. However, in this instance, I do not know why I should retract from the tradition I received and my sources because of [the statements] in this work by this author.

Afterwards, the Rambam himself regretted his original decision. In a responsum, he wrote that he desired to add the sources on which the decisions of the Mishneh Torah were based. Unfortunately, the Rambam himself never succeeded in composing such a text, and the task of discovering these sources has been left to the sages of subsequent generations.

10. See Bava Batra 121b.

11. Jeremiah and Baruch witnessed the destruction of the First Temple. After Jeremiah's death, Baruch went to Babylon and taught Torah to the exiles there.

12. The Anshei K'nesset Hagedolah presided over the return to Zion at the beginning of the Second Temple period and set the foundations for the reconstruction of the nation.

13. These two sages begin the line of zugot (pairs) mentioned in the first chapter of Avot. The first of the sages mentioned was the nasi (head of the academy), and the second the av beit din (head of the court).

14. See Eduyot 1:3 and Gittin 57b. It is difficult to understand why the Rambam mentions Shemayah and Avtalion's ancestry. On the contrary, the fact that they were converts raises serious questions as to why they were allowed to serve as nasi and av beit din. (See Hilchot Melachim 1:4 and the commentary in the Moznaim edition of that Halachah.)

15. Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai witnessed the destruction of the Second Temple. Before the fall of Jerusalem, he escaped with his students to Yavneh and laid a new foundation for our people's spiritual growth.

16. The commentaries have noted some apparent contradictions between the Rambam's statements here and those in the Introduction to his Commentary on the Mishnah. For example, in the Introduction to his Commentary on the Mishnah, the Rambam states that Rabbi Meir and Rabbi Nechemiah were different names for the same person, while here he mentions them as separate individuals. Similarly, in the Introduction to his Commentary on the Mishnah, the Rambam places

Rabbi Chananiah ben Teradion in the first generation of sages following the Temple's destruction, while here he places him in the third generation.

The Mishneh Torah is a later work, and it is possible that the Rambam changed his thinking on these particulars before its composition.

17. In the Introduction to his Commentary on the Mishnah, the Rambam explains that Rabbi Yehudah HaNasi merited the title Rabbenu Hakadosh (our saintly teacher), because "he possessed all the desired and good qualities."

18. The Roman Empire systematically attempted to suppress the study of Torah in all the lands under its control.

19. Though Rabbi Yehudah HaNasi's composition of the Mishnah is a monumental achievement in its own right, perhaps the Rambam elaborates in his description of it because of the parallels to his own composition of the Mishneh Torah.

20. Rav and Shemuel represent the first generation of Amoraim, the age in which the center of Torah study shifted from Eretz Yisrael to Babylonia.

21. In the Introduction to his Commentary on the Mishnah, the Rambam explains Rabbi Chiyya's contribution as follows:

He followed his master's [Rabbi Yehudah HaNasi's] footsteps [in composing a text for the public] to explain the matters he saw to be confusing in his master's work.

This was called the Tosefta. Its intent was to explain the Mishnah and expound upon concepts that would require much effort to be derived from the Mishnah... to show how these ideas could be developed and deduced from the Mishnah.

22. Thus, according to the Rambam, the approximate date of the composition of the Jerusalem Talmud was the year 4025 (365 C.E.). The commentaries have not found an explicit source supporting the Rambam's contention that Rabbi Yochanan composed the Jerusalem Talmud. Indeed, it appears that the final text of that work was composed by Rabbi Mannah and Rabbi Yosse ben Rabbi Bun approximately one hundred years after Rabbi Yochanan's death. Some commentaries explain that Rabbi Yochanan laid the foundation for the text that was completed by the later sages.

23. In Babylonia.

24. In Eretz Yisrael.

25. Thus, according to the Rambam, the approximate date of the composition of the Babylonian Talmud was 4125 (465 C.E.). The commentaries point to Bava Metzia 86a, which relates that "Rav Ashi and Ravina were the final authorities with regard to

instruction," as the source for the Rambam's statements. From the Rambam's later statements, it appears that in this instance as well, Rav Ashi laid the foundation for the Talmud. However, the composition of the text was completed by Ravina Zuta, Mar bar Rav Ashi, and Rav Yosse more than seventy years after Rav Ashi's death.

26. In the Introduction to his Commentary on the Mishnah, the Rambam deals with this subject at length, citing as examples, the prohibition of eating fowl together with milk and the eighteen decrees passed by the School of Hillel and the School of Shammai.

27. In the Introduction to his Commentary on the Mishnah, the Rambam also mentions these two categories, describing them as: Laws that were established after meditation on the proper structure for interpersonal relations, without adding or detracting from the words of the Torah, or matters that [were instituted] for the spiritual betterment of mankind.

Among the examples of such laws he cites are: Hillel's institution of the Pruzbul and the ordinances of Ushia, which require a father to support his children. The Rambam also discusses these three categories of Rabbinic decrees in Hilchot Mamrim, Chapters 1 and 2.

28. The Rambam is referring to Bereshit Rabbah.

29. Today, this collection of teachings is known as Mechilta D'Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai.

30. Because these ordinances were universally accepted by the Jewish people, their observance became mandatory, as the Rambam explains further on.

31. Perhaps by specifying "the Babylonian Talmud," the Rambam is alluding to the halachic principle that whenever there is a difference between the decisions of the Babylonian and the Jerusalem Talmuds, those of the Babylonian Talmud are followed.

32. In his Introduction to Sefer HaMitzvot, the Rambam explains that he chose to compose the Mishneh Torah in Mishnaic Hebrew rather than in Aramaic in order to make it more accessible to the common man.

33. The Rambam is referring to the body of responsa (She'elot UTshuvot) which began to accumulate from the many questions circulated among the different Jewish communities in the diaspora.

34. In the Introduction to his Commentary on the Mishnah, the Rambam mentions some of these texts: Halachot Gedolot, Halachot Pesukot, the She'iltot of Rav Achai Gaon, and the Halachot of Rav Yitzchak Alfasi.

35. This corresponds to the year 1177 C.E. Apparently, the Rambam composed the Mishneh Torah over a number of years, constantly revising his work. Thus, in Hilchot Kiddush HaChodesh 11:16, he mentions the date of the composition of the text as 4938, one year later, and in Hilchot Shemitot V'Yovalot, he mentions the date 4936, one year earlier.

36. Though the Rambam mentions his nationality when stating his name in some of his other works as well (see Iggeret HaShmad), it is possible that he had a specific intention in doing so here. Despite his desire and intention for the Mishneh Torah to be universally accepted, he knew that other customs were followed in the Ashkenazic community. By mentioning his country of origin, he could be alluding to the fact that some of the customs he mentioned were specific to Jews of that background (Yayin Malchut).

37. For it is only these laws that are binding on the entire Jewish people, as explained above.

38. As mentioned above, there were many rabbis who considered the Rambam's intention in the composition of this text and, in particular, the name he chose for it, as presumptuous. Indeed, for that reason the name Mishneh Torah is rarely used. Instead, the text is commonly referred to as the YadHaChazakah ("The Strong Hand") [so called because the Hebrew is numerically equivalent to fourteen, the number of books in the Mishneh Torah], or simply "the Rambam."

39. The Rambam's statements imply that he desired the Mishneh Torah to be studied in the order in which it was composed, so that a reader can receive a full picture of the Oral Law.

40. These halachot are comparable to sections within a book.

41. In his Introduction to Sefer HaMitzvot, the Rambam explains that he chose to structure the text in this manner in order to make the subject matter more accessible to the reader.

42. For there are some commandments - e.g., the requirement to dedicate the spoil taken from Midian (see Numbers, Chapter 31) - that were recorded in the Torah, but applied only in those specific circumstances.

43. In Sefer HaMitzvot, the Rambam quotes the Midrash Tanchumah (Ki Tetzei), which states that it is as if each limb of the body is saying, "Do a mitzvah with me."

44. Thus, it is as if each day of the year is saying, "Do not commit a transgression on me" (ibid.).

You now have the history of how the debates began during the Hasmonaean period with two different groups debating certain issues.

You have also now read how the Pharisees survived the destruction of the Temple as the dominant religious authority and began to write what would be recorded in the Mishnah by Rabbi Akiva and completed by Rabbi Yehuda after the bar Kochba revolt. Other sages would come and explain further what the Mishnah had stated and then all of these were again rewritten by Rabbi Maimonides into the Mishneh Torah without recording who said what and why. All of this was explained as the Oral Torah and considered equal with the written Torah of Moses.

During this entire process of approximately 1345 years (from the Hasmonaeans until Rambam), each of the Holy Days were changed, so that the only one being kept at the proper time today is the weekly Sabbath. Even it has been changed from sunset to begin the Sabbath to now when you can see three stars, then the Sabbath begins.

We all know that if you keep the Holy Days at the wrong time, you have sinned and missed your appointment with Yehovah on the days He sanctioned. By using the Hebrew calendar, you are gathering on days *men* have sanctioned. By not keeping these appointments with Yehovah at the right time you are sinning. We all know sin is the transgression of the law as 1 John tells us:

4 Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness, for sin is lawlessness. (1 John 3:4)

9 He who turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer is a hateful thing. (Proverbs 28:9)

31 But we know that God does not hear sinners, but if anyone is God-fearing and does His will, He hears him. (John 9:31)

Metonic 19-Year Cycles

The Metonic cycles are about 19-year cycles in which the lunar phases return to the same place they were 19 years prior. Meton was a Greek astronomer credited with having discovered this in 432 B.C., even though the Babylonians and Chinese were using it before this date.

The Greek astronomer Meton of Athens (fifth century BC) observed that a period of 19 years is almost exactly equal to 235 synodic months and, rounded to full days, counts 6,940 days. The difference

between the two periods (of 19 years and 235 synodic months) is only a few hours, depending on the definition of the year.

Considering a year to be $1/19$ of this 6,940-day cycle gives a year length of $365 + 1/4 + 1/76$ days (the unrounded cycle is much more accurate), which is slightly more than 12 synodic months. To keep a 12-month lunar year in pace with the solar year, an intercalary 13th month would have to be added on seven occasions during the nineteen-year period ($235 = 19 \times 12 + 7$). When Meton introduced the cycle around 432 BC, it was already known by Babylonian astronomers.

A mechanical computation of the cycle is built into the Antikythera mechanism. (The Antikythera mechanism is an ancient analog computer designed to predict astronomical positions and eclipses for calendrical and astrological purposes, as well as the Olympiads, the cycles of the ancient Olympic Games.)

The cycle was used in the Babylonian calendar, ancient Chinese calendar systems (the 'Rule Cycle') and the medieval computus (i.e. the calculation of the date of Easter). It regulates the 19-year cycle of intercalary months of the Hebrew calendar.

At the time of Meton, axial precession had not yet been discovered, and he could not distinguish between sidereal years (currently: 365.256363 days) and tropical years (currently: 365.242190 days). Most calendars, like the commonly used Gregorian calendar, are based on the tropical year and maintain the seasons at the same calendar times each year. Nineteen tropical years are about two hours shorter than 235 synodic months. The Metonic cycle's error is, therefore, one full day every 219 years, or 12.4 parts per million.

Traditionally, for the Babylonians and Hebrew lunisolar calendars, the years 3, 6, 8, 11, 14, 17, and 19 are the long (13-month) years of the Metonic cycle. This cycle, which can be used to predict eclipses, forms the basis of the Greek and Hebrew calendars, and is used for the computation of the date of Easter each year.

The Babylonians applied the 19-year cycle since the late sixth century BC. As they measured the moon's motion against the stars, the 235:19 relationship may originally have referred to sidereal years, instead of tropical years as it has been used for various calendars.⁹⁷

It is interesting that the Metonic cycle has an error built into it and yet the Hillel calendar is using this cycle for their calculations. More

⁹⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metonic_cycle

on this later. The following quote is how Judaism justifies this Metonic cycle:

The lunar month on the Jewish calendar begins when the first sliver of moon becomes visible after the dark of the moon. In ancient times, the new months used to be determined by observation. When people observed the new moon, they would notify the Sanhedrin. When the Sanhedrin heard testimony from two independent, reliable eyewitnesses that the new moon occurred on a certain date, they would declare the rosh chodesh (first of the month) and send out messengers to tell people when the month began.

*The problem with strictly lunar calendars is that there are approximately 12.4 lunar months in every solar year, so a 12-month lunar calendar is about 11 days shorter than a solar year and a 13-month lunar is about 19 longer than a solar year. The months drift around the seasons on such a calendar: on a 12-month lunar calendar, the month of Nissan, which is supposed to occur in the Spring, would occur 11 days earlier in the season each year, eventually occurring in the Winter, the Fall, the Summer, and then the Spring again. On a 13-month lunar calendar, the same thing would happen in the other direction, and faster. To compensate for this drift, the Jewish calendar uses a 12-month lunar calendar with an extra month occasionally added. The month of Nissan occurs 11 days earlier each year for two or three years, and then jumps forward 30 days, balancing out the drift. **In ancient times, this month was added by observation: the Sanhedrin observed the conditions of the weather, the crops and the livestock, and if these were not sufficiently advanced to be considered “spring,” then the Sanhedrin inserted an additional month** into the calendar to make sure that Pesach (Passover) would occur in the spring (it is, after all, referred to in the Torah as Chag ha-Aviv, the Festival of Spring!).*

A year with 13 months is referred to in Hebrew as Shanah Me’uberet (pronounced shah-NAH meh-oo-BEH-reht), literally: a pregnant year. In English, we commonly call it a leap year. The additional month is known as Adar I, Adar Rishon (first Adar) or Adar Alef (the Hebrew letter Alef being the numeral “1” in Hebrew). The extra month is inserted before the regular month of Adar (known in such years as Adar II, Adar Sheini or Adar Beit).

In the fourth century, Hillel II established a fixed calendar based on mathematical and astronomical calculations. This calendar, still in use, standardized the length of months and the addition of months

over the course of a 19-year cycle, so that the lunar calendar realigns with the solar years. Adar I is added in the 3rd, 6th, 8th, 11th, 14th, 17th and 19th years of the cycle. The current cycle began in Jewish year 5758 (the year that began October 2, 1997).⁹⁸

By adding 19 years to 1997, you arrive at 2016 as the start of the next 19-year cycle, and then 2035 would be the start of the next cycle after that.

When we consider the built-in error of the Metonic cycle for this year 2024, we can see that the cycle is out by just over 11 days since Meton publicised the discovery of it.

2024 C.E. (our current year) + 432 B.C. (year Meton cycle publicised) = 2456 (total) / 219 (The Metonic cycle's error is, therefore, one full day every 219 years) = 11.2146119 days

If we assume that Hillel began to use the Metonic cycle in 358 C.E., which we are not 100% sure of, then the error looks like this:

2024 - 358 (B.C. dates we add, C.E. dates we subtract) = 1666 / 219 = 7.60730594 days

The error in the Metonic cycle adds up to be 11.2 days, if we begin in 432 B.C., or 7.6 days if we begin when Hillel first began to use the calculated calendar. Keep this error in mind as we continue.

The Roman Republic Calendar

Yehovah's calendar had been working fine from the creation of the world up until the Mishnah, but in the Mishnah, we begin to see the roots of what would become the calculated Hebrew calendar. Those calculations were not enacted until the Jews were forced into the diaspora, and only then were they implemented in order to help all Jews everywhere keep the Holy Days of Yehovah at the same time. They no longer had anyone in the land to witness the moon or the barley to begin the year and they did not have phones or internet as we do today.

I am not assigning blame to anyone. I am showing you the history of events and why they took place and the results of those events and how they come into play with us now at the end of this age.

In order to understand why Julius Caesar became involved with the Roman calendar, we must look at its history:

⁹⁸ <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-jewish-calendar>

Roman republican calendar, dating system that evolved in Rome prior to the Christian era. According to legend, Romulus, the founder of Rome, instituted the calendar in about 738 BC. ***This dating system, however, was probably a product of evolution from the Greek lunar calendar, which in turn was derived from the Babylonian.*** The original Roman calendar appears to have consisted only of 10 months and of a year of 304 days. The remaining 61 1/4 days were apparently ignored, resulting in a gap during the winter season. The months bore the names Martius, Aprilis, Maius, Junius, Quintilis, Sextilis, September, October, November, and December—the last six names correspond to the Latin words for the numbers 5 through 10. The Roman ruler Numa Pompilius is credited with adding January at the beginning and February at the end of the calendar to create the 12-month year. In 452 BC, February was moved between January and March.

By the 1st century BC, the Roman calendar had become hopelessly confused. The year, based on cycles and phases of the moon, totaled 355 days, about 10 1/4 days shorter than the solar year. The occasional intercalation of an extra month of 27 or 28 days, called Mercedonius, kept the calendar in step with the seasons. The confusion was compounded by political maneuvers. The Pontifex Maximus and the College of Pontiffs had the authority to alter the calendar, and they sometimes did so to reduce or extend the term of a particular magistrate or other public official. Finally, in 46 BC, Julius Caesar initiated a thorough reform that resulted in the establishment of a new dating system, the Julian calendar (q.v.).⁹⁹

I want you to make note of what was just stated. The calendar systems in use in Babylon, Greece and Rome were all lunar-based calendars. Before the Babylonian Empire was the Assyrian Empire and they too used a lunar calendar. After the Babylonian Empire came the Medo-Persian Empire and they too used a lunar calendar at least until 459 B.C.¹⁰⁰ With a quick search we can discover that the lunar calendar has been and still is being used to this day by the following peoples: Chinese, Hebrew, Islamic, Hindu, Thai, Vietnamese, Burmese,

⁹⁹ Roman Republican Calendar <https://www.britannica.com/science/Roman-republican-calendar>

¹⁰⁰ Encyclopaedia Iranica Calendars <https://iranicaonline.org/articles/calendars>

Tibetan, Kurdish, Assyrian, Jain and Celtic.¹⁰¹ I have not searched it out more, but about the 5th century B.C. the solar calendars are seen in use more and more.

I am pointing this out to you, so you understand the original calendar in use after the Flood, indeed from the creation of Adam was the lunar calendar, which is based on the sighting of the moon to begin each month. Yehovah God is the same today, yesterday and for ever. He does not change:

6 For I am Jehovah, I change not. Because of this you sons of Jacob are not destroyed. (Malachi 3:6)

8 Jesus Christ the same yesterday and today and forever. (Hebrews 13:8)

The Julian Fix

The Roman calendar was working if it was managed properly. With the pontifices, politicians and magistrates' term in office all regulated by the year, a pontifex could lengthen the year when he or his allies were in office or refuse to lengthen it when his opponents were in office.

Julius Caesar attempted to fix this abuse of power by aligning the calendar with the sun.

Although¹⁰² the approximation of $365 + \frac{1}{4}$ days for the tropical year had been known for a long time, ancient solar calendars had used less precise periods, resulting in gradual misalignment of the calendar with the seasons.

The octaeteris, a cycle of eight lunar years popularised by Cleostratus (and also commonly attributed to Eudoxus) which was used in some early Greek calendars, notably in Athens, is 1.53 days longer than eight mean Julian years. The length of nineteen years in the cycle of Meton was 6,940 days, six hours longer than the mean Julian year. The mean Julian year was the basis of the 76-year

¹⁰¹ The 12 Lunar Calendars Still in Use Around the World
<https://www.mooncratertycho.com/the-12-lunar-calendars-still-in-use-around-the-world/>

¹⁰² Julian Calendar https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Julian_calendar

cycle devised by Callippus (a student under Eudoxus) to improve the Metonic cycle.

In Persia (Iran) after the reform in the Persian calendar by introduction of the Persian Zoroastrian (i. e. Young Avestan) calendar in 503 BC and afterwards, the first day of the year (1 Farvardin=Nowruz) slipped against the vernal equinox at the rate of approximately one day every four years.

Likewise in the Egyptian calendar, a fixed year of 365 days was in use, drifting by one day against the sun in four years. An unsuccessful attempt to add an extra day every fourth year was made in 238 BC (Decree of Canopus). Caesar probably experienced this "wandering" or "vague" calendar in that country. He landed in the Nile delta in October 48 BC and soon became embroiled in the Ptolemaic dynastic war, especially after Cleopatra managed to be "introduced" to him in Alexandria.

Caesar imposed a peace, and a banquet was held to celebrate the event. Lucan depicted Caesar talking to a wise man called Acoreus during the feast, stating his intention to create a calendar more perfect than that of Eudoxus (Eudoxus was popularly credited with having determined the length of the year to be $365 + \frac{1}{4}$ days). But the war soon resumed and Caesar was attacked by the Egyptian army for several months until he achieved victory. He then enjoyed a long cruise on the Nile with Cleopatra before leaving the country in June 47 BC.

Caesar returned to Rome in 46 BC and, according to Plutarch, called in the best philosophers and mathematicians of his time to solve the problem of the calendar. Pliny says that Caesar was aided in his reform by the astronomer Sosigenes of Alexandria who is generally considered the principal designer of the reform. Sosigenes may also have been the author of the astronomical almanac published by Caesar to facilitate the reform. Eventually, it was decided to establish a calendar that would be a combination between the old Roman months, the fixed length of the Egyptian calendar, and the $365 + \frac{1}{4}$ days of Greek astronomy. According to Macrobius, Caesar was assisted in this by a certain Marcus Flavius.

The first step of the reform was to realign the start of the calendar year (1 January) to the tropical year by making 46 BC 445 days long, compensating for the intercalations which had been missed during Caesar's pontificate. This year had already been extended from 355 to 378 days by the insertion of a regular intercalary month in February. When Caesar decreed the reform, probably shortly after his return from the African campaign in late Quintilis (July), he

added 67 more days by inserting two extraordinary intercalary months between November and December.

These months are called Intercalaris Prior and Intercalaris Posterior in letters of Cicero written at the time; there is no basis for the statement sometimes seen that they were called "Undecimber" and "Duodecimber", terms that arose in the 18th century over a millennium after the Roman Empire's collapse. Their individual lengths are unknown, as is the position of the Nones and Ides within them.

Because 46 BC was the last of a series of irregular years, this extra-long year was, and is, referred to as the "last year of confusion". The new calendar began operation after the realignment had been completed, in 45 BC.

As you can read, the mess Julius was working with was not a small matter. The calendar is now going to have 365 days with a leap year every 4th year. The Julian calendar went into effect on January 1, 45 B.C. One year later at the Ides of March, Julius Caesar was stabbed to death.

The Julian Error and Pope Gregory's Fix

To understand the error in the Julian calendar, you must understand the calendar Julius created has three years which are 365 days long and one leap year of 366 days every four years. When you total them up and divide by four, it gives you an average year that is 365.25 days long. That is more than the actual solar year value of approximately 365.2422 days (the current value, which varies), which means the Julian calendar gains one day every 129 years. In other words, the Julian calendar gains 3.1 days every 400 years.

Another interesting development during the calendar reformation by Julius Caesar was when he set the equinox. Our English word *equinox* is derived from the Latin word *aequinocitium*, which comes from two Latin words: *aequus* (equal) and *nox* (night).

When Julius Caesar established the Julian calendar in 45 BC, he set 25 March as the date of the spring equinox; this was already the starting day of the year in the Persian and Indian calendars. Because the Julian year is longer than the tropical year by about 11.3 minutes on average (or 1 day in 128 years), the calendar "drifted" with

respect to the two equinoxes – so that in 300 AD the spring equinox occurred on about 21 March, and by the 1580s AD it had drifted backwards to 11 March.

This drift induced Pope Gregory XIII to establish the modern Gregorian calendar. The Pope wanted to continue to conform with the edicts of the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD concerning the date of Easter, which means he wanted to move the vernal equinox to the date on which it fell at that time (21 March is the day allocated to it in the Easter table of the Julian calendar), and to maintain it at around that date in the future, which he achieved by reducing the number of leap years from 100 to 97 every 400 years. However, there remained a small residual variation in the date and time of the vernal equinox of about ± 27 hours from its mean position, virtually all because the distribution of 24-hour centurial leap-days causes large jumps.¹⁰³

I find it amazing that the equinox was set by Julius Caesar and even the word *equinox* comes from the Latin and not the Egyptian, Babylonian or Greek languages where various calendars were well established long before Rome. Again, we are seeing that the equinox was not originally part of the Hebrew calendar or calculations. But it was used in the Council of Nicaea to begin to calculate Easter, which is what Constantine wanted in order to no longer be dependent upon the Jews who went by the crescent moon and barley to begin the year.

In 1582, Pope Gregory XIII promulgated the Gregorian calendar. Reform was required because too many leap days were added with respect to the astronomical seasons under the Julian scheme. On average, the astronomical solstices and the equinoxes advance by 10.8 minutes per year against the Julian year. As a result, 21 March (which is the base date for calculating the date of Easter) gradually moved out of alignment with the March equinox.

¹⁰³ Equinox <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Equinox>

JULIAN 1582		October			Gregorian 1582	
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

While Hipparchus and presumably Sosigenes were aware of the discrepancy, although not of its correct value, it was evidently felt to be of little importance at the time of the Julian reform (46 BC). However, it accumulated significantly over time: the Julian calendar gained a day every 128 years. By 1582, 21 March was ten days out of alignment with the March equinox, the date where it was reckoned to have been in 325, the year of the Council of Nicaea.¹⁰⁴

You can plainly see that the weekly Sabbath was never changed in all of these computations. The month of October just went from 2, 3, 4, to 15, 16, 17. There was no change in the days themselves. The Pope just removed 10 numerical days from the month.

The Protestant countries of Northern Europe (and their colonies in, for example, North America) regarded this as a Popish plot and refused to fall into line. However, in 1752 Great Britain adopted the Gregorian calendar -- by which time it was necessary to drop 11 days and so 14th September 1752 followed 2nd September. There were riots in the streets with people demanding "Give us back our 11 days!"

Some other countries were even later adopting the new system: Bulgaria in 1916, the Soviet Union in 1918 and the Greek Orthodox Church in 1924. This is a source of irritation to historians of the period where the two different calendars overlap.¹⁰⁵

The Synodic Month and the Moladot Drift

¹⁰⁴ Julian Calendar https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Julian_calendar

¹⁰⁵ <https://mathshistory.st-andrews.ac.uk/Extras/JulianErrors/>

I will apologize right now, as I am about to get into some very technical information about this error that has crept into the calendar, but it is essential to understand. Would Yehovah create a calendar with a built-in error? No, He would not. And yet here we are, discussing a calendar (the Hillel calendar) most people assume to be the one always in use as far back as Moses and/or Noah.

When you understand this error, it is also going to help you to understand the Tombstones of Zoar, which is what this book is originally about. In order for you to understand the various methods of dating the tombstones, you need to understand this error—not all the details, but to understand that there is an error in the calculated Hebrew calendar.

In the next quote, this word *molad*,¹⁰⁶ originally meant *birth of the moon*, but has come down to us now to mean *the conjunction of the moon*. The birth of the moon takes place when you see the first crescent, but now *molad* means the conjunction or when the sun and the moon are in line with the earth so that the moon cannot be seen.

A "new moon"¹⁰⁷ (astronomically called a lunar conjunction and, in Hebrew, a molad) is the moment at which the sun and moon have the same ecliptic longitude (i.e. they are aligned horizontally with respect to a north–south line). The period between two new moons is a synodic month. The actual length of a synodic month varies from about 29 days 6 hours and 30 minutes (29.27 days) to about 29 days and 20 hours (29.83 days), a variation range of about 13 hours and 30 minutes. Accordingly, for convenience, the Hebrew calendar uses a long-term average month length, known as the molad interval, which equals the mean synodic month of ancient times. The molad interval is 29 days, 12 hours, and 793 "parts" (1 "part" = $\frac{1}{18}$ minute = $3\frac{1}{3}$ seconds) (i.e., 29.530594 days), and is the same value determined by the Babylonians in their System B about 300 BCE and

¹⁰⁶ Molad (מולד, plural Moladot, מולדות) is a Hebrew word meaning "birth" that also generically refers to the time at which the New Moon is "born". The word is ambiguous, however, because depending on the context, it could refer to the actual or mean astronomical lunar conjunction (calculated by a specified method, for a specified time zone), or the molad of the traditional Hebrew calendar (or another specified calendar), or at a specified locale the first visibility of the new lunar crescent after a lunar conjunction.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Molad>

¹⁰⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hebrew_calendar

was adopted by Hipparchus (2nd century BCE) and by Ptolemy in the *Almagest* (2nd century CE). Its remarkable accuracy (less than one second from the current true value) is thought to have been achieved using records of lunar eclipses from the 8th to 5th centuries BCE. In the Talmudic era, when the mean synodic month was slightly shorter than at present, the molad interval was even more accurate, being "essentially a perfect fit" for the mean synodic month at the time.

Currently, the accumulated drift in the moladot since the Talmudic era has reached a total of approximately 97 minutes. ***This means that the molad of Tishrei lands one day later than it ought to in (97 minutes) ÷ (1440 minutes per day) = nearly 7% of years. Therefore, the seemingly small drift of the moladot is already significant enough to affect the date of Rosh Hashanah, which then cascades to many other dates in the calendar year, and sometimes (due to the Rosh Hashanah postponement rules) also interacts with the dates of the prior or next year.***

The rate of calendar drift is increasing with time, since the mean synodic month is progressively shortening due to gravitational tidal effects. Measured on a strictly uniform time scale (such as that provided by an atomic clock) the mean synodic month is becoming gradually longer, but since the tides slow Earth's rotation rate even more, the mean synodic month is becoming gradually shorter in terms of mean solar time.

By explaining all of this to you, I am showing you how each man-made calendar has defects, thereby demonstrating they are not designed by Yehovah. He would not create a defective calendar.

Metonic Cycle Drift

A larger source of error is the inaccuracy of the Metonic cycle. Nineteen Jewish years average 6939d 16h 33m 03¹/₃s, compared to the 6939d 14h 26m 15s of nineteen mean solar years. Thus, the Hebrew calendar drifts by just over 2 hours every 19 years, or approximately one day every 216 years. Due to accumulation of this discrepancy, the earliest date on which Passover can fall has drifted by roughly eight days since the 4th century, and the 15th of Nisan now falls only on or after 26 March (the date in 2013), five days after the actual equinox on 21 March. In the distant future, this drift is projected to move Passover much further in the year. If the calendar

is not amended, then Passover will start to land on or after the summer solstice around approximately AM 16652 (12892 CE).

Implications for Jewish Ritual

When the (Hebrew Hillel) calendar was fixed in the 4th century, the earliest Passover (in year 16 of the Metonic cycle) began on the first full moon after the March equinox. This is still the case in about 80% of years; but, in about 20% of years, Passover is a month late by this criterion. Presently, this occurs after the "premature" insertion of a leap month in years 8, 11, and 19 of each 19-year cycle, which causes Passover to fall especially far after the March equinox in such years. Calendar drift also impacts the observance of Sukkot, which will shift into Israel's winter rainy season, making dwelling in the sukkah less practical, and affecting the logic of the Shemini Atzeret prayer for rain which will be more often recited once rains are already underway.

Modern scholars have debated at which point the drift could become ritually problematic, and proposed adjustments to the fixed calendar to keep Passover in its proper season. The seriousness of the calendar drift is discounted by many, on the grounds that Passover will remain in the spring season for many millennia, and the Torah is generally not interpreted as having specified tight calendrical limits. However, some writers and researchers have proposed "corrected" calendars (with modifications to the leap year cycle, molad interval, or both) which would compensate for these issues:

- Dr. Irv Bromberg has proposed a 353-year cycle of 4,366 months, which would include 130 leap months, along with use of a progressively shorter molad interval, which would keep an amended fixed arithmetic Hebrew calendar from drifting for more than seven millennia. The 353 years would consist of 18 Metonic cycles, as well as an 11-year period in which the last 8 years of the Metonic cycle are omitted.*
- Other authors have proposed to use cycles of 334 or 687 years.*
- Another suggestion is to delay the leap years gradually so that a whole intercalary month is taken out at the end of Iggul 26; while also changing the synodic month to be the more accurate 29.53058868 days. Thus the length of the year would be $(235 \times 13 \times 26 - 1) / (19 \times 13 \times 26) = 365.2422$ days, very close to the actual tropical year. The result is the "Hebrew Calendar" in the program CalMaster2000.*

Religious questions abound about how such a system might be implemented and administered throughout the diverse aspects of the world Jewish community.

Julian and Hillel Out of Sync

To further demonstrate this drift caused by the Metonic cycle and the Julian calendar, I would now like to share an article from the Jerusalem Post from 2007:

The Jewish calendar is out of sync. Fix it¹⁰⁸

The next 'Blessing of the Sun' will occur in April 2009 – 19 days ahead of schedule.

By STEPHEN GABRIEL ROSENBERG

MAY 21, 2007 18:56

We observant Jews count the Omer – 50 days from Pessah to Shavuot – because the Torah commands us to. Every night we've been reciting the number of days and weeks that have passed and look forward to the coming festival, rightly called Shavuot, or Weeks. In Greek it is Pentecost – the counting of 50. This counting of 50 days between festivals seems to have been an ancient custom among farmers. Many of the festivals are two months apart. If the farmer celebrated seven days of harvest festival, added an extra day, as the eighth day of Shemini Atzeret is added to Succot, and if he then counts 50 days, he is on to the eve of the next festival. This basic count of 59 days, or just two full months, would have applied between Pessah and Shavuot if we counted as the pre-rabbinic Ethiopians did, taking "from the morrow of the Sabbath" (Leviticus 23:15) to be the day after the whole festival, thus bringing Shavuot to 15th of Sivan. It was the Pharisees who changed all that so as to bring Pentecost forward to coincide with their date for the Theophany at Mt. Sinai. THE JEWISH calendar has been a lunar one, confirmed by the sighting of the new moon, at least from the time of the little tablet, the so-called Gezer Calendar excavated in 1908, considered to be of the 11th century BCE, which counted the agricultural year in consecutive months, four of them in pairs. In matters of time, the month is a natural phenomenon, as are the day and the solar year, although the three are difficult to correlate. The month is actually 29.530588 days long and the solar year 365.2422 days, which makes calculation difficult.

¹⁰⁸ <https://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Op-Ed-Contributors/The-Jewish-calendar-is-out-of-sync-Fix-it>

In the early Roman Empire the year was still counted as a lunar one and correlation with the seasons was chaotic and unwieldy. It was so until the time of the Emperor Julius Caesar, who was advised by astronomers to scrap the lunar count and fix a solar year of 365 and 1/4 days. That fraction of a day was not practical so it was decreed to have three years of 365 days, and one of 366 days every four years. Known as the Julian Calendar, it had the desired effect of regulating the days and months with the seasons. The new reckoning was introduced in 45 BCE and was expected to be correct for time everlasting. But it was not to be. THE CALENDAR year was more than 11 minutes too long, which meant an increase of one day in about 130 years. Thus by medieval times, after a period of say, 1,000 years, the calendar year was already seven days in advance of the sun. By the time reform came, under Pope Gregory XIII, the calendar was 10 days ahead of the solar system, and consequently in March 1582, the new Gregorian Calendar took 10 days out of the month of October of that year. It was not an easy reform to swallow, and Great Britain was the last major country to adopt it, not doing so until nearly 200 years later in 1752. It was then that popular riots called for "the return of our 11 days," that led to the Treasury being forced to move the tax year 11 days forward from the quarter-day of March 25 to April 5. As the Julian year had been too long by about three days in 400 years, the Gregorian Calendar solved the problem by declaring that the leap day should be ignored at every century year and only used in those centuries divisible by 400, as is still the practice today. SO FAR, so good, but how does that impact on the Hebrew calendar? We are very meticulous in our counting, as for instance in counting the Omer between Pessah and Shavuot; and, after all, we did invent the seven-day week. It is now adopted all over the world, while the 10-day week of the ancient Egyptians and the five-day week of the more recent French Revolution never took hold. Our calendar has been a very ingenious one, having solved the problem of relating the lunar counting to the solar reality, and ensuring that festivals did not fall on unsuitable days of the week, like Yom Kippur on a Friday or Pessah on a Monday. But its very ingenuity should not lead us into thinking it infallible. When confirming the calendar by sighting of the moon became impractical, tradition has it that a fixed calendar was set down by the Patriarch Hillel II in 358 or 359 CE. It is not certain that this was so as, for instance, Maimonides does not mention it, though he says that monthly sightings did cease some time before the end of the Babylonian Talmud. Although some flexibility may have continued, it

is clear that by the time of the Geonim in the ninth century a fixed calendar was being adhered to. That calendar, like all previous ones, divided the year into four tekufot or seasons, which conformed to the solstices and equinoxes of the earth around the sun. The first division was the tekufa of Nissan, or the spring season. It was in that season that the festival of Pessah had to fall, as the Torah tells us to "Observe the month of Aviv (Spring) and make Passover" (Deuteronomy 16:1), so the calculation of the four seasons was of paramount importance. ALTHOUGH we do not know when the fixed calendar started, whether in the fourth century or not, it is our guiding light today and 26 years ago it told us that the "Blessing of the Sun" was to be on April 8, 1981. It is a ceremony held every 28 years, when the sun is considered to be in the same position as the one it held in the days of Creation, that is, on a Wednesday. If the year is held to be 365 days long, then the date of its "birth" – its birthday – falls on the same day of the week every 28 years. But when we celebrated that in 1981, the tekufa date was April 8, or 18 days after the true astronomical equinox of March 21. In other words, the Jewish calendar was 18 days out of sync with the heavenly facts. How did this happen? Quite simply because the original calculations, whether by Hillel II or others, were based on the Julian Calendar of their time and, as we have seen, the Julian Calendar would now also be about 15 days out of line with the sun. Does this really matter? As the tekufa of Nissan, or Spring, continues to progress ahead of the sun, by more than 11 hours a year, we shall find that in time it will approach nearer and nearer to the astronomical summer, and the festival of Pessah will no longer fall in our tekufa of Nissan. It can be calculated that this will occur in about 640 years, and then we will be in breach of the Torah law. The festival may still be in the spring, but the tekufa of Spring will be in the summer. SO GREAT BRITAIN was not the last country to adopt the Gregorian correction of the Julian calculations. The Hebrew calendar has not yet recognized the discrepancy but it is something we should consider very carefully and quite soon, for the next "Blessing of the Sun" will occur in two years' time, in April 2009, so it would be sensible to reform the calendar before then, **so that our prayers will be in line with God's Creation, and not 19 days ahead of it.** As in England, that change may well cause riots in the streets, this time in Jerusalem and Bnei Brak – but is it sensible to let this time bomb go on ticking any longer? The writer is a Fellow of the Albright Institute of Archaeological Research, Jerusalem.

I have included all of this to demonstrate to you that there is a serious problem with the Hillel calendar, which today is known as the Hebrew calendar by which most Jews and those keeping the Feasts use in order to know when to keep the seven annual Feasts. If they are out of sync with Yehovah by 19 days, as the article above says, or out 7% of the time as the chapter before suggested, then there is a very serious problem. But it is even worse than both of these combined together. Using the Metonic cycles can also add an additional 30 days on the already accumulating error. $30 + 19$ is 49 and in 2024, there is a 60-day difference in the time I kept Passover and the Holy Days and the time when the Jews kept Passover and the rest of the Holy Days. SIXTY DAYS!! This is very bad. But even amongst those who reckon time as they once did, there are currently three factions who differ in keeping the Feasts by 60 days, because of differing theologies or takanot. I will come back to this shortly but before I do, we must look at a number of new calendars that have come up in recent years.

Equinox, Zadok, Enoch, and The Book of Jubilees Calendars

29 For I know this, that after my departure grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Also men shall arise from your own selves, speaking perverse things in order to draw disciples away after them. (Acts 20:29-30)

As we research the history of the calendar and how things changed in small increments over time, I now want to share with you, what were once heretical teachings that were thrown out. In recent years these false teachings have been taken from the garbage heaps of history, revived and introduced to those returning to the Torah, only to lead them away once again.

I want to give you the answers to these new and false calendars that will explain to you step by step how you can easily prove each of these solar calendars false using your own Bible. By doing this one exercise, all of them fall by the wayside and we need not waste our time studying into them.

The Dead Sea Scrolls are believed to be written in the 2nd century B.C. At about this same time, the Book of Jubilees was written around 160-150 B.C. The book of Enoch was also put together from the 2nd to 1st centuries B.C. as well. They each revolve around a 364-day solar

year, claiming to be the original calendar starting in the Garden of Eden. Yes, I have really oversimplified this for brevity's sake.

The Heresy of the Enoch Calendar

Recently¹⁰⁹ Nehemia Gordon interviewed Dr. Miryam Brand who holds a Ph.D. in Bible and Second Temple Literature from New York University and an M.A. in Bible and Biblical Interpretation from Matan and Haifa University. Her book on the portrayal of sin in the Second Temple period (Evil Within and Without: The Source of Sin and Its Nature as Portrayed in Second Temple Literature) was published in 2013 and her commentary on the Book of Enoch was published as part of Outside the Bible in 2013. She has taught at Brown University, New York University, and Stern College and has spoken at Hebrew University, Cambridge University, and the University of Kiel. She is currently an Associate Fellow at the Albright Institute of Archaeological Research.

Dr. Brand stated in this interview that the Book of Enoch is really several books. It's really about five books, maybe six if you count the last chapters as a separate book, which by the way, themselves are kind of built up of different pieces. But those books each have a different point. The only thing they have in common is Enoch as a character, and that's pretty much the only thing they have in common. She also said the book of Enoch was written between the 2nd century BC and 70 AD. It was not written by the Enoch before the flood. The earliest full copy of Enoch was not found until the 16th century and only in the Ge'ez Ethiopian version. Then we find them in the Genizah of Qumran in fragments. No full text versions.

*Dr Brand also said in the interview: **So, first I just want to make clear also that just as I said that first Enoch is really a whole bunch of books, they're actually from different time periods. So the parables of Enoch are actually dated to between 40 before the Common Era, and before 70 to the Common Era. In other words, it's after the Parthian invasion in 40 BCE and before the destruction of the Second Temple.***

Allow me to emphasize this one point again: Dr. Miryam Brand who holds a Ph.D. in Bible and Second Temple Literature from New

¹⁰⁹ You can listen to the rest of the interview at Hebrew Voices #17 – Enoch Walking with Angels (Rebroadcast) Posted on June 1, 2016 by Nehemia Gordon. <https://www.nehemiaswall.com/hebrew-voices-enoch-walking-with-angels>

York University and an M.A. in Bible and Biblical Interpretation from Matan and Haifa University, a scholar on these ancient books, said the Books of Enoch were NOT written by the preflood Enoch, but were composed between the Parthian invasion in 40 B.C. and the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 C.E. She also said this book was composed by different authors and then all of them put into one book with the only commonality between them being the name of Enoch.

As we have already stated, all ancient calendars were lunar and not solar. Even the Egyptian ancient calendar was a lunar one.¹¹⁰ Those claiming the solar calendars were the original are either lying or have never done any real research.

It was also the Egyptians who first developed the solar calendar while using the lunar calendar:

The Egyptians¹¹¹ appear to have been the first to develop a solar calendar, using as a fixed point the annual sunrise reappearance of the Dog Star—Sirius, or Sothis—in the eastern sky, which coincided with the annual flooding of the Nile River. They constructed a calendar of 365 days, consisting of 12 months of 30 days each, with 5 days added at the year's end. The Egyptians' failure to account for the extra fraction of a day, however, caused their calendar to drift gradually into error.

Ptolemy III Euergetes of Egypt, in the Decree of Canopus (237 BC), introduced an extra day every four years to the basic 365-day calendar (this practice also having been introduced in the Seleucid calendar adopted in 312 BC).

The earliest Egyptian calendar¹¹² was based on the moon's cycles, but later the Egyptians realized that the "Dog Star" in Canis Major, which we call Sirius, rose next to the sun every 365 days, about when the annual inundation of the Nile began. Based on this knowledge, they devised a 365 day calendar that seems to have begun around 3100 BCE (Before the Common Era), which thus seems to be one of the earliest years recorded in history.

¹¹⁰ The Egyptian Calendar <https://www.britannica.com/science/calendar/Months-and-important-days>

¹¹¹ Solar Calendar Chronology <https://www.britannica.com/science/solar-calendar>

¹¹² A Walk Through Time- Ancient Calendars <https://www.nist.gov/pml/time-and-frequency-division/popular-links/walk-through-time/walk-through-time-ancient-calendars>

Before 2000 BCE, the Babylonians (in today's Iraq) used a year of 12 alternating 29 day and 30 day lunar months, giving a 354 day year.

Getting back to the Book of Enoch, allow me to share the article from Schalk and Elsa Klee.

In some¹¹³ of our recent posts, we have discussed the calendar and its origin. One topic that we have not yet addressed is the topic of the solar calendar – also known as the Enoch calendar. We have recently seen some groups starting to promote the Enoch calendar as the “original” calendar of YHVH. According to this group, the calendars based on the moon dates are from after the Babylonian exile. Followers of the Enoch calendar teach that the lunar calendar is something that the nation picked up from the Babylonians. According to them, the lunar calendar was never part of the first temple period. This topic also ties in nicely with the recent in-depth studies about the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Essenes.

We often read that one of the ways to explain the misconception that Y'Shua was keeping a Pesach meal a day before the rest of the community, is the fact that He was following another calendar. Most often, the calendar referred to is the calendar followed by the Essenes. In our previous article, we have shown that Y'Shua was most likely anti-Essene. He warned His followers about the teachings of the Essenes.

Let us do a more detailed study of the Enoch calendar and the calendar of the Essenes. The more we know about this calendar the better we can decide what the Scriptural calendar is.

The Origin of the Enoch Calendar

There is no record of the Enoch calendar in the Scripture. We can find the most likely origin or proof of this calendar in the books of Enoch and Jubilees. These two books do not make up our current canon of Scripture.

¹¹³ This article is from our Newsletter 5850-014, published on June 28, 2014. It is taken from an article written by my friends Schalk and Elsa Klee. <https://sightedmoon.com/the-heresy-of-the-enoch-calendar/>
<http://www.setapartpeople.com/enoch-calendar> The Heresy of the Enoch Calendar
Written by Schalk_&_Elsa. Posted in False teachings, YHVH's Appointed times.

We have lots of texts in the book of Jubilees that quote passages from the Book of Enoch. Thus, we can assume that the book of Enoch was written first. It was then followed by the book of Jubilees and then the writings of the community at Qumran. The books of Enoch and Jubilees are not well known. Let us first get a bit more detail on these two books.

History of the Books

*These two books do not form part of the canon of Scripture¹¹⁴ that either Judaism or Christianity recognizes. These books are classified as “Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament.” These books were written late, compared to the canonical books. These books are only accepted by the Ethiopian churches (Orthodox Christian and Jewish.) It is interesting that, although Beta Israel, also known as Ethiopian Jews, **see both these books as canonical, they still follow the lunar calendar.** Their calendar is a combination of the ancient calendar of Alexandrian Jewry, Book of Jubilees, Book of Enoch, Abu Shaker and the Ge’ez calendar.*

At the caves in the Judean desert, archaeologists found fragments of the book of Enoch. (1Q23-24, 2Q26, 4Q201-212, 4Q530-33, 6Q8) Most of the fragments found are too small to translate to English. Not all parts of the book of Enoch were present at Qumran. The fragments found were in Aramaic. The Aramaic versions of the book do not tie up nicely with the Ge’ez (Ethiopian) translation. 4Q209, the Astronomical Book, in the Aramaic version is longer than the Ge’ez version. Also, the Aramaic version found at Qumran of the Book of the Giants, does not exist in the Ge’ez translation. But this book is preserved in the medieval Jewish literature. This indicates to us that the text of this book has not been well preserved. We do not even know which parts were originally included and which parts were added later.

We also have evidence from the Dead Sea Scrolls¹¹⁵ that the Book of Jubilees was originally written in Hebrew. It was then later translated to Greek. In the caves of the Judean desert, archaeologists found several fragments of this book in Hebrew. They found twelve fragments of the Book of Jubilees. Only some fragments found in cave 4 are large enough to be translated into English. (4Q216 – 4Q220) At Qumran, fragments were also discovered of books that are close

¹¹⁴ <https://www.setapartpeople.com/getting-to-know-the-books-of-the-bible>

¹¹⁵ <https://www.setapartpeople.com/care-dead-sea-scrolls>

to Jubilees but not exactly the same. The researchers have called these “pseudo-Jubilees” (4Q225-227.) We also find reference to the book of Jubilees in the Damascus Document. Here, the book uses the original Hebrew name – “Book of the Divisions of Times into their Jubilees and Weeks” – CD 16.2-4. Based on the Hebrew manuscripts found, it appears as if the Ge’ez (Ethiopian) translations of Jubilees are still fairly accurate.

For both books, the most complete manuscripts only exist in Ge’ez. Ge’ez is the ancient South Semitic language that originated in Eritrea and the northern region of Ethiopia. We have proof that these books were translated from Hebrew/Aramaic to Greek, Greek to Latin and also from Greek to Ge’ez.

Content of the Books: Enoch

The book of Enoch consists of multiple parts that were put together as one book by a later editor. The book consists of the following parts:

- *Book of Watchers – Chapters 1-36 including fragments of the Book of Noah in chapters 6-11*
- *Book of the Parables – Chapters 37-71 is also known as the Book of Similitudes*
- *Book of the Luminaries – Chapters 72-82*
- *The Dream Visions – Chapters 83-90*
- *Critical Structure – Chapters 91-104*
- *God and Messiah to dwell in Man – Chapter 105*
- *Latin fragment of the book of Noah – Chapters 106-107*
- *Appendix added later – Chapter 108*

The parts of this book were not all written by one author. It also appears that these books are not structured in chronological sequence. The authors of all the sections belong to the Chasids¹¹⁶ or

¹¹⁶ The terms *hasid* and *hasidut*, meaning “pietist” and “piety”, have a long history in Judaism. The Talmud and other old sources refer to the “Pietists of Old” (*Hasidim haRishonim*) who would contemplate an entire hour in preparation for prayer. The phrase denoted extremely devoted individuals who not only observed the Law to its letter, but performed good deeds even beyond it. Adam himself is honored with the title, in tractate *Eruvin* 18b by Rabbi Meir: “Adam was a great *hasid*, having fasted for 130 years.” The first to adopt the epithet collectively were apparently the *hasidim* in Second Temple period Judea, known as *Hasideans* after the Greek rendering of their name, who perhaps served as the model for those mentioned in the Talmud. The title continued to be applied as an honorific for the exceptionally devout. In 12th-century Rhineland, or *Ashkenaz* in Jewish parlance, another prominent

their successors the Pharisees. The Book of the Luminaries seems to be the oldest, dating from the third century B.C. The Book of Watchers contains parts of the Book of Luminaries, indicating that it was compiled at a later stage. The Book of the Parables appears to be the most recent. It is believed that it was written towards the end of the first century B.C. This part of the book was not found among the scrolls at Qumran. Also, the Book of Luminaries found at Qumran is much longer than the Ethiopic versions.¹¹⁷

The Book of the Luminaries is presented as a revelation from the archangel Uriel (YHVH is my light.) In the book, Enoch translates to his son Methuselah, all that Uriel has shown him about the laws of the cosmos and how this works. The purpose of this work is to show the uniformity of YHVH's creation. It also shows how the movement of the luminaries, and the blowing of the wind confirms this.

According to this model the firmament is like an upside-down cup on a saucer. The saucer is the earth and where the cup and saucer meet, there are twelve gates. These gates are where the sun and moon rise during the 12 months of the year. The sun rises in the eastern gate and the sets again in the corresponding western gate. Next to these gates are many windows through which the stars emerge and disappear. This pattern is based upon the solar calendar of 364 days. It is divided into 4 sections, each with 91 days. The months consist of 30 days, except for the 3rd, 6th, 9th and 12th months. These four months each have an extra day. In the Aramaic fragments found at Qumran (4Q208-9), we also have a tabulation that correlates the movements of the sun and the moon during the annual cycle.

This seems to be the oldest recording we have of the solar calendar.

Jubilees

The Book of Jubilees is a re-telling of Genesis 1 to Exodus 12. It does differ in that this work is also an interpretation of the text. The author sometimes uses the exact same wording. Sometimes he deletes the text

school of ascetics named themselves hasidim; to distinguish them from the rest, later research employed the term Ashkenazi Hasidim. In the 16th century, when Kabbalah spread, the title also became associated with it. Jacob ben Hayyim Zemah wrote in his glossa on Isaac Luria's version of the Shulchan Aruch that, "One who wishes to tap the hidden wisdom, must conduct himself in the manner of the Pious."

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hasidic_Judaism

¹¹⁷ Charles, R. H. (Ed.). (2004). Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament. Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

and in other cases he adds his interpretation to the text. The re-telling also follows a chronological sequence. This means that the author mixed the texts of different books of the Torah. The author also removed perceived contradictions. This provides us with a 'targum' on the books of Genesis and Exodus.

*The author adds his own interpretation of the Scripture in several places. He does this by adding the phrase "For this reason it is written (or ordained) in the heavenly tablets" For example, he claims that nakedness is forbidden because YHVH clothed Adam and Eve. He also uses the same method to argue that the solar calendar must be followed to celebrate the feast:*¹¹⁸

*17 For this reason it is ordained and written on the heavenly tablets, that they should celebrate the feast of weeks in this month once a year, to renew the covenant every year. 18 And this whole festival was celebrated in heaven from the day of creation till the days of Noah—twenty-six jubilees and five weeks of years: and Noah and his sons observed it for seven jubilees and one week of years, till the day of Noah's death, and from the day of Noah's death his sons did away with (it) until the days of Abraham, and they eat blood. (Jubilees 6:17-18)*¹¹⁹

The main purpose of the author is to get the Jews of his time to return to Torah. He is specifically interested in the halakhah, the way these commandments should be lived. To encourage the Jews to keep these commandments, he sometimes adds text to raise the importance of some of the commandments. For example, he states that Noah made a proper sacrifice:

3 And he celebrated with joy the day of this feast, and he made a burnt sacrifice unto YHVH, one young ox and one ram, and seven sheep, each a year old, and a kid of the goats, that he might make atonement thereby for himself and his sons. 4 And he prepared the kid first, and placed some of its blood on the flesh that was on the altar which he had made, and all the fat he laid on the altar where he made the burnt sacrifice, and the ox and the ram and the sheep, and he laid all their flesh upon the altar. 5 And he placed all their offerings mingled with oil upon it, and afterwards he sprinkled wine on the fire which he had previously made on the altar, and he placed incense on the altar and

¹¹⁸ Nickelsburg, G. W. E. (2005). *Jewish literature between the Bible and the Mishnah : a literary and historical introduction* (2nd ed.). Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.

¹¹⁹ Charles, R. H. (Ed.). (2004). *Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*. Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software. All Jubilee and Enoch scriptures supplied by this software.

caused a sweet savor to ascend acceptable before YHVH his Elohim. (Jubilees 7:3-5)

He also states that Jacob paid tithes of all he had (including his clothes). Jacob also made his son Levi a priest to do the offerings on the 15th of the month.

2 And Jacob rose early in the morning, on the fourteenth of this month, and he gave a tithe of all that came with him, both of men and cattle, both of gold and every vessel and garment, yea, he gave tithes of all. 3 And in those days Rachel became pregnant with her son Benjamin. And Jacob counted his sons from him upwards and Levi fell to the portion of YHVH and his father clothed him in the garments of the priesthood and filled his hands. 4 And on the fifteenth of this month, he brought to the altar fourteen oxen from amongst the cattle, and twenty-eight rams, and forty-nine sheep, and seven lambs, and twenty-one kids of the goats as a burnt-offering on the altar of sacrifice, well pleasing for a sweet savour before YHVH. (Jubilees 32:2-4)

*In the last two chapters the author also provides a detailed description of how the Sabbath and the feast of Pesach must be celebrated. As mentioned before, the author follows a chronological sequence in his re-telling. This chronology is based on the solar calendar and uses the jubilees as a major marker of time. **The author claims that the calendar that was revealed to Enoch by the angel Uriel, as the true calendar.***

Allow me to jump in here. It is this last line above that people use to justify the solar calendar. Stop and think for a moment. Someone between the years 150 B.C. and 70 C.E. claims the solar calendar is the one we are supposed to be using because he said it was given to Enoch by an angel named Uriel and we are supposed to believe him with no collaborating evidence from Genesis or any other Biblical texts. Then, when we check the history of the Assyrians, Babylonians, Egyptians, Medo-Persians, Greeks, Chinese, and other ancient calendars, we discover they were all lunar calendars which converted to solar later on or roughly around the 5th century B.C. Does no one fact check from reputable sources what people say? Do people only search for and accept as truth those things that agree with their viewpoint?

If that same author of the Book of Enoch told you that the moon was made from Swiss cheese, would you also believe him because he said Uriel told him so? No, of course not. We all know the moon is made from blue cheese, not Swiss.

Continuing with the Klee article:

*16 And in the eleventh jubilee Jared took to himself a wife, and her name was Bâraka, the daughter of Râsûjâl, a daughter of his father's brother, in the fourth week of this jubilee, *and she bare him a son in the fifth week, in the fourth year of the jubilee, and he called his name Enoch. 17 And he was the first among men that are born on earth who learned writing and knowledge and wisdom and who wrote down the signs of heaven according to the order of their months in a book, that men might know the seasons of the years according to the order of their separate months. 18 And he was the first to write a testimony, and he testified to the sons of men among the generations of the earth, and recounted the weeks of the jubilees, and made known to them the days of the years, and set in order the months and recounted the Sabbaths of the years as we made (them), known to him. (Jubilees 4:16–18)*

Unlike Enoch, the author of Jubilees becomes specific about the solar calendar being the only calendar. He specifically makes the statement that people will later start following a calendar that is not 364 days. This will cause the people to celebrate the appointed times on the wrong days.

*35 For I know and from henceforth will I declare it unto thee, and it is not of my own devising; for the book (lies) written before me, and on the heavenly tablets the division of days is ordained, lest they forget the feasts of the covenant and walk according to the feasts of the Gentiles after their error and after their ignorance. 36 **For there will be those who will assuredly make observations of the moon—how (it) disturbs the seasons and comes in from year to year ten days too soon.** 37 For this reason the years will come upon them when they will disturb (the order), and make an abominable (day) the day of testimony, and an unclean day a feast day, and they will confound all the days, the holy with the unclean, and the unclean day with the holy; for they will go wrong as to the months and sabbaths and feasts and jubilees. 38 For this reason I command and testify to thee that thou mayst testify to them; for after thy death thy children will disturb (them), so that they will not make the year three hundred and sixty-four days only, and for this reason they will go wrong as to the new moons and seasons and sabbaths and festivals, and they will eat all kinds of blood with all kinds of flesh. (Jubilees 6:35–38)*

Again, I have to point out that there are those today quoting this line from the Book of Jubilees, saying there would come those who use

the moon instead of the sun. This is another example of people not understanding the moon is made from blue cheese and not from Swiss cheese. It is just plain stupid logic. I say stupid for those who do not research beyond the surface level, reserving the word idiots¹²⁰ for those who will not change once they have been proven wrong.

Those using the lunar calendar instead of the solar calendar have always been in existence—the lunar calendar was the original calendar. To say that “afterwards would come those who use the moon instead of the sun” is to call everyone who comes afterwards stupid for knowing their history: it’s ludicrous. At this time, they all knew the lunar calendar was in existence since creation.

There is no excuse in this age of the Internet. With the tap of a few keys, we all have access to a world of knowledge and resources from scholars and libraries around the globe. Any 8th grader can search these truths out for themselves. What most do not do, is to use reputable sources and steer clear of low-quality researchers.

Returning to the Klee article:

The book is dated based on the contents of the book and the paleographic dating of the fragments found at Qumran. Researchers currently date the Book of Jubilees to somewhere between 175 and 75 B.C. The late date of the book is also supported by the fact that the text most closely relates to the text of the Septuagint. Yet, its text is different enough to show that it does not rely purely on the Septuagint text.

Why Are These Books Not Canonical? Book of Enoch

In the Book of Jude, we do find a reference that proves the author was familiar with some of the contents of the Book of Enoch. But, the author of Jude does not mention that he is quoting from the Book of Enoch.

14 It was also about these men that Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied, saying, “Behold, YHVH came with many thousands of His holy ones, 15 to execute judgment upon all, and to

¹²⁰ 3 The foolish ones took their lamps, but took no oil with them. (Matthew 25:3)

1 O foolish Galatians, who bewitched you not to obey the truth, to whom before your eyes Jesus Christ was written among you crucified? (Galatians 3:1)

3 Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, do you now perfect yourself in the flesh? (Galatians 3:3)

convict all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds which they have done in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.” (Jude 1:14–15)

Thus to take the fact that the two books contain similar material, further would be inaccurate. It is not sound logic to now imply that the Book of Jude makes the Book of Enoch canonical. If we were to follow this logic, we would also need to make the works of the Greek writers Aratus (Acts 17:28), Menander¹²¹ (1 Cor. 15:33), and Epimenides (Tit. 1:12) canonical. Paul referred to their writings in his epistles.

A big concern with the Book of Enoch is in the way that it presents Enoch. Based on the Scripture of Genesis 5:22–24 we have the interpretation of Enoch ascending to heaven.

22 Then Enoch walked with YHVH three hundred years after he became the father of Methuselah, and he had other sons and daughters. 23 So all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years. 24 Enoch walked with YHVH; and he was not, for YHVH took him. (Genesis 5:22–24)

1 The words of the blessing of Enoch, wherewith he blessed the elect «and» righteous, who will be living in the day of tribulation, when all the wicked «and godless» are to be removed. 2 And he took up his parable and said—Enoch a righteous man, whose eyes were opened by God, saw the vision of the Holy One in the heavens, «which» the angels showed me, and from them I heard everything, and from them I understood as I saw, but not for this generation, but for a remote one which is for to come. (Enoch 1:1–2)

This interpretation has Enoch ascending into heaven, seeing the vision of YHVH and then receiving the wisdom that he has to share with his son. The story of the angel showing Enoch the heavenly beings is a similar style to the temple being shown to Ezekiel. We also see in Enoch 46:1–3 a description of the “One who had the head of Days” as well as another that is called the “Son of Man.”

1 And there I saw One who had a head of days, And His head was white like wool, And with Him was another being whose countenance had the appearance of a man, And his face was full of graciousness, like one of the holy angels. 2 And I asked the angel who went with me and showed me all the hidden things, concerning that Son of Man,

¹²¹ The Greek phrase the REV translates as “Bad company corrupts good morals” is an exact quotation from the play “Thais” by the Greek poet Menander (342–291 BC). Although Paul may have read Menander, it is more likely that by Paul’s time the concept was so well known and so often observed that it was a common saying.

who he was, and whence he was, (and) why he went with the Head of Days? 3 And he answered and said unto me: This is the Son of Man who hath righteousness, With whom dwelleth righteousness, And who revealeth all the treasures of that which is hidden, Because the Lord of Spirits hath chosen him, And whose lot hath the pre-eminence before the Lord of Spirits in uprightness forever. (Enoch 46:1–3)

This vision is again very similar to another one we find in Scripture. In the Book of Daniel we find the following:

13 “I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him. 14 “And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations and men of every language Might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion Which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one Which will not be destroyed. (Daniel 7:13–14)

In the Book of Daniel we see that the Messiah is called the Son of Man. What makes the Book of Enoch a serious problem is that later, the book describes how Enoch becomes the “Son of Man.”

14 And he (i.e. the angel) came to me and greeted me with His voice, and said unto me: ‘This is the Son of Man who is born unto righteousness, And righteousness abides over him, And the righteousness of the Head of Days forsakes him not.’ 15 And he said unto me: ‘He proclaims unto thee peace in the name of the world to come; For from hence has proceeded peace since the creation of the world, And so shall it be unto thee for ever and for ever and ever. (Enoch 71:14–15)

The author of the Book of Enoch, sees Enoch ascending into heaven on a cloud and then later becoming the Son of Man (Messiah). For any believer in Y’Shua the Messiah, this must be a reason to discard the Book of Enoch as an inspired writing. A less serious issue with the book should be how accurate the revelation really is. Today we know that some of the truths revealed to Enoch are actually wrong. Here are some of the known inaccuracies:

- The solar cycle is 364 days. We know that it is 365.25 days. The counter argument to this is that Enoch is describing the solar year before the flood of Noah. This cannot be true as Enoch also describes how the days become shorter and then again longer as the year progresses. This would not be the case in a “pre-Noah calendar”.
- Enoch 72:37 states that the sun is 7 times brighter than the moon, but that these two are of equal size. We know that this is not correct. If a man looks at the sun and moon from earth, they may appear to be of the same size. If the Creator was to reveal the truth about the

luminaries to Enoch, He surely would have known that the sun is much larger than the moon.

- *The Book of Enoch describes two calendars. It has the details of a solar and a lunar calendar. If the solar calendar is the “real calendar”, why describe both?*

Book of Jubilees

The first reason to doubt the Book of Jubilees would be its strong reliance on the Book of Enoch. As we have discussed in the previous section, there are serious concerns with some of the content of Enoch. Another reason to doubt the book of Jubilees would be its inaccuracy of the chronology. The author takes a strong stance on the importance of the sabbatical and jubilee years, but yet he gets it wrong. For example, Jubilees 4:21 states that Enoch was six years of Jubilees with YHVH, but Gen 5:22 states that Enoch was 300 years with YHVH.

21 And he was moreover with the angels of YHVH these six jubilees of years, and they showed him everything which is on earth and in the heavens, the rule of the sun, and he wrote down everything. (Jubilees 4:21)

22 Then Enoch walked with YHVH three hundred years after he became the father of Methuselah, and he had other sons and daughters. (Genesis 5:22)

This would mean that a Jubilee is 50 years. This is in contradiction with the rest of the Book of Jubilees (Jubilees 23:8). Let us look at another example. We have the following information about Abraham: 14 And in this thirty-ninth jubilee, in the Second week in the first year, Terah took to himself a wife, and her name was 'Ednâ, the daughter of 'Abrâm, the daughter of his father's sister. 15 And in the seventh year of this week she bare him a son, and he called his name Abram, by the name of the father of his mother; for he had died before his daughter had conceived a son. (Jubilees 11:14–15)

1 And it came to pass in the first week, in the forty-fourth jubilee, in the second year, that is, the year in which Abraham died, that Isaac and Ishmael came from the Well of the Oath to celebrate the feast of weeks – that is, the feast of the first fruits of the harvest – to Abraham, their father, and Abraham rejoiced because his two sons had come. (Jubilees 22:1)

8 And he lived three jubilees and four weeks of years, one hundred and seventy-five years, and completed the days of his life, being old and full of days. (Jubilees 23:8)

According to these verses, Abraham was born in the thirty-ninth jubilee, the seventh year of the second cycle. Abraham died¹²² in the forty-fourth jubilee in the second year of the first cycle. But, if we add 3 jubilees to his birth we get to the 42nd jubilee and if we add another 4 cycles we get to the seventh year of the sixth cycle. Thus, we have at least one jubilee missing somewhere. The author tries to keep his text aligned with the book of Genesis 25:7. In the process he gets his calculations all wrong.

The Essenes

Many of the scrolls describe for us the calendar of the Essenes. We do not know everything about their calendar, but from their writings we can learn a lot about their practices.

They followed a twelve-month calendar in which the year consisted of 364 days. The Temple Scroll (11QTemple) describes this calendar in detail. The editor of the scroll, Yigael Yadin, dated the scroll to around the time of John Hyrcanus. This would date the scroll to around 135 to 104 BC. With this calendar, the first day of the year would always be on the fourth day of the week after the spring equinox. The Essenes did this because YHVH created the sun on the fourth day. This, then implies that the first three days of creation was before the start of the first year. So, we have three days that do not belong to any year.

The months also have a fixed pattern. There are always twelve months in a year. Each month is 30 days. Every quarter they added an extra day. Thus, the sequence is 30; 30; 31. The calendar repeated the sequence 4 times to make a total of twelve months. This then ended up being a 364-day year. Unless some change was made periodically to the Essene's 364-day calendar, the time of the observance of the annual feasts would get out of synch with the seasons. The Essenes would end up observing the spring festivals in winter. It would take only a few decades for noticeable calendar slippage to occur because it was "off" by almost 1 1/4 days a year. Some form of intercalation was obviously necessary. But, we have no proof that the Essenes applied any intercalation. We also have no references in the books of Enoch or Jubilees on how to do this.

¹²² Abraham was born in the 2nd year of the 6th Sabbatical Cycle in the 40th Jubilee Cycle (1948 after creation). He died in the in the 2nd year of the 3rd Sabbatical Cycle in the 44th Jubilee Cycle (2123 after creation).

*The scrolls of the community at Qumran also tell us about their annual feasts. **They had more agricultural feasts than the feasts recorded in Leviticus 23.** These were a harvest Festival of Grapes and another of Olives. Other festivals observed by the Qumran sectarians included the Festival of the Wood Offering, the Feast of the Wine and the Festival of the Priests' Consecration (ordination). They did not celebrate the feasts of Purim or Chanukah. The result of this method is that all dates always fall on the same day of the week every year. The sabbath falls on the same date in a given month, year in and year out. And festivals all fall on the same day of the week every year. Passover always falls on Tuesday. The annual schedule was as follows:*

<i>Month</i>	<i>Day</i>	<i>Feast</i>
1	1-8	Days of Ordination for Priests
1	14	Passover
1	26	Waving of the Omer (first fruits)
3	15	The Festival of Weeks (Shavu'ot)
5	3	Festival of New Wine
6	22	Festival of Oil
6	23-29	Festival of the Offering of Wood
7	1	Day of Remembrance (Yom T'Ruah)
7	10	Day of Atonement (Yom Kippurim)
7	15	Festival of Booths (Sukkot)

The calendar regulated not only the schedule for the feasts. It also regulated the time for the various groupings of priests who provided service in the Temple. The community organized the priests into 24 courses (mishmar / mishmarot). Each mishmar conducted Temple service for one week starting on the first day of the week. Each group bore a family or clan name and was assigned specific weeks. Since 24 groups serving twice equaled only 48 weeks, four groups served three times a year. This made up the complete 52-week year. The scrolls include several tables of the six-year cycle of priestly courses. It also mentions the families who were expected to officiate in the Temple in weekly turns of duty. In every 52-week year, four families had three, rather than two, turns. Thus it took six years to complete the cycle.

Who are the True Zadokites?

The true Zadokites will be restored as Levitical priests serving under King David in the near future:

46 And the chamber facing northward is for the priests, the keepers of the charge of the altar. They are the sons of Zadok among the sons of Levi, who come near Jehovah to minister to Him. (Ezekiel 40:46)

19 And you shall give a young bull for a sin offering to the priests the Levites, who are of the seed of Zadok, who approach Me to minister to Me, says the Lord Jehovah. (Ezekiel 43:19)

15 But the priests, the Levites, the sons of Zadok, who kept the charge of My sanctuary when the sons of Israel went astray from Me, they shall come near Me to minister to Me, and they shall stand before Me to offer to Me the fat and the blood, says the Lord Jehovah. (Ezekiel 44:15)

11 for the priests who are sanctified, of the sons of Zadok, who have kept My charge, who did not go astray when the sons of Israel went astray, as the Levites went astray. (Ezekiel 48:11)

In the following genealogy of the Zadokites, take note that they are the descendants of Phinehas in fulfilment of the promise made to him by Yehovah:

11 Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, has turned My wrath away from the sons of Israel while he was zealous for My sake among them, so that I did not destroy the sons of Israel in My jealousy. 12 Therefore say, Behold! I give him My covenant of peace. 13 And he shall have it, and his seed after him, the covenant of an everlasting priesthood, because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the sons of Israel. (Numbers 25:11-13)

As we return to the article by Schalk and Elsa Klee,¹²³ you will also note that there are two different Zadoks in the family tree.

Most of us see Second Temple Judaism as a singular unit of belief. Based on the writings of the Apostolic Scriptures, we acknowledge some splintering within the group. We know about the Pharisees, the

¹²³ <https://www.setapartpeople.com/enoch-calendar>

Sadducees and also the Samaritans. In recent years the Essenes have also started coming into focus. Yet, there was a much larger division within Second Temple Judaism that most of us are unaware of. We need to understand this more fundamental division if we want to contextualize the Enoch calendar.

After the return of the nation from the Babylonian exile, a Zadokite priesthood was established in Jerusalem. They claimed, based on Scripture, that the sons of Zadok were the priests. Most importantly, Zadok was the priest in the time of king David. It was Zadok who anointed king Solomon. In the book of Chronicles, it is documented that they were the priests until the exile to Babylon.

*3 The children of Amram were Aaron, Moses and Miriam. And the sons of Aaron were Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. 4 Eleazar became the father of Phinehas, and Phinehas became the father of Abishua, 5 and Abishua became the father of Bukki, and Bukki became the father of Uzzi, 6 and Uzzi became the father of Zerahiah, and Zerahiah became the father of Meraioth, 7 Meraioth became the father of Amariah, and Amariah became the father of Ahitub, 8 and Ahitub became the father of **Zadok**, and Zadok became the father of Ahimaaz, 9 and Ahimaaz became the father of Azariah, and Azariah became the father of Johanan, 10 and Johanan became the father of Azariah (it was he who served as the priest in the house which Solomon built in Jerusalem), 11 and Azariah became the father of Amariah, and Amariah became the father of Ahitub, 12 and Ahitub became the father of **Zadok**, and Zadok became the father of Shallum, 13 and Shallum became the father of Hilkiah, and Hilkiah became the father of Azariah, 14 and Azariah became the father of Seraiah, and Seraiah became the father of Jehozadak; 15 and Jehozadak went along when YHVH carried Judah and Jerusalem away into exile by Nebuchadnezzar. (1 Chronicles 6:3–15)*

32 Then King David said, “Call to me Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada.” And they came into the king’s presence. 33 The king said to them, “Take with you the servants of your lord, and have my son Solomon ride on my own mule, and bring him down to Gihon. 34 “Let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him there as king over Israel, and blow the trumpet and say, ‘Long live King Solomon!’ (1 Kings 1:32–34)

Now that the Davidic¹²⁴ monarchy no longer existed, they felt the need to lead the nation. Soon the need for a king disappeared, as these functions were now taken over by the priesthood. The priesthood held that the Covenant at Sinai is the significant covenant. This covenant enforces the importance of Moses and Aaron. **The Hasmonites replaced the Zadokite priesthood during the Maccabean period. They replaced the Zadokites because of their support of the Hellenization of the Jewish nation. The replacement of the Zadokites was in place in the time when Y'Shua went to the Temple.** At the same time there were other sects of Judaism. These included some of the people that never left the land during the exile. There were some smaller groups, all with their own truth. These smaller groups can be grouped together as the Enochic Jews. The Enochic Jews also included some of the Samaritans. We find in the writings of Abu'l Fath a description of an interesting group of Samaritans called the "Sect of Dustan" – also known as Dositheans. This is a group that formed after John Hyrcanus destroyed the Samaritan temple on Mt. Gerizim. This group shows many similarities with the teachings of the Qumran community.

These include:

1. Very strict sabbath observance – No feeding or rescuing of animals on the sabbath. (CD 10:14– 11:18)
2. The concern regarding the purity of their water, both for drinking and for mikvah. (1QS 3:4–5)
3. They both followed a solar calendar as laid down by both the Book of Jubilees and 1 Enoch. (1QS 10:1–5; 1QpHab 12:5–9)¹²⁵

We do know that they cannot be the exact same group. The community at Qumran saw Jerusalem as the place of worship. They also saw the writings of the prophets as canonical. However, we do know that one of the reasons that the sect of Dustan split from the Samaritans was the Judaising tendencies of this sect. The influence of this group on the community at Qumran is very obvious.

The Enochic Jews claimed that their priesthood was before the priesthood of Aaron. Their priesthood came from people like Adam and Enoch. To them the significant covenant is the covenant with Noah after the flood. Their writings did not emphasize the Sinai

¹²⁴ The Davidic Monarchy has always existed, but not in Judea. Watch our teaching on the Ten Lost Tribes, to discover this amazing history.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EtXbzO4xl_c

¹²⁵ Cansdale, Lean. Qumran and the Essenes: A Re-evaluation of the Evidence. 1997. Tubingen : Mohr. ISBN 3-16-146719-1

covenant. They based their covenantal proceeding around what happened with Noah.

For more information on this complex topic, we recommend the works of Gabriele Boccaccini. Specifically his book – *Beyond the Essene Hypothesis* – covers this topic in detail. This is an area of history and religion that still has so many unanswered questions.

Conclusion to the Enochian Heresy

In order for you to be able to accept the Enoch calendar, you also need to change some of the other fundamental parts of your belief system. These fundamental changes would include:

- *Changing your definition of what inspired scripture is. You now need to make books like Enoch and Jubilees part of this definition. This would then include the part where Enoch sees himself as the Son of Man. Accepting these two books then opens the door to some other books to be included. It also puts books like Leviticus in opposition to some of these additional books. (e.g. Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs)*

- *To be a true follower of the authors of these additional books, you would need to de-emphasize the Mosaic covenant. You would then need to place a greater importance of the covenant with Noah. In the books of Enoch and Jubilees, there is a lot more focus on the way of Noah, than what happened with the nation as they were led out of Egypt. They justified their calendar based on what Noah did.*

- *Thus we can see that the Enoch calendar carries behind it a fundamental shift in your belief. A small decision, like accepting the Book of Enoch as truth, has a ripple effect. The Book of Enoch leads to the book of Jubilees, which in turn leads to the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs. All this then leads to putting the Enoch literature (including their alternative priesthood) at the same level as the rest of Scripture.*

As the final point, we would like to explain why we call this a heresy. We claim to be the followers of Y'Shua the Messiah. If we are His followers and His disciples, it means we must do as He did. In our previous article, we have shown you two proof points about why we believe that Y'Shua was anti-Essene. To take this point a bit further, we need to add the following facts:

- *Y'Shua never quoted from the books of Enoch or Jubilees.*
- *Y'Shua went to the feasts in Jerusalem according to the calendar of the Judeans.*

1 After these things there was a feast of the Jews (Judeans), and Y'Shua went up to Jerusalem. 2 Now there is in Jerusalem by the sheep gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew Bethesda, having five porticoes. (John 5:1–2)

- *Y'Shua's parents took Him to the Temple in Jerusalem to be redeemed.*

22 And when the days for their purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him up to Jerusalem to present Him to YHVH 23 (as it is written in the Law of YHVH, "Every firstborn male that opens the womb shall be called holy to YHVH"), 24 and to offer a sacrifice according to what was said in the Law of YHVH, "A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons." (Luke 2:22–24)

- *Y'Shua told us that we need to listen to what these people (the scribes and Pharisees) teach. We were not to do as they do, but still listen to them.¹²⁶*

1 Then Y'Shua spoke to the crowds and to His disciples, 2 saying: "The scribes and the Pharisees have seated themselves in the chair of Moses; 3 therefore all that they¹²⁷ tell you, do and observe, but do

¹²⁶ Actually, we are told to guard and do whatever Moses said. We're not to do according to the Pharisees' ma'asim, for they talk torah, but they don't really do torah.

¹²⁷ They or he-Now that's a very subtle difference between what you saw in the Greek, a difference of one single word, or primarily one single word. In the Greek it said in Matthew, "all that they say" you must obey, all they say, "they" being the Pharisees. In the Hebrew he says, "you must obey all that he says", "he" being Moses. So, the difference of this one single word fundamentally changes Yeshua's message. What he's saying now is, if their claim to authority is that they sit in the seat of Moses, so do as Moses says, obey Moses. They claim their authority is they are sitting in this ornate stone chair in the synagogue, they're teaching with supposed authority, sitting in the seat of Moses, so obey Moses. Do what Moses says.

not do according to their deeds;¹²⁸ for they say things¹²⁹ and do not do them. (Matthew 23:1–3)

- Y'Shua chose Paul, a Pharisee, to be His apostle to the nations. He did not choose an Essene or a supporter of the Enochic Judaism.

11 And Y'Shua said to him, "Get up and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying, 12 and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him, so that he might regain his sight." 13 But Ananias answered, "Master, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he did to Your saints at Jerusalem; 14 and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name." 15 But Y'Shua said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel; 16 for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name's sake." 17 So Ananias departed and entered the house, and after laying his hands on him said, "Brother Saul, the Master Y'Shua who appeared to you on the road by which you were coming, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." (Acts 9:11–17)

¹²⁸ Alright, so what are these ma'asim? Ma'asim are "precedents." The literal meaning is "actions" or "deeds", and in the Greek it translates this as *ergon*, which in your English you have "works", the works of the Pharisees. But what are the works of the actions or deeds of the Pharisees? In Pharisee terminology, ma'asim refers to "precedents", or "acts or deeds that serve as precedents". And what do they mean by that? Well, we've already seen that Pharisee law means to legislate every aspect of life, literally from the moment you wake up in the morning to the moment you go to sleep at night.

<https://www.nehemiaswall.com/hebrew-yeshua-vs-greek-jesus-2>

¹²⁹ Now, after I had read Matthew 23 and then I reread this passage, I realized in Hebrew this sounds very similar. There's a similar style here, and it seems to me that Yeshua was echoing the words of 2 Kings 17:34 about the Samaritans. And I think what he was saying is that just as the Samaritans of old do according to their statutes and their judgments, and they do not do according to the Torah, so too the Pharisees of his own era, do according to their *takanot* and their ma'asim, their reforms and their precedents, and **they talk Torah, but they don't do Torah. And what does he mean they talk Torah? They're sitting in the seat of Moses, talking Torah to you all day long, but what they're really telling you is not Torah, it's just in the guise of Torah. What they're really telling you are their own reforms and precedents, and they don't really do Torah.**

<https://www.nehemiaswall.com/hebrew-yeshua-vs-greek-jesus-2>

6 But perceiving that one group were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, Paul began crying out in the Council, “Brethren, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees; I am on trial for the hope and resurrection of the dead!” (Acts 23:6)

These points make it clear that Y'Shua saw the priesthood in Jerusalem as the valid priesthood. He does not tell us to listen to those in the seat of Adam, the seat of Noah or even the seat of Enoch. It is about the priesthood as defined in the Sinai covenant. After the death of Y'Shua, His disciples and Paul kept on going to the Temple in Jerusalem. They continued with the offerings in the Temple, including sin offerings.

All this implies that if we want to accept the Enoch calendar as the true calendar, we would need to contradict, thus reject, the teachings of Y'Shua. We then need to follow the teachings of a renegade Second Temple Period sect of Judaism. Y'Shua even warned us about the teachings of this sect. I think it is significant that this sect has ceased to exist. Why are some so desperate to resurrect this false teaching?

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The Deal Breaker

Here is the secret information most of those peddling the Qumran false teachings don't want you to know. They assume you don't know how to count. They assume you don't care about obeying Yehovah properly. They're assuming correctly that most of you don't know the year is 365 days, 6 hours, 13 minutes and 53 seconds long. They assume you don't know the moon or month is 29 days, 12 hours, 44 minutes and 3 seconds long. They assume you do not understand Deuteronomy:

1 If a prophet rises among you, or a dreamer of dreams, and gives you a sign or a wonder, 2 and the sign or the wonder which he foretold to you occurs, saying, Let us go after other gods which you have not known, and let us serve them, 3 you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams. For Jehovah your God is testing you to know whether you love Jehovah your God with all your heart and with all your soul. 4 You shall walk after Jehovah your God and fear Him, and keep His commandments, and obey His voice, and you shall serve Him and hold fast to Him. 5 And that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death, because he has spoken to turn you away from Jehovah your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt and redeemed you out of the house of slaves, to thrust you out of the way in which Jehovah your God commanded you to walk. So you shall put the evil away from the midst of you. (Deuteronomy 13:1-5)

They assume you won't understand that by keeping the Holy Days at the wrong times, you will be serving other gods.¹³⁰ All of these calendars cause you to keep the Holy Days at the wrong times.

¹³⁰ 26 Behold, I set before you today a blessing and a curse: 27 A blessing if you obey the commandments of Jehovah your God which I command you today, 28 and a curse if you will not obey the commandments of Jehovah your God, but will turn aside out of the way which I command you today, to go after other gods which you have not known. (Deuteronomy 11:26-28)

Nehemia: So, the blessing, it says, "if you listen, or obey, the commandments of Yehovah, your God, which I am commanding you today." And the curse, "if you do not obey the commandments of Yehovah your God and you turn from the way which I am commanding you today to go after other gods which you did not know." And it's interesting, so those are the two possibilities: you obey the commandments, or you don't obey the commandments and go after other gods. So, I've got a question. What if you don't obey the commandments, but you worship the true God? You say, "I worship the God of Moses, but I don't keep Moses's commandments."

20 But the prophet who shall presume to speak a word in My name which I have not commanded him to speak or who shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die. 21 And if you say in your heart, How shall we know the word which Jehovah has not spoken? 22 When a prophet speaks in the name of Jehovah, if the thing does not follow nor come to pass, that is the thing which Jehovah has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously. You shall not be afraid of him. (Deuteronomy 18:20-22)

Don't fall prey to false teachings about the calendar. You are susceptible to them if you do not understand how to prove which one is TRUE—which one is from Yehovah. So long as you keep your head in the sand, you are in danger of being deceived. These Qumran calendars, the Enoch, Jubilee, Zadok, and Dead Sea calendars are all false teachings Yehovah has sent to test you. Yes, you are being tested just before the end of this age—just before the 7th millennium is to begin. Will you pass the test?

3 you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams. For Jehovah your God is testing you to know whether you

Jono: How can you worship God if you don't keep his commandments? I don't understand how those two things are reconciled.

*Nehemia: Exactly. And these are the only two choices that Moses presents. He says, "look," and he presents two pictures. That's the opening word, it's "see," "look." And then there are two pictures. **There's the picture of obedience to Yehovah or there's worshiping another god.** I think what he's saying here is, **if you don't obey the commandments of the Creator of the universe, then you're worshiping some other god. You're worshiping the god who didn't give those commandments, who doesn't care about those commandments.** Even if you call them Yehovah, even if you call him Yahweh, even if you call him by his true name, whatever that is, and you say, **I worship the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but I'm disregarding His commandments, then you've created a god out of your own heart; it's no longer the God of Scripture.***

*That reminds me of this verse, and I think we've quoted it before; it's in 2 Chronicles 15:3. It's a prophecy of Azariah, son of Oded, and I won't spend too much time on it, but it says, **"And many days for Israel without the true God, without the teaching priest, and without the Torah."** I think the lesson here is that you might call this god "the God of Israel, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of Scripture," **but if you're not following the Torah then it's not the true God.***

<https://www.nehemiaswall.com/torah-pearls-reeh>

love Jehovah your God with all your heart and with all your soul.
(Deuteronomy 13:3)

Remember what you are told. Love the truth. Search the Bible, not some garbage dump also known as a Genizah where heretical teachings are placed. Do not swallow the hammashchith that was buried there.

8 And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the breath of His mouth and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming, 9 whose coming is according to the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, 10 and with all deceit of unrighteousness in those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, so that they might be saved. 11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, 12 so that all those who do not believe the truth, but delight in unrighteousness, might be condemned. (2 Thessalonians 2:8-12)

Those who teach these calendars are false prophets. They can repent right away, or they can die in the next few years. How can we know absolutely for sure what calendar to use? Let me now give you the *deal breaker* these false teachers will not teach you. But you must do your homework and study this. Do the work or you will remain unsure. Do this homework to build your defenses against all these false teachers that are coming more often now, as we approach the end of this age. Fortify your mind with the truth from the scriptures. Do it now.

The *deal breaker* is simple to do. All you have to do is count, but you actually have to do it. *Ezekiel's Thirteenth Month* also called *Ezekiel's 30 Days*¹³¹ are one of the teachings we have had on our site since 2007. It was first written by Larry and June Acheson in 1998 and updated in 2007 after a conversation with me. At the time they wrote this article they were not even thinking about various solar calendars. They were looking to prove that a 13th month had to be added in order for Ezekiel to perform the siege of 390 days for Israel and 40 days for Judah given to him by Jehovah. Jehoiachin was captured in the 2 Adar Bet of 598/597 B.C. or, March 16, 597 B.C. The fifth year of Jehoiachin's captivity would then be 593/592 B.C.

¹³¹ Ezekiel's Thirteenth Month by Larry and June Acheson
<http://www.ponderscripture.org/PDF%20Files/Thirteenth%20Month%20Issue.pdf>

That year of 593/592 B.C. was long before the Essenes ever lived. Long before the book of Enoch and the Enochian calendar were ever invented. Long before the Book of Jubilees was ever written, which can't even add up the Jubilee cycles it is talking about and its version of the Enoch calendar.

Ezekiel recorded the dates and seasons 2600 years before the sanctimonious-sounding Zadok calendar was reinvented in our modern times, copying the Enoch calendar. I do get upset and hate those who promote teachings that lead the brethren away from Torah and Yehovah. We can disagree about things, but when you lead people away from the truth to serve other gods, I get upset.

Note the following story about *lashon hara* (disparaging speech). The harm done by speech is even worse than the harm done by stealing or by cheating someone financially, because amends can be made for monetary harms, but the harm done by speech can never be repaired. For this reason, some sources indicate that there is no forgiveness for *lashon hara*.

A Chasidic tale illustrates this point:

A man went about the community telling malicious lies about the rabbi. Later, he realized the wrong he had done, and began to feel remorse. He went to the rabbi and begged his forgiveness, saying he would do anything he could to make amends. The rabbi told the man, "Take a feather pillow, cut it open, and scatter the feathers to the winds." The man thought this was a strange request, but it was a simple enough task, and he did it gladly. When he returned to tell the rabbi that he had done it, the rabbi said, "Now, go and gather the feathers. Because you can no more make amends for the damage your words have done than you can recollect the feathers."

Speech has been compared to an arrow: once the words are released, like an arrow, they cannot be recalled; the harm they do, cannot be stopped, and the harm they do cannot always be predicted, for words, like arrows, often go astray. Those who preach these false calendars are doing the same as those who commit *lashon hara*. Once they have publicized their false teachings, how many others will become deceived? It began with one false book written about 150 B.C., and here we are today at the end of this age with thousands or more being led astray. Do not listen to those who publish or share those false teachings. So, if you are ready, let me now share with you the *deal*

breaker which will destroy all these false calendars. Then you will know the truth.

The Thirteenth Month¹³²

By Larry and June Acheson

Without involving ourselves in the controversy that surrounds the calendars promoted by the opposing sides, we will simply turn to Scripture in an attempt to discern whether or not any solutions to the dilemma are presented. Yahweh does not tell us in His Word to set our year by a solar calendar of 365 days, nor does He insist that we abide by a luni-solar calendar that will occasionally have years consisting of 13 months. Had such instructions been inspired to have been included in our Bibles, this controversy would never have surfaced. Since those instructions are missing, it is up to us to search out any Scriptural evidence that can clue us in to the calendar used by Yahweh's people.

As the title of this study implies, there is a passage of Scripture that provides strong evidence that a luni-solar calendar was used by the people of Yahweh. In the book of Ezekiel we are given a month-by-month account of Ezekiel carrying out Yahweh's instructions pertaining to his bearing the iniquity of both the house of Israel and the house of Judah. He was told to lie on his left side for 390 days to bear the iniquity of the house of Israel, and then on his right side for 40 days to bear the iniquity of the house of Judah (Ez. 4:4-6). We are given a time frame in Ezekiel demonstrating that the year in which he did this had to contain thirteen months.

To begin our investigation of the above claim, we need to start at the beginning of the book of Ezekiel. In chapter one, Ezekiel receives a vision from Yahweh. Let's read the first three verses of that chapter:

1 And it happened in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, in the fifth of the month, as I was among the captives by the river Chebar, the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God. 2 On the fifth of the month, the fifth year of King Jehoiachin's captivity, 3 Coming the Word of Jehovah became known to Ezekiel, the son of Buzi, the priest in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar. And the hand of Jehovah was on him there. (Ezekiel 1:1-3)

In the above passage, we are told that the "word of Yahweh" came to him "in the fifth day of the month, which was the fifth year of king

¹³² The 13th Month by Larry and June Acheson <https://sightedmoon.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/The-Thirteenth-Month-Issue.pdf>

Jehoiachin's captivity.” We know from verse one of this chapter that this was during the fourth month. This is a good starting point for us. The key time frame at this point is that it is year five of King Jehoiachin's captivity. After receiving this vision, Yahweh commissions Ezekiel to go to the children of Israel to warn them of the consequences of their rebellion. This commission occurs in chapter 2:

7 And you shall speak My Words to them, whether they will hear or whether they will forbear, for they are rebellious. (Ezekiel 2:7)

Thus having been commissioned, we read on in chapter three that Ezekiel visited his fellow brethren of the captivity at Telabib:

15 Then I came to the exiles at Tel-at-abib, who lived by the river Chebar. And I sat where they sat; and I also dwelt seven days, being stricken dumb among them. (Ezekiel 3:15)

Ezekiel was clearly overwhelmed by the vision that he had seen, coupled with the virtually hopeless mission to which he had just been assigned — a mission to bring Yahweh's people back to the Faith. The key words in the above verse, though, for purposes of this discussion, are “seven days.” He remained in Telabib for seven days, according to the above verse.

Ezekiel's vision came to him on the fifth day of the fourth month during the fifth year of King Jehoiachin's captivity. (592 B.C.)¹³³ If we were to draw up a calendar to depict this time frame, it would look something like this:

¹³³ 609 BC In 2Ki 23:29 (CP 2Chr 35:20, 21, 22, 23, 24) God's judgment on Judah began when King Josiah was killed on the plain of Megiddo trying to stop Pharaoh Neco, king of Egypt, on his way to Carchemish on the Euphrates.

605 BC In Jer 46:2 Pharaoh Neco was defeated at Carchemish by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon.

605 BC 1st SIEGE OF JERUSALEM & EXILE TO BABYLON: is described in 2Ki 24:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. In 605 BC Ezekiel was 18 years old when 15 year old Daniel and his 3 friends were captured by Nebuchadnezzar and taken from to Babylon. Daniel's prophetic ministry from Babylon began about 605BC. Ezekiel was left behind in Jerusalem. At age 30 he would be eligible for the priesthood but before he reached that age- he was taken into exile in the next invasion described below.

597 BC 2ND SIEGE OF JERUSALEM & EXILE TO BABYLON: is described in 2Ki 24:10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 When Jehoiakim died, Jehoiachin succeeded him as king of Judah and in 597 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar, who with his defeat of Neco had become the dominant world power, besieged Jerusalem for the second time taking King Jehoiachin into exile to Babylon (this event in 597BC helps understand “the fifth year

YEAR 5 OF KING JEHOIACHIN'S CAPTIVITY							
FOURTH MOON							
			4	5	6		7
<div> <div>Last day of the seven days during which Ezekiel "sat astonished" by the river Chebar (Ez. 3:15)</div> <div>→</div> </div>				12	13		14
				18	19	20	21
				25	26	27	28
29	30						

As displayed above, you will notice we have circled two dates on this calendar, the 5th and the 12th. We circled the 5th because that is the date on which Ezekiel received his vision from Yahweh. We circled the 12th because this marks the end of the seven days that he “remained there astonished” among his brethren of the captivity.

At the end of those seven days (the 12th day of the fourth month of year five), the word of Yahweh came to him again. It was during this event that Ezekiel was given an astounding directive. He was told to lie upon his left side for 390 days, followed by 40 days on his right side. He was also given specific instructions as to what he was to eat and how he was to cook his food during this time frame. Keep in mind that during this entire period he was not to turn from one side to another (Ez. 4:8). Let’s read this amazing set of instructions given to Ezekiel as found in Ezekiel 4:1-11:

1 And you, son of man, take a tile to yourself, and lay it before you, and portray on it the city Jerusalem. 2 And lay siege against it, and build a fort against it, and cast a mound against it. Also set the camp against it, and set battering rams against it all around. 3 And take an iron griddle to yourself, and set it for a wall of iron between you and the city. And set your face against it, and it shall be under attack. And you shall set a battle against it. This shall be a sign to the house of Israel. 4 Also lie on your left side, and lay the iniquity of the house of Israel on it; according to the number of days that you shall lie on it, you shall bear their iniquity. 5 For I have laid on you the years of their iniquity, according to the number of the days, three hundred and ninety days. So you shall bear the iniquity of the house of Israel. 6 And when you have fulfilled them, lie again on your right side, and you shall bear

of Jehoiachin’s exile” specifically given by in Ezekiel 1:2) along with 10,000 Jews, one of whom was the young man Ezekiel.

https://www.preceptaustin.org/jehovah_shammah

the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days; a day for a year; a day for a year, I have set for you. 7 And you shall set your face toward the siege of Jerusalem, and your arm shall be uncovered, and you shall prophesy against it. 8 And, behold, I will lay bands on you, and you shall not turn yourself from one side to another until you have ended the days of your siege. 9 Take also to yourself wheat, and barley, and beans, and lentils, and millet, and spelt, and put them in one vessel, and make bread of them for yourself. According to the number of the days that you shall lie on your side, three hundred and ninety days, you shall eat of it. 10 And your food which you shall eat shall be by weight twenty shekels a day; from time to time you shall eat it. 11 You shall also drink water by measure, the sixth part of a hin. From time to time you shall drink. (Ezekiel 4:1-11)

Repeating what we have already outlined in our comments above, this passage clearly presents the seemingly bizarre instructions that were given to Ezekiel. He was ordered to conduct a “mimic siege” against Jerusalem as a sign against the iniquity of the house of Israel and the house of Judah. Furthermore, he was told to lie upon his left side for 390 days, followed by 40 days on his right side. Again, remember that during this entire period Ezekiel was not to turn from one side to another (Ez. 4:8). We do not read of any further time reference until we arrive at the eighth chapter of Ezekiel.

In Ezekiel chapter eight, we learn that the time frame has advanced from being the fifth year to the sixth year. By this time, Ezekiel had completed his act of obedience to our Heavenly Father. He had by now lain on his left side for 390 days, followed by his right side for another 40 days — a total of 430 days of “lying around.” We read of this time frame in Ezekiel 8:1:

I And it was in the sixth year, in the sixth month, on the fifth of the month, I was sitting in my house, and the elders of Judah were sitting before me. And the hand of the Lord Jehovah fell on me there. (Ezekiel 8:1)

Notice that Ezekiel was sitting in his house with the elders of Judah on the fifth day of the sixth month. Clearly, as an obedient servant of Yahweh, he had completed the days he was commanded to lie on his left and right side. The question we are left to answer is this: Given the premise that Ezekiel observed a solar calendar, could he have possibly completed the “days of lying around” by the fifth day of the sixth month of the sixth year of King Jehoiachin’s captivity? To best answer this question, we are displaying a solar calendar in which we use the dates given in Ezekiel, as displayed below. Since the 12th day of the fourth month was the last day of the seven days during which Ezekiel “sat astonished,” we will present a calendar depicting

5th Year of Jehoiachin's Captivity (Solar Calendar)

ELUL (6 th month)							
				1 ⁴⁹	50	51	
52	53	54	55	56	57	58	
59	12 ⁵⁰	61	62	63	64	65	
							72
Two months have elapsed (60 days)							
				30			

ETHANIM (7 th month)						
						1 ⁷⁹
80	81	82	83	84	85	86
87	88	89	12 ⁹⁰	91	92	93
94	95	96	97	98	99	100
Three months have elapsed (90 days)						107
30 ¹⁰⁸						

BUL (8 th month)						
	1 ¹⁰⁹	110	111	112	113	114
115	116	117	118	119	12 ¹²⁰	121
122	123	124	125	126	127	128
Four months have elapsed (120 days)						135
136	137	30 ¹³⁸				

CASLEU (9 th month)						
			1 ¹³⁹	140	141	142
143	144	145	146	147	148	149
150	151	152	153	154	155	156
12 ¹⁵⁷						
Five months have elapsed (150 days)						
164	165	166	167	30 ¹⁶⁸		

TEBETH (10 th month)						
					1 ¹⁶⁹	170
171	172	173	174	175	176	177
178	179	12 ¹⁸⁰	181	182	183	184
Six months have elapsed (180 days)						191
						30 ¹⁹⁸

SHEBAT (11 th month)						
1 ¹⁹⁹	200	201	202	203	204	205
206	207	208	209	12 ²¹⁰	211	212
213	214	215	216	217	218	219
Seven months have elapsed (210 days)						226
227	30 ²²⁸					

ADAR (12 th month)						
		1 ²²⁹	230	231	232	233
234	235	236	237	238	239	12 ²⁴⁰
241	242	243	244	245	246	247
Eight months have elapsed (240 days)						254
255	256	257	30 ²⁵⁸			

6th Year of Jehoiachin's Captivity -- Solar Calendar (continued)

ABIB (1 st month)						
				1 ²³⁰	260	261
262	263	264	265	266	267	268
269	12 ²⁷⁰	271	272	273	274	275
Nine months have elapsed (270 days)						
				30		282

ZIV (2 nd month)						
						1 ²⁸⁹
290	291	292	293	294	295	296
297	298	299	12 ³⁰⁰	301	302	303
304	305	306	307	308	309	310
Ten months have elapsed (300 days)						
30 ³¹⁸						317

SIVAN (3 rd month)						
	1 ³¹⁹	320	321	322	323	324
325	326	327	328	329	12 ³³⁰	331
332	333	334	335	336	337	338
Eleven months have elapsed (330 days)						
346	347	30 ³⁴⁸				345

TAMMUZ (4 th month)						
			1 ³⁴⁹	350	351	352
353	354	355	356	357	358	359
12 ³⁶⁰	361	362	363	364	365	366
Twelve months have elapsed (360 days)						
374	375	376	377	30 ³⁷⁸		

AB (5 th month)						
					1 ³⁷⁹	380
381	382	383	384	385	386	387
388	389	12 ³⁹⁰	391	392	393	394
Thirteen months have elapsed (390 days)						
						30 ⁴⁰¹

ELUL (6 th month)						
1 ⁴⁰⁹	410	411	412	5 ⁴¹³	414	415
416	417	418	419	12 ⁴²⁰	421	422
423	424	425	426	427	428	429
430	Fourteen months (420 days) have elapsed! Note: The count ended on the fifth day of the 6 th month (Ez. 8:1). Only 413 days had passed by when Ezekiel was sitting in his house! He was supposed to be lying down for 430 days!					

If the ancient calendar used by Ezekiel only consisted of 30-day months, the above scenario, at the very least, serves to demonstrate that something was lacking. It would have Ezekiel sitting in his house on day number 413. He was charged to lie on his side for 430 total days, so he was at least 17 days shy of reaching the goal ... if that's the calendar he used.

But lest we ignore all of our options, we should remember that with a solar calendar, there must be 365 days in the year, whereas we only allowed 360 days for the above calendar. Nevertheless, if we were to generously add seven extra days to the 412 days we gave Ezekiel, this would only give him a total of 419 days of "lying around" ... still far short of the 430 days he was allotted. Moreover, even if each month during that twelve-month time frame were to have had 31 days, Ezekiel would still have arisen too soon! We realize this is an impossible scenario, but for illustration purposes ... in order to give skeptics the "benefit of the doubt," ... if each month were to have contained 31 days, Ezekiel would have been "sitting around" on day #427 -- three days shy of his required completion date.¹³⁴

Not only do we believe the above calendar is unrealistic due to its not allowing Ezekiel to complete the commanded 430-day lying mitzvah, but we also believe it is very unlikely that each month contained thirty days. A lunation consists of 29½ days (29.53059 days, to be more precise). This is why some months, when you go by the lunar cycle, consist of 29 days, whereas other months have 30 days. Some are persuaded that, in ancient times, the months always consisted of thirty days, and they cite the Genesis flood account as evidence validating their claim.¹³⁵ Regardless of whether or not this claim has any merit, by the time of Ezekiel, the current lunar cycle was in place, as verified by ancient sources, including an ancient Greek calendar known as the "Attic Calendar," which was in place during the fourth and fifth centuries BCE.¹³⁶ The preponderance of evidence supports believing that the

¹³⁴ For those who, like me, need a visual aid to validate this computation, please request our paper entitled "An Ezekiel Calendar ... If Months Had Contained 31 Days."

¹³⁵ See "Appendix: Did the 150 Days During the Great Flood Consist of Five 30-Day Months?"

¹³⁶ More information on this ancient calendar may be easily found online. For example, the Opentopia Encyclopedia, in its article "Attic Calendar," offers the following information: "The months were either 29 or 30 days in length, loosely in alternation, since the moon orbits the earth in roughly 29.5 days. However, rather than following a set scheme (along the lines of 'Thirty days has September...'), the duration of each month was declared just before month's end in an attempt to latch the first of the following month onto the upcoming new moon. The short months of 29

ancients, including those of Ezekiel's day, did not recognize a calendar that contained only 30-day months. The following information is taken from The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible:

The Lunar Month

There is no direct evidence that the ancient Hebrews ever observed anything but a lunar month—i.e., a month of 29½ days, requiring alternation of 30-day months with 29-day months for practical purposes. Speculations concerning a purely solar reckoning, according to which the year was mathematically divided into twelve 30-day months without reference to the lunar phases, fail to explain why there should be months at all and do not take into sufficient account the widespread popularity of lunar calendars in very ancient times. It is true that 30 days are generally reckoned as a month's length (Gen. 7:11; 8:3-4; Num. 20:29; Deut. 21:13; 34:8; Esth. 4:11; Dan. 6:7; 12—A 6:8, 13) and that the year contained twelve months (I Kings 4:7; I Chr. 27:1-15) apart from intercalation. This formula is, however, only a practical way of reckoning and leaves undecided the precise calculation of the calendar. Arguments for a year of seven 50-day periods (the so-called pentecontad calendar) are even more precarious.¹³⁷

We concur with The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible that the ancient Hebrews' calendar consisted of months containing both 29 and 30-day months. This raises the question as to how such a calendar, known as a "Luni-solar calendar," could have worked out for Ezekiel ... presuming that the year only contained twelve months. The following calendar demonstrates that he would have fared even worse than he would have with the "30-Day Month Only" calendar:

days were known as 'hollow' and those with 30 days as 'full'." The article may be read in its entirety by accessing the following URL: http://encycl.opentopia.com/term/Attic_calendar

¹³⁷ From *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. 1, Abingdon Press, New York, 1962, p. 485

**5th Year of Jehoiachin's Captivity
(12-Month Luni-Solar Calendar)**

ABIB (1st month)						

ZIV (2 nd month)						

SIVAN (3 rd month)						

TAMMUZ (4 th month)						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	1	2
3						
10						
29						

Tammuz 12 is the final day of the seven days that Ezekiel "sat astonished." The very next day, at the earliest, he began the 430-day "Lie-Down Venture," c.f., Ez. 1:1-2; Ez. 3:15)

AB (5 th month)						
	1 ¹⁸	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	13
31	32	33	34	35	36	37
45	46	30 ⁷				

One month has passed by (30 days)

ELUL (6 th month)						
			1 ⁴⁸	49	50	51
52	53	54	55	56	57	58
59	13 ²⁶	61	62	63	64	65
				30		

Two months have elapsed (60 days)

ETHANIM (7 th month)						
					1 ⁷⁸	79
80	81	82	83	84	85	86
87	88	89	13 ⁹⁰	91	92	93
94	95	96		97	98	100
Three months have elapsed (90 days)						30 ⁹⁷

BUL (8 th month)						
1 ¹⁰⁸	109	110	111	112	113	114
115	116	117	118	119	13 ¹²⁰	121
122	123	124	125	126	127	128
Four months have elapsed (120 days)						135
136	30 ¹³⁷					

CASLEU (9 th month)						
		1 ¹³⁸	139	140	141	142
143	144	145	146	147	148	149
13 ¹⁵⁰	151	152	153	154	155	156
Five months have elapsed (150 days)						163
		29				

TEBETH (10 th month)						
			1 ¹⁶⁷	168	169	170
171	172	173	174	175	176	177
178	179	14 ¹⁸⁰	181	182	183	184
Six months have elapsed (180 days)						191
			29			

SHEBAT (11 th month)						
				1 ¹⁹⁶	197	198
199	200	201	202	203	204	205
206	207	208	209	15 ²¹⁰	211	212
Seven months have elapsed (210 days)						219
				29		

ADAR (12 th month)						
					1 ²²⁵	226
227	228	229	230	231	232	233
234	235	236	237	238	239	16 ²⁴⁰
241	242	243	244	245	246	247
Eight months have elapsed (240 days)						30 ²⁵⁴

6th Year of Jehoiachin's Captivity -- 12-Month Luni-solar Calendar
(continued)

ABIB (1 st month)						
1 ²⁵⁵	256	257	258	259	260	261
262	263	264	265	266	267	268
269	16 ²⁷⁰	271	272	273	274	275
276	Nine months have elapsed (270 days)					282
283	29					
ZIV (2 nd month)						
1 ²⁸⁴	285	286	287	288	289	
290	291	292	293	294	295	296
297	298	299	17 ³⁰⁰	301	302	303
Ten months have elapsed (300 days)						310
	30					
SIVAN (3 rd month)						
1 ³¹⁴	315	316	317			
318	319	320	321	322	323	324
325	326	327	328	329	17 ³³⁰	331
Eleven months have elapsed (330 days)						338
	29					
TAMMUZ (4 th month)						
			1 ³⁴³	344	345	
346	347	348	349	350	351	352
353	354	355	356	357	358	359
18 ³⁶⁰	Twelve months have elapsed (360 days)					
367				30		
AB (5 th month)						
374	375	376	377	378	379	1 ³⁷³
381	382	383	384	385	386	387
388	389	18 ³⁹⁰	391	392	393	394
395	Thirteen months have elapsed (390 days)					
392	30					
ELUL (6 th month)						
1 ⁴⁰³	404	405	406	5 ⁴⁰⁶	408	
409	410	411	412	413	414	415
416	417	418	419	18 ⁴²⁰	421	422
423	424	425	426	427	428	429
430	30					
Fourteen months (420 days) have elapsed! Note: The count ended on the fifth day of the 6 th month (Ez. 8:1). Only 407 days had passed by when Ezekiel was sitting in his house! He was supposed to be lying down for 430 days!						

As shown by the preceding twelve-month luni-solar calendar, Ezekiel prematurely ended his 430-day ordeal, i.e., he disobeyed the instructions given to him by Yahweh! He should have been “lying around” on the fifth day of the sixth month, not “sitting around”!

Keep in mind also that we have already given Ezekiel a “bare bones” amount of time during which he had to prepare for this period of adversity. As you may recall, he was told to prepare a certain amount of food and water for his adventure. Without a doubt, it would have taken some considerable amount of time and effort for Ezekiel to have made all the necessary arrangements for his siege. Note how Adam Clarke in Clarke’s Commentary explains Ezekiel 4:9-10:

9. Take thou also unto thee wheat. In times of scarcity, it is customary in all countries to mix several kinds of coarser grain with the finer, to make it last the longer. This which the prophet is commanded to take, of wheat, barley, beans, lentils, millet, and fitches, was intended to show how scarce the necessities of life should be during the siege.

10. Twenty shekels a day. The whole of the above grain, being ground, was to be formed into one mass, out of which he was to make 390 loaves, one loaf for each day; and this loaf was to be of 20 shekels in weight. Now a shekel, being in weight about half an ounce, this would be 10 ounces of bread for each day; and with this water to the amount of one-sixth part of a hin, which is about a pint and a half of our measure. All this shows that so reduced should provisions be during the siege that they should be obliged to eat the meanest sort of aliment, and that by weight, and their water by measure.¹³⁸

Somehow Ezekiel had to come up with enough grain and water to last for 430 days’ worth of baking bread. For us to presume he was able to come up with the necessary provisions on the same day he was granted his vision from Yahweh, this would make for a very lenient ... and unrealistic ... time frame. Nevertheless, for the sake of our friends who insist that a strictly 12-month calendar was in use during the days of Ezekiel’s siege, we produced the above sample calendars to illustrate that the only way either calendar could have been in use would have been if Ezekiel was disobedient to Yahweh. Realistically, he needed some extra days to have prepared for his ordeal, which means he should have begun lying on his left side later than on the 13th day of the 4th month of the 5th year. Had we taken this factor into account, then by the 5th day of the sixth month of the sixth year he would have clearly spent even less time on his right and left side. The difficulties in reconciling those 430 days with a solar calendar or even a 12-month luni-solar calendar are just too overwhelming.

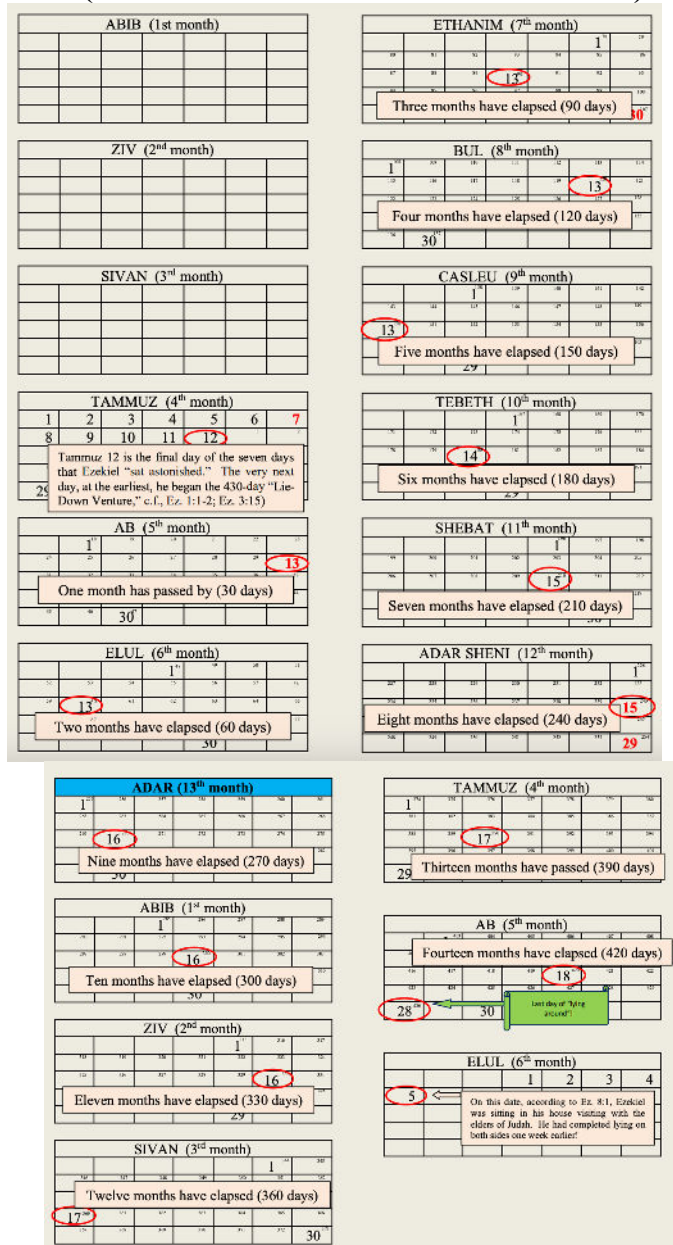
¹³⁸ Adam Clarke, *Clarke’s Commentary on the Bible*, 1985, Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, MO, p. 663.

As mentioned earlier, it is possible for a luni-solar calendar to have thirteen months in the space of a year. Most years will only contain twelve months, just like a solar calendar, but occasionally a year of thirteen “moons” is necessary to keep the seasons balanced with the months. For example, during the time of the wave sheaf offering for the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the omer offering consisted of the firstfruits of the barley harvest. In order to be able to produce those grains necessary for the offering, the barley crop had to be in the “green ear” by the time of the sighting of the first new moon of the year. Fourteen days later, it was ready to harvest, making the wave sheaf offering a reality. That same cycle continues year after year. But what if, twelve months later, at the sighting of the new moon that should have marked the first month of the new year, the barley was only halfgrown, not even having any “heads,” let alone “green ears”? The Israelites knew that they could not have proceeded with the count to the Passover, for there would certainly not have been any barley firstfruits available for the wave sheaf offering! They had but one option: Declare that new month to be the thirteenth month of the year. Abib, the name of the first month of the following year, would have to wait a few more weeks!

Is there Scriptural evidence that Israel used a luni-solar calendar consisting of thirteen months? Well, we have just examined Ezekiel’s “mimic siege” using both a solar calendar and a twelve-month luni-solar calendar, and have discerned that neither calendar could have been used, unless Ezekiel broke the commandment of Yahweh by getting up too early from lying on both his left and right sides. Let’s examine the time frame of Ezekiel’s adventure one more time, this time reconciling the 430 days with a luni-solar calendar consisting of thirteen months in order to determine if this is the calendar that was regularly employed by Ezekiel.

5th Year of Jehoiachin’s Captivity

(A Thirteen-Month Luni-solar Calendar)



As indicated on the preceding pages, this 13-month luni-solar calendar would have given Ezekiel the necessary time to complete lying on both his left and right sides in time to be found in his house sitting with the elders of Judah

on the fifth day of the sixth month. Based on this evidence, Ezekiel could not have observed a solar calendar. He definitely could have reckoned time with a luni-solar calendar, however.

Although many are of the mind that Yahweh intends for us to use the solar calendar, i.e., the sun, to determine our years, and hence the seasons of the years, there are some verses of Scripture that indicate otherwise.

Shown below is Psalms 104:19:

*19 He appointed the moon for seasons: the sun knoweth his going down.
(Psalm 104:19)*

In the scheme of things, those who seek the truth of Yahweh's will are going to find plenty of topics on which to disagree. The issue of which calendar He intends for us to employ is at or near the top of the list. It seems that for every conclusion one reaches, there is someone ready to point out its error. This controversy, as we indicated earlier, traces back to the fact that there are no clear-cut, concise, to-the-point passages of Scripture to which we can refer for an absolute solution to this enigma that has puzzled believers for centuries, even eons. We can all rejoice in knowing that there are many believers who care enough about what the Creator wants us to do that they are willing to study into this matter. May Yahweh bless our study of this subject as we seek to gain understanding of His will for us!

Comparison Charts Illustrating the Three Calendars Represented
in This Study

Solar Option (A 12-month calendar)			
Month	# of "Lying Days" in the Month	Running Total	Comments
Tammuz (4 th)	18	18 days	He began lying down on Tammuz 13 (Tammuz 13 to Tammuz 30 = 18 days).
Ab (5 th)	30	48 days	
Elul (6 th)	30	78 days	
Ethanim (7 th)	30	108 days	
Bul (8 th)	30	138 days	
Casleu (9 th)	30	168 days	
Tebeth (10 th)	30	198 days	
Shebat (11 th)	30	228 days	
Adar (12 th)	30	258 days	
Abib (1 st)	30	288 days	
Ziv (2 nd)	30	318 days	
Sivan (3 rd)	30	348 days	
Tammuz (4 th)	30	378 days	
Ab (5 th)	30	408 days	
Elul (6 th)	4	412 days	Ezekiel was 18 days short of his 430-day goal (430 - 412 = 18).

Luni-Solar Option (A 12-month calendar)			
Month	# of "Lying Days" in the Month	Running Total	Comments
Tammuz (4 th)	17	17 days	Ezekiel began lying down on Tammuz 13 (Tammuz 13 to Tammuz 29 = 17 days).
Ab (5 th)	30	47 days	
Elul (6 th)	30	77 days	
Ethanim (7 th)	30	107 days	
Bul (8 th)	30	137 days	Four consecutive 30-day months is uncommon, but it occurred this year (2007).
Casleu (9 th)	29	166 days	
Tebeth (10 th)	29	195 days	
Shebat (11 th)	29	224 days	Three consecutive 29-day months is unusual, but it occurred in both 2005 & 2007.
Adar (12 th)	30	254 days	
Abib (1 st)	29	283 days	
Ziv (2 nd)	30	313 days	
Sivan (3 rd)	29	342 days	
Tammuz (4 th)	30	372 days	
Ab (5 th)	30	402 days	
Elul (6 th)	4	406 days	Ezekiel was 24 days short of his 430-day goal (430 - 406 = 24 days).

Luni-Solar Option (A 13-month calendar)			
Month	# of "Lying Days" in the Month	Running Total	Comments
Tammuz (4 th)	17	17 days	Ezekiel began lying down on Tammuz 13 (Tammuz 13 to Tammuz 29 = 17 days).
Ab (5 th)	30	47 days	
Elul (6 th)	30	77 days	
Ethanim (7 th)	30	107 days	
Bul (8 th)	30	137 days	Four consecutive 30-day months is uncommon, but it occurred this year (2007).
Casleu (9 th)	29	166 days	
Tebeth (10 th)	29	195 days	
Shebat (11 th)	30	225 days	
Adar Sheni	29	254 days	In a 13-month year, the 12 th month is referred to as "Adar Sheni."
Adar (13th month)	30	284 days	The 13th month is called "Adar."
Abib (1 st)	30	314 days	
Ziv (2 nd)	29	343 days	
Sivan (3 rd)	30	373 days	
Tammuz (4 th)	29	402 days	
Ab (5 th)	28	430 days	Ezekiel stopped "lying around" at the end of the 28 th day of the month with time to spare.
Elul (6 th)	N/A	N/A	By Elul 5, Ezekiel had been freely "running around" for six days.

Appendix: Did the 150 Days During the Great Flood Consist of Five 30-Day Months?

The Great Flood of Genesis has caused quite a stir among those interested in learning what calendar was used by Noah. Several years ago, when the dates provided in Genesis chapters seven and eight were explained to us, we were shown that the only way for such a calendar to work would have been for the months to have contained, without exception, thirty days. This, of course, is in stark contrast to the luni-solar calendar as understood today, with months consisting of either 29 or 30 days. This variance occurs because a lunation is comprised of exactly 29.53059 days (roughly 29½ days). As the calendar used during the Great Flood was explained to us, each month had to contain 30 days because the flood waters began to fall on the 17th day of the second month, and the waters prevailed for 150 days. Then, on the 17th day of the seventh month, the ark came to rest upon the mountains of Ararat. The only way this seems to work is for each of those five months to contain 30 days ($30 \times 5 = 150$).

Later, we were shown an opposing view in which the author explained that, no, one of those months had to contain 29 days. The explanation as given in his two-page treatise was impressive and persuasive. It behooves us to examine each view to see which one really aligns with the Scriptural account. Before we look at the opposing calendars, let's review the pertinent verses in the Genesis account of the Flood:

Genesis 7:11 – “In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened.”

Genesis 7:24 – “And the waters prevailed upon the earth an hundred and fifty days.”

Genesis 8:3-4 – “And the waters returned from off the earth continually: and after the end of the hundred and fifty days the waters were abated. And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat.”

The first potential calendar I would like for us to review is the one in which one of the months contained 29 days. As we review it, we need to bear in mind that the waters were not abated (diminished) until after the end of 150 days. Then, on the 17th day of the seventh month, the ark came to rest upon the mountains of Ararat:

The “Four Months of 30, One Month of 29” Scenario

Year 600 of Noah, 2 nd Month						
FIRST DAY	SECOND DAY	THIRD DAY	FOURTH DAY	FIFTH DAY	PREPARATION	SABBATH
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17 ¹	18 ²	<div> <p>This is "day 1" -- when the "windows of heaven" were opened.</p> </div>		21 ⁵	22 ⁶	23 ⁷
24 ⁸	25 ⁹			28 ¹²	29 ¹³	30 ¹⁴

Year 600 of Noah, 3 rd Month						
FIRST DAY	SECOND DAY	THIRD DAY	FOURTH DAY	FIFTH DAY	PREPARATION	SABBATH
1 ¹⁵	2 ¹⁶	3 ¹⁷	4 ¹⁸	6 ¹⁹	6 ²⁰	7 ²¹
8 ²²	9 ²³	10 ²⁴	11 ²⁵	12 ²⁶	13 ²⁷	14 ²⁸
15 ²⁹	16 ³⁰	17 ³¹	18 ³²	19 ³³	20 ³⁴	21 ³⁵
22 ³⁶	23 ³⁷	24 ³⁸	25 ³⁹	26 ⁴⁰	27 ⁴¹	28 ⁴²
29 ⁴³	30 ⁴⁴					

Year 600 of Noah, 4 th Month						
FIRST DAY	SECOND DAY	THIRD DAY	FOURTH DAY	FIFTH DAY	PREPARATION	SABBATH
		1 ⁴⁵	2 ⁴⁶	3 ⁴⁷	4 ⁴⁸	5 ⁴⁹
6 ⁵⁰	7 ⁵¹	8 ⁵²	9 ⁵³	10 ⁵⁴	11 ⁵⁵	12 ⁵⁶
13 ⁵⁷	14 ⁵⁸	15 ⁵⁹	16 ⁶⁰	17 ⁶¹	18 ⁶²	19 ⁶³
20 ⁶⁴	21 ⁶⁵	22 ⁶⁶	23 ⁶⁷	24 ⁶⁸	25 ⁶⁹	26 ⁷⁰
27 ⁷¹	28 ⁷²	29 ⁷³	30 ⁷⁴			

Year 600 of Noah, 5 th Month						
FIRST DAY	SECOND DAY	THIRD DAY	FOURTH DAY	FIFTH DAY	PREPARATION	SABBATH
				1 ⁷⁵	2 ⁷⁶	3 ⁷⁷
4 ⁷⁸	5 ⁷⁹	6 ⁸⁰	7 ⁸¹	8 ⁸²	9 ⁸³	10 ⁸⁴
11 ⁸⁵	12 ⁸⁶	13 ⁸⁷	14 ⁸⁸	15 ⁸⁹	16 ⁹⁰	17 ⁹¹
18 ⁹²	19 ⁹³	20 ⁹⁴	21 ⁹⁵	22 ⁹⁶	23 ⁹⁷	24 ⁹⁸
25 ⁹⁹	26 ¹⁰⁰	<div> <p>This month only had 29 days!</p> </div>		28 ¹⁰²	29 ¹⁰³	

Year 600 of Noah, 6 th Month						
FIRST DAY	SECOND DAY	THIRD DAY	FOURTH DAY	FIFTH DAY	PREPARATION	SABBATH
					104 1	105 2
106 3	107 4	108 5	109 6	110 7	111 8	112 9
113 10	114 11	115 12	116 13	117 14	118 15	119 16
120 17	121 18	122 19	123 20	124 21	125 22	126 23
127 24	128 25	129 26	130 27	131 28	132 29	133 30

Year 600 of Noah, 7 th Month						
FIRST DAY	SECOND DAY	THIRD DAY	FOURTH DAY	FIFTH DAY	PREPARATION	SABBATH
114 1	115 2	116 3	117 4	118 5	119 6	140 7
141 8	142 9	143 10	144 11	145 12	146 13	147 14
<div>It was AFTER this day (the 150th day) that the waters were abated.</div>		149 15	150 16	151 17	152 18	21
		153 19	154 20	155 21	156 22	28
22	23	24	25	26	27	
29						

The most obvious question raised by the above scenario is, “If the waters weren’t abated until after the 150th day, then how is it the ark ‘came to rest’ upon the mountains of Ararat on that same 150th day?” The calendar proposed by those who insist that one of those months contained 29 days requires believing that the ark “came to rest” before the waters were abated. In order to explain the apparent discrepancy, we can presume lots of things, including the possibility that the Genesis account only gives us approximate dates; however, if we go strictly by the information provided ... and if we presume that one of those five months contained 29 days, then we have to address the question of how the ark came to rest upon the mountains of Ararat before the flood waters had abated. This is a concern that, to this point, we have yet to see satisfactorily explained by those who promote this type of scenario.

This brings us to the “Thirty-Day Month Only” calendar scenario. Does it fit the Genesis account? Let’s take a look at it:

The “Thirty-Day Month Only” Calendar Scenario

Year 600 of Noah, 2 nd Month						
FIRST DAY	SECOND DAY	THIRD DAY	FOURTH DAY	FIFTH DAY	PREPARATION	SABBATH
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17 ¹	18 ²	<div> <p>This is "day 1" -- when the "windows of heaven" were opened.</p> </div>		21 ⁵	22 ⁶	23 ⁷
24 ⁸	25 ⁹			28 ¹²	29 ¹³	30 ¹⁴

Year 600 of Noah, 3 rd Month						
FIRST DAY	SECOND DAY	THIRD DAY	FOURTH DAY	FIFTH DAY	PREPARATION	SABBATH
1 ¹⁵	2 ¹⁶	3 ¹⁷	4 ¹⁸	6 ¹⁹	6 ²⁰	7 ²¹
8 ²²	9 ²³	10 ²⁴	11 ²⁵	12 ²⁶	13 ²⁷	14 ²⁸
15 ²⁹	16 ³⁰	17 ³¹	18 ³²	19 ³³	20 ³⁴	21 ³⁵
22 ³⁶	23 ³⁷	24 ³⁸	25 ³⁹	26 ⁴⁰	27 ⁴¹	28 ⁴²
29 ⁴³	30 ⁴⁴					

Year 600 of Noah, 4 th Month						
FIRST DAY	SECOND DAY	THIRD DAY	FOURTH DAY	FIFTH DAY	PREPARATION	SABBATH
		⁴⁵ 1	⁴⁶ 2	⁴⁷ 3	⁴⁸ 4	⁴⁹ 5
⁵⁰ 6	⁵¹ 7	⁵² 8	⁵³ 9	⁵⁴ 10	⁵⁵ 11	⁵⁶ 12
⁵⁷ 13	⁵⁸ 14	⁵⁹ 15	⁶⁰ 16	⁶¹ 17	⁶² 18	⁶³ 19
⁶⁴ 20	⁶⁵ 21	⁶⁶ 22	⁶⁷ 23	⁶⁸ 24	⁶⁹ 25	⁷⁰ 26
⁷¹ 27	⁷² 28	⁷³ 29	⁷⁴ 30			

Year 600 of Noah, 5 th Month						
FIRST DAY	SECOND DAY	THIRD DAY	FOURTH DAY	FIFTH DAY	PREPARATION	SABBATH
				⁷⁵ 1	⁷⁶ 2	⁷⁷ 3
⁷⁸ 4	⁷⁹ 5	⁸⁰ 6	⁸¹ 7	⁸² 8	⁸³ 9	⁸⁴ 10
⁸⁵ 11	⁸⁶ 12	⁸⁷ 13	⁸⁸ 14	⁸⁹ 15	⁹⁰ 16	⁹¹ 17
⁹² 18	⁹³ 19	⁹⁴ 20	⁹⁵ 21	⁹⁶ 22	⁹⁷ 23	⁹⁸ 24
⁹⁹ 25	¹⁰⁰ 26	¹⁰¹ 27	¹⁰² 28	¹⁰³ 29	¹⁰⁴ 30	

Year 600 of Noah, 6 th Month						
FIRST DAY	SECOND DAY	THIRD DAY	FOURTH DAY	FIFTH DAY	PREPARATION	SABBATH
						¹⁰⁵ 1
¹⁰⁶ 2	¹⁰⁷ 3	¹⁰⁸ 4	¹⁰⁹ 5	¹¹⁰ 6	¹¹¹ 7	¹¹² 8
¹¹³ 9	¹¹⁴ 10	¹¹⁵ 11	¹¹⁶ 12	¹¹⁷ 13	¹¹⁸ 14	¹¹⁹ 15
¹²⁰ 16	¹²¹ 17	¹²² 18	¹²³ 19	¹²⁴ 20	¹²⁵ 21	¹²⁶ 22
¹²⁷ 23	¹²⁸ 24	¹²⁹ 25	¹³⁰ 26	¹³¹ 27	¹³² 28	¹³³ 29
¹³⁴ 30						

Year 600 of Noah, 7 th Month						
FIRST DAY	SECOND DAY	THIRD DAY	FOURTH DAY	FIFTH DAY	PREPARATION	SABBATH
	¹³⁵ 1	¹³⁶ 2	¹³⁷ 3	¹³⁸ 4	¹³⁹ 5	¹⁴⁰ 6
¹⁴¹ 7	¹⁴² 8	¹⁴³ 9	¹⁴⁴ 10	¹⁴⁵ 11	¹⁴⁶ 12	¹⁴⁷ 13
<div> <p>It was AFTER this day (the 150th day) that the waters were abated.</p> </div>		¹⁴⁹ 15	¹⁵⁰ 16	¹⁵¹ 17	¹⁵² 18	
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

As this calendar illustrates, by day 150 the waters had not yet completely abated and the ark was still afloat. It wasn't until after this day that the waters were abated, and that is when the ark came to rest in the mountains of Ararat ... the 17th day of the seventh month (i.e., day #151). This is the scenario that best fits the account as described in the book of Genesis. We are left to believe that during the days leading up to the Great Flood, each month contained 30 days. Did the cataclysmic shakeup of the earth caused by the Flood affect the lunar cycle, causing it to be what it is today? Many have reached this conclusion, which I thought seemed fairly reasonable, until I read the explanation offered by fellow truth seeker Joseph F. Dumond:

When I explain the 30 days of Noah, I remind people that the moon must be sighted in order to declare it New Moon day. Noah was locked inside the Ark for this length of time. It was also raining and overcast for much of the time. If we do not see the moon on the 29th day, then it is automatically New Moon day on the 30th day. As you know there are no 31 days. Noah was not able to see the New Moon during this time inside the Ark. It would not be until he took off the window and was able to see the sky in order to send off the birds; then and only then could Noah sight the New Moon. But inside the Ark all he could do was count 30 days each month.¹³⁹

As explained by Mr. Dumond, whenever it is overcast on the 29th day of the month, thus obscuring the sighting of the new moon that evening, by default we declare the next day to be "day 30." We cannot be so presumptuous as to declare the day following day #29 to be "New Moon Day" without having sighted the new moon crescent. Certainly, during the time of the Great Flood, Noah would have experienced his share of cloudy days, which in turn would have compelled him to declare five consecutive 30-day months. For us to build a doctrine around the belief that the months of antiquity all contained thirty days, we need to build it around something more tangible than the account of the Great Flood.

If we could be shown something more persuasive than the five months of Noah as he and his family endured the Great Flood, we might be persuaded that, once upon a time, each month literally contained thirty days. Nevertheless, our concern for now is, did such a calendar exist during the days of the prophet Ezekiel? We believe the evidence bears out that it did not. By the time of Ezekiel, the lunar cycle was the same as it is for us today, resulting in months of either 29 or 30 days. Either way, as we have seen, the year consisted of either 12 or 13 months. During the year of Ezekiel's mock siege, the year could only have contained thirteen months.

¹³⁹ Excerpt from an e-mail we received from Joseph F. Dumond on 10/28/2007. You can visit his web site by accessing the following URL: www.sightedmoon.com

Chronology of the Equinox

In our section about *The Julian Error and Pope Gregory's Fix*, we explained how the word *equinox* is made up of the Latin word *aequinocinium*, which comes from two Latin words: *aequus* (equal) and *nox* (night).

I researched but could not find the Babylonian name for equinox. I did find many who assumed the Babylonians knew about the equinox or just prescribed them with having discovered it, but I could not find proof of it or a Babylonian word that preceded Julius Caesar using the word *aequinocinium*, which leads me to believe that before 45 B.C. they were not using it in the Hebrew calendar.

The reason we are explaining the equinox to you is because there are many today, at the end of this age, who believe that you cannot keep Passover before the vernal equinox. Because of this takanat, they have incorporated the equinox into their calendric understanding and keep the Holy Days based upon a false premise—that Passover can only be kept after the equinox.

Once we get to the section on the tombstones, we will again provide you with about a dozen tombstones demonstrating to you how they kept Passover before the equinox and with no regard to the equinox at all.

Allow me to remind you that in our section titled *The Jerusalem and Babylonian Talmuds*, we showed you how the Jerusalem and Babylonian Talmuds were not completed until the 6th century C.E., having both begun in the 3rd century as a result of debates about the Mishnah. The Mishnah was redacted by Yehuda ha-Nasi between 170 and 217 C.E., when Yehudah died.

The Babylonian Talmud was completed after the Jerusalem Talmud, which is dated to the 3rd century, and both Talmuds are using the Mishnah as a reference.

These commentaries became known as Gemara, meaning "completion." Each Gemara, along with the Mishna, makes up a separate Palestinian and Babylonian Talmud. Begun by students of Judah ha-Nasi in the 3rd century, the two Gemara were not completed until early in the 6th century. Work on the Gemara was done by scholars in various academies known as yeshivas in both

Palestine and Babylonia. Schools that teach the Torah and Talmud and other rabbinic learning are still called yeshivas.

By the end of the 4th century, Palestine had become a largely Christian area, and the academies ceased to exist. Compilation of the Palestinian Talmud, therefore, came to an end. The work in Babylonia, however, went on, and it is this Talmud that became the standard text of Jewish law and religion. By orthodox believers it is considered divinely inspired, and in modern yeshivas it is still a major object of study.¹⁴⁰

I remind you of this chronology in order to quote what follows.

The Vernal Equinox in Determining Passover

Let me now quote Natan Lawrence of Hoshanarabbah.org as he quotes various sources explaining to you how other “things” were added to the searching of the barley. Instead of relying only on the barley, they began to add Takanot and Ma’asim—other rules to begin the year.

In the first paragraph, he states the equinox has been added. In the second paragraph he states that fruits of the trees and the equinox have been added to the barley search:

*Up until the second centuries A.D., the rabbinic Jews in fact followed the abib barley calendar as I document in my other (earlier referenced) calendar articles. **True, the Jews supplemented the observance of the barley with astronomical observances as well (e.g. the equinox, which they learned from the Babylonian astrologers) along with other natural spring phenomenon.** Nevertheless, their ancient writings reveal that a recognition that the barley has preeminence for determining the year. A Jewish Torah scholar or sage (a second century A.D. Tanaitic source) says in the Babylonian Talmud,*

Our [sages] taught, based on three things is the year intercalated: on the abib, on the fruits of the trees, and on the equinox. Based on two of them the year is intercalated but based on one of them alone the

¹⁴⁰ Talmud <https://kids.britannica.com/students/article/Talmud/277256>

*year is not intercalated. And when the abib is one of them everyone is pleased.*¹⁴¹

Another Jewish sage declares,

Our [sages] taught [that] the year is intercalated based on [the abib in] three regions: Judea, Transjordan, and Galilee. Based on two of them the year is intercalated but based on one of them alone the year is not intercalated. And when Judea is one of them everyone is pleased because the omer [wave-sheaf] offering can only come from Judea.

In the paragraph above we now must have two out of three regions agree with the barley being Aviv—something that is not found in the Torah.

*These quotes from the Babylonian Talmud reveal that the Jews in Babylon (outside the land of Israel) used other factors (i.e. the fruit trees and the vernal or spring equinox in addition to the abib barley) to determine the biblical calendar. This is because Babylon was hundreds of miles north and east of Israel, and lacking modern communications abilities and means of rapid travel, it wasn't easy for the Jews outside the land of Israel to look to the barley and new moon in Israel to calculate the biblical calendar. These are no longer impediments in our modern times of instant communications, so gaining this information is no longer an issue.*¹⁴²

It is here in the Babylonian Talmud that we see the equinox mentioned as one of the tools used by those in Babylon in the 6th century C.E. to determine the calendar start date—the calculated calendar which was only published in 358 C.E. by Hillel. This is showing you that rules are being developed for determining the beginning of the year, which the Hillel calendar does not specify. The further they get from the land, the more time that passes since they kept the original calendar, the more rules or takanot they develop. This is what happens when you have moved away from the truth.

The Biblical Calendar and the Vernal (Spring) Equinox

¹⁴¹ Bavli Sanhedrin 11b; from

http://www.karaite-korner.org/abib_faq.shtml#rabbanites_and_abib

¹⁴² <https://hoshanarabbah.org/blog/2019/03/23/the-vernal-equinox-calendar/>

Because of a misunderstanding of how and to what degree, if any, the vernal equinox factored into determining the biblical calendar, some folks are recommending that the vernal equinox be the main factor in establishing the new biblical year.

*Those who champion this view assert that the biblical calendar must be regulated by the sun and moon only, and that the abib barley has little or no bearing on the biblical calendar. They state that the new month must fall after the vernal or spring equinox, which occurs approximately on March 21. **In my extensive studies of the ancient biblical calendar, I can find no evidence to support this view.** In fact, it was the Babylonians and Roman Catholics (in determining Easter) that took this position—not the biblical Israelites or even the rabbinic Jews!*

Read again what Natan Lawrence has just stated concerning who established the vernal equinox into the calendric debates. We have already shown you how Constantine and the Nicaean Council of 325 C.E. needed the equinox to be rid of those terrible Jews, so they could determine Easter without need of the Jewish decisions about the barley and the new crescent moon.

Then read what I have highlighted in the next paragraph:

*It was the Constantine-era rabbinic calendar (commonly known as the Hillel 2 calendar and that is still in use today by most religious Jews worldwide) **that factored the vernal equinox into its calculations and not the biblical calendar that was in use at the time of Yeshua.** According to the eminent Jewish scholar, Jacob Neusner, the rabbinic or Hillel 2 calendar of Judaism (originating in ca. A.D. 360) “ensures that the festival of Passover falls at the full moon of the lunar month of Nisan (the fifteenth of Nisan), always coincides with the first full moon after the vernal equinox (Mar. 21), and that the festival of Tabernacles (Sukkot), which falls at the full moon of the lunar month of Tishri, always coincides with the first full moon after the autumnal equinox (Sept. 21).”¹⁴³*

¹⁴³ (Dictionary of Judaism in the Biblical Period, p. 111, by Jacob Neusner, Hendrickson; 2002, emphasis added). Note that although the author mentions the vernal equinox and full moon in determining the date of Passover, there is no mention of the new moon (which occurs some two weeks before the full moon each month) in this quote. He also makes no mention of the vernal equinox being a factor in determining the new year. We'll discuss this point further below.

It is true that for the Hillel 2 calendar, the Jewish sages used the spring and autumn equinoxes as one aspect among about a dozen to help determine the time of the spring and fall feasts. It was, however, only a minor factor for the Jewish sages in determining the feasts in biblical (or pre-Hillel 2 calendar) times, which the calculated Hillel 2 calendar of the Jewish sages replaced in A.D. 360.

With regard to the significance of the vernal equinox in determining the spring feasts, several other sources chime in on the subject. Read these, and then we'll discuss what they are saying, and what they are not saying.

Natan is stating that the Hillel calendar adopted the equinox in order to determine the start of the calendar year—something that was not done before 358 when the calculated calendar was released to the world, and they had means by either lighting fires or sending messengers to Babylon to advise them of barley being found. The takanot about the equinox has now been added to the Torah starting in 358 C.E.

Having now stated this fact, Natan then falls into the trap of quoting authorities who all accept the fact that the equinox was needed to determine the start of the year. And this was right after he just explained it was added in 358 C.E.

*[The Jews] at the time of Jesus Christ [did not] as yet possess any fixed calendar, but **on the basis of purely empirical observation, on each occasion they began a new month with the appearing of the new moon**, and likewise on the basis of each repeated observation intercalated a month in the spring of every third and second year, in accordance with the rule that **the Passover under all circumstances must fall after the vernal equinox.***¹⁴⁴

*The rule, according to which it is determined whether to intercalate [i.e. add a thirteenth month] or not, was very simple. It required that care should be taken that the Passover festival, to be celebrated at the full moon in Nisan (14th Nisan), should in any case **fall after the vernal equinox**, when the sun stood in the sign Aries. ...With this also agree the statements of Philo and Josephus [Ant. iii. 10. 5]. **If one therefore toward the close of the year noticed that the Passover would fall before the vernal equinox, the intercalation** [i.e. the*

¹⁴⁴ (History of Jewish People in the Time of Christ, first division, vol. 2, p. 366, by Emil Schurer; Hendrickson; 2009)

*addition of a thirteenth month] of a month before Nisan would have to be resorted to.*¹⁴⁵

*The year consisted of twelve months whose limits were determined by these observations [i.e. the visible sighting of the crescent new moon]. But, since the lunar year consists of only 354 days, eleven less than the solar year, it was necessary from time to time to ‘intercalate’ a thirteenth month before Passover, to prevent its being moved back into the winter. This intercalary month was a “second Adar” and was added whenever a consideration of the sun’s position [i.e. the vernal equinox], the state of the crops [i.e. the barley, since the wheat wasn’t ripe yet], or of the new-born lambs, made it appear necessary.*¹⁴⁶

*The full moon in [the month of] Nisan is the first after the vernal equinox and marks the celebration of Passover.*¹⁴⁷

*Thus Passover must be celebrated in the month of Nisan, called in the Bible the month of Abib [barley] (spring), and never before the vernal equinox.*¹⁴⁸

*According to Eusebius, long before Christ, the Jews anciently (as attested to by Philo, Josephus, Masaeus, the two Agathobuli, and Aaristobulus, who was one of the 70 Jewish scholars who translated the Septuagint) sacrificed the Passover lamb after the vernal equinox, in the middle of the first month.*¹⁴⁹

On account of three signs do they [the judges of the Sanhedrin, Sanh. 2:1ff] intercalate [i.e. add a thirteenth month onto the end of the year] the year, because of the tree, and because of the lateness of the spring equinox. On account of two of these they will intercalate the year, but on account of only one of them, they will not intercalate the year. But if they declared the year to be intercalated, lo, this is deemed intercalated. If the premature state of the grain was one of them, they would rejoice. R. Simeon b. Gamaliel says, ‘Also on account of the lateness of the spring equinox.’ On account of [evidence of conditions in] three regions to they intercalate the year: Judea, Trans-Jordan, and Galilee. On account of evidence produced in two of them they intercalate the year, but on account of evidence deriving from only

¹⁴⁵ *History of Jewish People in the Time of Christ, first division, vol. 2, pp. 370–371, by Emil Schurer; Hendrickson; 2009*

¹⁴⁶ *The Pharisees, by Louis Finkelstein, pp. 601–602, Jewish Publication Society, 1938; Philadelphia*

¹⁴⁷ *Dictionary of Judaism in the Biblical Period, p. 455, by Jacob Neusner, Hendrickson; 2002, emphasis added*

¹⁴⁸ *The New Jewish Encyclopedia, p. 70, Behrman House Publishers; 1976, emphasis added*

¹⁴⁹ *Ecc. Hist., book 7:16–19, emphasis added.*

*one of them they do not intercalate the year.And if the land of Judea was one of the two regions, they would rejoice, because of the [first fruits of] the grain which would come from there. They do not intercalate the year because [the season of the kids], lambs, or pigeons has not yet come. But in the case of all of them, they regard it as a support [for intercalating] the year.And Yochanan the scribe was before them, He said to him, 'Write: [In Aramaic] "To our brethren, residents of Upper Galilee and residents of Lower Galilee, may your peace increase! I inform you that the time of the removal has come, to separate the tithes from the olive vats.To our brethren, residents of the Upper South and residents of the Lower South....We inform you that the time for the removal has come, to separate the tithes from the sheaves of grain.They intercalate the year only if the spring equinox is distant by the better part of a month. How much is the better part of a month? Sixteen days."'*¹⁵⁰

A careless reading of the quotations above might cause one to come to the conclusion that the ancient Jews believed that the beginning of the first month of the biblical calendar had to fall after the vernal equinox. But this is not what the Jews of the first century believed or taught. On the contrary, the evidence indicates that the Jews considered the vernal equinox when determining the timing of Passover, for they all state that Passover or the time of the full moon (not the new moon) must fall after the vernal equinox. There is no mention that the new moon (*rosh chodesh*) had to fall after the vernal equinox, only that Passover or the full moon must fall after the vernal equinox. The full moon usually occurs 14 to 15 days after the new moon. Therefore, the ancients did not base their calendar on the first new moon after the vernal equinox, but rather on the first new moon that fell closest to the vernal equinox, which means the new moon could fall two or more weeks before the vernal equinox, just as long as Passover (which was on the fourteenth day of the first month at the time of the full moon) would occur after the vernal equinox. If it didn't, then the Jews added a thirteenth month.

Did you fall into the trap? You were just shown how the equinox was added only after 358 C.E. with the calculated calendar. It was added at this time. Before this time, it was not used. It became a *takanot* of the Mishnah, but it was not the basis for deciding when to add a 13th month or not. Then Natan uses it to decide when Passover should be

¹⁵⁰ (*Tosefta Sanh. 2.2–2.7; ca. A.D. 300*).

kept and not the 1st of Aviv. He just fell into the equinox trap the moment he began to weigh it into the equation.

The month of Aviv is determined solely upon the barley having attained green ears and there is enough barley to roast and make flour for the wave sheaf offering by Wave Sheaf Day. Period!

Conclusion

In the Scriptures, there is no evidence whatsoever that the vernal or spring equinox was a factor in determining the biblical calendar. No direct or indirect mention of it is even made in the Bible, nor do biblical historians indicate that it was the main factor for determining when the new year began and hence when the biblical feasts were calculated during Bible times.

Although the vernal equinox occurs in the spring of year and this fact was duly noted by the later Jewish sages, it was simply coincidental and ancillary to the indices of the abib barley, which in the Bible determined when the new year began.

Based on our research, we find that the vernal equinox only became a major factor in determining the Jewish calendar when the Jews were in exile in Babylon and outside the land of Israel where access to information about the state of the barley in the land of Israel was difficult to obtain. Then hundreds of years later in the time of Constantine in A.D. 360 when the final Jewish Sanhedrin invented the Hillel 2 calendar, the vernal equinox was taken into consideration, again, since obtaining information from the land of Israel about the state of the barley was difficult or impossible to obtain. Because of limitations on communications and travel, it wasn't possible to communicate the state of the barley and the sighting of the new moon in Israel to Jews scattered in remote lands outside of Israel—a problem that no longer exists.

It is true that some post-biblical era Jewish sages viewed the equinox as a minor consideration in determining the biblical calendar; however, the Scriptures give absolutely no indication that the equinox was to play any role in determining the new year or YHVH's feasts. To look to the vernal equinox as such is an extra-biblical, man-made doctrine. Moreover, to say that the vernal equinox factored into biblical calendric calculations is to read into the Word of Elohim something that is simply not there! The Scriptures never even refer to the equinox directly or indirectly!

YHVH gave only one determiner of when the new year would begin: the abib barley! In looking to other indicators beside the abib barley,

*the Jews were adding to the Word of Elohim. Yeshua condemned the Jewish leaders of his day for rejecting the Word of Elohim and then adding to or substituting for it the traditions (takanot) of men (Matt 15:9; Mark 7:9). Let us not be guilty before Yeshua of the same sin!*¹⁵¹

In all that Natan Lawrence has just explained, before the Mishnah, before the Jerusalem or Babylonian Talmuds, and before the dawn of the Hillel calendar in 358 C.E., there was no one using the equinox to determine the time of the year for Passover. But only after 358 C.E. were they using it and only because they had no one in the land of Israel to determine the state of the barley. The Jews did not bring the use of the equinox back with them at the end of the 70 years they were in Babylon. It only developed and began to be implemented once the Hillel calendar began to be used starting in 358 C.E. What the tombstones will show us is how the use of this new calendar was gradually implemented over time. It would be another approximately 50 years before it gained acceptance by the general public.

All these quotes which we have just read (stating the equinox was being used), are coming from the Babylonian or Jerusalem Talmuds, which were written long after the Hillel calendar had been circulating—for as much as 300 years. The Mishneh Torah was written 800 years after the fact.

It was also by the demand of Constantine to the Nicaean Council to find some method of determining Easter without being dependent upon the Jews to tell them when Passover was each year. He was upset because the Jews depended upon the barley being Aviv, in order to determine the 1st month. In 325, they kept two Passovers, adjusting for an error in timing.¹⁵²

Some will argue that the word *equinox* can be found in the Bible. Allow me to share what Dr. Nehemia Gordon has to say about this matter:

¹⁵¹ Natan Lawrence <https://hoshanarabbah.org/blog/2019/03/23/the-vernal-equinox-calendar/>

¹⁵² Nehemia's Wall Hebrew Voices #154 – Reaping the Benefits of the Medieval Aviv Calendar: Part 1

<https://www.nehemiaswall.com/hv-154-reaping-benefits-medieval-aviv-calendar-p-1>
<https://www.nehemiaswall.com/sts-reaping-benefits-medieval-aviv-calendar-p2>

Vernal Equinox and Tekufah

Q: Is the equinox (Tekufah) mentioned in the Tanach (Hebrew Bible)?¹⁵³

The claim has been made by proponents of the equinox calendar theory that the word equinox actually appears in the Tanach. They are referring to the word Tekufah or Tequfah which appears in the Hebrew Bible four times. Tekufah is in fact the post-Biblical word for "equinox", however, it never has the meaning of "equinox" in the Tanach. In Biblical Hebrew, Tekufah retains its literal meaning of "circuit", that is something which returns to the same point in time or space [from the root Nun.Quf.Pe. meaning "to go around"]. To claim that Tekufah means equinox in the Tanach, just because it had this meaning in later Hebrew, is an anachronism. This would be like saying that there were handguns in ancient Israel because the word EKDACH,¹⁵⁴ the post-Biblical Hebrew word for handgun, appears in Isaiah 54:12. Let us consider another example of this anachronistic use of language: Before the invention of the electronic computer during World War II, the word "computer" referred to a man who sat at a desk calculating (computing) mathematical equations. Imagine if we found an 18th century document mentioning "computers" and proclaimed to the world that there were really electronic computers in the 18th century. This is exactly what the equinox-followers are doing with the word Tekufah. To better understand this, let us consider the four appearances of Tekufah in the Tanach.

Tekufah in Exodus 34:22

The first appearance of Tekufah is in the list of Pilgrimage-Feasts (Hagim) in Ex 34:22 which refers to the agricultural character of the Feast of Booths (Sukkot):

"And the Feast of Ingathering at the circuit of the year (Tekufat HaShannah)."

Being misled by the Post-Biblical Hebrew meaning of Tekufah, some have interpreted "circuit of the year" anachronistically to refer to the Autumnal Equinox (it is doubtful whether the ancient Israelites even

¹⁵³ Karaite Korner, Vernal Equinox and Tekufah

https://www.karaite-korner.org/abib_and_tekufah.shtml

¹⁵⁴ *And I will make your battlements of ruby, and your gates of carbuncles, and all your borders of pleasant stones. (Isaiah 54:12) H688 עֲדָךְ 'eqdâch ek-dawkh' From H6916; burning, that is, a carbuncle or other fiery gem: - carbuncle.*

knew of the equinox, and they certainly had no way of calculating when it would be). This anachronistic reading leads to the suggestion of fixing the beginning of the year so that Sukkot (The Feast of Ingathering) falls out at the time of the Autumnal Equinox. However, a closer investigation shows that "circuit of the year" has nothing to do with the equinox. The list of Pilgrimage-Feasts also appears in a parallel passage in Ex 23:16 which describes Sukkot as follows:

"And the Feast of Ingathering at the going out of the year (Tzet HaShannah), when you have gathered in your work from the field." Exodus 34 is actually an almost verbatim paraphrase of Exodus 23 and it is important to compare and contrast these two passages; the differences are often very enlightening. Comparing Ex 34:22 and Ex 23:16 it is clear that the "going out of the year" and the "circuit of the year" refer to the same time. The "going out/ circuit" of the year is described in Ex 23:16 as "when you have gathered in your work from the field". This agricultural ingathering is also described in Dt 16:13:

"You shall keep the Feast of Booths for seven days, when you have gathered in from your threshing floors and from your wine presses." The Feast of Booths/ Ingathering is described as the "going out of the year" because it takes place at the end of the yearly agricultural cycle of planting, harvest, threshing, and ingathering. At the same time, Sukkot is described as taking place at the "circuit of the year" because once the agricultural cycle ends it then immediately recommences (making a circuit, returning to the same point in time) with the planting of the fields after the first rains (sometimes during or shortly after Sukkot itself).

Tekufah in Psalms 19:7

The term Tekufah (circuit) appears in Psalm 19 in reference to the sun, but here too it has nothing to do with the equinox. Psalm 19 describes the heavens and sun, which from their unique vantage point are witness to all things in creation, and thus (metaphorically) testify to the incomparable glory of God. Verses 5-7 describes the sun:

"(5)... He [YHWH] placed a tent among them [the heavens] for the sun. (6) Which is as a bridegroom going out of his chamber, and which rejoices as a strong man running a race. (7) From the end of the heavens is its [the sun's] going out and its circuit (Tekufato) is to their [the heavens] ends, and none is hidden from its heat"

Verse 6 describes the sun as a bridegroom that bursts forth out of his chamber and as a hero that runs along a path. Verse 7 then describes

the "going out" of the sun at one end of the heavens and the "circuit" (Tekufato) of the sun at the other end. Clearly what is being described is the daily path of the sun which rises at one end of the heaven (its going out) and sets at the other end (its return), "and none is hidden from its heat" during the course of the day. What has confused some readers is that the going out or exiting of the sun refers to sunrise, but this unusual terminology is used throughout the Tanach. For example, we read in Judges 5:31:

"Thus shall all the enemies of YHWH be destroyed; and all those whom he loves shall be as the going out of the sun (KeTzet HaShemesh) in its might". (Jud 5,31)

Those loyal to YHWH shall shine forth with glory as the "going out of the sun", that is sunrise. It may seem strange that sunrise is referred to as the "going out" of the sun. After all, in Exodus we saw that the going out of the year was the end of the year, whereas the going out of the sun is the beginning of the day. However, this is consistent with Biblical usage and in fact the common Biblical way of saying sunset is the coming in or entering of the sun. This is related to the ancient Israelite conception of the sun which at night was thought of as metaphorically dwelling in a celestial chamber (Ps 19:5). At dawn the sun goes out of this metaphorical chamber and the earth is lit while at night the sun comes into the metaphorical chamber and it is dark. This is also the thought behind the comparison of sunrise to a bridegroom coming forth from his chamber. Ps 19:7 refers to the going out of the sun (sunrise) at one end of heaven and its circuit (return to the same place, to its nightly chamber) at the other end, that is sunset (for a similar thought see Ecc 1:5). We see that here too Tekufah (circuit) has nothing to do with the equinox.

Tekufah in 2 Chronicles 24:23

As seen above the "Tekufah (circuit) of the year" in Exodus referred to events in the autumn (the time of the ingathering). The same expression (circuit of the year) is also used to refer to events which take place in late spring as we see in 2Chr 24:23:

"And it was at the circuit (Tekufah) of the year that the army of Aram went up and they came to Judah and Jerusalem..."

In this instance the "Circuit (Tekufah) of the year" comes in place of the common expression "Return (Teshuvah) of the year" which appears several times in the Tanach as "the time when kings go out [to war]" as in:

"And it was at the return (Teshuvah) of the year, and Ben-Haddad counted Aram and went up to Afek to war with Israel." (1Ki 20:26).

"And it was at the return (Teshuvah) of the year, at the time the kings go out [to war] and David sent Yoav... and they smote the Amonites and besieged Rabbah..." (2Sam 11:1)

The time that the kings went out to war was the late spring before the oppressive heat of summer and after the winter rains which made the mud roads in the Land of Israel impassable. We see here that Tekufah (circuit) of the year is used interchangeably with the more common Teshuvah (return) of the year. Whenever this annual set time for kings to go out to war comes around it is a "circuit of the year", returning to the same point in time as last year.

Tekufah in 1 Samuel 1:20

The term Tekufah (circuit) also appears in 1Sam 1:20 which says: "And it was at the circuits (Tekufot) of the days, and Hannah conceived and bore a son..."

Here the "circuits" of the days refers to "the same time the following year" [or possibly to the completion of the term of pregnancy?]. It is worth noting that Tekufah is plural in 1Sam 1:20 as tekufot "circuits". If we apply the anachronistic meaning of Tekufah as equinox then we get the absurd translation: "And it was at the equinoxes of the days, and Hanah conceived and bore a son..." This emphasizes how important it is to understand Scripture in its historical and linguistic context.

None of the four appearances of Tekufah in the Hebrew Scripture have anything to do with the equinox. Instead, this term is used in Biblical Hebrew in its primary sense of a "circuit", that is a return to the same point in space or time. Only in Post-Biblical Hebrew did Tekufah come to mean "equinox" and to read this meaning into the Tanach creates an anachronism.

The Lunar Sabbath Lie

While we are examining or exposing these false calendars, we must also look at one more that has developed in these last days. I am really not going to spend very much time on this one, as it is a complete waste of time. If you want more details about it, then do go to my

website¹⁵⁵ where we have four different articles explaining this false teaching.

Yochanan Zaquantov has addressed this subject, and his full article is on my site. Allow me to briefly share what he says on this subject:

The Lunar Shabbat Calendar Issues

By Yochanan Zaquantov

I have been asked about this calendar theory many times. So I have decided to address this here and pull forward the facts and discuss the theory and its inherent problems with both facts and claims by the author Jonathan David Brown and others. This theory is not an ancient one as the author states but of recent origin and did not originate with.

Lunar Sabbath

Jonathan David Brown was the first [Lunar] sabbath keeper in this century to begin the practice of counting the Sabbath from the New Moon day rather than using the modern seven day week. He published a book in 1993 which explained the practice, and the Lunar Sabbath movement has grown among the Messianic, Armstrong/Church of God and Christian Identity movements. Today Arnold Bowen, Matthew Janzen, and Troy Miller carry on the mantle of Lunar Sabbatarianism, while Jonathan David Brown concentrates on his musical work."

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jonathan_David_Brown#cite_note-2

We see that from Wikipedia that he was the modern promoter of this theory in 1993. He has published a book on this. I have read many articles of people who have had introductions to this theory and even when shown problems with it. None of them were used for this paper. However, a search for Lunar Shabbat on the Internet shows that they are available. There are even some personal stories of contact with some of the followers.

The Theory

The theory starts with Jonathan Brown and subtly spreads through the Messianic communities. It is further taken up by his followers who have fine-tuned it over time. One of the quotes from his supporters

¹⁵⁵ Lunar Sabbath Lie <https://sightedmoon.com/the-lunar-sabbath-lie/>

state from the Universal Jewish Encyclopedia which was originally compiled by Isaac Landman and was later published jointly by Isaac Landman and Simon Cohen.

In conclusion, I have looked at this theory which claims ancient origin and find it a modified Babylonian system which has no connection to the weekly Shabbat based on seven day week. In order to make this system work one must not count the New Moon day and adjust the Babylonian 7, 14, 21, 28 to be 8, 15, 22, 29 or follow the Greek method I show by Pletho. Thus, creating a set of dates that would align with the 15 day as a Sabbath in which Chagim Matzot and Sukkot would start. Thus, do this to try to give credence to such a system. Clearly, this system violates rules which are established in the Hebrew text for a day and counting of weeks for Shavuot. I have also shown two previous sources to the encyclopedia reference they use to proof of a so-called pure Solar Lunar calendar for weeks. The Pletho system looks the most close to the modern innovation. Thus, I find no compelling evidence which would indicate ancientness to this theory nor do I find true support for this in the Tanakh.

I will give you two simple proofs, which will easily dismiss the lunar sabbath as the lie it is.

First of all, you are to count 50 days to Shavuot from the Sunday during the Days of Unleavened Bread, which is seven sabbaths plus one day to arrive on the morrow after the 7th Sabbath.

15 And you shall count to you from the next day after the sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete. 16 To the next day after the seventh sabbath you shall number fifty days. And you shall offer a new food offering to Jehovah. (Leviticus 23:15-16)

Lunar Sabbatarians do not count the 1st day, the 29th day or the 30th day in the monthly cycles. They are free days. They have one of two schools of thought. One is to count by 7, 14, 21, 28 as the Sabbath each month, no matter which day they land on, and then not count the 29th, 30th or 1st. Or the other groups claim the 8th, 15th, 22nd and 29th days as the Sabbath, with the 1st and 30th as non-days.

Using either system counting to Shavuot becomes an impossibility. When I confronted the leaders of this movement about this around 2006, they had a special conference to resolve it. They could not resolve this 50-day issue, because they had to count the two or three non-days

in each month. In the month of Aviv, they would have the 29th and/or the 30th day, plus the 1st day of the next month as non-days. Then in the second month they would have the same problem before they ever get to 50 days for Shavuot. They always ended up with 53 or 54 days, yet many smart people fell into this false teaching.

The second easy proof is to understand Yehshua died on the 14th. They say this is a Sabbath by one group. The other group says the 15th is the Sabbath. Either way they both fail here.

Yehshua was in the grave three days and three nights. He came out of the grave towards the end of the Sabbath, in the late afternoon, before the first day of the week, which began at sunset. The women came early in the morning on the first day while it was still dark:

1 The first of the sabbaths Mary Magdalene came early to the tomb, darkness still being on it, and she saw the stone taken away from the tomb. (John 20:1)

The first of the Sabbaths is another way of saying Sunday, the first day of counting the Omer.

Yehshua was killed on Wednesday the 14th and buried before the sun set. At sunset was the first High Holy Day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which was Thursday the 15th. Friday the 16th the women bought and prepared the ointment, then rested the 17th for the weekly Sabbath. Make special note that Friday was the 16th, and the Sabbath was the 17th. The women came on the first day of the week, which is the “morrow after the Sabbath” as Leviticus 23 tells us. The Sabbath was the 17th day of the month. It was not the 14th or the 15th as these Lunar Sabbatarians claim in their lie.

The Counterfeit is Exposed—Now for the Real McCoy

2 The glory of God is to hide a thing; but the honor of kings is to search out a matter. (Proverbs 25:2)

From Adam to Noah, then to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph, the calendar of Yehovah was never changed or altered. When Yehovah presented it again to Moses it remained the same—unchanged all the way down to the time of Yehshua. But as we have now demonstrated to you, the winds of change beginning in the Hasmonaean rulership

developed into theological debates in Yehshua's day and were then encapsulated into doctrines written down in the Mishnah. These subtle changes over time then changed from doctrinal discussions to the Oral Law replacing the Torah, although they sounded just like the Torah.

Today any discussions about the Hebrew calendar and how it works give most people migraines as they try to unravel the mathematical complexities involved. When I began to look at this in the 1980's, it seemed as though we needed a cursory knowledge of Biblical Hebrew, the Biblical festivals, the customs of the ancient Israelites, astronomy, the history of ancient and modern calendars, and the agricultural practices in ancient Israel. Is it any wonder that most people never tackle the subject of the calendar, choosing instead to follow the majority in rabbinic Judaism, with the dates already pre-set for you? After all, they were the Jews. I had no reason to doubt them, assuming the calendar to be the same one given to them at Mount Sinai by Yehovah.

From 1981 until 2005, I faithfully kept the Hebrew calendar, year in and year out, learning the deeper meanings of each Holy Day and how they applied to the plan of Salvation.

Then in 2005, I went to a lecture by Nehemia Gordon and Michael Rood and had my bell rung. They explained the simple truths about things I had never questioned or considered. My eyes were being opened to what the Torah was saying, and I could not believe what I was now seeing. Why did my Church not see these things?

It was at this same time that I came to understand the Sabbatical and Jubilee cycles. The only way to understand them is by first understanding the Holy Days and now with my eyes being opened by Nehemia, many more truths began to be revealed.

We have mentioned a few times already about the words *takanot* and *ma'asim*. It was at this lecture in 2005 that Nehemia taught about the *takanot* and *ma'asim* that the sages had added to the Torah, and it literally changed my life.

Takanot and Ma'asim

Having shown you the history of the Oral Torah starting in the Hasmonaean period and walking you through each compilation as they became redacted and published, it is now time to learn how these things turned out. I will let my friend Dr. Nehemia Gordon explain the

meanings of Takanot and Ma'asim from his book *The Hebrew Yeshua vs. the Greek Jesus*.¹⁵⁶ May this teaching enlighten you as much as it has me.

Nehemia teaches the five fundamental principles of Pharisaism:

- 1 *Doctrine of the Oral Torah [written in the Mishnah (200 C.E.), Jerusalem Talmud (350 C.E.), Babylonian Talmud (500 C.E.), and the Midrash (200-900 C.E.)];*
- 2 *Absolute authority of the rabbis;*
- 3 *Midrashic interpretation;*
- 4 *Sanctified tradition; and*
- 5 *Commandments of Men/Enactments (Takanot).*

*I explained to my Torah-keeping Christian friend that the ancient name was Pharisees. And actually Pharisees comes from the Hebrew word Perushim, which means “the separated ones”, and at the time of the Second Temple they were separated off from the mass of the nation. Later on, after the destruction of the Temple, they began to take over more and more Jewish institutions, and today their modern name is the Orthodox Rabbis or Orthodox Jews.*¹⁵⁷

Now, this is something that Orthodox Rabbis actually proclaim very proudly, that they are a direct continuation of the Pharisees of Second Temple times. And in fact, in order to be called an “Orthodox Rabbi,” a person must have rabbinical ordination from a previous rabbi, and that rabbi from a previous rabbi, going back in an unbroken chain all the way back to the Pharisees of the 1st century. So, the Rabbis of today are literally a direct continuation, one rabbi to the next, from the Pharisees of the 1st century.

And Pharisaism, ancient Pharisaism and modern Orthodox Judaism are both founded upon five fundamental principles, five fundamental principles of Pharisaism, which I lovingly call, “the five iniquities of the Pharisees.”

And before we go into the first principle of Pharisaism, and which is really the most foundational principle, I want to throw out a question to you: how many Torahs are there? How many Torahs? Very simple question; it's not a trick question. How many Torahs are there?

Audience: One!

¹⁵⁶ The Hebrew Yeshua vs. the Greek Jesus by Nehemia Gordon
<https://www.amazon.com/Hebrew-Yeshua-vs-Greek-Jesus/dp/097626370X>

¹⁵⁷ <https://www.nehemiaswall.com/hebrew-yeshua-vs-greek-jesus-2>

Nehemia: *One Torah. But if you're a Pharisee, there are two Torahs. And that's your most fundamental doctrine and belief - that when Moses went up to Mount Sinai for forty days and forty nights, the Creator revealed to him two separate and distinct revelations: the written Torah and the Oral Torah. The written Torah is what you were referring to, the Five Books of Moses. That was the revelation that was written down. However, the second Torah according to the Pharisees, which is the Oral Torah, which is also known in English as the Oral Law, and they believe that God revealed to Moses this oral revelation which was transmitted from Moses to Joshua and so on and so on, down to the Pharisees of the 1st century, and even down to the rabbis of today.*

Doctrine of the Oral Torah

Now, everything we're going to learn today about Pharisaism is really predicated upon this concept of the Oral Law, the Oral Torah. If we don't understand Oral Torah, we're not going to understand anything else about Pharisaism. Everything else flows from that concept.

Now, the concept of the Oral Law is really an ancient concept. The first reference to it, the first datable historical reference, is an incident from the era of Shammai. Shammai... many of you may have heard of Hillel. Hillel was the author of the Seven Rules of Hillel. His sidekick was Shammai. And an ancient source tells us, "An incident with a certain gentile that came before Shammai." The gentile said to Shammai, "How many Torahs do you Pharisees have? Shammai answered: We Pharisees have two! Two Torahs, the written Torah and the Oral Torah."

So, this is an ancient concept that goes back to approximately at least 20 Before the Common Era, approximately 50 years before Yeshua's ministry. And really, it probably goes back even a few hundred years before that. So, this is an ancient doctrine, and really, the most fundamental principle of Pharisaism is the theology or the doctrine of the two Torahs, the written Torah and the Oral Torah.

Now, the Pharisees explain that the written Torah is sort of an outline; they often give the analogy of a lecture. The notes that you're writing down right now, those notes, that's the written Torah. And the actual details, everything I'm saying, that's the Oral Torah. And because of this, the Pharisees explain that the written Torah is completely incomprehensible without the Oral Torah. The Oral Torah completes the written Torah and really fills in all the details.

You cannot understand the written Torah without the Oral Torah according to the Pharisees.

Now, one of the major changes in Pharisaism in the last 2,000 years is that the Oral Torah has actually been written down, and today it's written down and contained in four collection of writings.

The first one of these to be written down was the Mishnah, which was written down around the year 200 of the Common Era. And it contains the collection of Pharisaical traditions and teachings and practices and customs and laws, and that's really the backbone of the Oral Law.

The next thing to be written down was the Jerusalem Talmud, which was written down around the year 350 of the Common Era. You might think it was written in Jerusalem, but in fact it was written in Tiberias. It was called Jerusalem to give it more prestige. That was written down around the 350 of the Common Era. In the Jerusalem Talmud, it contains discussions of, "When the rabbi said X,Y,Z in the Mishnah, what were they talking about?" And it elaborates and discusses and examines the Mishnah.

The next thing to be written down is the Babylonian Talmud, which actually was written in Babylon as the name implies, around the year 500 of the Common Era. Finally, the last thing to be written down was the Midrash, which was written down over many hundreds of years, from around 200 up until the year 900 of the Common Era.

These four bodies of writings, these four collections, collectively are today what's known as the Oral Law. Even though it was originally oral - in the time of Yeshua it was still oral - today, the Oral Law has been written down.

And this is really the most fundamental principle of Pharisaism, the doctrine of the Oral Torah. Everything else we're going to hear today about Pharisaism is predicated upon this.

Absolute Authority of the Rabbis

The second principle of Pharisaism is the absolute authority of the rabbis; the rabbis have absolute authority on earth to interpret Scripture. And this is epitomized by the saying in the Midrash, which we now know as part of the Oral Torah. In the Midrash it says, "Even if the Pharisees instruct you that right is left, or left is right, you must obey them."

Well, what does that mean? What that means is if my rabbis tell me that this is my right hand, I have to obey them. By the way, it doesn't say I have to believe them. I'm allowed to even say and know that the

rabbis are factually wrong, but I must obey their authority because they have the absolute authority to interpret Scripture.

And in fact, when I was growing up, I was told that if the rabbi is wrong, the sin is upon him. But you, as the individual believer, cannot take the initiative to question the authority of the rabbi. If your rabbi tells you this, you must accept it and follow it.

Well, I really had a problem with this when I was growing up and I began to study the Torah, and I began to study the Talmud, the Oral Law, and I could see in the Torah that this was clearly the word of God. In the Torah we read, "And Yehovah spoke unto Moses, saying." And we get to the Prophets, and we read, "Thus says Yehovah." It's clearly the word of God. And we get to the Talmud, and we read, "Rabbi Meir says this, but Rabbi Akiva disagrees and says that." And I looked at this and I went to my rabbis, and I said, "Look, one is the word of God, the other is clearly the words of men. Shouldn't we accept the word of God over the word of men, especially since they're not consistent with each other?" And my rabbi said, "No, absolutely not! Although these things are spoken as the words of this rabbi or that rabbi, the actual content of their words were revealed to Moses on Mount Sinai."

And I wasn't convinced, and I came back, and I said, "Look, the way the rabbis are interpreting Scripture and the Oral Law, the way they're interpreting the written Scripture is just not consistent with what it says in Scripture. And I can read, and I can see that's not what it says." And I said to them, "Shouldn't we reject this Oral Law and just accept the written Scripture?" And my rabbi said to me, "No, absolutely not. You must not say such things. That's what the Karaites say!"

And I said, "Who?" And I investigated and I found out throughout history there had always been Jews who only believed in the written Scripture, and they were called Karaites. Kara is the ancient Hebrew word for Scripture; Kara-ite is a follower of the Old Testament or the Hebrew Scriptures, and we'll talk about that a little bit more later.

I really had a hard time with this Oral Law, and I just couldn't accept it. One day, one of my rabbis sat down and he said, "Enough of questioning the authority of the rabbis, Nehemia. You must accept their authority." And he began to tell me a very famous story, the story of Rabbi Eliezer, which is a foundational story in Rabbinical theology.

And the story of Rabbi Eliezer, it's told in the Babylonian Talmud, and it goes as follows: Rabbi Eliezer was the greatest of the sages of his era. He was actually the teacher of Rabbi Akiva, who's maybe one

of the most famous rabbis that ever lived, so you can imagine how great Rabbi Eliezer was. And one day Rabbi Eliezer is in the Rabbinical Academy and he's having a debate with all the other rabbis on some minutiae of Rabbinical Law about whether a certain type of oven is ritually clean or ritually unclean. And Rabbi Eliezer says, "that oven is ritually clean", and all the other rabbis say, "it's ritually unclean", and Rabbi Eliezer is trying to convince the other rabbis he's right. He's one and he's against this mass of other rabbis. And the Talmud explains that on that day, Rabbi Eliezer brought forth every argument in the world and he couldn't convince the other rabbis he was right. He brought forth Scriptural arguments and rational arguments and he couldn't convince them he was right. He doesn't know what to do, he's getting very frustrated, and finally he says, "I know what I can do to convince them, I'm going to invoke a miracle." And Rabbi Eliezer shouts out, and he says, "If I'm right, let the trees prove it!" And at that moment they heard the snapping of wood, and all the rabbis ran outside, and they saw an entire orchard of trees being ripped from the roots and flying up in the air. And they looked at this and they said, "This is a miraculous occurrence. Rabbi Eliezer has invoked a miracle to prove he's right, and the miracle has come to pass." And they looked at this miracle and they turn to Rabbi Eliezer, and they say, "Sorry, Rabbi Eliezer, we don't listen to trees." Oh, boy! What's he going to do? "You don't listen to trees? I just brought a miracle!"

So, he says, "Okay, maybe we're not quite understanding each other here," and he says, "let's try this again. I'm going to invoke a second miracle. If I'm right, let the river prove it!" And at that moment, they heard the rushing of the water. It was a very great river, and they run outside, and they see this mighty river begin to flow backwards, and they look at this and they say, "This is a miracle! A second miracle has now been invoked that Rabbi Eliezer has brought to prove he's right. We're very impressed." They turn to Rabbi Eliezer, and they say, "Sorry Rabbi Eliezer, we don't listen to rivers." He's brought two miracles and they're not listening to what he's saying. He's brought Scriptural arguments and rational arguments and two miracles, and they won't listen to him.

So, finally in desperation, he yells out and he says, "If I'm right, let the walls of the academy prove it!" And at that moment they heard the walls begin to shake and rumble. And the Talmud explains that the walls came to a 45-degree angle, collapsing in. Of course, if they'd fallen in the entire way, the story would have ended right here! And the rabbis look at these walls and realize they've almost been

killed by these falling walls. And they turn to Rabbi Eliezer, and they say, "Wow! Three miracles! Now we're really impressed. This can't be a coincidence; this is clearly a series of miraculous events." They turn to Rabbi Eliezer and say, "Sorry Rabbi Eliezer, we don't listen to walls." He doesn't know what to do. Three miracles and they won't accept his opinion; they won't accept these proofs that he's right.

And finally, in utter desperation he calls out and he says, "If I'm right, let heaven prove it!" And at that moment they heard the crack of thunder, followed by a voice, "Why do you dispute with Rabbi Eliezer? In all matters, the Law agrees with him." And by the way, that's an actual recording that was made at the time!

They've heard this voice calling out from heaven saying, "Rabbi Eliezer's right, why are you arguing with him?" And they hear this and they're very impressed. They turn to Rabbi Eliezer, and they say, "Scriptural evidence and three miracles and God calling down to us from heaven telling us you're right," and they turn to him and say, "we're very impressed but sorry, we don't listen to heaven."

And as my rabbi was telling me this story, he opened up to me the Book of Deuteronomy, Deuteronomy chapter 30 verse 12. And there it actually says concerning the Torah, that the Torah is not in heaven, "it is not in heaven". And these are the words that the rabbis said to Rabbi Eliezer, and they explained to him that God has no say in interpreting Scripture because the Torah is not in heaven. The Torah is here on earth, and the rabbis are the ones who have exclusive authority to interpret Scripture. God has no say in it.

And my rabbi turned to me as he was telling me this story and he said, "You see Nehemia? God Himself can't question the interpretation of the rabbis. So, who are you to question their interpretation?" And as I was hearing this, I was in shock. And I have to tell you, for years I struggled with the Oral Law. It was very difficult for me, because my father was a rabbi, and many of my ancestors were prominent rabbis. The man after whom I'm named, Nehemia, was a famous rabbi in Chicago. And for me to break from this Oral Law, which had been the heritage of my ancestors, was very difficult for me. And for years I struggled with this, and I had doubts, and I wasn't sure. But when I heard this story, I turned to my rabbi and I thanked him and I said, "Now I know this is not of God."

Now the story actually has a continuation; it gets worse. The Talmud goes on... my rabbi didn't tell me this part, but later, I read this directly out of the Talmud, and it tells about how, later on, after the faceoff between Rabbi Eliezer and the other rabbis, one of the rabbis

named Rabbi Natan was wandering through the forest. And who does he meet in the forest? He meets the prophet, Elijah.

Of course, the rabbis believe that Elijah never died. If you've ever been to a Rabbinical Passover Seder, one of the things that you'll notice very prominently, they'll stop in the middle of telling the story of the Exodus and they'll open up the door to let Elijah in.

Well, Rabbi Natan, according to the Talmud, actually met Elijah, and he said to him, "Elijah, when we said to God that the Torah is not in heaven," and by the way, if you look at that passage where it says, "it is not in heaven" and you read two verses earlier, what it's actually saying in the context is, "the Torah is not too difficult for you". It's saying there, "you have no excuse not to keep the Torah. It's not too difficult, it's not across the sea or in heaven that you have some excuse to say, 'I need someone to go up to heaven to get it for me'. The Torah is not too difficult." That's what it actually says in Deuteronomy 30, but the rabbis only take those five words out of context. And Rabbi Natan asked Elijah, "What was God's reaction when we said, 'the Torah is not in heaven'?" And Elijah explains, according to the Talmud, that at that moment God laughed and said, "My sons have defeated me! My sons have defeated me!" And this appears in the Babylonian Talmud, the Tractate of Baba Metsia, page 59b.

The point of the story is, I don't believe that God actually said those words as the Talmud claims. But the point of the story in the Talmud, whether the words were said or not, is that the rabbis have vanquished God; that the rabbis have absolute authority on earth to interpret Scripture, and the rabbis have defeated God in this sense. He has no say in how Scripture is to be interpreted on planet Earth. In heaven He can say whatever He wants, but down here on earth, the rabbis have absolute authority.

And this is a fundamental principle of Pharisaism – that you really can't understand Pharisaism without understanding this concept.

Midrashic or Irrational Interpretation

Well, the third principle of Pharisaism is what I call Irrational Interpretation. The rabbis don't call it that, they call it Midrashic Interpretation. This is sometimes translated into English as homiletical or hermeneutical interpretation. And what it does is it systematically ignores the language and context of Scripture. And the principle behind this method of interpretation, of this approach, is that Scripture is a divine code, and only the rabbis have the

knowledge and authority and tools to decipher that divine code. And we've already seen an example of that with the words "it is not in heaven" from Deuteronomy 30. The rabbis took only those words "it is not in heaven" out of the context, disembodied them from the context, and imbued them with a meaning that was never intended, that God has no authority in how to interpret Scripture.

Let's look at another example, a classic example of Midrashic interpretation, or irrational interpretation, Exodus 23 verse 2. There we read in the Torah, "You shall not go after the majority to do evil, neither shall you testify in a matter of strife, to incline after the majority to pervert justice." What this means is that you must not follow what the majority says just because the majority says it. You must follow the truth, even if you're the only one doing that. And if you're testifying in a court case, you must not say that a certain person is guilty just because everybody says he's guilty. You must testify the truth, even if you're the lone voice of reason, because to do otherwise would be a perversion of justice.

Now, this is a very, very, important commandment in the Torah, that we must follow the truth and not the majority, not to be sheeple, following after the herd. But the rabbis take this verse, and of course, they have the absolute authority on earth to interpret Scripture, and using this authority, Scripture being a divine code, they arbitrarily take off words from the beginning and words from the end, and what they're left with is the principle, "incline after the majority".

And in fact, this is a very important principle in Pharisaism, when there was this debate between Rabbi Eliezer and the rabbis. Why was it so important for Rabbi Eliezer to convince the other rabbis that he was right? Why couldn't he just say, "I'm a very wise man, you're very wise men, let's agree to disagree." Why did he have to invoke miracles and have God calling out from heaven? Why couldn't they just agree to disagree? Because the rabbis said to Rabbi Eliezer, "you must incline after the majority". They said to him, "In Exodus 23:2, it has already been written that 'you must incline after the majority.' We're the majority. You have to accept our opinion." That's why it was so important for him to convince them. If he can't convince them, he has to accept this opinion that he knows to be factually untrue.

Now, what's wrong with this? Who's to say Scripture's not a divine code? That's what the rabbis would respond. They'd say, "Okay, we're taking these words out of context, but that's the original intent that God had when He gave the Torah. Who's to say Scripture's not a divine code?"

Well, I know Scripture is not a divine code because it tells us in Deuteronomy exactly how to interpret Scripture. Deuteronomy chapter 31 verse 12. It describes there a commandment that the Torah must be read out loud in a public reading. And there we're told, "Gather the nation, the men, the women, the children, and the sojourner in your gates, in order that they hear, and in order that they learn and fear Yehovah your God and diligently do all the words of this Torah." And the purpose of this public reading every seventh year of the entire Torah, from Genesis to the end of Deuteronomy, is so that Israelites would hear the Torah. By hearing the Torah, they would learn the Torah, and by learning the Torah, they would know to do the Torah.

It goes on in verse 13 and it explains, "And their children who did not know." That seven-year-old boy who's never heard the Torah before, it's his first time, "their children who did not know, they shall hear and learn to fear Yehovah your God." Now, this is very important, because what this means is that the way the ancient Israelites learned Torah was by hearing it. And actually, this is the way that God intended that the Torah be understood, by coming every seventh year and hearing it in the public reading. Someone who's never heard Torah before, someone who does not know, will simply learn it by hearing it.

Now, once we realize that, we realize that you can't take five words out of context, "it is not in heaven", because when I'm hearing it, I'm hearing the entire passage, I'm hearing the entire verse. I can't take two verses here and three words there and half a verse here, and proof text myself into an entire theology. I have to actually read Scripture within its context and look at all the evidence and all the context, not just taking a few words here and a few words there, because that's what the ancient Israelites would have understood and heard when they heard the Torah read out loud every seventh year.

Now, why is it that they had to hear the Torah? Why couldn't they simply sit in their houses and read Torah like we do today? Why did they have to actually hear it out loud, and come all the way to Jerusalem every seventh year? Well, the reason for that is that the average ancient Israelite did not have a copy of the Torah in his house. It took great wealth and resources to have a copy of the Torah in your house.

And in fact, there's a specific law in Deuteronomy 17 that the Messiah, anointed King of Israel, must write for himself a copy of the Torah. And the reason he must write for himself a copy of the Torah is that if he doesn't write for himself a copy of the Torah, he won't

have one. He can't go to the store and buy one for \$3. If he doesn't write it out letter for letter, word for word, he simply won't have one. And if he doesn't have one, he can't reign as a righteous king. As a righteous king of Israel he has to have the Torah at his side at all times, and that's why Deuteronomy 17 has a specific law commanding the king to write a copy of the Torah.

Again, why did it take such great resources to make a copy of the Torah? Let's remember, in ancient times if I wanted a copy of the Torah, I had to start off with an entire flock of sheep that I could slaughter in order to make parchment. Not everybody could afford to do this. I had to have barrels and barrels of ink in order to actually write the Torah. And bear in mind, you couldn't go in ancient times to Office Depot and say, "I need thirty barrels of ink." You had to actually have someone go out and produce the ink and produce the barrels. This was the whole industry just to write one book! And finally, maybe the most expensive part is, you had to have a scribe sit for at least a year and sit and copy letter for letter, word for word, in order to have a copy of the Torah for yourself.

So, the average Israelite simply did not have a copy of the Torah. He didn't have the wealth or the resources to produce a copy of the Torah. And the Creator knew this, and that's why He took into account and said that the way the average Israelite will learn Torah, the simple shepherd and farmer, is by simply hearing it every seventh year. Once we realize this, we realize that the way Scripture is intended to be understood is by looking at the language and the context. And that's key to understanding the correct interpretation of Scripture, looking at the language and the context.

Now, this is actually a big challenge for us. We can't just show up every seventh year and hear it, because we have certain challenges that ancient Israelites did not have. The first challenge we have is a linguistic challenge, the language. The Torah is not written in King James English, it's actually written in Biblical Hebrew. The problem is that nobody today in the world speaks Biblical Hebrew. I've lived in Israel for twelve years and I'm fluent in Modern Hebrew, and I actually read Biblical Hebrew fluently, but nobody speaks Biblical Hebrew as their native tongue.

To give you an idea of what the difference is, it's like the difference between the English you speak here today and the English of Chaucer. You could pick up the writings of Chaucer and you probably would understand a few words on each page, but unless you're specifically trained to read that dialect of English, you won't understand what Chaucer is saying. And that's the challenge we have

with Biblical Hebrew. We have to understand the language as it was originally spoken 3,500 years ago, the language that was spoken by the ancient Israelite shepherds and farmers that could simply show up and hear the Torah read and understand it.

So, we have to work a lot harder than they did. And that's part of what it means to be in exile, to be thrown out of the Land of Israel and lose our language, to be scattered throughout the world. These are the things that we have to deal with being in exile.

The next thing we have to look at is the context. And we've already talked about textual context. That is, I can't just take the words "it is not in heaven" and disembody them from the context. I have to look at the entire passage or I'm twisting what Scripture says. And there's also historical context. Let me illustrate what I mean by this historical context with an example. Three times in the Torah we're commanded, "Lo tevashel g'di b'chalev imo", "You shall not boil a kid in its mother's milk." Three times that appears, word for word, jot for jot, tittle for tittle, the exact same commandment, three times.

Three times.

Now, the rabbis, of course, look upon Scripture as a divine code, and when they hear three times, Exodus 23, "You shall not boil a kid in its mother's milk", Exodus 34, "You shall not boil a kid in its mother's milk", Deuteronomy 14, "You shall not boil a kid in its mother's milk," they hear that three times and they say, "Scripture is a divine code, and when codes have repeated things, it's to encode extra hidden meaning. And when it appears, the same commandment three times, that actually indicates three different things."

What are the three different things this indicates? Of course, only the rabbis have the authority to interpret what those three things are. The first one, according to the rabbis, is you shall not eat meat and milk together. The second time it says, "You shall not boil a kid in its mother's milk", what it really means is you shall not cook meat and milk together, and the third time it appears, it means you shall not even benefit from meat and milk cooked together. What do they mean by benefit? You may not even feed it to your dog.

Well, that's how the Pharisees, the rabbis, look at it. When I hear three times that the Creator tells me, "You shall not boil a kid in its mother's milk", I first ask the question, "What would the ancient Israelite shepherd or farmer have understood if he heard these exact words repeated three times? If he was that boy, that seven-year-old boy who knew nothing?" Deuteronomy 31 verse 13, he didn't know anything; what would he have understood? And I came to the conclusion after a linguistic and textual analysis that what I would

understand from hearing this three times is “You shall not boil a kid in its mother’s milk!” It’s very clear! It has nothing to do with meat and milk!

Now, today we know that’s correct. We know that’s the correct interpretation, because archaeologists have uncovered ancient documents written by the Canaanites from a city in Syria called Ras Shamra which had ancient Canaanite writings, and there the Canaanites talk about how they have a fertility rite where they would boil a kid in the milk of its mother as a fertility rite for one of their goddesses. And so today we know that the reason the Torah forbade us from partaking in this pagan practice or forbade us from boiling a kid in the milk of its mother, is that this was an ancient pagan fertility custom or sacrifice, and that’s why the Torah doesn’t say “don’t eat meat and milk together” or “don’t boil meat and milk together”. Because it’s not talking about that, it’s talking about a very specific pagan fertility sacrifice of boiling the kid in the milk of its mother. It’s not even a dietary law. It’s a pagan sacrifice we’re forbidden from partaking in.

And every ancient Israelite, shepherd or farmer, would have known this. They interacted with the Canaanites, and they knew these pagans. They knew their ways, and they knew that they were sacrificing kids in the milk of their mothers, and the Torah’s coming to forbid them from doing that.

That’s the difference between interpreting Scripture as a divine code and actually interpreting Scripture in its context, according to its language and according to its historical context. And what this teaches us is that we have to use archaeology and history in order to uncover and try to get a better picture and understanding of what the Torah is commanding us. That’s the third principle of Pharisaism.

Sanctified Tradition

The fourth principle of Pharisaism is sanctified tradition, and in Hebrew this is called minhag, or “custom”. And there’s a principle in Pharisaism, “minhag yisreal torah hi”, “A custom of Israel is law”. And what that means is that a custom done over and over by an Israelite or a Jewish community over time becomes sanctified, and it becomes an actual law.

So, I mentioned today that I’m dressed as a modern-day Pharisee. I don’t actually dress this way normally; I’m dressed in the garb of a modern-day Pharisee to illustrate to you what it would mean to obey the Pharisees. And this is actually a sanctified outfit, a tradition that’s

been sanctified over time. And if you go to Jerusalem or New York or certain parts of Chicago you'll see people all over dressed like this because they're following the sanctified tradition of their ancestors. Now, what do we mean by a sanctified tradition? The classic example of a sanctified tradition is wearing the head covering, and right now I'm going to illustrate to you what it would mean not to follow the traditions of the Pharisees, the sanctified traditions. We're going to peel away some of these man-made laws, some of these sanctified traditions. I'm going to take off the hat because this is a traditional Pharisee hat. I'm going to take off the hat and peel away a layer of tradition. And now I'm left wearing the kippah, the skullcap; and the kippah is a tradition that's been sanctified over the last approximately 800 years. A thousand years ago there was no such thing as Jews wearing kippahs; it didn't exist. There was no such custom like that. Approximately over the last 800 years this custom has been sanctified over time. And today it's been so sanctified that there is an actual law with its own rules and regulations that the Pharisees teach, that you must wear the skull cap if you're a male. And this is described in the Shulchan Aruch, which we've seen before as the modern universally accepted guide to Pharisaical living. And there it says about the kippah, the skullcap, "One may not walk four cubits with an uncovered head." So, this is not just a folk custom, "Oh, I feel Jewish if I wear a kippah." No! If you wear the kippah, you're following this man-made law that's been sanctified over time, and now it's taking on its own rules and regulations. "One may not walk four cubits with an uncovered head." Let's see how that would work.

So, I'm going to take off my kippah, peel away another layer of tradition, and we're going to see what this means. So, if I'm following the sanctified tradition I can walk one cubit, and I can walk a second cubit, and a third cubit, and if I walk that fourth cubit then I'm violating the laws of the Pharisees, this sanctified tradition.

There's another law there, in the Shulchan Aruch, concerning the head covering. And there it says, "It is forbidden to pray with an uncovered head." That's very interesting, and I think that matter speaks for itself. But what you can see here is that this is not just a folk custom or tradition, this is something that has been sanctified over time and now is taking on its own rules and regulations.

Well, what's wrong with that? Many people will say, "Well, it makes me feel good to wear a kippah. It makes me feel more Jewish, not just to wear the kippah, the skullcap, but to follow all these different traditions, even if I'm not Jewish by extraction. I feel good following

these traditions, it makes me feel closer to the ancient roots.” What's wrong with that? What's wrong with adding new commandments, with sanctifying these traditions?

*What's wrong with it is that the Torah specifically forbids us from doing this! In Deuteronomy chapter 4 verse 2 it says, “**You shall not add unto the matter which I command you today nor shall you diminish anything from it, to keep the commandments of Yehovah your God which I am commanding you!**” There's a specific prohibition in the Torah from adding to the Torah!*

So, if we add these man-made laws, if we follow these sanctified traditions, we are partaking in adding to the Torah. Now, it's very interesting here, because in the same breath that it forbids us from adding to the Torah, it forbids us from taking away from the Torah. So, to follow one of these sanctified traditions is no different than abolishing the Sabbath. Adding to the Torah, taking away, those are both a violation of this fundamental law in the Torah of adding or taking away from the Torah.

*Now, this appears a second time. There's a second witness to this, Deuteronomy 12:32. “**All that I'm commanding you, you shall diligently do; you shall not add to it or diminish from it.**” You must not add to the Torah or take away from the Torah. And the question becomes, if you follow these man-made laws, these sanctified traditions, who are you obeying? Who are you being obedient to? Are you being obedient to our Creator? Or are you following these man-made laws which are in addition to the Torah?*

*This appears a third time! Proverbs 30 verse 6, there we're told, “**Do not add unto His words, lest He reprove you and you be found a liar.**” I don't want God calling me a liar. I don't want any part of that.*

Commandments of Men/ Enactments (Takanot)

The fifth principle of Pharisaism is very similar to number four, and the fifth principle is the “commandments of men”, or “enactments”. In Hebrew, the takanot. The takanot, that's the fifth principle of Pharisaism. Has anybody heard that word before, takanot? Is that familiar from anywhere? Yes? Okay. So, let's all say it together, takanot!

Audience: Takanot!

Nehemia: Okay. So, takanot, these man-made laws, and these are actually called by the rabbis... there is another term for this, mitzvot derabanan, “commandments of our rabbis”. And the rabbis actually make a very clear distinction between laws that they derive from the

Torah, albeit using their irrational method of interpretation, and laws that they derive simply by either tradition or by a Rabbinical enactment. And the truth is that sometimes they can't distinguish between whether a certain law was established by tradition, by doing it over and over, or whether it was established by an actual rabbi sitting down and making a new enactment. And so really those are very related and similar categories. But there's a very clear distinction between that and laws derived from the Torah even using their irrational methods of interpretation.

Now the classic example of takanot, or "commandments of our rabbis" is the washing of the hands. And because the Oral Law gives the rabbis the absolute authority to make these new enactments - they have a divine God-given right to make new enactments - because of that you make the blessing, "Blessed art thou Lord, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments, commanding us to wash the hands." The rabbis know very well that God never commanded us to wash the hands, but what they mean by this is that God commanded you to obey the rabbis. By obeying the rabbis, you're indirectly obeying God. And this is very interesting. What this means is every time you sit down to eat a meal and wash your hands, you're actually proclaiming the God-given authority of the rabbis to make these enactments.

Now, how many people are thinking here, "I'm not going to do these Rabbinical enactments. They're not from the Torah." How many people are thinking that? Okay, we've got a good group of Pharisees here, most people are... How many people are thinking they're not going to follow these man-made laws because they're not from the Torah? Okay, that's much better.

Now, this is what the Oral Law says to everyone who raised their hands. It says in the Midrash, which is part of the Oral Law, it says, "A person must not say, 'I will not keep the commandment of the elders because they are not from the Torah.'" You must not say that. "The Almighty says to such a person," now they're literally putting words in God's mouth, "The Almighty says to such a person, 'No, My son! Rather all that they decree upon you, observe!'" And then it goes on, and now it quotes Deuteronomy 17:11, "As it is written, 'According to the instruction which they teach you.'"

Now, you could look up in Deuteronomy 17, and it's not talking about the Pharisees or rabbis. You won't see them mentioned anywhere. What it's actually talking about is the High Priest at the Temple and the prophetic judge. And what it talks about there is if there's a difficult court case and the lower judges... remember Moses came

along and he appointed lower judges, and lower judges below them, because he couldn't handle judging every matter by himself.

So, what it's describing in Deuteronomy 17 is if one of those lower judges comes along and says, "I don't know what the law is here", or "this is a difficult case, I don't know what to do", then he goes to the high judge at the Temple, or to the High Priest at the Temple. This is not talking about the Pharisees or the rabbis. And actually in various passages such as in Ezra chapter 2 verse 63, it talks about an actual case they had like this. And it says there that this had to be decided by the High Priest with the Urim and the Thummim, or in Hebrew the Urim and the Tumim, which was a prophetic device that the high judge would go and ask, "What is the answer?" He would ask from God; he wouldn't just make it up, because God actually does have a say in how Scripture is interpreted.

But the rabbis apply this to themselves, because to them God has no say; only they have a say. And then it goes on in the Midrash... remember, God is speaking here, the Almighty. And it goes on there and it says, "Even I must obey their decree." Even I, God, must obey the decrees of the rabbis. And by the way, it quotes a verse there from Job, which has nothing to do whatsoever with the authority of the rabbis, or God obeying them. But the principle here is that the rabbis are given absolute authority, not only to interpret Scripture but to make new enactments, and God Himself must obey those enactments according to the Oral Law.

Well, now that we understand Pharisaism, let's get an overview. We see these five principles of Pharisaism, and the first principle is the concept of the two Torahs, the written Torah and the Oral Torah. Then we have the authority of the rabbis, the absolute authority of the rabbis to interpret Scripture. God has no say in it, only the rabbis do. Irrational or Midrashic interpretation; Scripture is a divine code and things can be taken out of context. Sanctified tradition, such as the kippah. And the takanot, or commandments of men, such as the washing of the hands.

Now that we understand Pharisaism, what we need to do is go back to Matthew 15 and see if we can understand what's happening. The Pharisees come along and say to Yeshua, "Your disciples are transgressing the tradition of the elders because they don't wash their hands before they eat," which is that ritual we saw before. What is exactly going on there? There in verse 3, Yeshua says to the Pharisees, "Why do you also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?" So how do the Pharisees transgress the commandment of God by their tradition? How is the Pharisee

tradition a transgression of the commandment of God? They're adding to the Torah! Deuteronomy 4:2, Deuteronomy 12:32 and Proverbs 30 verse 6 forbid us to add to the Torah! And by adding these laws to the Torah, this commandment to wash the hands, it's a transgression of the commandment of God.

Yeshua goes on in verse 6 and he says to the Pharisees, "Thus have you made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition." How did the Pharisees make the commandment of God of none effect? This is something that I see every day in modern day Israel. I see it all the time.

One of the things that most people are surprised at when they come to Israel for the first time is that most Jews in Israel do not observe the Sabbath. Most people, when they come to Israel, are shocked to see that, and if you ask the average Israeli, "Why don't you keep the Sabbath?" He'll respond and tell you, "It's impossible to keep the Sabbath." And I respond, "Okay. I've been keeping the Sabbath my whole life. Why is it impossible?" And he'll tell you, "Well, if I keep the Sabbath, I have to do this and I have to do that, and I can't do this and I can't do that." And every single thing he lists is something... these man-made traditions and laws that the Pharisees have foisted upon the nation, these heavy burdens they've loaded up upon the nation, and the average person can't always distinguish between what has the Creator commanded us and what are these man-made laws that the Pharisees have commanded. And because of that, they just completely give up and say, "Okay, I just can't do it." They give up. And by requiring these man-made laws, the Pharisees have made the commandment of God of none effect. They've made it impossible to keep the Torah.

Now, I've been keeping the Sabbath my whole life, and I know from firsthand experience that it's a pleasure to keep the Sabbath! The Sabbath is a delight! It's only when you add all these man-made laws and rules and regulations, then it becomes impossible to keep and it becomes a burden. And this is how the Pharisees make the commandment of God of none effect. Well, what we can see here very clearly in Matthew 15 is Yeshua is warning his disciples not to follow the man-made laws of the Pharisees. You must not follow the man-made laws.

Mitzvat Anashim Melumada

1 Then the scribes and Pharisees who were from Jerusalem came to Jesus, saying, 2 Why do your disciples transgress the tradition of the

elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread. 3 But He answered and said to them, Why do you also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? 4 For God commanded, saying, "Honor your father and mother"; and, "He who speaks evil of father or mother, let him die by death." 5 But you say, Whoever says to his father or mother, Whatever you would gain from me, It is a gift to God; 6 and in no way he honors his father or his mother. And you voided the commandment of God by your tradition. 7 Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, 8 "This people draws near to Me with their mouth, and honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. 9 But in vain they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." (Matthew 15:1-9)

13 And Jehovah said, Because this people draw near Me with their mouth, and with their lips honor Me, but have removed their heart far from Me, and their fear toward Me is taught by the command of men; (Isaiah 29:13)

G3862 (Strong) παράδοσις paradosis par-ad'-os-is

From G3860; transmission, that is, (concretely) a precept; specifically the Jewish traditional law: - ordinance, tradition.

He goes on in verse 7, this is a very interesting passage, and he says, "You hypocrites," speaking to the Pharisees, "You hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy of you saying," and now he quotes Isaiah 29 verse 13, "This people draws near into me with their mouth, and honors me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."

Well, now we know what he's talking about, "teaching for doctrines the commandments of men". That is Pharisaism with their Oral Law and their man-made authority to interpret Scripture even above that of God and their takanot and their sanctified traditions. That's "teaching for doctrines the commandments of men".

Now, when I first read this, I was very intrigued, for a different reason than you're so intrigued by it. I was intrigued by this because Matthew 15:9 is actually a paraphrase of Isaiah 29:13. Isaiah 29:13 actually speaks about, in Hebrew, "mitzvat anashim melumada", which is translated variously as, "a learned commandment of men" or "a commandment of men learned by rote" or some variation of that translation. And the reason I was so intrigued by this is that I knew that, throughout history, Karaite Jews, strictly Old Testament Tanakh-following Jews, have always quoted

these verses from the moment that Pharisaism was invented, have always quoted Isaiah 29:13 in reference to the Pharisees. And I thought this was very interesting that Yeshua was applying the same exact verse to the Pharisees back in the 1st century.

Well, the answer is here, in the Hebrew, and if you can read this old Hebrew script, then you already know the answer. This is what it looks like transcribed into modern Hebrew print. And what Yeshua says there in Hebrew Matthew chapter 23 verses 2 to 3, Yeshua says, “Al kish Moshe yeshvu ha’pirushim ve’ha’chachamim: ve’ata kol asher yomar lachem shimru ve’assu u’be’takanotayhem u’ma’aseyhem al ta’assu she’hem omrim v’hem einam osim.”

So, there you have it. There you see, it's very clear. This is what it would look like translated into English, there Yeshua says, “The Pharisees and sages sit upon the seat of Moses. Therefore, all that he says to you, diligently do, but according to their reforms and their precedents do not do, because they talk but they do not do.”

Now that's a very subtle difference between what you saw in the Greek, a difference of one single word, or primarily one single word. In the Greek it said in Matthew, “all that they say” you must obey, all they say, “they” being the Pharisees. **In the Hebrew he says, “you must obey all that he says”, “he” being Moses.**

They Talk and They Do Not Do According to the Torah

So, the difference of this one single word fundamentally changes Yeshua's message. What he's saying now is, if their claim to authority is that they sit in the seat of Moses, so do as Moses says, obey Moses. They claim their authority is they are sitting in this ornate stone chair in the synagogue, they're teaching with supposed authority, **sitting in the seat of Moses, so obey Moses. Do what Moses says.**

He goes on there, Yeshua, in Hebrew Matthew, and he says, **“according to their reforms and their precedents do not do,”** and the word I've translated here as “reforms”, in Hebrew is *takanot*. We've heard that word before, so let's all repeat that word, *takanot*! So, *takanot* are these man-made laws, like the washing of the hands, and Yeshua's warning his disciples not to do according to their *takanot*. And I translated this before as “enactments”, a more precise dictionary definition of *takanot* is “reforms that change biblical law”. That's how the word is defined more precisely in the Jastrow Dictionary, which is the standard dictionary of early Rabbinical Hebrew, late Second Temple Hebrew, **“reforms that change biblical law”**, and the classic example of one of these man-made laws, these

takanot, is the commandment to wash our hands, of the rabbis, before you eat bread.

Well, now that we understand Matthew 23, we see that Yeshua is not telling you to obey the Pharisees, he's telling you to obey Moses. We still have to go back to Matthew 15 and see what it says there in the Hebrew. If we started off with what was a contradiction in the Greek, we can't just look at the Hebrew of one passage and not the other.

Not According to Their Takanot and Ma'asim

So now let's look at Matthew 15 in the Hebrew, and there we read, Yeshua says to the Pharisees, "Why do you also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?... you made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition." Can anyone guess what the Hebrew word behind "tradition" is? The word is takanot! So not only is there no contradiction in the Hebrew between Matthew 15 and Matthew 23, but in the Hebrew, there's a consistent message throughout the entire book. There's this consistent string that runs through the book that Yeshua's warning his disciples not to follow the takanot of the Pharisees, these man-made laws of the Pharisees.

*Yeshua goes on. **He warns against the takanot of the Pharisees. He also warns against their precedents, not to do their precedents, and the Hebrew word for "precedents" is ma'asim.** Ma'asim is a word we'll look at in a moment, but these are two really important words, takanot and ma'asim. Because these are the two things that if you're disciples of Yeshua that he's warning you not to do, the takanot and ma'asim. So, let's say those words together, takanot and ma'asim!*

Alright, so what are these ma'asim? Ma'asim are "precedents." The literal meaning is "actions" or "deeds", and in the Greek it translates this as ergon, which in your English you have "works", the works of the Pharisees. But what are the works of the actions or deeds of the Pharisees? In Pharisee terminology, ma'asim refers to "precedents", or "acts or deeds that serve as precedents". And what do they mean by that? Well, we've already seen that Pharisee law means to legislate every aspect of life, literally from the moment you wake up in the morning to the moment you go to sleep at night.

For example, the Pharisees command their disciples which shoe to put on first in the morning. So, what does a Pharisee do when he comes to a new situation where the Oral Law doesn't tell him what to do? For example, if he lives in a country where you don't have shoelaces, and he doesn't know which shoe to put on first in the

morning because he doesn't know which one to tie first because there are no laces. So, what he does is he combs the Oral Law looking for instruction, and he combs tradition and man-made laws, and if he can't find any instruction on which shoe to put on first in the morning, if there are no laces, then he goes and he looks at the precedents of one of his rabbis. Meaning, he looks and he says, "We know that such and such a rabbi, on such and such an occasion put on his right shoe first even though he didn't have laces," and that becomes a precedent, that then establishes what the proper norm, the proper standard of behavior is. The assumption is this rabbi could not be sinning, and if he put on his right shoe first, even though it didn't have laces, that's the proper standard for behavior.

*And what Yeshua is saying is, don't look to the precedents of the Pharisees as the proper standard of behavior. Don't do according to their precedents. **Do as Moses says, not according to their takanot and their ma'asim.***

Let's look quickly at an example of a precedent. This is a precedent brought in the Talmud, and it says, "A ma'aseh", ma'aseh is the singular for ma'asim, so a precedent. "A precedent in which Rabban Gamaliel" you probably thought it was pronounced "Gama-liel", the correct Hebrew pronunciation is "Gamliel". And Gamaliel, as you all know, was the Pharisaical teacher of Shaul of Tarsus, of Paul. However, this is Gamaliel's grandson, Gamaliel II. So, "A precedent in which Rabban Gamaliel II and the elders were traveling in a ship, when a gentile made a ramp on which to descend, and Rabban Gamaliel and the elders descended by it." Okay, so what on earth is this talking about? The Pharisees start off with the principle that if somebody built something for you on the Sabbath, you may not use that. If they build a ramp for you on the Sabbath, you may not use that ramp. And so, then they asked the question, what if the ramp is built on the Sabbath, but it's not specifically for me? May I use that ramp? And the Oral Law doesn't tell them what to do, so they go, and they say, "Okay, we remember that one time Rabban Gamaliel II descended on such a ramp, and that tells us that this was the proper behavior, and that such a thing is permissible." In other words, the behavior of the rabbi in a specific circumstance becomes the standard by which one should behave in the future.

*And what Yeshua is warning his disciples is, **don't do according to their takanot, and don't do according to their ma'asim.** Their claim to authority is that they sit in the seat of Moses, so do as he says. **Do as Moses says.***

Now, what about this statement, “because they talk but they do not do”? When I first read this, my question was, “What do they talk and what don't they do?” When we read this in the Greek, it's very clear that it's saying they're hypocrites, but now in the Hebrew, we have a whole new context. He's not saying to obey the Pharisees even though they don't do what they say themselves, he's saying obey Moses. So, what's this, “they talk and they do not do”? What are they talking and what aren't they doing?

And then in 2 Kings 17 verse 34, it summarizes the ways of the Samaritans and it says, “Until this very day they do according to their former ways, according to their statutes and their judgments” this is how it reads **in the Hebrew**, **“they do not fear Yehovah, and they do not do.”** And then in the Hebrew, the words “they do not do” is isolated in such a way that it emphasizes those words. And then it completes the sentence, and it says, “according to the Torah and commandments that Yehovah commanded the children of Jacob.” **So, what don't the Samaritans do? They don't do according to the Torah.**

Now, after I had read Matthew 23 and then I reread this passage, I realized in Hebrew this sounds very similar. There's a similar style here, and it seems to me that Yeshua was echoing the words of 2 Kings 17:34 about the Samaritans. **And I think what he was saying is that just as the Samaritans of old do according to their statutes and their judgments, and they do not do according to the Torah, so too the Pharisees of his own era, do according to their takanot and their ma'asim, their reforms and their precedents, and they talk Torah, but they don't do Torah. And what does he mean they talk Torah? They're sitting in the seat of Moses, talking Torah to you all day long, but what they're really telling you is not Torah, it's just in the guise of Torah. What they're really telling you are their own reforms and precedents, and they don't really do Torah.**

So again, what we see up till now is that in the Greek, Jesus is coming along and changing Torah, saying “obey the Pharisees”, whereas in the Hebrew he's actually upholding Torah. Now, in light of that, how do we explain this passage, Matthew 5?

Do Not Swear by Anything Falsely

Matthew 5, six times Yeshua says in the Greek... he says, “You have heard it said, but I say.” And what it really sounds like when you read this in English is that Yeshua, or in the Greek, Jesus, is coming along and changing entire Torah commandments, adding, taking away,

modifying. So, what's going on? Did he uphold Torah or did he not uphold Torah? And this is especially a very difficult textual question, because in that very same passage, in verse 17, he says he's not come to do away with "one jot or one tittle"! So how can he then turn around and a few verses later start changing things saying, "you have heard it said, but I say"?"

Well let's look at one passage here, one passage that particularly caught my eye. This is Matthew 5:33 to 37. It says there in the Greek, "Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not break your oath, but keep the oaths you have made to the Lord.' But I tell you, do not swear at all"! And here, very explicitly, Jesus is saying in the Greek not to swear at all. It's an absolute prohibition if you're a disciple of Jesus to swear, to make any kind of oath.

Now, you should be getting a little bit nervous here right now because Jesus has forbidden you to swear under any circumstances, and if you swear, you're from the evil one, according to the Greek Jesus. But let's see what it says in the Hebrew. In Hebrew Matthew 5, we read, "You have further heard what was said by the ancients, 'you shall not swear falsely by my name,'" that's a direct quote word for word from Leviticus 19:12. "But you must pay your vow to Yehovah," which is a paraphrase of Deuteronomy 23:21.

And then he goes on and he says, "But I say to you, that you must not swear by anything falsely," falsely is what he says in the Hebrew. **So, in the Hebrew, he is not prohibiting vows, he's prohibiting false vows.** "Not by the earth, which is His footstool," meaning you must not say, "I swear by the earth" and be lying; you have to be telling the truth if you swear by the earth. "Nor by Jerusalem, which is His footstool, nor by your head because you cannot make one hair white or black. But let your yes be yes and your no, no. Anything added to this is evil." And we'll get back to, "anything added to this is evil" in a minute.

But in verse 37, he starts off saying, "let your yes be yes and your no, no." Now he's not talking about making vows here, he's talking about making false vows. So, when he says, "let your yes be yes", what he means in this new context is if you say, "I swear by Jerusalem! Yes, I will do such and such," that better be a true yes, that better not be a false yes. And if you say, "No! I swear by the throne of God, I will do such and such," that better be a no, you better not be lying there.

Now, why would he need to tell us not to make false vows? Or why would he need to tell you not to make false vows? Isn't it obvious that you shouldn't make false vows? That's pretty obvious. But what happened, apparently, is in that period some Pharisees came along

and they said, “Okay, well it says in Leviticus 19:12, ‘you shall not swear falsely by My name’, so if I don’t use the name, I’m allowed to swear falsely.” That’s what the Pharisees were teaching in this period, that you’re allowed to swear falsely as long as you don’t use the name. Because it says, “by My name”, and anyway, they don’t use the name so they can swear falsely all day long.

What Yeshua is saying is, “No! When it says in Scripture ‘not to swear falsely by My name’, it doesn’t mean you can swear falsely by other things.” Yes, as a keeper of Torah, you’re supposed to be swearing by the name of the Creator, that’s what we read in Deuteronomy. But if you’re going to swear by other things, that doesn’t mean you’re allowed to lie! The principle behind this commandment is not to swear falsely. Even if you don’t use the name, you’re not supposed to swear falsely. And I think that’s obvious to anybody who uses common sense and looks at this in its context that this is not a permission to vow falsely or to swear falsely. Simply, the way that an Israelite should be swearing is by the name, and if you’re swearing by the name, you must not swear falsely.

And all Yeshua is doing here is, he is bringing out the underlying Torah principle, saying, “No, what you Pharisees are doing, opening up these loopholes, saying ‘I’m allowed to swear falsely’, that’s not the point of the commandment. You’re over-literalizing it. You’re taking the words and disembodimenting them from the context and from the meaning behind what it’s saying. You’re only taking the words and not the spirit of what it’s really saying.” Which is the contextual meaning that anyone with common sense would understand.

Now, there’s no doubt that 2,000 years ago, when Yeshua said this, he would have been accused by the Pharisees of adding to the Torah, because they said it does say, “by My name”, and if you tell me I can’t swear falsely by Jerusalem, where does it say that in Scripture? Now, to anyone who uses their common sense, to the simple Israelite shepherd or farmer who comes and hears “you shall not swear falsely by My name”, it’s obvious that you can’t swear falsely by other things as well. That’s obvious.

But to the Pharisees that’s not so obvious, because to them Scripture is divine code. And Yeshua wanted to make it very clear that he’s not adding to Torah, he’s just bringing out the underlying Torah principle, and that’s why he ends his statement saying, “anything added to this is evil”. He wouldn’t add anything to the Torah because that would be evil. And this is simply a paraphrase of Deuteronomy chapter 4 verse 2, “do not add anything to the Torah or take away”, and Yeshua is simply reiterating this basic Torah principle.

Now, what we have in the Greek Matthew, like it or not, is an abolition of vows. Jesus is coming along and abolishing vows. You're forbidden to swear by anything, that's a fact, that's what he says there. In the Hebrew Matthew on the other hand, we have an abolition of false vows. That's a very different message, isn't it? A very different statement. He's not abolishing vows; he's abolishing false vows. And really, what we see is the Greek Iesous as he's called in the Greek, the Greek Jesus, is abolishing entire Torah commandments, "Don't worry about adding to the Torah, obey whatever the Pharisees tell you to do. And don't worry about vowing in the name of the Creator, don't vow at all, that's what I'm telling you to do. Don't swear at all." Whereas we've now uncovered a Hebrew Yeshua, the words of Yeshua as he's portrayed in the Hebrew, and there, he's upholding Torah. He's saying, "Their claim to authority is they sit in the seat of Moses. Do what Moses says, do as he says. And they're telling you that you can jump through these loopholes and swear falsely? No, that's not the point of the commandment. The point of the commandment is to not to swear falsely at all."

Blind Chairs

Let's look at Hebrew Matthew chapter 23 verses 16 and on, and there Yeshua is speaking to the Pharisees throughout Matthew 23, and there he says to the Pharisees, "Woe to you, you blind chairs." You could look in the Greek and you'll see it says, "Woe to you, you blind guides." In the Hebrew he says, "you blind chairs". Remember, Matthew 23 verse 2, he said, "they sit in the seat of Moses", and now he's calling them "the blind chairs". "Yeah, you're sitting in that seat, but you're blind chairs."

"Woe to you, you blind chairs, who say that he who swears by the sanctuary is not obligated." Does that sound familiar? "Swear by the sanctuary is not obligated." In other words, if you say, "I swear by the Temple of Jerusalem", you're allowed to lie because you haven't used the name. "Who say that he who swears by the sanctuary is not obligated but he who vows by anything that is sanctified to the sanctuary building is obligated to pay." Meaning, if you make a vow to bring something to the Temple, then you have to pay it. Well, that's very convenient, isn't it?

"Mad men and blind men! Which is greater, the sanctuary or the thing which is sanctified to the sanctuary? And you say he who vows by the altar is not obligated but he who vows to bring a sacrifice must give it." Meaning if you say, "I swear by the altar in Jerusalem", then

you're allowed to lie because you haven't used the name. But if you swear to bring a sheep to the altar, then you have to give it because some of the priests were Pharisees, and the Pharisees have got to eat, so it's a simple economic consideration. "Which is greater, the sacrifice or the altar? The sanctuary or the sacrifice?"

And this next verse, verse 20, is really, I think, the decisive verse. There he says, "He who swears by the altar swears by it and by all that is in it." So here he's actually upholding vows. Now, what happened to "if you make a vow by anything, you're from the evil one"? That's not here at all, that's not reflected at all. He's saying, "If you make a vow, you must keep that vow, you must not swear falsely."

Now, the reason this is so significant is because in the Greek, in the very same verse in Greek Matthew, he says, "Therefore, he who swears by the altar swears by it and by everything on it." In other words, in the Greek he's saying the exact same thing as he's saying in the Hebrew on this particular verse - upholding vows. Meaning that in Matthew 23:16 to 20, both in the Greek and the Hebrew, Yeshua is saying no to false vows, yes to true vows. Well, what happened to anybody who swears is from Satan? That's not being reflected here even in the Greek!

I began this walk, learning about the Sabbath and Holy Days in 1981 with the Worldwide Church of God. In the winter of 2004-2005, I heard Nehemia teaching this lesson about takanot and ma'asim, and it changed my life. It has been such a blessing for me to understand this teaching all these years since. Especially today, with so many adding and taking away from the Torah, this teaching has even more meaning because this explains so much and has such a profound warning against adding things to the Torah. I wanted to include it with all of you.

Karaite Calendar

Now that we understand that *Karaites* means scripturalists, it is time to look at how they determine the calendar.

Karaites¹⁵⁸ use the lunar month and the solar year, but the Karaite calendar differs from the current Rabbinic calendar in a number of ways. The Karaite calendar is identical to the Rabbinic calendar used

¹⁵⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hebrew_calendar

before the Sanhedrin changed the Rabbinic calendar from the lunar, observation based, calendar to the current, mathematically based, calendar used in Rabbinic Judaism today.

In the lunar Karaite calendar, the beginning of each month, the Rosh Chodesh, can be calculated, but is confirmed by the observation in Israel of the first sightings of the new moon. This may result in an occasional variation of a maximum of one day, depending on the inability to observe the new moon. The day is usually "picked up" in the next month.

The addition of the leap month (Adar II) is determined by observing in Israel the ripening of barley at a specific stage (defined by Karaite tradition) (called aviv), rather than using the calculated and fixed calendar of rabbinic Judaism. Occasionally this results in Karaites being one month ahead of other Jews using the calculated rabbinic calendar. The "lost" month would be "picked up" in the next cycle when Karaites would observe a leap month while other Jews would not.

Furthermore, the seasonal drift of the rabbinic calendar is avoided, resulting in the years affected by the drift starting one month earlier in the Karaite calendar.

Also, the four rules of postponement of the rabbinic calendar are not applied, since they are not mentioned in the Tanakh. This can affect the dates observed for all the Jewish holidays in a particular year by one or two days.

In the Middle Ages many Karaite Jews outside Israel followed the calculated rabbinic calendar, because it was not possible to retrieve accurate aviv barley data from the land of Israel. However, since the establishment of the State of Israel, and especially since the Six-Day War, the Karaite Jews that have made aliyah can now again use the observational calendar.

We know this is the accurate way to keep the calendar. In recent years, Roy Hoffman¹⁵⁹ of the New Moon Society has been sighting the moon and gathering information for the Sanhedrin for the day they will once again revert back to the sighting of the moon. Roy Hoffman also stated the following:

¹⁵⁹You can learn more about Dr Hoffman at these two videos.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hxA0R8i4BY8&t=16s> &

<https://www.nehemiaswall.com/hebrew-voices-orthodox-jew-who-sights-the-new-moon>

For over a thousand years, the Hebrew calendar has been fixed by calculation. Today, the Hebrew calendar does not match that fixed (Crescent Moon calendar) by observing the Moon. Even though the gap between the two calendars continues to increase, we do not have the authority to alter the calendar until a new Sanhedrin (religious high court) is re-established and is widely recognized.

We have just demonstrated that the Sanhedrin has not sat since about 358 C.E. and yet we have seen all these additions and changes to the way the calendar was “improved”, until such a time as now where it is out by two months this year of 2024. We have also shown you how the Metonic cycle error and the Julian error are also involved in the misalignment of the Holy Days with the current calculated calendar. I say this to demonstrate that they could change the calendar back to sighting the moon and looking for the barley to begin the year if they had the desire and heart to do so. They are in the land and have been there since the 1880’s as individuals and since 1948 as a nation.

Aviv

Today, as it was in the Middle Ages, discrepancies about what constitutes Aviv is hotly debated. This debate in 2024 is divided by about four differing groups.

One group must have fields of ripe harvestable hard-dough barley by the end of the 12th month, so that each person across the nation of Israel can make the wave sheaf offering. Another group believes you must have just one field of brown harvest-ready barley by the end of the 12th month. One of the Christian groups believes you must have ripe brown harvest-ready barley in conjunction with the lambs being born, the storks migrating through Israel, the flax in bloom, and the grapes and figs budding. This group also is split, as some must have it by the end of the 12th month and others by the 10th day of the 1st month. Some of these groups also check to see if the other seven species¹⁶⁰ are maturing at the proper times throughout the year.

I am claiming that each one of them has become errant due to the takanot they have accepted and adopted. I have learned from each group and been a part of those groups in my journey and growth in my

¹⁶⁰ 8 a land of wheat and barley and vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey, (Deuteronomy 8:8)

walk, but I am dead set against takanot and ma'asim that lead you away from keeping Yehovah's moedim when He said to keep them.

Allow me to explain.

There are 12 or 13 months in a given year. Each month is determined by the sighting of the moon's first crescent as witnessed by two or more people in Israel. This becomes controversial only if just one person sees the moon on the 1st or 7th critical months but has a picture to back them up. Then what do you do? We need two witnesses.

When it comes to deciding on whether or not to add a 13th month, another controversy develops. Adding a 13th month is determined by what each group believes is the proper meaning of the Hebrew word Aviv. If the barley is not Aviv according to what they understand the word Aviv means, then a 13th month is added. This is where we all differ.

The one and only indicator, as to whether you add a 13th month, is the barley. It is not dependent on the Metonic cycle or the equinox. There is no guesswork or supposition, for the Word of Yehovah is clear on this point, as we read in Exodus:

2 This month shall be to you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year to you. (Exodus 12:2)

If we continue to read further in Exodus 12,¹⁶¹ we will see that this first month occurred at the time of the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread, with Passover beginning at the end of the fourteenth day of the first month (verse 18).¹⁶² But how do we know which month

¹⁶¹ 15 You shall keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread. You shall eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded you, in the time appointed of **the month Abib**, for in it you came out of Egypt. And no one shall appear before Me empty. (Exodus 23:15)

18 You shall keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread. You shall eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded you, in the time of **the month Abib**. For in **the month Abib** you came out from Egypt. (Exodus 34:18)

¹⁶² Verse 6 clearly defines when we are to slay the passover:

6 And you shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month. And the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. (Exodus 12:6)

But verse 18 clearly defines that we are to eat the sacrifice at evening, which begins the Feast of Unleavened Bread on the 15th at sunset:

18 In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month **at evening**, you shall eat unleavened bread, until the twenty-first day of the month at evening. (Exodus 12:18)

is the first month? This is where the agricultural indicator comes into play.

4 You are going out this day in the month Abib. (Exodus 13:4)

Yehovah is connecting the growth of the barley at a certain stage with the 1st month of the year.

It is important that you pay attention to the meaning of the word Aviv:

B) אֶבֶב (אֶבֶב ABB) ac: ? co: **Grain** ab: ?

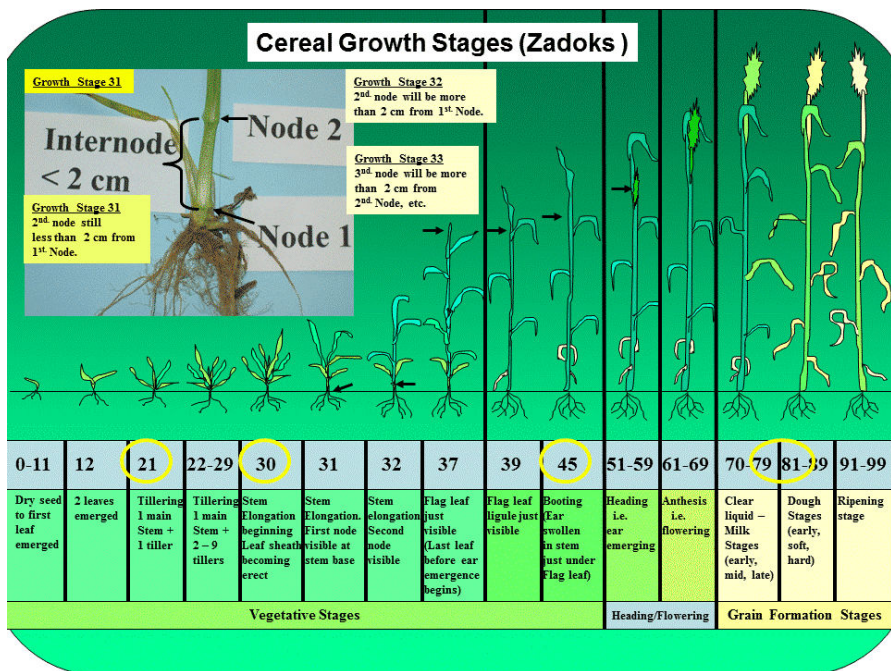
b^m) אֶבֶב (אֶבֶב A-BYB) - **Green Grain**: *The new green ears of growing grain as the parent seeds attached to the stalk (pole) of the next generation of crops. Also Abib, the name of a month in the Hebrew calendar. [freq. 8] |kjb: abib, corn| {H24}*

H24 (Strong) אֶבֶב 'âbîyb aw-beeb'

From an unused root (meaning to be tender); green, that is a young ear of grain; hence the name of the month Abib or Nisan: - Abib, ear, green ears of corn.

Aviv or Abib means “*fresh, young barley ears*” or literally “*green in the ears.*” So literally, when Yehovah called the 1st month by the name Aviv, he was calling it the month of the “green barley ears.” It is right here in the meaning of the word Aviv, that Yehovah clearly reveals in which season the new year is to begin. It is not the month of ripe brown barley heads. This is important to understand, as this is one of the main sticking points today between the various groups searching for the barley each year.

This requires you to understand the growth cycle of barley and exactly how long it takes for the barley to mature from the time the heads come out of the boot. The barley has green heads for approximately 28 days according to the Zadok scale (stages 51-79).



From the time the barley “heads” or has just come out of the head, until it is harvestable is about 40 days, according to the Zadok scale (stages 51-91). It is between those 28-40 days, when Passover will fall, that you must determine if the barley will be ripe enough by Wave Sheaf Day.

Some years Wave Sheaf Day falls on the 15th day of the month and other years on the 21st day of the month. The question we wrestle with each year is: Will the barley be at stage 81 on the Zadok scale by Wave Sheaf Day?

Wave Sheaf Offering

You are not to just bring a sheaf and wave it before Yehovah. You must prepare the sheaf, by threshing out the grains and gathering enough to be ground up into about an omer’s worth of flour. It is this omer of flour that is waved before Yehovah.

By understanding this part of the offering, you are then to understand that the barley that is collected must be at such a stage that it can be roasted to remove any remaining water and then ground into flour, otherwise the grinding would result in a paste. On the Zadok scale

this is approximately stage 81 or more, when the dough is firm enough that it can be roasted to remove the remaining moisture and then ground into flour.

As you read the instructions in Leviticus 2, read carefully what you are told in verse 14, that you are to bring **Green Ears of Grain** roasted by fire. These are the very first of the first fruits.

Laws for Grain Offerings:

1 And when anyone will offer a food offering to Jehovah, his offering shall be of fine flour. And he shall pour oil on it and put frankincense on it. 2 And he shall bring it to Aaron's sons, the priests. And he shall take out of it his handful of flour and its oil, with all its frankincense. And the priest shall burn the memorial of it on the altar, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savor to Jehovah. 3 And the rest of the food offering shall be Aaron's and his sons', most holy of the offerings of Jehovah made by fire. 4 And if you bring a sacrifice of a food offering baked in the oven, it shall be unleavened cakes of fine flour mixed with oil, or unleavened wafers anointed with oil. 5 And if your offering is a food offering on the griddle, your offering shall be of fine flour unleavened, mixed with oil. 6 You shall break it in pieces and pour oil on it. It is a food offering. 7 And if your offering is a food offering in the frying pan, it shall be made of fine flour with oil. 8 And you shall bring the food offering that is made of these things to Jehovah. And when it is presented to the priest, he shall bring it to the altar. 9 And the priest shall take from the food offering a memorial of it, and shall burn it on the altar. It is an offering made by fire, of a sweet savor to Jehovah. 10 And that which is left of the food offering shall be Aaron's and his sons: it is most holy of the offerings of Jehovah made by fire. 11 Any food offering which you shall bring to Jehovah shall not be made with leaven. (chametz) For you shall burn no leaven, (se'or) nor any honey¹⁶³, in any offering of Jehovah

¹⁶³ Honey is not se'or, but it is chametz and that's why it's not allowed on Yehovah's altar. So, honey speeds up the leavening process. I am told challah rises nicely and quickly because usually challah recipes call for honey instead of sugar - and honey is chametz!

The next passage we're going to look at is the laws of chametz, of leavened bread, as they relate to the flour offering, in Hebrew, the korban mincha. The laws of the flour offering are first given in Leviticus chapter 2, and there we read, in Leviticus 2:11,

made by fire. 12 As an offering of the firstfruits, you shall bring them to Jehovah. But they shall not be burned on the altar for a sweet savor. 13 And every sacrifice of your food offering shall you season with salt. And you shall not allow the salt of the covenant of your God to be lacking from your food offering. You shall offer salt with all your offerings. 14 **And if you bring a food offering of your firstfruits to Jehovah, green ears (Aviv) roasted by fire, grains of a garden, you shall bring near for a food offering your firstfruits,** 15 And you shall put oil on it and lay frankincense on it. It is a food offering. 16

“Every flour offering that you offer to Jehovah you must not make as chametz, for you must not burn any seor or any honey as a fire offering to Jehovah.”

And again, in English you would have completely missed this because it would have said, “You must not make as leavened bread for you must not burn any leaven.” And you would think those are the same thing. But here we see we cannot take the flour that we offer to Jehovah and make it as chametz because we’re not allowed to burn seor or honey as a fire offering to Jehovah.

Okay, seor, we know, is put into the dough and makes it chametz. That is, you take the leavening or yeast agent, and you stick it into the dough, you mix it into the dough, and then from that you end up with chametz. What does honey have to do with it? What honey has to do with it is quite simply that honey is another thing that can act as a leavening agent. Honey is highly concentrated with sugar, and that will speed up the leavening process. And what I mean by that, again, is that if you leave out any dough that doesn’t have any leavening agent in it, it will eventually rise after three or four days. But if you stick honey in it, then it will leaven much quicker. It won’t leaven as quickly as if you stick seor, or sourdough, in it, but it will leaven so much quicker. So, we’re forbidden here to burn seor and honey upon the altar of Jehovah, and therefore we cannot make the bread of the flour offering as chametz. I should point out that there are certain specific flour offerings that are brought as chametz, that are the exception to the rule. Those are the thanks offering and the new bread offering that’s brought on Shavuot, in the Feast of Weeks, but we won’t get into that, that’s a different conversation.

But the rule is, you’re not allowed to burn seor or honey upon the altar of Jehovah, and even in those other sacrifices, in the thanks offering that’s in Leviticus 7, where it talks about that you do make it as chametz, the flour offering. You don’t burn that on the altar, you just eat it as chametz.

From this point we’re going to skip over the rest of the topic of the flour offering, because that’s really a different subject that we can go into a different time. But this helps us in defining exactly what leaven is. We see it’s not just something that’s leavened using yeast, or using sourdough, it’s something that’s leavened using any leavening agent, even honey. And again, this doesn’t mean we have to get rid of all the honey in our houses because it doesn’t say that. It says to get rid of the seor, the sourdough, which is yeast, and to get rid of the chametz. We can have honey, but we just can’t mix the honey in with our dough.

<https://www.nehemiaswall.com/biblical-understanding-of-passover-leaven-chametz>

And the priest shall burn it as incense with its memorial offering from its grains and from its oil, besides all its frankincense, a fire offering to Jehovah. (Leviticus 2:1-16)¹⁶⁴

With this understanding, we now know that the barley must be in a state of green ears, and it must also have enough dough in the heads that they can be roasted and turned into flour.

Deuteronomy 16 adds more knowledge to the barley equation:

Passover

1 Observe the month Abib, and keep the Passover to Jehovah your God. For in the month of Abib, Jehovah your God brought you forth out of Egypt by night.¹⁶⁵ 2 And you shall therefore sacrifice the

¹⁶⁴ (karmel) It should be noted that not all the barley ripens in the Land of Israel at the same time. The wave-sheaf offering is a national sacrifice brought from the first fields to become harvest-ready. However, the first-fruit offerings brought by individual farmers can vary in ripeness anywhere from "Aviv parched in fire" to fully ripe grain which may be brought "crushed" or "coarsely ground". This is what is meant in Lev 2:14,

"And when you bring a first-fruit offering to Jehovah; you shall bring your first-fruit offering as Aviv parched in fire or crushed Carmel" (Carmel is grain which has hardened beyond Aviv to the point where it can be "crushed" or "coarsely ground"). All of the above passages have been translated directly from the Hebrew and it is worth noting that the King James translators seem to have only understood the various Hebrew agricultural terms very poorly. In Lev 2:14 they translated Carmel as "full ears" and "Aviv" as "green ears" whereas in Lev 23:14 they translated Carmel as "green ears"!

<https://www.nehemiaswall.com/aviv-barley-in-the-biblical-calendar>

¹⁶⁵ Nehemia: Well, so, Deuteronomy 16. Why don't we jump ahead to there? There, we've got the feasts. This is one of my favorite passages in the whole Bible, "shmor et chodesh ha'Aviv," observe the month of the Aviv, "ve'asita Pesach la Yehovah Elohecha," and do the Passover to Jehovah your God. Remember, in the Tanakh, in the Hebrew Bible, Passover is always a sacrifice. So, "do the Passover," isn't the feast, it's a sacrifice, "ki bechodesh ha'Aviv hotsi'acha Yehovah Elohecha mimitsrayim Laylah." For in the month of the Aviv, Jehovah your God took you out of Egypt by night. This is actually a very controversial verse, believe it or not. The reason it's controversial is that Numbers 33:3, which we read in a previous portion, says, "They set out from Rameses in the first month on the fifteenth day of the month, it was on the morrow of the Passover offering that the Israelites started out defiantly in plain view of all the Egyptians." Now, some of the translations say, "the day after the Passover", but the Hebrew is very much more specific. It says, "the morrow of the Passover," which in Hebrew "mimochorat," means the morning following the

Passover to Jehovah your God, of the flock and the herd, in the place which Jehovah shall choose to place His name there. 3 You shall eat no leavened bread with it. Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread with it, the bread of affliction, for you came forth out of the land of Egypt in haste, so that you may remember the day that you came forth out of the land of Egypt all the days of your life. 4 And there shall be no leavened bread seen with you in all your borders for seven days. Nor shall any of the flesh which you sacrificed in the first day at evening remain all night until the morning. 5 You may not sacrifice the Passover within any of your gates, which Jehovah your God gives you, 6 but at the place which Jehovah your God shall choose to place His name in, there you shall sacrifice the Passover at evening, at the going of the sun, at the time that you came out of Egypt. 7 And you shall roast and eat in the place which Jehovah your God shall choose. And in the morning you shall turn and go to your tents. 8 Six days you shall eat unleavened bread. And on the seventh day shall be a solemn assembly to Jehovah your God. You shall do no work.

The Feast of Weeks

*9 You shall count seven weeks to yourselves. Begin to count the seven weeks **from the time you began to put the sickle to the grain.** 10 And you shall keep the Feast of Weeks to Jehovah your God with a measure of a free-will offering of your hand, which you shall give according as Jehovah your God has blessed you. (Deuteronomy 16:1-10)*

Passover. So that means they left in the morning. So why does it say here in verse 1, "at night" in Deuteronomy 16:1?

...

Nehemia: One of the things that you have in biblical Hebrew is these little clauses, which will kind of be stuck at the end of the verse. What I mean by that is that you could really read this verse, "observe the month of the Aviv and do the Passover to Yehovah your God at night, for in the month of the Aviv, Yehovah your God took you up out of Egypt." In other words, that statement "by night," or "at night," sometimes they'll just stick that kind of clause at the end, that little part of the sentence. And really it goes to something earlier in the chapter, and there's a really funny example.

...

Nehemia: Long story short, my way of reading this is, "observe the month of the Aviv and do the Passover to Yehovah your God at night for the month of the Aviv, Yehovah your God took you up out of Egypt." That's how I read it.

<https://www.nehemiaswall.com/torah-pearls-reeh>

When was the sickle put to the grain?

Because of this statement in Deuteronomy 16:9 that we must begin to count the seven weeks from the time we first put the sickle to the grain, we are told that we begin to cut the grain on the first day of the week, just as we are told in Leviticus 23, the morrow after the weekly Sabbath during the days of Unleavened Bread.

10 Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, When you have come into the land which I give to you, and shall reap the harvest of it, then you shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest. 11 And he shall wave the sheaf before Jehovah to be received for you. On the next day after the sabbath the priest shall wave it. (Leviticus 23:10-11)

15 And you shall count to you from the next day after the sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete. 16 To the next day after the seventh sabbath you shall number fifty days. And you shall offer a new food offering to Jehovah. 17 You shall bring out of your homes two wave loaves of two-tenth parts. They shall be of fine flour. They shall be baked with leaven, firstfruits to Jehovah. 18 And you shall offer with the bread seven lambs without blemish of the first year, and one young bull, and two rams. They shall be for a burnt offering to Jehovah, with their food offering, and their drink offerings, a fire offering of sweet savor to Jehovah. (Leviticus 23:15-18)

The sickle was put to the grain during the Days of Unleavened Bread after the sun had set on the Sabbath. The Mishnah records¹⁶⁶ a

¹⁶⁶ [Mishnah Menachot 10:3](#)

(3) How would they do it [reap the omer]? The agents of the court used to go out on the day before the festival and tie the unreaped grain in bunches to make it the easier to reap. All the inhabitants of the towns near by assembled there, so that it might be reaped with a great demonstration. As soon as it became dark he says to them: "Has the sun set?" And they answer, "Yes." "Has the sun set?" And they answer, "Yes." "With this sickle?" And they answer, "Yes." "With this sickle?" And they answer, "Yes." "Into this basket?" And they answer, "Yes." "Into this basket?" And they answer, "Yes." On the Sabbath he says to them, "On this Sabbath?" And they answer, "Yes." "On this Sabbath?" And they answer, "Yes." "Shall I reap?" And they answer, "Reap." "Shall I reap?" And they answer, "Reap." He repeated every matter three times, and they answer, "yes, yes, yes." And why all of this? Because of

lavish ceremony in which it was asked three times: Is the sun set? Is this the sickle? Is this the barley I shall cut? Is this the basket to put the sheaves in? Shall I cut the barley? After each time the questions are asked, the crowd all shouted back: Yes, the sun has set! This is the sickle! This is the basket! This is the barley! Cut the barley!

There are some groups who advocate that you can harvest the barley before Wave Sheaf Day. We strongly disagree because of what Deuteronomy 16:9 says; the Mishnah 10:7, redacted about 180 C.E., also concurs with these views:

The bringing¹⁶⁷ of the Korban Omer acts as a trigger to permit two, otherwise prohibited actions. First, the Mishna tells us that these grains are subject to the rules of Chadash. The Pasuk tells us וְלֹא תֵאָכְלוּ עֲדָתְכֶם הַיָּזֶם הַזֶּה עַד תִּבְרָאֶם אֶת-קֶרְבַּן וְלֹא תֵאָכְלוּ עֲדָתְכֶם הַיָּזֶם הַזֶּה עַד תִּבְרָאֶם אֶת-קֶרְבַּן--it is prohibited to eat from these new grains prior to the bringing of the Korban Omer. This prohibition applies even nowadays--even without a Beis HaMikdash. As we will see in Mishna 5, this prohibition lasts until day's end on the 16th (or 17th) of Nissan. Then, all new grain is permissible to consume.

Second, the Pasuk tells us that the Omer is to be from the first harvest. וְהִבְאֵתֶם אֶת-עֹמֶר ראשית קצירכם. By implication, this means that you are prohibited from harvesting anything prior to the cutting of the Omer. Once again, the harvesting of the Omer permits subsequent harvesting of all grain.

It was from this moment in time when the barley was cut that the counting began to Shavuot. It is from the next day at 9AM once the wave offering has been made that only then could you begin to harvest¹⁶⁸ your grains and eat them across all of Israel. It is critically

the Boethusians who held that the reaping of the omer was not to take place at the conclusion of the [first day of the] festival.

<https://www.sefaria.org/sheets/227367.89?lang=bi&with=all&lang2=en>

¹⁶⁷ Mishnah Sefaria 10:7

<https://www.sefaria.org/sheets/227367.89?lang=bi&with=all&lang2=en>

¹⁶⁸ The Mishnah also records that no one could harvest until after the Wave Sheaf had been cut.

Mishna 7, it is prohibited to harvest any grains prior to the harvesting of the Omer. Once the Omer was harvested, however, you are allowed to harvest other grains. According to our Mishna, it seems that as soon as the Omer was offered the marketplace would be flooded with flour and grain from the new harvest. For this to

important to have the very first fruits of the barley so that people didn't lose their crops waiting for this ceremony to take place.

When this was done at the right time, when the barley had enough dough in the head to be roasted and ground into flour, then the farmers did not have to wait or risk losing their crops because the barley had reseeded while they waited for Wave Sheaf Day to come. Once the crops were mature in each individual field, then they could begin to harvest. The timing is very important.

As you study up on this and as we have already shown you in this book, the Pharisees, Boethusians and Sadducees disagreed as to when harvesting was to take place. With the Pharisees writing the books, today it is according to their reckoning, but they did record the dispute.

Barley becomes ripe at different times in Israel depending on the location, so when do you perform this ceremony—at what point did the priests collect and wave a sheaf (or Omer) of barley—at the beginning, middle or end of the barley harvest season? We have already answered this.

The Bible is clear. The Israelites could neither harvest nor eat their spring barley crop until the priests made the wave sheaf offering on First Fruits Day (Lev 23:10–11, 14; Deut 16:9). Not only does the Torah teach this, but Jewish historical sources such as the first-century Jewish historian Josephus recognized this fact as well. We read:

*But on the second day of unleavened bread, which is the sixteenth day of the month, they first partake of the fruits of the earth, **for before that day, they do not touch them.** And while they suppose it proper to honour God, from whom they obtain this plentiful provision, in the first place, they offer the first-fruits of their barley, and that in the manner following: They*

happen, it meant that the farmers spent the night, after the Omer was cut, harvesting their fields and bringing the product to market. Our Mishna records a dispute between Rabi Meir and Rabi Yehuda whether this was appropriate behavior (i.e., should the merchants have waited some amount of additional time before offering their wares for sale).

According to Rabi Meir, the Chachomim extended the prohibition on harvesting until after the Omer was offered on the Mizbeach because they were afraid that if you allowed people to harvest the grain right way, they may inadvertently eat the grain prior the Omer's offering--which is biblically prohibited. Rabi Yehudah did not share that concern and even seemingly encouraged the grains' immediate appearance.

*take a handful of the ears, and dry them, then beat them small, and purge the barley from the bran; they then bring one-tenth deal to the altar, to God: and, casting one handful of it upon the fire, they leave the rest for the use of the priest; **and after this it is that they may publicly or privately reap their harvest.***¹⁶⁹

Barley, like a lot of agricultural crops, doesn't necessarily ripen all at the same time. Depending on micro-climates, topography and elevation, the barley in one region may mature faster than somewhere else. Although Israel is a small country, wild barley, for example, grows in Jerusalem at some 2,500 feet of elevation, while in the Jordan Valley (just 30 or 40 miles away) barley grows near the Dead Sea, which is more than 1,300 feet below sea level. Because it is warmer in the Jordan Valley, the barley there will sometimes ripen several weeks earlier than that in Jerusalem. This means that all over the land of Israel, the ancient Israelites were harvesting barley for a period of several weeks.

Leviticus 23:14 and Deuteronomy 16:9 along with the above quote from Josephus state that the Israelites weren't allowed to harvest their barley crop until the first fruit offering was made. Furthermore, Leviticus 23:10 states that the barley is to come from the land of Israel (not just from Jerusalem, which wasn't even in Israelite hands when Moses wrote Leviticus). This confirms the position of the modern Karaite Jews who search for ripening (abiv) barley throughout the land of Israel. Since Jerusalem is approximately 2500 feet above sea level, the barley in the valleys would become ripe much earlier than in Jerusalem (being at a higher elevation where the temperatures are cooler.) Therefore, if an Israelite farmer in the valley had to wait for the barley in Jerusalem to become ripe before being permitted to harvest his lower-elevation barley, his barley may rot on the stalk or fall to the ground making harvesting all but impossible except with a pair of tweezers! For this simple reason, wherever the barley first became ripe in Israel, that's when a sheaf was harvested to be presented as the wavesheaf offering. After that, as the barley came ripe across the land of Israel, farmers were free to harvest their crops, but not before.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁹ See *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book 3, 10:5, by Flavius Josephus.

¹⁷⁰ The Biblical Calendar Demystified by Ya'acov Natan Lawrence
https://www.hoshanarabbah.org/pdfs/cal_demyst.pdf

The Joshua 5:10 Controversy

In 1337 B.C., Joshua crossed the Jordan River and entered the promised land.

10 And the sons of Israel camped in Gilgal and kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month at evening in the plains of Jericho. 11 And they ate of the old grain of the land on the next day after the Passover, unleavened cakes and roasted grain in the same day. 12 And the manna stopped on the next day after they had eaten the old grain of the land. And there was no more manna to the sons of Israel, but they ate the fruit of the land of Canaan that year. (Joshua 5:10-12)

It is this group of scriptures and their meaning that was hotly debated by the Boethusians, Sadducees and Pharisees during the Hasmonaean period—all the way down to the destruction of the Temple. It was the Pharisees who took over after the destruction of the Temple and it is their interpretation that Judaism now follows.

Christians keep Pentecost Sunday 50 days after Easter Sunday. Easter is calculated as the 3rd Sunday after the spring equinox and is the day they believe Christ came up from the grave. For this reason, we cannot use them as a source to sort this out.

To understand the confusion over this, we begin in Leviticus:

9 And Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, 10 Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, When you have come into the land which I give to you, and shall reap the harvest of it, then you shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest. 11 And he shall wave the sheaf before Jehovah to be received for you. On the next day after the sabbath the priest shall wave it. 12 And you shall offer that day when you wave the sheaf, a male lamb without blemish of the first year for a burnt offering to Jehovah. 13 And its food offering shall be two-tenths part of fine flour mixed with oil, a fire offering to Jehovah for a sweet savor. And the drink offering of it shall be of wine, the fourth part of a hin. 14 And you shall eat neither bread, nor parched grain, nor green ears, until the same day, until you have brought an offering to your God. It shall be a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings. 15 And you shall count to you from the next day after the sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf

of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete. 16 To the next day after the seventh sabbath you shall number fifty days. And you shall offer a new food offering to Jehovah. (Leviticus 23:9-16)

A. S. Van Der Woude¹⁷¹ explains where these different beliefs originated:

After the time of the Old Testament there are different ideas among the Jews as to the day constituting the terminus a quo of the seven weeks (Van Goudoever, pp. 18, 29). It concerns here the exegesis of Leviticus 23:11, 15, which speaks of "the day after the sabbath." The Sadducees (and also the Samaritans) took the text as literally as possible. They understood the sabbath mentioned there as being the seventh day of the week . . . In that case the Feast of Weeks was always on the first day (Sunday). The Council of Nicea more or less went along with this and put Pentecost (even as Easter) on a Sunday. The Pharisees counted differently. Their calculation became officially accepted in Jewish orthodoxy from the second century A.D. According to them the "sabbath" in these texts refers to the first feast day of the Passover. On the following day the sheaf was to be brought and the fiftieth day was to be calculated from that. (p. 389, The World of the Bible)

Does the count to Shavuot—Pentecost—begin with the day after the weekly Sabbath or the day after the first annual Holy Day of Unleavened Bread? This is the heart of the controversy.

Those who believe that the count to Pentecost begins on the day after the first annual Sabbath of the year (the First Day of Unleavened Bread) follow the traditional Jewish method of deriving the proper date. With the current structure of the Hillel II Jewish calendar, this holy day now always falls on Sivan 6, and thus, they cannot fulfill the command to count seven **complete** Sabbaths to Shavuot.

This reasoning is based on how they understand Joshua 5:10. They use the example of Joshua keeping Passover on the 15th and the day after, the 16th, as the day they began to eat the fruit of the land. The Rabbis believe that Joshua and Israel were doing exactly as Leviticus says:

¹⁷¹ https://www.herealittletherealittle.net/index.cfm?page_name=Sivan6

14 And you shall eat neither bread, nor parched grain, nor green ears, until the same day, until you have brought an offering to your God. (Leviticus 23:14)

How do we figure out which methodology is correct? Do we go from Sunday, the day after the weekly Sabbath, or from the 16th of Nisan to Sivan 6 each year?

While there may be some confusion about when to begin the count to Shavuot, the answer as to which way we should count is discovered if we just keep reading:

15 And you shall count to you from the next day after the sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete. 16 To the next day after the seventh sabbath you shall number fifty days. (Leviticus 23:15-16)

Shavuot, the 50th day, has to also be the day after the 7th Sabbath. When you count seven Sabbaths, you arrive at 49 days. The day after, or the morrow after the seventh sabbath, is the 50th day. Understanding the ending here and how it is always going to land on a Sunday, will show you that you must also start on the Sunday during the Days of Unleavened Bread—the Sunday after the weekly Sabbath.

The Sabbath does not have to be during the seven days of Unleavened Bread. Wave Sheaf Day or Sunday always has to be during those seven days. Each year there is only one Sunday that is within the seven days of Unleavened Bread.

Now if we read Joshua 5:10, we should understand that the 14th when they prepared for the Passover meal was a Sabbath day. They ate the meal in the evening which was the start of the 15th and in that year, it was also the Sunday. Sunday was the 15th day. Once they make the Wave Sheaf Offering at 9 AM Sunday, Nisan 15, then they can eat the new grains of the land.

When I check Torahcalendar.org¹⁷² for the year they entered the Promised Land, it does show the 14th being on the Sabbath, thus confirming what we are claiming.

¹⁷² This is a chart showing the 13th month of the year 1336 B.C. Torah Calendar uses the equinox and believes Passover cannot come before said equinox. The Tombstones will show otherwise on numerous occasions. This is why we are showing the month

I also said new grain, even though the KJV I quoted above for Joshua 5:10 uses the word OLD grains. I will let Nehemia Gordon explain this:

The great¹⁷³ 12th Century rabbinical Bible commentator Ibn Ezra mentions a “Roman sage” who brought Joshua 5:11 as proof for the Pharisee interpretation. According to this Roman rabbi, Joshua 5:11 is no less than the silver bullet, the irrefutable proof for the Pharisee position. This Roman rabbi argued that since Passover begins on the 15th of the First Hebrew Month (Nissan), the “morrow of the Passover” must be the 16th. This is exactly when the Pharisees believe the Omer offering is supposed to be brought, on the 16th of the First Hebrew Month. If the Israelites brought the Omer on the 16th day of the First Hebrew Month in the year they entered the Land of Israel, argues the Roman rabbi, it proves that the Pharisees are correct in beginning the 50-day count to Shavuot on the 16th. According to Ibn Ezra, bringing up Joshua 5:11 was a disaster for the Pharisee position:

“[The Roman Rabbi] did not know that it cost him his life, for the Passover is on the fourteenth and its morrow is the fifteenth, and so it is written, “And they traveled from Ramesses in the first month, etc.” (Numbers 33:3). Eating parched grain is forbidden until the waving of the Omer.”

Desperate to salvage the situation, Ibn Ezra proposes a novel re-interpretation of Joshua 5:11. Previous rabbis understood this verse to describe the Israelites eating the new grain of the Land of Israel, which only becomes permissible each year after the Omer offering is brought (Leviticus 23:14). The time between harvest and the Omer offering might be anywhere for a few hours to a couple of weeks. During this interim period, the new grain must be stored and only old grain may be eaten, that is, grain from a previous year’s harvest. Since the Israelites were new in the Land of Israel, they did not have any grain from previous years. They had been wandering in the desert eating Manna for 40 years. As soon as they entered the Land, they harvested the grain they found growing in the fields of Jericho. They

before as the actual month in this case, as it shows the 14th on a Friday. If the moon is not seen, then the month is declared a 30-day month, moving the start by one day. Thus, the 14th is now on Shabbat.

<https://torahcalendar.com/Calendar.asp?YM=Y-1336M13>

¹⁷³ Nehemia’s Wall, The Truth About Shavuot, Posted on June 3, 2022, by Nehemia Gordon <https://www.nehemiaswall.com/truth-shavuot>

then waved the Omer, the first sheaf of the harvest, making all their new harvest permissible to eat and began the 50-day count to Shavuot.

From Ibn Ezra's perspective, the Israelites did this one day too early, on the morning of the 15th day of the First Hebrew Month. According to the Pharisees, the Omer must always be brought on the 16th day of the First Hebrew Month. Ibn Ezra's ingenious solution to this embarrassing biblical fact of history is to add the word "old" to Joshua 5:11. If the Israelites ate "old grain," that is, grain harvested in a previous year, then the verse has nothing to do with the Omer offering or the 50-day count to Shavuot.

*Ibn Ezra's new interpretation was highly influential, more than most people realize. When Christian scholars started translating the Bible into English, they went to Jewish rabbis to learn the Hebrew language. When it came to Joshua 5:11, the rabbis told the Christian translators to add the word "old" to the verse. More precisely, they told them that the word "grain," in Hebrew *avur*, actually means "old grain." As a result, Ibn Ezra's novel interpretation is reflected in the most famous English translation of all time, the King James Version:*

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 –King James Version

Most translations do not employ the Ibn Ezra translation trick of adding the word "old." This is true for both Christian and Jewish translations. Here are a few examples:

"On the day after the passover, on that very day, they ate the produce of the land, unleavened cakes and parched grain." New Revised Standard Version

The day after the Passover, that very day, they ate some of the produce of the land: unleavened bread and roasted grain." New International Version

"And they did eat of the produce of the land on the morrow after the passover, unleavened cakes and parched corn, in the selfsame day." Jewish Publication Society 1917

"On the day after the passover offering, on that very day, they ate of the produce of the country, unleavened bread and parched grain." Jewish Publication Society 1985

"And they ate of the grain of the land on the morrow of the Passover, unleavened cakes and parched grain on this very day." Judaica Press

These translations were made by people who read Hebrew and they knew that the word “old” was simply not there. The Christian translators of the King James Version, on the other hand, did not know this and took someone else’s word for it. Ibn Ezra himself must have known that adding “old” to the verse was not the correct linguistic interpretation. In his introduction to his commentary on the Torah, Ibn Ezra declares that the rules of language and grammar must be bent to fit rabbinical interpretation when it affects practical religious observance. Adding the word “old” to Joshua 5:11 is a clear example of bending the rules of the language. Ibn Ezra reveals his true understanding when he points out in response to the Roman rabbi, “Eating parched grain is forbidden until the waving of the Omer.” He only mentions the “parched grain” from Joshua 5:11 and not the “unleavened bread” because he knows it disproves the very thing the Pharisees wanted to prove.

“Parched grain,” in Hebrew kali, refers to nearly ripe grain that is still slightly moist. The farmers would harvest this moist grain early and parch it in fire to make it crunchy and delicious. Parched grain could only come from a freshly harvested crop, not from old grain! Joshua 5:11 says the Israelites ate “parched grain” on the morrow of the Passover, on the morning of the 15th day of the First Hebrew Month. The “unleavened bread” could theoretically have come from the old grain, as Ibn Ezra suggested, but the parched grain had to be new grain. Year-old moist grain would go bad, so parched grain could only be “new” grain from that year’s harvest. This new crop would be forbidden to eat until the waving of the Omer, which took place on the “morrow of the Passover,” which Ibn Ezra knew from Numbers 33:3 was the morning of the 15th day of the month. That first year in the Land of Israel, the Israelites ate the new grain and began the 50-day count to Shavuot on the 15th of the First Hebrew Month. This was one day too early for the rabbinical reckoning, which is why Ibn Ezra says that bringing Joshua 5:11 into the discussion of the timing of Shavuot cost the Roman rabbi his life - figuratively speaking, of course.

One technical point to consider is that the word “morrow” is the operative term in the phrase the “morrow of the Sabbath.” Joshua 5:11 makes it clear that the “morrow” has to be during the seven days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The Sabbath itself might actually precede these seven days, as it did that first year the Israelites entered the Land of Israel.

In ancient times, the Pharisee Shavuot would coincide with the Biblical Shavuot about once every seven years. This would happen

whenever the First Hebrew Month began with the sighting of the new moon on a Friday night. In years such as these, the 16th day of the month would be both the second day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread and the morrow of the weekly Shabbat. The modern rabbinical calendar established by Hillel II in 359 CE calculates the beginning of the month using the dark moon, making this a less common scenario.

Seven Species and the Timing of the Calendar

When we have the correct timing of the calendar with the barley, then as each of the seven species are ripe in Israel, we will be able to offer the first fruits of each species at the proper time.

We read about them in Deuteronomy:

6 And you shall keep the commandments of Jehovah your God, to walk in His ways and to fear Him. 7 For Jehovah your God brings you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills, 8 a land of wheat and barley and vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey,¹⁷⁴ 9 a land in which you shall eat bread without want. You shall not lack any thing in it. It is a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills you may dig copper. 10 And you shall eat and be

¹⁷⁴ Nehemia: Verse 8, Deuteronomy 8:8. This is essentially listing the ancient staple crops of Israel and they refer to this often as, “the Seven Species.” That is, the seven main crops that grew in ancient Israel. So, we’ve got wheat and barley, we’ve got the vine, which means grapes, we’ve got figs, we’ve got pomegranates, and you know, I read that, I’m like, pomegranates? Like, how often does somebody eat a pomegranate? But I guess that was very important in ancient times. We’ve got olive, which is a major source of protein, and a major source of just about everything, the olive, in this part of the world. And then the last one is honey. I don’t know if we’ve talked about this in the past, but a lot of scholars look at this and they say, “Honey? How many bees are there in Israel?” There’s definitely honey in Israel just like any other place. But there’s one crop that’s missing, and that’s the date. Date trees are native to the land of Israel. They actually found a date seed on Masada from 2000 years ago and they were able to plant it and grow a tree out of it.

So, dates are a main staple crop of ancient Israel. And so, what’s suggested by many scholars is that the honey here is actually referring to date honey.

So, these are the seven species of Israel, and you see these crops growing everywhere in Israel. I mean, I walk around my neighborhood at different times of the year and I see every one of these things growing.

<https://www.nehemiaswall.com/torah-pearls-eikey>

satisfied, then you shall bless Jehovah your God for the good land which He has given you. (Deuteronomy 8:6-10)

As we have already read, it is the barley that determines the first of the year in the month when Passover is kept. Fifty days later then the harvest of wheat begins for the Feast of Shavuot. In the 5th month the grapes are ready to be harvested. It was the 5th month when the spies came and collected the huge cluster of grapes, along with the fig and pomegranates.¹⁷⁵ Then as we come to the Feast of Sukkot, olives and dates or date honey are ready to harvest. These seven species of first fruits from the Land of Israel, are the only acceptable offering that can be made in the Temple.

Yehshua said that before the Day of the Lord, Elijah would come and be found restoring all things. Those of you who are now returning to the original calendar are part of this restoration process. To be able to be a part of it and to see it happening and to be able to help teach others about these things is of the highest honour. Each of us are part of this prophetic message Yehshua told us about.

The Sabbatical and Jubilee Years

I have now covered quite a lot concerning the calendar and the history and development of the debates which then turned into the Mishnah, then the Talmuds, and then the Mishneh Torah. I have mentioned many names in that history how things were changed or added on and now we are going to explain more about the takanot and ma'asim that were created and how those additions over time took root and changed the timing of the Sabbatical and Jubilee years. Using these same takanot and ma'asim caused changes to the days we are to keep Holy, which Yehovah commanded us to observe. Instead, traditions and precedents took over and most now keep the Holy Days according to those takanot and ma'asim.

This exercise was needed to be done by you the reader in order for you to understand what we are about to explain about those known Sabbatical and Jubilee years. Because many of those historians who

¹⁷⁵ 23 *And they came to the valley of Eshcol and cut from there a branch with one cluster of grapes. And they carried it between two men upon a staff, and some of the pomegranates and of the figs. (Numbers 13:23)*

write about the Sabbatical and Jubilee evidence are blinded by the calendar they follow, they accept takanot as facts and dismiss other evidence that does not fit their narrow thinking. Understanding what the original calendar was and when it was changed over time gives you all the tools you need to look at all the Sabbatical and Jubilee evidence and figure out what they are telling you. This is especially true when you begin to study the Tombstones of Zoar.

How the Sabbatical and Jubilee Confusion Began

The Sabbath Year

1 And Jehovah spoke to Moses in Mount Sinai, saying, 2 Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, When you come into the land which I give you, then shall the land keep a sabbath to Jehovah. 3 You shall sow your field six years, and you shall prune your vineyard six years, and gather in the fruit of it. 4 But in the seventh year shall be a sabbath of rest to the land, a sabbath for Jehovah. You shall neither sow your field, nor prune your vineyard. 5 You shall not reap that which grows of its own accord of your harvest, neither gather the grapes of your undressed vine. It is a year of rest to the land. 6 And the sabbath of the land shall be food for you, for you and for your servant, and for your slave woman and for your hired servant, and for your stranger who stays with you, 7 and for your cattle, and for the beast that is in your land, shall all the increase of it be for food.

The Year of Jubilee

8 And you shall number seven sabbaths of years to you, seven times seven years. And the time of the seven sabbaths of years shall be forty-nine years to you. 9 Then you shall cause the trumpet of the jubilee to sound on the tenth of the seventh month; in the day of atonement, the trumpet shall sound throughout all your land. 10 And you shall make the fiftieth year holy, one year, and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee to you, and you shall return each man to his possession, and you shall return each man to his family. 11 That fiftieth year shall be a jubilee to you. You shall not sow, neither reap that which grows of itself in it, nor gather in it of your undressed vine. 12 For it is the jubilee. It shall be holy to you. You shall eat the increase of it out of the field. 13 In the year of this

jubilee you shall return each man to his possession. (Leviticus 25:1-13)

The confusion about when the Sabbatical or Jubilee years are, began in the second century or around 200 C.E., with the writing of the Mishnah. At this time there was a debate as to whether or not the Jubilee year was every 50th year followed by another seven years, or every 49 years with the 50th year also being the 1st year of the next count.

During the Bar Kokhba Revolt, they knew the Jubilee year they kept was 134 C.E. and the next Sabbatical year was six years later in 140 C.E., thus proving that the Jubilee year is the first year of the count.

This is attested to by a number of contracts we will introduce to you later in book two of **The Stone Cry Out**. After the defeat and expulsion of the Jews by Hadrian, the Sabbatical and Jubilee years ceased to be kept. They were abolished altogether as a requirement for Judaism by its leaders during the third century C.E. They had not been keeping the Jubilee years since the expulsion of the Northern Ten Tribes in 723 B.C.

They were of the understanding that all twelve tribes had to be together in order to celebrate the Jubilee and because the northern tribes were driven out, they no longer kept the Jubilee year.

I strongly disagree with this summary statement I have made here. Allow me to share two views about this so you can understand what is being put forward from Jewish sources. From Chabad.org¹⁷⁶ on when the Jubilee year is:

In short, the answer to your question is that the Jubilee year is currently not observed or commemorated. The reasons for this are complex and involve many different opinions on the matter. In the following lines I will attempt to briefly relay the relevant issues.

According to biblical law, the Jubilee is only observed when all twelve tribes of the Jewish nation are living in Israel, as is derived from the verse, “And you shall sanctify the fiftieth year, and proclaim freedom throughout the land for all who live on

¹⁷⁶ When Is the Next Jubilee Year? By Baruch S. Davidson

https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/513212/jewish/When-Is-the-Next-Jubilee-Year.htm#footnote2a513212

it,” which implies that the Jubilee is only sanctified when “all who live on it”—meaning, all who are meant to be living there—are in the Land of Israel. Furthermore, the Jubilee is only observed when every tribe is living in the specific part of the land which it was allotted when the Land of Israel was divided. However, some are of the opinion that the Jubilee is observed as long as there is a partial representation of each tribe, even if most of the tribe is not in Israel.

In the 6th century BCE, the Assyrians conquered the Northern Kingdom of Israel and sent the majority of its population into exile. Those who were deported are historically known as the Ten Lost Tribes.

We are certain that before that point in time the Jubilee was regularly observed. We also know that, with the destruction of the Second Temple and the disbandment of the Sanhedrin (supreme rabbinical court), we ceased to mark the Jubilee year in any form. The periods about which there is a question are the remaining years between the exile of the Ten Tribes and the destruction of the First Temple, and the Second Temple Era.

According to the opinion that partial representation of each tribe is sufficient to fulfill the scriptural requirement, biblically mandated Jubilees were fully observed throughout the periods in question, because there remained a small representation of each tribe in Israel.

However, according to the first opinion mentioned above, with the exile of the Northern Kingdom the required condition for the Jubilee to be sanctified was lost. Thus, the last time there was a biblical requirement to observe the Jubilee was about 150 years before the destruction of the First Temple.

The question remains, however, whether according to this opinion Jubilee years were designated or observed during this time by rabbinic injunction. This is the subject of debate amongst the sages.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁷ The reasons behind this debate: Although there was no biblical requirement to observe the Jubilee year after the Ten Tribes were exiled, the observance of the shemittah (Sabbatical year) remained a biblical obligation. The integrity of the seven-year Sabbatical cycle depended on the larger fifty-year cycle—after completing

As mentioned above, though, today the Jubilee year is neither designated nor observed.¹⁷⁸

And now for the answer to your question: “When is the next Jubilee year?”

We eagerly await the day when G-d will bring our entire nation back to our homeland—including the ten “lost” tribes—and we will again resume observing the Jubilee year, as well as so many other mitzvot which we are incapable of performing until that awaited day.¹⁷⁹ Rabbi Baruch S. Davidson

This article above is also subtly insinuating that the Jubilee years are only to be kept when you are in the land of Israel. It is my position that the Sabbatical and Jubilee years are to be kept by everyone around the world, in the same way everyone is to keep the Sabbath and the Holy Days. The entire world is to obey Yehovah, and these laws are part of the kingdom which will be over this whole earth.

Here is what My Jewish Learning has to say about this:

seven seven-year cycles, a one-year hiatus was taken before the new cycle began (on the 51st year). It was thus necessary to designate a (non-observed) fiftieth “Jubilee” year. Others explain that the sages also instituted the (partial) observance of the laws of Jubilee to commemorate the biblical mitzvah. However, there is also an opinion in the Talmud that the Jubilee is not an “in-between-cycles year,” but rather that it is the first of the next 49-year cycle, and thus not designating it would not impact the calculation of the Sabbatical cycles. This opinion also maintains that the Sages never instituted the Jubilee year as a commemoration.

¹⁷⁸ *Although the laws of shemittah are observed in Israel to this very day, the Jubilee year is not designated or observed. There are many reasons for this. Some of them: a) The Jubilee only affected the shemittah cycle when the shemittah was established and declared by the Sanhedrin, as opposed to today when it is automatically programmed into the perpetual Jewish calendar. b) The observance of shemittah today is only a rabbinic decree, and therefore the Jubilee year does not affect its cycle. c) No commemoration is in order when there is no Sanhedrin, whose participation in the declaration of the Jubilee year was integral. In fact, it was the Sanhedrin’s blast of the shofar (ram’s horn) on Yom Kippur which signaled the entry of the Jubilee year.*

¹⁷⁹ *The information in this response is taken from Encyclopedia Talmudit, vol. XXII, s.v. “Yovel.”*

Today, shmita¹⁸⁰ is observed in the land of Israel, which creates some challenges for a modern nation of 8 million people who still need to eat. An innovative legal workaround, known as the heter mechira (“sale permit”), allows the land to be worked by selling it to a non-Jew for the duration of the year.

But the jubilee year has not been observed for at least two millennia. This is because the verse in Leviticus, which specifically names “all its inhabitants,” was understood by the rabbis to mean that the jubilee year only applies when all those who are meant to live in Israel — that is, all 12 tribes of Israel — do in fact live there. According to Maimonides, the jubilee years were counted after the end of the Babylonian exile and the construction of the Second Temple, but they were not observed.

I have trouble with sweeping statements like this as they ignore the historical facts. We have 12 contracts from the Bar Kochba period showing quite clearly, they were correctly keeping the Jubilee year as the 1st year or year one of the next count to 50. Then they counted five **years** in which the land could be leased, followed by the Sabbatical year. They knew and they were keeping the Jubilee year because they claimed Simon Bar Kochba was the Messiah who was to come in the Jubilee year. We will have more explanation about these things in Part 2 of ***The Stones Cry Out***, where we will show you how the tombstones of Zoar were tracking the Jubilee years into the 5th century A.D.

The sages during the time when the Mishnah was being redacted in 200 C.E., took the year 134 C.E. (a Jubilee year) and subtracted 50 to arrive at the year 84 C.E. as the previous Jubilee year. They then counted the 49th year as the year 83 C.E., subtracted seven to get the year 76, and then subtracted seven again to get the year 69 C.E. as the year the Temple was destroyed. The year of the Temple’s destruction is going to be one of the in-depth chapters we will deal with as it is so important to many of our dates. As you just read, this simple mistake of assuming the Jubilee cycle was 50 years is at the root of confusion as to when the Temple was destroyed. We will get to the other date that adds more confusion in a bit.

¹⁸⁰ My Jewish Learning *The Jubilee (Yovel) Year*

<https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/sabbatical-year-shemitah-and-jubilee-year-yovel/>

There has been a long-standing debate over exactly which Sabbath and Jubilee Cycle system represents the one actually practiced by the ancient Israelites. To the novice this dispute may at first glance seem trivial. Nevertheless, there are two reasons that its solution is extremely valuable.

First, this cycle is an essential tool for any reconstruction of the chronological framework of ancient Israelite history. The strong foundation it provides, in turn, acts as a guide for other contemporary dynasties and events.

Second, once the correct cycle is ascertained, it allows us to "clock in" and discover which years are presently Sabbaths and Jubilees. This possibility holds great significance for students of biblical eschatology. The book of Hebrews, for example, notes that, "The Law," of which the Sabbath and Jubilee years are a part, is "a shadow of the coming good things." (Hebrews, 10:1) The Sabbath Day, to demonstrate, was reckoned as a type of the great sabbatism and rest into which the people of Yahweh will one day enter.

(Hebrews, 3:7-4:13) "Those taken captive" is a reference to the future captivity of the Israelites among the nations during the end of days. The prophets foretold that out of this captivity a remnant of Israel and Judah would return to the Promised Land and eternally dwell with Yahweh. This return was symbolized by the Israelites regaining their liberty during the Jubilee year. The coming of the messiah during the end of days, at which time he will save Israel and Judah from their captivity and return them to their homeland, was, by extension, understood as occurring in one of these future Jubilee years.

In either case, whether for an accurate Israelite chronology or for eschatological purposes, a precise knowledge of this ancient cycle is required. Therefore, we must take the utmost care in uncovering the true and original Sabbath Year and Jubilee Cycle.

There are four possible Sabbath Cycle systems we must consider. For simplification purposes, this study shall utilize the following labels for these four systems. Our "key" or "example" date will be the Sabbath Year in each system which is either on or nearest to the year that Jerusalem and Herod's Temple (the second Temple) were destroyed (the summer of 70 C.E.).

- *System "A": Abib (March/April) 1, 70 C.E. until Abib 1, 71 C.E. The month of Abib was also called Nisan. System "A" is advocated by this study.*

- System "B": Tishri (Sept./Oct.) 1, 68 C.E. until Tishri 1, 69 C.E. The Zuckermann-Schürer system.
- System "C": Tishri 1, 69 C.E. until Tishri 1, 70 C.E. The Marcus-Wacholder theory.
- System "D": Abib 1, 69 C.E. until Abib 1, 70 C.E. A possibility based upon the evidence of an Abib 1 beginning for the year coupled with the claim of Rabbi Jose¹⁸¹ and other Talmudic writers that the year before the fall of Jerusalem was a Sabbath Year.

Today the most popular of these theories is System "B." This System has been advocated since the time of the Mishnah (formed at the end of the second century C.E.). It only differs from System "D" in that System "D" would start the Sabbath Year in the spring rather than in the fall. System "C" has also been advocated since the Gemara portion of written Talmudic times, but it has been the lesser sister to System "B." It has again gained some popularity in recent years due to the work of Ralph Marcus and Zion Wacholder. System "A," on the other hand, is the conclusion based upon the in-depth research into the ancient evidence provided in this study. In reality, system "A" has merely allowed the evidence to present its own case.

It is the contention of this study that the Jews who supported System "B," beginning in the late second century C.E., lost touch with the accurate chronology and the true Sabbath Year and Jubilee Cycle. **They, in turn, incorrectly calculated the Sabbath Year for more ancient times so as to make it fall one year prior to the destruction of Jerusalem rather than during that event.** System "D" is merely a modified form of "B." System "D" takes notice of the fact that the earlier Israelites actually began their Sabbath Year in the spring and not with the fall (the Jewish reckoning of fall as the official beginning of the Sabbath Year taking place at a relatively late date). System "C" takes into account that the year Jerusalem fell (70 C.E.) was a Sabbath Year but it errs in that it continues the late and, what we shall prove to be, false practice of reckoning the beginning of a Sabbath Year from the fall.

All three Systems ("B," "C," and "D") are faced with important obstacles. Advocates of these various theories have often been forced to harshly criticize ancient records, like those from Josephus and the Maccabean books, because the historical data is inconsistent with present theory. Robert North, for example, takes

¹⁸¹ This is Rabbi Yose Ben Halafta of whom we wrote about earlier.

Josephus to task by challenging his historical year as exhibiting "internal inconsistencies which invalidate their use for chronology." North concludes, "It should be abundantly clear that the Sabbath Year dates of Josephus are either palpably incommensurate, or else insolubly obscure."

This study disagrees. It is not Josephus or any other pre-second century C.E. ancient report that is the source for the confusion. Indeed, we find them all remarkably accurate. Rather, it is the attempt to force these early records to conform with one of the three erroneous sabbath cycle theories now prevalent which has created an illusion of historical error.

System "A," on the other hand, does not start from the premise of an existing theory which is built upon the interpretation of one or two dates or upon a late tradition, as the three other Systems do. Instead, it allows the evidence to build its own structure. The results of this method reveal that the ancient sources are in perfect harmony and reflect an entirely different sabbath cycle than heretofore presented. As is to be expected, the fact that System "A" is a new and radical departure from the three established theories demands that it must submit in every detail to very close scrutiny. Yet, there is no doubt in this researcher's mind that System "A" not only survives meticulous scrutiny, but its solution is compelling.

As part of our Preliminary Discussion, we shall review some major flaws in the System "B" chronology. These observations will be followed by some initial comments with regard to the question about which month served as the beginning of the ancient Sabbath Year during the post-exile period. These two chapters will set the stage for other numerous proofs presented throughout which shall conclusively show that the first day of the Hebrew month of Abib (later called Nisan) was the true New Year date for the Jews up and until the time of the Bar Kochba revolt (133-135 C.E.).¹⁸²

This evidence presented in this work, **The Stones Cry Out**, also agrees. Many historical artifacts recording Sabbatical years were dismissed because they did not match one of these three theories. Many of the Tombstones of Zoar were also dismissed because they did not line up with the conventional understanding of the Hillel calendar. This was precisely the point for us going over the calendar issues in the first sections of this book. It is this lack of understanding the transition away

¹⁸² **The Sabbath and Jubilee Cycles** by Qadesh La Yahweh Press, Introduction pages 5-7, <https://www.yahweh.org/publications/sjc/sj-0Intr.pdf>

from the crescent moon to begin the month and barley to begin the year, which is how the calendars worked throughout history up until the Hillel calendar was introduced in 358 C.E., that is one of the main stumbling blocks to understanding the Jubilee cycles. Once this understanding is explained, then many of what were discarded historical proofs will flood in and confirm each and every Sabbatical and Jubilee year. The evidence is overwhelming.

We also understand how you can bring a horse to water, but you can't make it drink; in the same way you can provide all the proofs in the world, but you can't make a person think.

A clear understanding of each of these four systems, along with an intimate understanding of the calendars, is necessary to unraveling this mystery that surrounds the Sabbatical and Jubilee historical records. We have now provided the first part about the calendars in order to help you understand.

As we continue with the explanation from Qadesh La Yahweh Press, along with our own work examining each historical evidence on its own merit—once that is complete the summation of the whole then defines for us when the Sabbatical and Jubilee years are. We do not try to make any of them fit any pre-defined theory. We just let the evidence define the truth as does Qadesh La Yahweh Press.

Changing Nisan to Tishri and Rosh Hashanah

29 The secret things belong to Jehovah our God, but the revealed things belong to us and to our sons forever, so that we may do all the words of this Law. (Deuteronomy 29:29)

I have now covered the development of the current Hebrew calendar used by Jews and those keeping Torah around the world, in the first part of our book. I have shown you how deviations began during the Hasmonaean period and were debated by the houses of Hillel and Shammai until they were incorporated into the Mishnah discussion by the year 180 C.E. We have gone through this rather extensive historical lesson in order to understand how things were changed. I have also gone back to explain these changes to the calendar so that you can now understand how those changes would come into effect in changing the Sabbatical and Jubilee years.

In the simplest of terms, a false understanding became accepted as doctrine and once it was written down in the Mishnah, it was no longer challenged. The couple times it was challenged, the majority overruled and that was the end of the matter.

It is proclaimed that the start of the year or the New Year begins on Rosh Hashanah or the 1st day of the 7th month, the month named Tishri. This is normally in the Gregorian months of September or October each year.

The Hebrew calendar does not name its months. They are all counted from 1¹⁸³ through 12 or 13 if needed, but after the Babylonian captivity ended in 539 B.C., the Jews brought back to the land of Israel the names of the months according to the Babylonian *tradition*. Then to some extent the fact that the Babylonian Talmud was created in Babylon by the 6th century, made it much easier to accept these calendric changes.

How the 7th Month Became Tishri the 1st Month

How did the 7th month become the 1st month? Why is the 7th month called Tishri and why do we call the 1st day Rosh Hashanah?

Let's start with the name. As is well known, the names of the months of the Hebrew calendar derive from the Babylonian calendar, which was in Akkadian, an ancient Semitic language spoken mainly in Assyria and Babylonia. Given that the Babylonians were the leading astronomers in the region, it's not surprising that their language had such a profound effect on the Hebrew calendar.

The month's name—Tishrei – in fact stems from the Akkadian word tašrītu which means “beginning.” But the beginning of what? Similar to most ancient peoples of the region, the Babylonians began counting the new year in spring, in the month of Nisan (another name of Akkadian origin). It could be that the Babylonians marked the beginning of the second half of the year with an additional festival in Tishrei—the seventh month, if one begins counting from Nisan. The

¹⁸³ This is important because later on in Deuteronomy 16, it gives a commandment to observe or keep the month of the Aviv. If you don't know ancient biblical Hebrew you don't know what that means. Some people think that Aviv is the name of the month. It turns out that Aviv is actually this agricultural term that describes the barley as it's beginning to enter into that month.

<https://www.nehemiaswall.com/torah-pearls-vaeira> The Month of Green Ears.

Babylonian-Akkadian name also made its way into Arab dialects in the region of Mesopotamia and the Levant: the Gregorian months of October and November are called Tishrin al-Ul and Tishrin a-Thani, meaning – first and second Tishrei.

In the Bible, it is customary to call the months of the year by their number. Therefore, when the Israelites are commanded to celebrate Yom Kippur, Sukkot, and the mysterious holiday on the first of Tishrei (“a day of sabbath rest, a sacred assembly commemorated with trumpet blasts”, Leviticus 23:24), the month is simply called the “seventh month.” However, the seventh month is also one of the only months whose local-Canaanite name appears in the Bible. 1 Kings 8 tells of the people who gathered in Jerusalem for the dedication of the Temple by King Solomon: “... at the time of the festival in the month of Ethanim, the seventh month.” The Jewish sages offered various interpretations for the meaning of the “month of Ethanim,” but it is likely that it derives simply from the beginning of the rains, when the rising waters of the rivers and streams generated a strong current (ethan/eitan means “strong” in Hebrew).¹⁸⁴

The debate of the start of the year and the turn of the year entered into the discussions of the Rabbis with the houses of Hillel and Shammai. The Akkadian word *Tasritu* meaning beginning, and the Canaanite word *Ethanim*, meaning strong or the beginning of the strong rains, were well known and being discussed. But Tishri as the start of the year did not take root until it was written about in the Mishnah around 180 C.E.

But it is surprising that the Torah made no mention of a new year at 1 Tishrei, which today is so central to the Jewish religious experience. The Torah’s reference to 1 Tishrei is sparse altogether, describing a holiday characterized primarily by the blowing of a shofar. “In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall observe complete rest, a sacred occasion commemorated with loud blasts. You shall not work at your occupations, and you shall bring an offering by fire to the Lord.” The name “Rosh Hashanah” is not mentioned, nor is there a reference to its function as a day of judgment and anniversary of the world’s creation.

Yet by the period of the Mishnah at the beginning of the second century, the outlines of today’s Rosh Hashanah holiday are clear; and discussions about the prayers of Rosh Hashanah appear as early

¹⁸⁴ <https://blog.nli.org.il/en/tishrei/>

as the teachings of the schools of Hillel and Shammai, which date to the first century CE.

Mishnah Rosh Hashanah 1:1 specifically defines Rosh Hashanah's "new year" status. "The first of Tishrei is the beginning of the year [rosh hashanah] for years, sabbatical cycles, and the jubilee." Although the functions of this new year relate primarily to the agricultural cycle and the beginning of a new harvest year, the Mishnah also begins to assign to it conceptual and theological meaning.

Do not just read over this. Stop! Read this again. In the first century in the schools of Hillel and Shammai, Rosh Hashanah was first in their discussions and prayers. The Mishnah was written 180 years later and was then incorporated into the Torah as doctrine.

"On Rosh Hashanah all human beings pass before Him as troops, as it is said: The Lord looks down from heaven; He sees all mankind. From His dwelling place He gazes on all the inhabitants of the earth? He who fashions the hearts of them all, who discerns all their doings. (Psalms 33:13-15)" (M. Rosh Hashanah 1.2)

Sometime between the Torah and the codification of the Mishnah, the autumn new year gained ascendance, now transformed into a major celebration, and the Nisan new year was left as a marker of the months and festivals in the calendar year. Although theories abound about the causes of this transition, the mechanics are lost in the web of historical change. The talmudic rabbis analyze the text of the Bible as they argue about when the new year should begin, yet different sets of verses yield different answers. Historians cite evidence from the ancient Near East, looking at the new years celebrated by neighboring peoples, but nothing is conclusive. Others look to archeology for support. But the truth remains murky.

Some ancient Semitic peoples considered the year to begin around the autumn harvest and the beginning of the rainy season, which both signified the start of a new agricultural year. Although the Torah never explicitly refers to an autumn new year, some scholars see in the Torah's apparent timing of the fall harvest festival (Sukkot) a small hint of a possible fall new year. According to Exodus 23:26, the Feast of the Harvest, which closely follows Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, occurs, b'tzayt ha-shanah, at the going out of the year, signifying the close of one agricultural year and the beginning of the next. Similarly in Exodus 34:22, the Feast of the Ingathering is said to occur t'kufat hashanah, "at the turn of the year." Further evidence

of the fall as the beginning of the agricultural year in Palestine is a calendar from the 10th century BCE found at Tel Gezer, which begins with the two Months of the Ingathering.

Scholars looking for biblical precursors of today's full-blown Rosh Hashanah holiday also look to the text of Nehemiah 8:1-8, although it never refers to a new year celebration. Rather, it describes Ezra reading the book of the law before the people on the first day of the seventh month. Some wonder, given this accumulation of hints about the importance of 1 Tishrei, whether this day was a new year in biblical times and the Torah "covered it up" because the pagan connotations of the day were too strong to acknowledge it as a Jewish new year.

Other scholars, however, believe that the existence of pagan new year celebrations influenced the timing of the Nisan and Tishrei new years, yet the evidence is contradictory. The Akitu festival that celebrated the Babylonian and Sumerian New Years generally occurred in the spring, although there is some evidence of autumnal Akitu festivals. H. Tadmor argued that in the biblical period, Nisan was the new year in the kingdom of Judea while Tishrei was the new year in the northern kingdom of Israel. In the Qumran literature, Nisan is always the new year.

According to Yehezkel Kaufmann, some scholars claim the autumn festival described in the Torah to be a new year "on the basis of its supposed correspondence to the Babylonian new year, in which the myth of the creation and ancient Babylonian god Marduk's battle with Tiamat play a central part." These scholars envisioned a yearly dramatization of the battle of the Israelite God with Tiamat and his "subsequent enthronement as universal king."

Giving further credence to this view are a series of psalms that focus on God's kingship (47, 93-100, 149, etc.), which were thought to be part of this new year ritual. Recurring themes in these psalms reflect ideas important in the **rabbinically created holiday of Rosh Hashanah**: God as creator, God as king, and God as judge. Several of the psalms also allude to the sounding of the shofar.

Kaufmann, however, does not accept this explanation, calling it "**one of the most remarkable products of the creative imagination of modern biblical scholarship.**" Kaufmann sees no biblical evidence of a battle between God and any Babylonian deity, and he maintains that the enthronement psalms focus on God's kingship over creation, not a victory over a divine enemy.

Moving from the theories of Bible scholars to the interpretations of Jewish commentators, we see an acknowledgement of the existence of

the two new years, Nisan and Tishrei, along with attempts to derive meaning from this doubling. Because Rosh Hashanah occurs at the beginning of the seventh month, counting from Nisan, Nachmanides (Ramban), a 13th-century commentator, tied the two together by positing that the very process of counting tied Rosh Hashanah to the redemption from Egypt. This, suggests Ramban, is similar to the tie between the weekday and Shabbat that is also accomplished by counting:

Just as we remember the Sabbath day by counting according to the first day of the Shabbat cycle, the second day of the Shabbat cycle [in Hebrew, the weekdays do not have names, they are numbered in relation to the coming Shabbat], as I will explain below, so we remember the Exodus from Egypt by counting the first month, and the second and third month from our redemption. For this is not the enumeration that we apply to the year, for the beginning of our years is in Tishrei, as it is written (Exodus 34:22), “the Festival of gathering, at the year-season,” and it is written (Exodus 23:16), “at the going-out/changing of the year.” Therefore, when the month of Nisan is called “first” and Tishrei “seventh,” the meaning is: the first from the redemption and the seventh therefrom. And this is the meaning of “the beginning-one let it be for you.” For it is not the beginning of the year, but the beginning for you, for it is thus-called in memory of our redemption.

Modern interpreters of Judaism also look for meaning in the existence of two new year festivals. Ismar Schorsch and others focus on the roles of the two new years as exemplars of the particularist/universalist balance in Judaism — the relative weight Judaism gives to an inward focus on the Jewish people vs. an outward focus on all of humanity.

Schorsch points out that although R. Eliezer and R. Yehoshua argued in the Babylonian Talmud’s tractate Rosh Hashanah about whether Nisan or Tishri was more significant, they both accepted the existence of a calendar with more than a single new year. Both cite verses purporting to prove that a series of critical events took place in their favored month: the creation of the world, Israel’s future redemption from exile, the birth and death of the patriarchs, conception of a child by the matriarchs, and Joseph’s release from prison.

The reason, maintains Schorsch, was to give greater weight to either the nationalist or the universalist trend in Judaism. Because R. Yeshoshua saw national redemption as the fulcrum of Jewish history, he held with the Torah that Nisan was the first month. Nisan’s role as the new year for Jewish kings as well as the anniversary of Jewish

nationhood reflects Yeshoshua's national focus. With his more universal thrust, R. Eliezer supported Tishrei as the anniversary of the creation of Adam and hence of all humanity. Within the universalist compass of Tishrei, issues of sin and renewal applicable to all human beings were emphasized. The fact that Tishrei is the new year for counting of the reigns of gentile kings also reflects this worldly perspective.

By attributing different yet complementary roles to the new years of Nisan and Tishrei, teachers of Torah have helped integrate perspectives of world, nation, and individual within the Jewish religion.¹⁸⁵

As you can see, there is no basis for Tishri being a new year other than it was added. There is no command from Yehovah to do so, and because of this lack of proof, other inventions were created such as the birth of Adam.

2 You shall not add to the Word which I command you, neither shall you take away from it, so that you may keep the commands of Jehovah your God which I command you. (Deuteronomy 4:2)

The Crux of the Whole Matter

We began this book with the desire to explain each of the Sabbatical and Jubilee years and how anyone can determine them without any complicated mathematical formulas. As I began to explain how the Sabbatical years were changed, it became very apparent that the error which moved the Sabbatical year out of alignment was also involved in changing the Holy Days of the calendar. This is why we have shown you the history of the Mishnah, the Jerusalem and Babylonian Talmuds, as well as the Mishneh Torah.

We are now coming to the crux of the whole matter. Once you understand what was done, who did it and why, then you will no longer be able to deny the glaring errors added to the calendar.

We Are All Like Lemmings

¹⁸⁵ <https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/how-rosh-hashanah-became-new-years-day/>

I was raised as a Catholic and when I was challenged about the Sabbath, I was absolutely sure that one billion Catholics and the Pope could not be wrong. I was shocked when I read the Bible and understood just how wrong they were. I later confirmed these truths through history as I looked into the matter more deeply.

In 1981, I began this journey and within a year, I was attending the Worldwide Church of God learning about the Sabbath and Holy Days following the Hebrew calendar. We were about 150,000 strong and I was learning so much about each of the Holy Days.

Then in the winter of 2004-2005, I met Michael Rood and Nehemia Gordon who explained the meaning of the Takanot and Ma'asim, as well as the crescent moon to begin the month and the barley to begin the year. Once again, I was blown away and challenged by the teachings they put forward.

It is so obvious, when you read the Bible. I do not know why I never saw it before, but there it was as plain as day.

Until this time in 2005, I was following what others told me the Bible meant. I was a lemming in each group until I began to read the Bible for myself. I blindly followed the Catholics and then the leadership of the Worldwide Church of God, and simultaneously the teachings of the Rabbis about the Holy Days. How in the world could they have it wrong? They are supposed to be the ones preserving it, but sadly, they too had twisted the scriptures.

We have mentioned earlier about the Metonic cycles and the built-in error it has and how it is estimated to be out by 19 days now. We also mentioned about the built-in error in the Julian calendar. If you add an Adar Bet, a 13th month, without respect to the growing season in Israel, you could be out by as much as 49 days.

In 2024, we kept Passover in the month of Green Ears on February 26, 2024. We then kept Wave Sheaf Day on March 3, 2024, and Shavuot on April 21, 2024. Those on the Hillel calendar kept Passover on April 22, 2024, which was about 49 days' difference. We were harvesting the first fruits of wheat at the same time the Hillel calendar people should have been harvesting barley, but it was long gone by April 28, 2024, which was their Wave Sheaf Day.

I am now going to go through a quote from Qadesh La Yahweh Press; I am going to do it slowly and methodically, because this is very important for you to understand. I want you to see these things for yourself and then you can explain them to others and help restore the

brethren to keeping the Holy Days according to when Yehovah commanded.

The Sabbatical Year Controversy of 70, 69 or 68 C.E.

In our section about *How the Confusion Began*, we shared with you about four different theologies about the Jubilee cycles. Allow me to refresh your memory here now. System “A” is the one we are also following and it’s going to prove itself to all of us.

- *System “A”: Abib (March/April) 1, 70 C.E. until Abib 1, 71 C.E. The month of Abib was also called Nisan. System “A” is advocated by this study.*

System “B, C, and D” are all based on the Hebrew calendar today, assuming it always has been this way and therefore will be the same going back in history. The only problem is that it is not the same and it changes over time.

- *System “B”: Tishri (Sept./Oct.) 1, 68 C.E. until Tishri 1, 69 C.E. The Zuckermann-Schürer system.*
- *System “C”: Tishri 1, 69 C.E. until Tishri 1, 70 C.E. The Marcus-Wacholder theory.*
- *System “D”: Abib 1, 69 C.E. until Abib 1, 70 C.E. A possibility based upon the evidence of an Abib 1 beginning for the year coupled with the claim of Rabbi Jose¹⁸⁶ and other Talmudic writers that the year before the fall of Jerusalem was a Sabbath Year.¹⁸⁷*

It is because of these three various methods of recording the Sabbatical and Jubilee cycles, that the confusion begins. I say that knowing the confusion did not begin with them but back in the Mishnah around 180 C.E. But people today latch on to these “authorities” and assume they are correct, and depending on which *authority* they latch onto first, that is generally the theory people will follow.

¹⁸⁶ This is Rabbi Yose Ben Halafta of whom we wrote about earlier.

¹⁸⁷ **The Sabbath and Jubilee Cycles** by Qadesh La Yahweh Press, Introduction pages 5-7, <https://www.yahweh.org/publications/sjc/sj-0Intr.pdf>

Flaws in the System “B” Reconstruction¹⁸⁸

The system “B” reconstruction (which makes the period from Tishri [Sept./ Oct.], 68 until Tishri, 69 C.E.—the year before the fall of the Temple—a sabbath year) is widely held today as legitimate because of the works of Zuckermann (1857) and Schürer (1901). When scrutinized, their arguments are found to rest almost entirely upon a statement from the mid to late second century C.E. Jewish work entitled Seder Olam (chapter 30), written by the chronographer Rabbi Jose (Yose) ben Khalaphta. Jose comments that the year prior, both to the destruction of the first Temple and of the second Temple, was a sabbath year. The opinions voiced in Rabbi Jose’s text became the opinion of numerous Talmudic writers that followed him. It was the tradition of the Geonim,¹⁸⁹ and it was the considered opinion of, among others, Moses Maimonides, a well-respected Talmudist of the twelfth century C.E.

Proof for this historical construction is believed found in a statement made by Josephus, while he was discussing the siege of Jerusalem by Herod the Great in 37 B.C.E. According to this view, Josephus would have this siege take place during a sabbath year. Another item of evidence which is offered comes from some documents produced during the Bar Kochba revolt. This war, the advocates of system “B” hold, continued from 132 to 135 C.E. for all of Judaea. A contract dated towards the end of the second year of this Judaeen revolt mentions that after the next five years of harvesting there would be another shemitah (rest), i.e. sabbath year. Having reasoned that the first year of the war for all Judaea began in the spring of 132 C.E., the year 138/139 C.E. (Tishri reckoning) is hailed as the oncoming sabbath year intended by the documents.

It is clear that the majority of the Talmudic writers believed that system “B” was valid, beginning with many of the Jewish rabbis from the early third century C.E. Authority has also been lent to this calendar system during the last 150 years due to the studies and concurrence made by more recent historians, beginning with Zuckermann. As Wacholder adds, “The prestige of Schürer’s

¹⁸⁸ **The Sabbath and Jubilee Cycles** by Qadesh La Yahweh Press, Chapter 1, pages 9-17, <https://www.yahweh.org/publications/sjc/sj01Chap.pdf>

¹⁸⁹ The Geonim were the rectors of the great Rabbinic academies of Sura and Pumbeditha in preMohammedan Babylonia. The “Geonic period” lasted from the end of the sixth until the first half of the eleventh centuries C.E. World Jewry recognized these men as their highest religious authorities.

agreement with this reckoning made Zuckermann's calendar the mainstay of scholarship."¹⁹⁰ Nevertheless, as this study will show, a number of flaws exist in this popular view, flaws which should cause a great deal of hesitation before system "B" should be so eagerly accepted. These defects arise from the following points:

Other Views

First, the opinion held by Rabbi Yose (Jose) in the Seder Olam, and subsequently by the majority of the Talmudic writers that followed him, was not the only view on the subject. Indeed, there were important exceptions which demonstrate that there was no universal Jewish understanding about the sabbath year cycle.

*The Babylonian Talmudic work entitled Arakin reports one calculation, stating: "thus it is found that it (the destruction of the second Temple) happened during the last part of a septennate (seven year cycle)."*¹⁹¹ That is, the second Temple, which had been enlarged and called Herod's Temple, fell to the Romans during a sabbath year, not in the year after as system "B" requires.

*The Abodah Zarah shows that the early third century C.E. rabbi named Hunna also calculated the sabbatical cycle based upon the fact that the second Temple was destroyed during a sabbath year.*¹⁹²

*The Arakin on the other hand, points out that Rabbi Judah had argued that the destruction of the second Temple could not have happened in a sabbath year because the first Temple was destroyed in the third year of the cycle.*¹⁹³ Therefore, based upon a chronology agreed upon by the Talmudists, the second Temple was destroyed in the same third year of the cycle. The author of the Arakin adhered to the same chronology as Rabbi Judah and the others, but against them he mentions the argument that the first and second Temples were both destroyed during a sabbath year.

*The Seder Olam, as well as Talmudic works like the Taanith,*¹⁹⁴ *hold that both the first and second Temples were destroyed in a post-*

¹⁹⁰ HUCA, 54, p. 123.

¹⁹¹ B. Arak., 12b. The Heb. term **אָנְד** is utilized, meaning the "outgoing" or last part of a thing (HEL, pp. 141, 113). In this passage it refers to the last year of the septennate.

¹⁹² B. A.Zar., 9b.

¹⁹³ B. Arak., 12b.

¹⁹⁴ B. Taan., 29a.

sabbath year. Yet, they too clung to the same chronological framework used by Rabbi Judah and the Arakin text.

An Error in Chronology

*Second, all of the opinions held by Talmudic Jewish writers from the late second century C.E. and beyond are further colored by some flagrant and basic chronological errors. Using a distorted interpretation of the prophecy in Daniel, 9:24–27 (70 weeks being understood to mean 70 weeks of years—i.e. 490 years), their chronology was built upon the supposition that the second Temple stood for 420 years, being destroyed in the 421st year.¹⁹⁵ Under this construction, the second Temple began to be erected in 351 B.C.E. (Chart B). **It is obvious from reading the Seder Olam (29–30) that Rabbi Jose’s chronology is based entirely upon the rabbinical interpretation of this prophecy from Daniel and that he purposely makes the destruction of the temples built by Solomon and Herod (the first and second Temples) conform to this premise.***

*According to the prophecy in Daniel, 69 weeks (7 weeks plus 62 weeks) would pass before the appearance of the messiah, which was understood to mean 483 years; i.e. the messiah would appear in the 484th year. The 421st year of this chronology brings us to the destruction of the second Temple in 70 C.E., the 484th year becomes 133 C.E., the actual beginning of the Bar Kochba revolt.¹⁹⁶ During this revolt some of the important rabbis of that period declared Simeon Bar Kochba to be the messiah. The drift of this evidence leads one to suspect that the chronology advocated by Rabbi Jose was in truth originally devised to support the claim of Bar Kochba as the messiah. **After Bar Kochba failed, his claim as the messiah died, but the chronology which had been made popular at that time continued with a life of its own.***

Unfortunately, Rabbi Jose’s arrangement is impossible since the book of Ezra places the completion of the second Temple in the sixth

¹⁹⁵ E.g. B. Arak., 12b; B. Yom., 9a; J. Meg., 1:12; TSCJ, pp. 39–43; TRC, pp. 9f, n. I.

¹⁹⁶ Not in 132 C.E. as popularly assumed. Bar Kochba was involved in a local revolt in 132 C.E. but he was not recognized by all Judaea until spring of 133 C.E. After formal recognition, coins and other documents for all Judaea began to be dated by the revolt (see Section V).

year of King Darius of Persia (515 B.C.E.).¹⁹⁷ Ezra and Nehemiah, noted for their involvement in the activities of the second Temple, lived in the fifth century B.C.E., long before 351 B.C.E. Further, as history reveals, Bar Kochba was not the messiah, as many other rabbis of that time had themselves argued. Nevertheless, the chronology continued as if it had been valid.

Three divergent opinions were also expressed among the Jews as to what year represented the first celebration of a sabbath and Jubilee after the Israelites entered the land of Kanaan under Yahushua (Joshua) the son of Nun. These opinions colored their interpretation of chronology and their understanding of which years represented sabbaths.

- Most of the Talmudic writers claimed that the Israelites took seven years to conquer Kanaan and seven years to divide up the land. The fifteenth year in the land was a Jubilee.¹⁹⁸

- The first century B.C.E. Jewish work entitled *The Book of Jubilees*, on the other hand, argued that the Jubilee was celebrated in the first year that the Israelites entered Kanaan.¹⁹⁹

- The book of *Sepher Yashar* and the works of Josephus held a quite different position.²⁰⁰

Both calculated that the sixth year of the invasion into Kanaan was a year of rest (sabbath), implying that the Jubilee was in the fourteenth year: i.e. the seven years of conquest included a one year period prior to entering Kanaan—with the defeat of the Kanaani Emori (Amorites) located east of the Jordan—and then five years of conquest west of the Jordan before the sabbath year. During the sabbath year (year six in Kanaan) the land was distributed among the tribes of Israel.

¹⁹⁷ 14 And the elders of the Jews built, and they were blessed through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. And they built and finished it according to the command of the God of Israel, and according to the command of Cyrus, and Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia. 15 And this house was finished on the third day of the month Adar, in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the king. 16 And the sons of Israel, the priests, and the Levites, and the rest of the sons of the captivity, kept the dedication of this house of God with joy. (Ezra 6:14-16) The sixth year of Darius was 516-515 B.C.

¹⁹⁸ TSCJ, pp. 25–28.

¹⁹⁹ Jub., 50:1–4.

²⁰⁰ *Yashar*, 89:54–90:1; *Jos., Antiq.*, 5:1:19 (cf. *Joshua*, 14:1–15). The Hebrew work of *Sepher Yashar* (also called *Jasher*) must not be confused with *The Book of Jasher* by Alcuin, which is a fraudulent work. In the citations from the Hebrew *Yashar* we utilize the numbering system of M. M. Noah's English translation; but, in as much as this edition has several flaws, we remind our reader to rely on the Hebrew text (e.g. SHJ).

This sabbath year was followed by six years of planting and harvesting in order to produce enough store for the next sabbath and following Jubilee.

Next, beginning in the latter part of the second century C.E., Jewish writers incorrectly established the first of Tishri of the seventh month in the sixth year of the sabbath cycle as the start of the sabbath year. In doing so, they abandoned the first of Abib (called "Nisan" by the Babylonians and postexilic Jews), being the first month (March/April) in the calendar originally used among the Israelites.²⁰¹ This arrangement was the outgrowth of centuries of tradition intent upon building "a fence around the Law."²⁰² By putting into place sabbath year precepts (takanot and Ma'asim) during the months just prior to the actual start of the sabbath year, the religious leaders of Judaea believed they were preventing their followers from inadvertently breaking the Law. This interpretation at first created a sabbath year that extended from Tishri of year six until the last day of Adar, the twelfth month (Feb./March), of year seven. In the second century C.E., even this was shortened so that the year ended with the arrival of Tishri in the seventh year. The eighth year (or first year of the next cycle) was, in turn, made to begin on the first day of Tishri of year seven.²⁰³

Modern day chronologists have assumed that this first of Tishri beginning was used as the official start of the sabbath year not only from the time of the Mishnah, when the oral laws of the Talmudists were first put into writing (about 200 C.E. forward) but in the Halakoth (oral laws) period, which started in about the mid-second century B.C.E. and continued until around 200 C.E. Indeed, many apply it not only to the sabbath year but for every year in the post-exile period. Yet, as this investigation will demonstrate, evidence from the pre-destruction era (i.e. before Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 C.E.) and even as late as the Bar Kochba revolt (133–135 B.C.E.) proves that the early Jews of Judaea observed an Abib (Nisan) 1 beginning for all of their years, including the sabbath year.

We will have more to say on these particular subjects in our next chapter and throughout our study. The point to be considered here is

²⁰¹ See for example R.Sh., 1:1, and B. A.Zar., 10a.

²⁰² Ab., 1:1–5. As C. K. Barrett points out, the Jews understood that by this fence making they were to, "Make additional commandments in order to safeguard the original commandments; for example, certain acts should be avoided towards the approach of evening on Friday lest one should forget and inadvertently continue to do them on the Sabbath" (TNTB, p. 149).

²⁰³ E.g. Sot., 7:8.

that the shifting of the beginning of the year from the spring to the fall by the Jews in the post Halakoth period added to the confusion already in process.

It is evident that even before the Bar Kochba revolt, which for all intents and purposes ended with the fall of Jerusalem and Beth Thera in Ab (July/Aug.), 135 C.E., there had arisen various opinions about chronology among the different Jewish factions. These opinions became divisive after the chronological works of Demetrius were published (third century B.C.E.), who established the notion that the Israelite sojourn in Egypt lasted only 215 years rather than 400 years.²⁰⁴ A simple comparison between Josephus, the book of Jubilees and later Jewish works makes this point. This debate and the subsequent confusion it caused was further exacerbated by the fall of Jerusalem in 70 C.E., after which the Jews came to believe that the messiah must surely come now to recover their city and to rebuild the Temple. This messianic dream found its expression in the Bar Kochba revolt of 133–135 C.E.

Other Factors

The destruction of Jewish records by the Romans created a situation where only partial documentation was able to survive. Indeed, the Romans were notorious for destroying the records and culture of the people whom they hated and conquered (e.g. they even went so far as to salt the earth of Carthage after their victory over that city to prevent a future return of those people to their homeland). The decimation of Jewish documents especially took its toll with the burning and the ruination of both the second Temple and the city of Jerusalem in 70 C.E. and again with the conquest and destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans after the Bar Kochba revolt in 135 C.E.

The extreme anti-Jewish sentiment that had developed in the Roman attitude, due to the Jewish revolt of 66–70 C.E., led to the suppression of the practice of keeping the sabbath years. The observance of a sabbath year during the Bar Kochba revolt was only a momentary interlude in this suppression. There can be little doubt, as North observes,²⁰⁵ that the rabbinical ruling in the Mishnah, which allowed

²⁰⁴ 18 ESJ, pp. 98–104.

²⁰⁵ Bib., 34, pp. 512f

for cultivation during sabbath years when such sowing was commanded by foreign conquerors, came into existence during this postsecond Temple period. It is also known that during the third century C.E. greedy Roman proconsuls used force and threats of severe punishment to extract land-taxes from the Jews in the sabbath years. These conditions led Yannai (called Rabbah), a chief Rabbinic authority of that time, to issue a proclamation abrogating the sabbath year laws.²⁰⁶

The loss of records and other sources of documentation for keeping the sabbath year was further complicated by the dispersion of the Judaeans population after the demise of Jerusalem in 70 C.E. It was further aggravated by a permanent ban against all Jews—preventing them from coming near the region surrounding the city of Jerusalem—which took effect after the collapse of the Bar Kochba revolt in August of 135 C.E. This ban came about in the reign of emperor Hadrian (first half of the second century C.E.). At that time, the Romans began to build a temple dedicated to Jupiter on the site of the ancient Temple of Yahweh. As Dio points out, this sacrilege “brought on a war of no slight importance nor of brief duration.”²⁰⁷ The Jews, deeming it intolerable that a foreign people should be settled in their holy city and worship a pagan deity there, looked for a messianic deliverance from the evil. They believed they found one in Bar Kochba. The prophecy of 70 weeks found in the book of Daniel was interpreted by the followers of Bar Kochba to mean 70 weeks of years (490 years); and the sabbath year arriving in 133 B.C.E.²⁰⁸—which was followed by a Jubilee—was set forth as the time of deliverance per this prophecy. Records from the time of the Bar Kochba revolt reveal that the Jews had once again re-established the practice of keeping the sabbath year.²⁰⁹

In 135 C.E. the revolt in Jerusalem was crushed. At the time of this last revolt, the Roman government made “a legal decree and ordinances” that “the whole nation (of the Jews) should be absolutely prevented from entering from thenceforth even the district around Jerusalem,”²¹⁰ “the whole of Judaea was made desolate,”²¹¹ and for the most part the Jews were scattered throughout the world. Once

²⁰⁶ BJK, p. 382.

²⁰⁷ Dio, 69:12.

²⁰⁸ For the evidence of this sabbath year see Section V, Chaps. XXVI–XXIX. https://www.yahweh.org/pdf_index2.html

²⁰⁹ See Chap. XXVI.

²¹⁰ Eusebius, H.E., 4:6.

²¹¹ Dio, 69:14.

again Jewish practices, including the sabbath year, were suppressed and important records destroyed. This condition opened the door for minority opinions and misinformation to flourish.

With the forced non-observance of the sabbath year, combined with the lapse of time, Jewish scholars, beginning with the mid-second century C.E., were left to determine the sabbath and Jubilee cycle by chronographical considerations, largely derived out of their own devices. The school that rose to dominance was one which calculated that the sabbath and Jubilee were the fourteenth and fifteenth year after the Israelites entered into the land of Kanaan. Also remaining in their possession were the calculations used by the supporters of Bar Kochba.

The following is the Talmudic chronology that became popular and was assumed to be correct:

Exodus to building the Temple 480 years

Existence of first Temple 410

Babylonian Exile 70

Existence of second Temple 420

Exodus to end of second Temple 1380

Except for the figure of 480 years,²¹² the remaining calculations are all spurious. For example, from the end of the first Temple, destroyed in 587 B.C.E., until the destruction of the second Temple (Herod's Temple) in 70 C.E. is 658 years not 490 (70 plus 420) years as given. The error was further complicated by the formula that 483 years had passed from the rebuilding of the Temple to the appearance of Bar Kochba as the messiah.

With this error in hand, the rabbis, based upon their incorrect date for the Exodus, calculated what they believed were the sabbath year cycle and first Jubilee practiced by the Israelites upon their entering Kanaan. This cycle was then extended down until their own time. The rabbis simply subtracted from their figures 40 years for the wilderness sojourn. From here, one school determined that the fifteenth year of entry into Kanaan was the first Jubilee. Those who held to a complete 50-year Jubilee cycle before a new 50-year cycle started, as a result, found that there were 850 years from the Israelite

²¹² 1 Kings, 6:1. The existence of the first Temple was actually 372 years; the period of the Babylonian exile, beginning the year after the destruction of the first Temple, was 49 years; and from the time that the Jews returned from their Babylonian captivity in 538 B.C.E., until the destruction of the second Temple in 70 C.E. was 608 years. For details see our forthcoming text entitled *Israelite Chronology*.

entrance into Kanaan until the end of the first Temple.²¹³ Therefore, the first Temple, they argued, was destroyed on a sabbath year.

Rabbi Judah and those of his school, meanwhile, who believed in a 49-year Jubilee cycle, the 50th year being the first year in the next 49-year cycle, found that the 850th year was the third year in the sabbath cycle. Herein lies the source for the differences between these two systems (as mentioned above).

There is yet one other method of calculation that appears to have been used. Almost without a doubt, the rabbis in the mid-second century C.E. knew what years had been celebrated as a sabbath and a Jubilee during the Bar Kochba revolt. These dates, as shall be proven later on, were 133/134 and 134/135 B.C.E., Nisan reckoning. Yet, no exact record was known for the observance of the sabbath year around the time of the destruction of the second Temple in 70 C.E.

The debate over the exact cycle (whether it was 50 years or 49 years) was very strong during the late Halakoth and early post-Halakoth period, as their records show. Those who adhered to a 50-year cycle were also those who voiced the opinion that the first sabbath and Jubilee observed by the Israelites in Kanaan took place in the fourteenth and fifteenth years upon their coming into that land.

Many Jews, meanwhile, continued to observe the Jubilee years long after the fall of Jerusalem in 70 C.E. (a fact clearly indicated by the Babylonian Rosh ha-Shanah,²¹⁴ which not only gives opinions on how the Jubilee should be kept but argues that "it must be kept even outside of Palestine"). This view, by the way, did not interfere with the opinion, held by many of the rabbis since the latter part of the second century B.C.E., that after the fall of Samaria, until the destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E., the Jubilee was not required.²¹⁵

²¹³ TSCJ, p. 32.

²¹⁴ B. R.Sh., 8b-9b.

²¹⁵ It was the opinion of the rabbis, who were dominated by the sect of the Pharisees, that after the fall of Samaria the Jubilee was no longer observed or required (B. Arak., 32; HUCA, 44, p. 154, ns. 4, 6). For two reasons this interpretation is manifestly an error. First, the leadership of the postexile Jews, up until the mid-fifth century B.C.E., was in the hands of leading Yahwehists, like Ezra the scribe, Nehemiah the governor, and the high priest Yahushua, as well as important prophets of Yahweh, e.g. Haggai and Zechariah. The people during this period even formally agreed to observe the sabbath years (Neh., 10:31). It is extremely unlikely that during a period of restoration and strong adherence to the Torah that these Jews would, in contradiction to their purpose, find a reason to avoid the Jubilee, itself a sabbath year. Second, exemption was argued only by the Pharisees and the agreement to set aside the

This abstinence was allowed, so they claimed, by “rabbinical” rather than “scriptural” ordinance;²¹⁶ i.e. the rabbis had no scriptural authority but had invested themselves with the power to make such a decision.

In accordance with this view, these rabbis counted 50 years back from the last known Jubilee in 134/135 C.E. = 84/85 C.E. (Nisan reckoning). The year 84/85 C.E., therefore, was determined to be a Jubilee and the year prior, 83/84 C.E., a sabbath year. Continuing the seven-year cycle back from 83/84 C.E., they arrived at 69/70 C.E., Nisan reckoning, as a sabbath year. When the calendar using a Tishri beginning for the sabbath year was applied, this year was moved back 6 months, beginning in Tishri 68 and ending before the first of Tishri of 69 C.E. The result of this calculation is the system “B” cycle.

What then of those Jews who claimed that the year in which the second Temple was destroyed was a sabbath year? This conclusion is certainly not explained by popular Talmudic chronology. It is suggested by the evidence that this lesser known understanding was

Jubilee was certainly not universal among the Jews. This fact is demonstrated by the book of Jubilees, which was composed in the latter half of the second century B.C.E. by a non-Pharisee (OTP, 2, pp. 43f). It goes to great lengths to promote the Jubilee cycle. This text clearly reflects the debate, then raging, over whether or not the Jews were still required to continue their observance of the Jubilee cycle. Later on, the Qumran Community bewailed the fact that Israel had in their time turned “a blind eye” to the issues of the Jubilee and sabbath years and that men should return to the Torah of Moses (DR, 16:2–4).

The Pharisees were unable to press their interpretation until they had gained great influence among the masses, which circumstance did not become evident until the reign of Hyrcanus (134/133–105/104 B.C.E.), see Jos., Antiq., 13:10:5. During the reign of Queen Alexandra (76/75– 68/67 B.C.E.), they even gained political power (see Jos., Antiq., 13:16:1–3, Wars, 1:5:2). The influence of the Pharisees over the masses, beginning in the latter half of the second century B.C.E., became so great that it made the more conservative sect of the Sadducees “submit unwillingly and perforce, yet submit they do to the formulas of the Pharisees, since otherwise the masses would not tolerate them” (Jos., Antiq., 18:1:4). It may very well be that the severity of the famine suffered during the Jubilee of the 151st Seleucid (161/160 B.C.E.), see 1 Macc., 9:23f, cf. 9:1–18, served to convince these rabbis and the masses that continual observance of the Jubilee was unnecessary, since it resulted more in divine punishment than in a national blessing. With the attainment of political power for the Pharisees in the early part of the first century B.C.E., the setting aside of the observance of the Jubilee year became a fait accompli.

²¹⁶ HUCA, 44, p. 154, ns. 4, 6.

based either upon some actual piece of data about the destruction or, as is more likely the case, upon the correct calculation of the sabbath cycle (i.e. a 49 year cycle wherein the 50th year represents the first year of the next 49 year period; a calculation deemed accurate even by Zuckermann).²¹⁷ Using a correct calculation they could easily count back from 133/134 B.C.E., when the sabbath was observed during the Bar Kochba revolt, to the year that Jerusalem fell. From this method they could easily conclude that the city's demise occurred during a sabbath year.

Unfortunately, the Talmudists of this minority view continued to use the same flawed chronology as their brothers and when they calculated backwards from their date for the destruction of the second Temple their figures showed that the first Temple would also have been destroyed in a sabbath year (which is impossible as any accurate chronology for this period will demonstrate). It is the charge of this study that the underlying reason that the Talmudic Jews, from the time of the mid-second century C.E., expounded system "B" is the fact that they calculated their answers from flawed and misinformed chronographical data developed just prior to or during the outbreak of the Bar Kochba war and as expanded upon in later centuries.

Conclusion

The system "B" calculations were based upon a flawed chronological system which must have been created several years after the First Revolt and (based upon their interpretation of the prophecy in Daniel, 9:24–27) seems to have served as an added impetus for the Second Revolt. The rabbis relied far too heavily upon their religious traditions and scribal interpretations and did not adequately utilize

²¹⁷ Zuckermann correctly notes that, "The fiftieth year forms no part of the past period of the Jubilee, but opens a new series of a Jubilee-cycle of 49 years. This Jubilee-year appears to be independent, but is really included in the subsequent period. This has been correctly conceived by R. Jehudah, who maintains that 'the Jubilee-year is reckoned to the following Sabbatical cycle and to the following period of the Jubilee.' The year of Jubilee, moreover, is not celebrated as the conclusion of a period, but as the commencement of a new series of years" (TSCJ, p. 23.). This fifty-year calculation holds the same relationship to sabbath years that the Feast of Weeks holds to sabbath days. The Feast of Weeks is calculated by counting seven weeks of days (49 days) from the weekly sabbath that falls during Passover, and celebrating the next day, the 50th day, which is the first day of the week (cf. Jos., Antiq., 13:8:4), as a feast and high sabbath (Lev., 23:9–21). The normal cycle of a seven-day week never changes because of the Feast of Weeks. Neither does the normal cycle of the sabbath years.

sound historical documentation. Later, the calculations left over from the rabbis during the Bar Kochba revolt were combined with a Tishri (Sept./Oct.) beginning for the sabbath year to create a new interpretation—far different, for example, than the chronology found in Josephus (c. 90 C.E.).

For those who believed in a full 50 years for each Jubilee cycle, the second Temple was destroyed in a post-sabbath year. For some of those who adhered to a 49-year cycle (e.g. Rabbi Judah), it occurred in the third year of a sabbath cycle. Those who opposed these views and contended that Jerusalem and the Temple fell during a sabbath year did so because they either had retained some vague tradition that such had been the case or correctly calculated the cycle, which achieved for them the correct answer. They simply adjusted their chronology to reflect this solution.

In time and despite the fact that the debate as to whether the Jubilee cycle had originally been a complete 50 year unit or one of 49 years (with the 50th year also being the first of the next cycle), the arguments that the second Temple had been destroyed in the third year of a sabbath cycle or in a sabbath year itself were eventually suppressed by the rabbinical view of system “B.”

The problem was made even more acute when the rabbis changed the New Year date. This date had previously been Abib, later called Nisan (March/April), 1 but sometime after the conquest of Jerusalem in 135 C.E. and before 200 C.E., as reflected in the Mishnah, officially became Tishri 1—at least for the sabbath year and the first year of the next cycle. This change, though, was by no means immediate and had been in the process over a long, drawn out period of time. At first, apparently beginning in the last part of the second century B.C.E., Tishri 1 was introduced as a de facto beginning only for the practice of not planting or sowing crops in the last part of the year before the sabbath year. Shortly before the Mishnah was written (about 200 C.E. or soon after) every sabbath year officially started with Tishri 1.

The background of the system “B” scenario is suspect and its arrangement is flawed. Therefore, it would be unwise to simply accept its premise as valid without a thorough and close examination of earlier and much more reliable records. A judicious approach is to set aside the Talmudic speculations of Rabbi Jose and others who followed his lead and to examine the records from the period prior to the composition of the Seder Olam (about 160 C.E.). These earlier records should first be judged on their own merits. Only then, if these earlier records agree with the conclusions of system “B,” should we bring the Talmudic documents into the picture as added support.

Yet what our study has discovered is quite to the contrary. The earlier records actually disagree with Rabbi Jose and the Talmudic writers who followed him. The evidence clearly establishes a cycle of its own and, accordingly, it is time to dismiss the calculations set forth by the advocates of system “B” and return to this original understanding.

What Qadesh La Yahweh Press is stating is in fact true. What our own research and discoveries are going to show are that Rabbi Yose and those who followed his chronology got it wrong when compared to the historical documentation.

Once again, we are seeing how the takanot and ma’asim created during the Hasmonaean periods, debated in the schools of Hillel and Shammai, and then added to the Mishnah after the Bar Kochbah period, little by little led all of us away from the truth.

What we have just shared shows how the Sabbatical and Jubilee years were moved by bad and false chronology and theology. We are about to learn in greater detail how the beginning of the year was changed from Aviv to Tishri.

How Tishri Became the New Year

This period of time from the Hasmonaean to the Bar Kochba war—these 400 years are when all the damage to the proper timing of the Sabbatical and Jubilee years took place. It was not maliciously done. No, it was done in a time of confusion and various factions putting forth their views as being correct. It is no different than what we are doing today, arguing over which calendar is correct or which way we are to count the Jubilee cycles, whether by 49s or 50s. Depending on which group rose to authority or power determined which system would prevail.

Today in 2024, most people assume and give authority to the Rabbis about calendric issues. They do not feel they are able to figure it out on their own. This is how lemmings are born.

The next²¹⁸ issue we must contend with is the concept that the Jews, from the time of their return to Judaea from Babylon in 538 B.C.E. until the end of the Bar Kochba revolt (135 C.E.), officially began

²¹⁸ Chapter II The Tishri I New Year Question
<https://www.yahweh.org/publications/sjc/sj02Chap.pdf>

*their sabbath years with Tishri (Sept./Oct.) 1 of the sixth year of the sabbath cycle, as had become their custom sometime after the Bar Kochba war. This view is held as gospel not only by those advocating system "B" but even by historians like Ralph Marcus and Zion Wacholder (system "C").*²¹⁹ *This view, as we shall prove, is false.*

The supposition that the sabbath year officially began with the first of Tishri arose as a Jewish Talmudic "interpretation" which had gained popularity among their chronographers during the second century C.E. As a preliminary to dispelling this error, the following facts must be considered.

The Seventh Month and the Jubilee

*To begin with, a close examination of all the scriptural verses relevant to the sabbath years (both regular and Jubilee) proves that there is no commandment to begin any of these years with the seventh month of the preceding year.*²²⁰ *The only time that the seventh month, later identified as Tishri, is mentioned in association with a sabbath year is in Leviticus, 25:8–13, and here it has only to do with the year of Jubilee. Furthermore, even in this passage from Leviticus it is specifically called "the seventh month," not the first or the beginning of any year system. In fact, Scriptures specifically define the feast of the seventh month as occurring at "the going out of the year," while events which happened during the spring are said to have taken place "at the return of the year."*²²¹

The Talmudists misinterpreted Leviticus, 25:8–13, to mean that the observances of the Jubilee rituals designated for the seventh month belonged to the 49th year in the cycle. Nevertheless, a careful reading proves that the seventh month spoken of actually belongs to the 50th year, not the 49th.

And you shall count seven sabbaths of years, seven years seven times, and shall be to you the days of the seven sabbaths of years, forty-nine years. And you shall let sound a ram's horn, a signal in the seventh moon, on the tenth of the moon. On the Day of Atonement the ram's

²¹⁹ HUCA, 44, pp. 153–196; Marcus, Jos., vii, pp. 196f, n. a, pp. 694f, n. a, viii, p. 5, n. e. Also see Chart A.

²²⁰ E.g. Exod., 23:10–11; Lev., 25:1–28, 27:16–24; Num., 36:4; Ezek., 46:16–18.

²²¹ Exod., 23:16, "going out of the year"; 1 Kings, 20:26; 2 Chron., 36:10, "the return of the year"; NBD, p. 178, equates the "going out of the year" with the autumnal equinox and the "return of the year" with the vernal or spring equinox. Also see THP, p. 116, n. 5.

horn shall sound in all your land. **AND YOU SHALL MAKE SACRED יָבִיל (AYTH; THIS) YEAR, THE FIFTIETH YEAR,** and you shall proclaim liberty in the land to all its dwellers. A Jubilee it shall be for you. And you shall return a male to his possession; and each to his family you shall return him. A Jubilee it is, the fiftieth year. A year it is for you, not shall you sow it and not shall you harvest that which grows of itself and not gather the unkept vine, for a Jubilee it shall be. Sacred it shall be to you. (Lev. 25:8ff)

This passage clearly states that 49 years had already been counted before one was to consider the seventh month, thereby placing the seventh month in the 50th year. Furthermore, the statement attaches to the duties of the seventh month the phrase, “and you shall make sacred this year, the 50th year, and you shall proclaim liberty in the land to all its dwellers.” Also, on the tenth day of the seventh month, the Day of Atonement, a ram’s horn or trumpet was to be sounded. **The passage in no way implies that the trumpets were to be sounded because it announced the coming of the Jubilee, which would yet be six months off. Rather, it was to be sounded because one was in the seventh month of the Jubilee year and the nation was proclaiming “liberty.”** Further, the very fact that the seventh month is mentioned without a qualifying statement, such as, “being the first month of the sabbath year,” demonstrates that this seventh month belongs to a year already in progress.

יָבִיל (Jubil; Jubilee) literally means, “the blast of a horn (from its continuous sound).”²²² The year of Jubilee, therefore, is named from the fact that in that year the trumpet is blown. It would make no sense if the trumpet was blown in the middle of the 49th year, for in that case the 49th year would be the year of Jubilee (trumpet blowing). Josephus, accordingly, pronounced that “the 50th year is called by the Hebrews Jubil; at that season debtors are absolved from their debts and slaves are set at liberty.”²²³ Philo adds clarification by noting that Yahweh “consecrated the whole of the 50th year.”²²⁴ Nothing is said about consecrating the last six months of the 49th year as the beginning of the Jubilee.

The awkwardness created by the explanation that the Jubilee year began with the seventh month of the 49th year in the cycle is further manifested by the fact that many of the Talmudic Jews actually started this year not with the first day of the seventh month but with the tenth

²²² SEC, Heb. #3104.

²²³ Jos., Antiq., 3:12:3.

²²⁴ Philo, Spec. Laws, 2:22.

day—the day that the trumpets of Jubilee were actually sounded. The Babylonian Rosh ha-Shanah, for example, argues: “(Is the New Year for) Jubilees on the first of Tishri? Surely (the New year for) Jubilees is on the tenth of Tishri, as it is written, *On the day of Atonement shall you make proclamation with the horn.*”²²⁵ **It is clear that the original scheme of the Jubilee and sabbath cycles came to be obscured by inventive over-interpretations of later ill-informed theologians.**

The prophetic character attached to the year of Jubilee and the seventh month of that year further compels us to place the trumpet blowing of the seventh month within the 50th year. The seventh month, for example, brings with it the Feast of Trumpets on the first day, the Day of Atonement on the tenth, and the Feast of Tabernacles from the fifteenth to twenty-second days. These celebrations point towards the final atonement of man by his death, resurrection into the Judgment which follows,²²⁶ the final quickening of mankind into immortal beings, and the attainment of true liberty from sin after the Judgment. At that time the great inheritance of land will be parceled out to those attaining salvation. This liberty is symbolized by such things as the redemption of slaves and the land being freed from debt and returning to its original owner.²²⁷ The rightful time for “liberty” to be proclaimed, therefore, is within the seventh month of the Jubilee year.

The Tishri Year

The Talmudic doctrine that the month of Tishri in the sixth year of a sabbath cycle should officially begin the sabbath year is not proclaimed in any writings before the end of the second century C.E. Important works from the first century C.E. and prior, which delve heavily into this subject, never even imply such an arrangement. They hold that the month of Abib (Nisan) is always the first month in determining scriptural practices.²²⁸

Josephus (c. 90 C.E.) states that before the Exodus the Israelites in Egypt, following Egyptian practice, observed the month of

²²⁵ B. R.Sh., 8a.

²²⁶ Cf. Heb., 9:27; Rev., 20:11–15.

²²⁷ Lev., 25:11–17.

²²⁸ E.g. Jub., 49:1–10, 50:1–4; Philo, Spec. Laws, 1:35(180–189), 2:17–23(71–119); Jos., Antiq., 3:10:1–6, 3:8:4; a first century Jewish omen text (JNES, 48, pp. 201–214) and the Meg. Taan. (JQR, 10, pp. 237–243).

*Marheshuan, called Dios (Oct./Nov.)*²²⁹ in Greek, as the second month making the first month Tishri, yet with Moses it became the eighth month. “Moses,” he points out, “appointed Nisan, that is to say Xanthicus (March/April), as the first month for the festivals, because it was in this month that he brought the Hebrews out of Egypt; he also reckoned this month as the commencement of the year FOR EVERYTHING RELATING TO DIVINE WORSHIP, but for selling and buying and other ordinary affairs he preserved the ancient order.”²³⁰ Notice that the month of Tishri, the seventh month, was the beginning of a year system practiced among the pagans in Egypt. We also know that the month of Tishri was used by the pagan Macedonians as the first month of their year. Yahweh changed this system for the Israelites just before their famous Exodus out of Egypt during the month of Abib, (1379) B.C.E.²³¹

Josephus, living in the latter part of the first century C.E., points out that even in his day, writing some 20 years after the destruction of the Temple at Jerusalem, “the ancient order,” which began with Tishri, was only “for selling and buying and other ORDINARY AFFAIRS.” Since the sabbath year is part of divine worship, and in no way is to be construed as in the category of “ordinary affairs,” Josephus is here understood to mean that the sacred year was required to begin with the month of Nisan (Abib), roughly our April. His comment also reveals the seed for the later view of the Talmudic Jews, the transition from the system used for “ordinary affairs” to things of “divine worship” being but a short step.

Philo (c. 40 C.E.) indicates the same thing as Josephus. He writes that the year began in the spring and that Moses “proclaimed a rest for the land and made the husbandman stay his work di’ (di; after completing) six years.”²³² He does not say “from the latter part of the sixth year” but “after completing six years.”

From the First Revolt (66–70 C.E.) against Rome, continuing through the Bar Kochba revolt (133–135 C.E.), the records show that the Jewish year was still reckoned from Nisan and not Tishri.²³³ As we

²²⁹ For the equivalency between the Greek, Hebrew, and Roman months see Chart G. This is to be found in <https://www.yahweh.org/publications/sjc/sj12Chap.pdf> page 11.

²³⁰ Jos., *Antiq.*, 1:3:3. 13.

²³¹ Exod., 12:1–20, 13:4–10. Qadesh La Yahweh Press had this date as 1439 B.C. We have changed it to 1379 B.C. and will prove this through the Sabbatical and Jubilee Cycles.

²³² Philo, *Spec. Laws*, 1:35, par. 180ff, 2:21, par. 104.

²³³ 15 IEJ, 21, pp. 40f and n. 11.

shall later see, the sabbath year was still determined in this period by this same Nisan method.²³⁴

The first time that we notice the reckoning of a sabbath year as officially beginning with the month of Tishri in the year prior to the seventh year is from a passage in the Mishnah (about 200 C.E.):

There²³⁵ are four 'New Year' days: on the first of Nisan is the New Year for kings and feasts; on the first of Elul is the New Year for the Tithe of cattle (Rabbi Eleazar and Rabbi Simeon say: the first of Tishri); on the first of Tishri is the New Year for [the reckoning of] the years [of foreign eras], the Years of Release and Jubilee years, for the planting [of trees] and for vegetables; and the first of Shebat is the New Year for [fruit-]trees (so the School of Shammai; and the School of Hillel say: on the 15th thereof).²³⁶

This claim of four New Year days in one year is not substantiated in Scriptures, which proclaims only one New Year's day, the first of Abib (Nisan).²³⁷ It is also important to notice that even in the Mishnah the first of Nisan was the New Year for "(Israelite) kings and feasts." Tishri was used for "the years (of foreign eras)."²³⁸ There can be little doubt that the foreign era referred to means the Macedonian Seleucid era, which began its year with Hyperberetaeus (Sept./Oct.). Yet it was an era used by foreign peoples, not an early Israelite (i.e. from the time of Moses) or scriptural calendar system.

An important Talmudic work called *Abodah Zarah* confirms that the beginning month for the year had indeed been changed and that it now differed from the days when the Jews had their own kings. While commenting upon the issues presented by the above passage from the Mishnah, it states:

The one refers to Jewish kings, the other to kings of other nations—the year of other nations' kings being counted from Tishri, and of Jewish kings from Nisan. Now, IN THE PRESENT TIME we count the years from Tishri; were we then to say that our Era is connected with the Exodus it is surely from Nisan that we ought to count. Does this not prove that our reckoning is based on the reign of the Greek kings (and not the Exodus)? That indeed proves it.²³⁹

²³⁴ See Chaps. XXVI–XXIX.

²³⁵ As you read this, take note that there are no scriptures to back any of this up. It is all according to the opinions of various Rabbis.

²³⁶ *R.Sh.*, 1:1.

²³⁷ *Deut.*, 16:1.

²³⁸ Danby, *Mishnah*, p. 188, n. 7; cf. *Gitt.*, 8:5.

²³⁹ *B. A.Zar.*, 10a.

The Transition to the Tishri Year

The New Year date of Tishri 1 for the sabbath year is an offshoot of late Talmudic interpretation. As has been previously noted, the Scriptures never claim that the seventh month began a regular sabbath year. The deduction that Tishri began a Jubilee year was itself a misreading of Leviticus, 25:8–13. The rabbis of the post-Bar Kochba period, in an effort to “build a fence around the Law,”²⁴⁰ merely extended their misreading of Leviticus 25:8–13, which dealt only with the year of Jubilee, to the regular sabbath year.

Nowhere is the superimposition of a Tishri year by the Jews of the post Bar Kochba period (after 135 C.E.) more self-evident than when we compare Deuteronomy, 31:10–13, with Josephus (Antiq., 4:8:12) and the Mishnah (Sotah, 7:8). Deuteronomy commands that, “מִקֵּץ (in the last part)²⁴¹ of the seven years,” there would be a public reading of the Torah, “in the appointed time of the year of the shemittah (sabbath year),²⁴² in the feast of Tabernacles (i.e. in the seventh month).” Josephus (late first century C.E.) proves that this was still the understanding in his time. The Sotah (200 C.E.), meanwhile, contradicts it, making this public reading occur at the beginning of the eighth year.

Further, there is no record of Tishri as the official beginning of the sabbath year until some 65 years after the Bar Kochba revolt. Earlier records make no such claim. As a result, there is no justification for assuming that it was common practice before the post-Bar Kochba period.

There can be little doubt that part of this transition from an Abib (spring) to a Tishri (fall) New Year date was influenced by the dominance of foreigners and pagans in Jerusalem and Judaea after the overthrow of the Bar Kochba revolt, and the decrees and ordinances established by Hadrian thereafter. These foreigners utilized the Macedonian version of the Seleucid era, which began the year in Hyperberetaeus (Sept./Oct.; Tishri). The Seder Olam, for example, states, “And in the Exile they write in documents according to the reckoning of the Greeks (i.e. Seleucid Era).”²⁴³ After the rabbis

²⁴⁰ Ab., 1:1–5, e.g., 3:1–4.

²⁴¹ HEL, p. 234, מִקֵּץ, “from the end” or “at the end,” meaning in the last part of something.

²⁴² That the shemittah is the sabbath year see below Chap. XI, p. 159, ns. 2, 3.

²⁴³ S.O., 30.

had determined that the sabbath year should begin with Tishri, it was an easy step to determine every year as starting from this same point. A further indication that the sabbath and Jubilee years, up until the Bar Kochba revolt, continued among the Judaeans to begin with the month of Abib (Nisan) can be drawn from these facts. It is inconceivable, for example, that the Jews of the late sixth century B.C.E., having left their Babylonian exile in 538 B.C.E. to resettle Judaea, would not have known the correct way of observing scriptural years. Several sabbath years and a Jubilee year transpired during this exile and those faithful Yahwehists who returned to Judaea, such as the high priest Yahushua (Joshua), the son of the high priest Yahuzadaq (Jozadak), would certainly have continued to count them. Also, many who lived in Judah before the destruction of the first Temple and their exile into Babylonia in 587 B.C.E. were still alive. One noted example was the prophet Daniel.²⁴⁴ When a portion of the Jews returned from their Babylonian captivity in 538 B.C.E., this older generation was available for guidance.

In the mid-fifth century B.C.E., the knowledge and timing of the sabbath and Jubilee years would still be known. It was during this period that the scribe Ezra (author of the books of Chronicles and Ezra) and Nehemiah (of the book of Nehemiah fame) settled in Judaea. The devout prophets of Yahweh named Haggai and Zechariah, among others, also lived there. These men, well-versed in scriptural knowledge and inspired of Yahweh, would undoubtedly be aware of which years and seasons represented the sabbath and Jubilee years. In full support of this view, we know that the Jews who returned from their Babylonian captivity took a pledge to keep the sabbath year.²⁴⁵ That they continued to keep the sabbath year is verified in the records of Josephus, who points out that Alexander the Great (331 B.C.E.) permitted them to continue this practice, as did the Romans in the first century B.C.E.²⁴⁶

Interpretations with regard to the understanding of the laws of the Torah began to change when Antiochus Epiphanes tried to hellenize Judaea (169–165 B.C.E.). At this time there arose a Jewish party called the Pharisees. They believed in a system of oral laws, based upon rabbinic traditions, that were later to be codified in the Mishnah. This sect was opposed by the older and more conservative

²⁴⁴ Dan., 1:1–21, 5:1–31, 8:1, 9:1–2, 10:1; 2 Kings, 24:1–25:21; 2 Chron., 36:5–23; Ezra, 1:1–3:13.

²⁴⁵ Neh., 10:31.

²⁴⁶ Jos., Antiq., 11:8:5–6, 14:10:5–6.

party of the Sadducees, who held to a strict understanding of the Torah and gave no regard to oral tradition. In the reign of Hyrcanus (134/133–105/104 B.C.E.) the Pharisees had already gained great influence among the masses and, during the reign of Queen Alexandra (76/75–68/67 B.C.E.), they rose to power over Judaea.²⁴⁷ At the time of King Herod, 37–4 B.C.E., the legitimate line of Hasmonaean high priests was removed and in their place Herod set up “some insignificant persons who were merely of priestly descent.”²⁴⁸ ***This degenerated priesthood, combined with the rise of the scribes as a religious power (who brought into being the Pharisee sect and the Talmudic traditions), soon perverted the sound doctrines originally practiced. Traditions and interpretations replaced the authority of Scriptures and from the time of Herod onwards the doctrine of “traditions” dominated Jewish life. These numerous traditions were condemned by Yahushua the messiah (whose name is often translated into English as “Jesus Christ”) as actually being opposed to sound scriptural doctrine.***²⁴⁹ ***It was by these lower ranked, “insignificant” priests and the new scribe class that Yahushua the messiah was wrongfully tried and executed.***

Josephus refers to a Judaeian high priest of the first century C.E., named Ananus, as “rash in his temper and unusually daring” and tells of his conspiracy to kill Jacob (James) the brother of the messiah, Yahushua.²⁵⁰ The servants of a subsequent priest named Ananias are called “utter rascals” who combined their operations with “the most reckless men.” These men “would go to the threshing floors and take by force the tithes of the priests. Neither did they refrain from beating those who refused to give. The high priests were guilty of the same practices as their slaves, and no one could stop them.”²⁵¹

Out of this degenerated class of priests and the “tradition” believing rabbis and scribes there arose support for the Bar Kochba revolt. It was thought that Simeon Bar Kochba (Simeon ben Kosiba) would restore the rabbis to power in Judaea. Many of the rabbis, of course, did not believe in the messianic attributes of Bar Kochba, but they nevertheless supported the rebellion in his name as a political quest for freedom.

²⁴⁷ Jos., Antiq., 13:10:5, 13:16:1–3, Wars, 1:5:2.

²⁴⁸ Jos., Antiq., 14:16:4, 20:10:5.

²⁴⁹ E.g. Matt., 15:1–9; Mark, 7:1–13; Col., 2:8; 1 Pet., 1:18.

²⁵⁰ Jos., Antiq., 20:9:1.

²⁵¹ Jos., Antiq., 20:9:1–2.

*Wacholder and others speak of “the gradual shifting of the New Year from Nisan to Tishri, which has been formalized into our Rosh ha-Shanah.”*²⁵² Yet their perception of this “gradual shifting,” at least for the sabbath years, assumes that it occurred shortly after the return of the exiles in 538 B.C.E. In turn, this view leads them to interpret passages from the book of Maccabees, Josephus, and other early records as if the month of Tishri had long been the official beginning for the sabbath year. Many others go so far as to assume that the month of Tishri began every year, not just the sabbath year.

Contrary to this view, nothing in these records even suggests such an early change. Most likely, the alteration did not become official until long after the fall of Jerusalem in 70 C.E. Indeed, one cannot even find evidence that the Jewish sabbath year officially began with Tishri during the Bar Kochba revolt (133–135 C.E.). Not until the Mishnah (about 200 C.E.) do we find this interpretation, and historians admit that this late text does not prove ancient practice.²⁵³

The change in the beginning of the year could only start to occur after the degenerated priesthood had been put into place (in Herod’s day) and after a substantial period of time had elapsed, when memories of the correct observances under a more honorable priesthood had died, had become grossly misunderstood, or were wrongly overturned by an ill-considered notion that the former leaders had been in error. Its growth would more properly have mushroomed after the First Revolt, while the Zealots and other extremists had come to power, yet not truly fashionable until after the Second Revolt, when the vision of Bar Kochba as a “messiah” had been crushed. Foreign domination of Jerusalem and Judaea after the Bar Kochba revolt necessitated contracts and other civil matters to be conducted with the Macedonian version of the Seleucid year (beginning in Tishri). This reality would certainly contribute to the movement towards a Tishri calendar.

There was also a problem created by a winter planting season in Judaea, which had need of harvesting in the spring and summer. It was much more convenient to begin a sabbath year with the planting season and end it before the next planting season began. Discontinuing the sabbath year in the midst of an agricultural season would have been construed by many rabbis as a hardship. It became a simple matter to reinterpret Leviticus, 25:9, to mean that the seventh month of the 49th year of the Jubilee cycle represented the

²⁵² HUCA, 44, p. 155.

²⁵³ See CKIJ, p. 70; and OOGA, pp. 439, 454f; MNHK, p. 51.

beginning of the year of Jubilee, and by extension the seventh month of every sixth year of the sabbath cycle represented the start of the sabbath year.

Conclusion

‘Based upon this preliminary evidence, it is the conclusion of this study that one cannot automatically assume that the early pre-Mishnah records (i.e. before 200 C.E.) are to be read with the understanding that the month of Tishri in the sixth year of the sabbath cycle was utilized by the Jews of those times as the official beginning of the sabbath year. Each record must be analyzed in context to determine when the beginning of the sabbath year actually took place. As this study proceeds, the evidence will prove that late Talmudic interpretations misunderstood certain earlier Jewish agricultural practices that came into existence after the mid-second century B.C.E. These earlier Jewish practices, which built “a fence around the Law,” required the observance of the sabbath year during the latter part of the sixth year of the cycle in an effort to protect the sabbath year. It was believed that, by prohibiting harvesting and sowing in the months just before the sabbath year had actually begun, they could prevent people from inadvertently crossing over the time line and defiling the sabbath year. The few months prior to the sabbath year, therefore, conformed with the practices of the oncoming sabbath year. The later Talmudic Jews (second century C.E. and after) simply misinterpreted these previous safeguards and falsely assumed that the sabbath year should begin at the time of the year when the above mentioned prohibitions started.

Nevertheless, all of the pre-Mishnah records demonstrate that the earlier Jews officially began their seventh year, the sabbath year, with Abib (Nisan) 1. The decision to change was encouraged by the loss of official records, the loss of Jewish governmental authority, and circumstance. For example, after the failure of the Bar Kochba revolt in 135 C.E. the Jews came under even heavier influence of foreign kings and cultures utilizing a year reckoned from the fall. This transition was further facilitated by the preservation of a Tishri year among the Jews themselves. Josephus poignantly reminds us that a Tishri year was still used during the first century C.E. for things not related to divine worship, such as “selling and buying and other ordinary things.” The agricultural season was also an influence. The “need” of most present-day chronologists to interpret a “Tishri” beginning for the sabbath year is pursued in order to make the earlier

records conform with late Talmudic interpretation and more recent theory. In turn, important items of evidence from the pre-Mishnah period are adjusted to fit either the system “B” scenario, as with the Zuckermann-Schürer calendar, or to pursue the idea that the later Talmudic writers really did agree with the more ancient records but that their works have been misunderstood (Wacholder, system “C”).

I first read Qadesh La Yahweh Press and what they say about the Sabbatical and Jubilee years way back on Passover 2005. These facts, along with what I had just learned a couple months earlier about the crescent moon to begin the month and the barley to begin the year from Nehemia Gordon and Michael Rood, left me stunned. Again, as I quote these sources, I am still shocked and amazed at how we have all just accepted what we have been told as the truth having never checked the facts.

I hope that what we have now shared will inspire you to do a more complete search so that you can follow Yehovah and not any man.

Rabbi Eliezer and Rosh Hashanah 27a²⁵⁴

With this historical background you are now almost ready to begin to look at each of the historical records we have collected about the Sabbatical and Jubilee years. Before we begin, I would like to quote the Mishnah about Rosh Hashanah which became the new year in Tishri instead of Aviv.

I would like you to focus on who developed this new year and how it came into being.

15 § It was taught in the mishna: Yom Kippur of the Jubilee Year is the same as Rosh HaShana with regard to both the shofar blasts that are sounded and the additional blessings that are recited in the Amida prayer. Rav Shmuel bar Yitzhak said: In accordance with whose opinion do we pray today on Rosh HaShana, saying: This day is the beginning of Your works, a commemoration of the first day? In accordance with whom? In accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Eliezer, who said: The world was created in the month of Tishrei. We therefore mention on Rosh HaShana that it is the first day.

²⁵⁴ Rosh Hashanah 27a The William Davidson Talmud (Koren - Steinsaltz)
https://www.sefaria.org/Rosh_Hashanah.27a?lang=bi&with=all&lang2=en

16 Rav Eina raised an objection: It was taught in the mishna: Yom Kippur of the Jubilee Year is the same as Rosh HaShana with regard to both the shofar blasts that are sounded and the additional blessings that are recited in the Amida prayer. But there are the words: This day is the beginning of Your works, a commemoration of the first day, which can be recited on Rosh HaShana but cannot be recited on Yom Kippur of the Jubilee Year, which is neither: The beginning of Your works, nor: A commemoration of the first day. If so, how can one recite the same blessing on both occasions? The Gemara answers: When the mishna was taught, saying that the blessings of the Jubilee and Rosh HaShana are the same, it was taught with regard to the other parts of the blessings, but the line beginning: This day, is indeed omitted on Yom Kippur of the Jubilee Year.

Rav Sheisha, son of Rav Idi, taught the previous passage as follows: Rav Shmuel bar Yitzhak said: That which we learn in the mishna, Yom Kippur of the Jubilee Year is the same as Rosh HaShana with regard to both the shofar blasts that are sounded and the additional blessings that are recited in the Amida prayer; in accordance with whom was it taught? Apparently it was not taught in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Eliezer, as if it reflects the view of Rabbi Eliezer, there is a difficulty. Since he said that the world was created in Tishrei, then there are also the words: This day is the beginning of Your works, a commemoration of the first day, which can be recited on Rosh HaShana, but cannot be recited on Yom Kippur of the Jubilee Year. If so, how can one recite the same blessing on both occasions? The Gemara rejects this argument: When the mishna was taught, it was taught with regard to the other parts of the blessings, but this line is indeed omitted on Yom Kippur of the Jubilee Year.

If I now go to Hebrew4Christians and read what they have posted about the creation of the world, you can then learn how the takanot (plural of takanah) of Rabbi Eliezer have morphed into the following teachings:

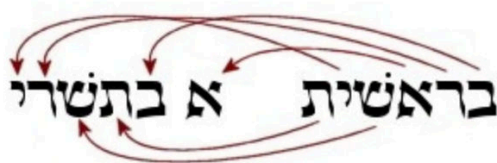
Popular²⁵⁵ Judaism regards Rosh Hashanah as the date of the Creation of the universe by God (Talmud: Rosh Hashanah 27a), but the Midrash notes that it occurred six days earlier, on the 25th of Elul, when God created the Divine light by saying, "Let there be light"

²⁵⁵ Teshuvah and Creation Elul 25 on the Jewish Calendar

https://hebrew4christians.com/Holidays/Fall_Holidays/Elul/Creation/creation.html#loaded

(Gen. 1:3). The sages reasoned that since the gematria for the word yehi (יְהִי, "let there be," is 25, and man was created on Rosh Hashanah, the first work of creation (שִׁית־רֵאשִׁי-שְׁהֵי־עַבַּד) actually began on Elul 25 of the Hebrew calendar...

The Mishnah (Sanhedrin 38b) states that Adam and Eve were created six days later on Rosh Hashanah (i.e., Tishri 1), but how did the sages determine this date? In other words, why did they think man was created on Rosh Hashanah? By transposing the Hebrew letters of the very first word of the Hebrew Scriptures:



on the 1st of Tishri

in the beginning

In other words, by rearranging the letters of the word bereshit ("in the beginning"), the phrase aleph b'Tishri ("on the 1st of Tishri") was formed, and therefore this date became associated with the anniversary of creation (or rather, the creation from Adam's perspective, i.e., the "sixth day").

If our theology is going to now consist of rearranging the letters of the Bible to fit our preconceived notions, then where do we stop? If I take the English word "this," I can change the letters to be "shit" or "hits," or "tish."

What ever happened to:

2 You shall not add to the Word which I command you, neither shall you take away from it, so that you may keep the commands of Jehovah your God which I command you. (Deuteronomy 4:2)

What Rabbi Eliezer has done, and what the Mishnah has done, is a shame to all of us who have allowed it to become our replacement theology, instead of obeying the Torah. There may be many nuggets of information we can glean from the Mishnah, but it is not the Word of Yehovah, and the authors of the Mishnah have accepted as facts what were erroneous misunderstandings at that time.

I will let you now finish reading what Hebrew4Christians has said about the creation of the world based upon the Mishnah and Rabbi Eliezer:

According to Jewish tradition, this first "Friday" of creation was the first Rosh Hashanah, the "head of the year," since it represents the day that God began to rule as King of the Universe (i.e., melekh ha-olam: לֵךְ זֶה עַד הָאָדָם). When Adam first opened his eyes and human consciousness was born, he immediately understood that the LORD created all things, including himself. According to midrash, Adam's first words were, עָדֵן לֵךְ זֶה עַד הָאָדָם / Adonai malakh olam va'ed: "The LORD is King for ever and ever" (Exod. 15:18). God then said, "Now the whole world will know that I am King," and He was very pleased. This was the "tov me'od" (טוֹב מְאֹד) (moment of creation, when God saw all that He had made "and found it very good" (Gen. 1:31). The birthday of humanity is therefore the Coronation Day for the King of the Universe. Psalm 47 celebrates the Kingship of God that mentions the "shout" (teruah) and shofar blast of God's coronation: עָלָה אֱלֹהִים בְּקוֹל שׁוֹפָר / E-loh-heem beet-roo-ah Adonai be-kohl shoh-fahr "God has gone up with a shout (teruah), the LORD with the sound of a trumpet (shofar). Psalm 47:5 celebrates the Kingship of God that mentions the "shout" (teruah) and shofar blast of God's coronation:

"God has gone up with a shout (teruah), the LORD with the sound of a trumpet (shofar). Psalm 47:5

The sound of the shofar is meant to awaken our consciousness that the LORD is King of the Universe. "Wake up from your (moral) sleep. You are asleep. Get up from your slumber. You are in a deep sleep. Search for your behavior. Become the best person you can. Remember God, the One Who created you" (Mishneh Torah). "How blessed are the people who know the joyful sound (teruah), O LORD; they walk in the light of Your Presence" (Psalm 89:15).

The Midrash also says that on this very first Rosh Hashanah (i.e., the day of humanity's creation) Adam and Eve committed the fatal sin by eating from the forbidden Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil: They taught in the name of R' Eliezer: On the twenty-fifth day of Elul the world was created... On the day of Rosh Hashanah, during the first hour, it occurred to His thought [i.e., to create man]; in the second, He took council with the ministering angels; in the third, He

gathered together his dust; in the fourth, He kneaded him; in the fifth, He shaped him; in the sixth, He completed his form; in the seventh, He breathed into him soul; in the eighth, He placed him in the Garden; in the ninth, he was commanded; in the tenth, he transgressed; in the eleventh, he was judged; and in the twelfth, he went free.

After the LORD judged Adam and Eve, He compassionately gave them the skin of a sacrificial lamb as their covering (Gen. 3:21). This First Sacrifice, offered by the Hand of God Himself, foreshadowed the coming Sacrifice of the Lamb of God who was slain "from the foundation of the world" (1 Pet. 1:20). On the very first day of mankind's creation, then, the LORD initiated His plan of redemption and salvation through Yeshua (Jesus) as the Divine Light of the world (לֵךְ זוֹהַר וְרָא).

Midrash Bereshit includes the statement: "Great is teshuvah, for it preceded the Creation of the World, as it says, 'Before the mountains came into being, You reduced Man to nothingness, and said 'Return' (Psalm 90:2-3)." This idea suggests that God created humanity with the intent of ultimately revealing Himself as Redeemer and Savior. Therefore we see the Lamb of God (שֶׁהָיָה לְכַפֵּר) slain "from the foundation of the world" (1 Pet. 1:20) restoring the kingdom that was prepared for those chosen to be redeemed "before the foundation of the world" (Eph. 1:4, Matt. 25:34).

We are not told when Yehovah created the world. We can speculate as to when it was, but the moment those speculations become doctrine and we begin to change the calendric commands of Leviticus 23 and 25, and then justify those changes by adding a few other scriptures to it, we just stepped into no-man's-land where anything is plausible, and facts no longer matter. We can then change entire words by rearranging the letters to mean whatever we want them to mean.

I will close with these thoughts.

It is my belief that those who do not love the Torah, are the same ones who venture down rabbit trails looking for the secret knowledge that no one else has figured out or has access to—secret information found in the Apocrypha books and in the Genizahs or garbage heaps of history—information that comes from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Most people have trouble discerning the evil because they have never learned from the Tree of Life what is the truth to begin with—they have never learned how to tell the counterfeit from the original. This is what Paul was referring to when he said they did not

have a love of the truth to begin with and because they did not love the WORD, the Torah, Yehovah gave them over to their own lust and false information so that they believed their own lies.

7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already working, only he is now holding back until it comes out of the midst. 8 And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the breath of His mouth and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming, 9 whose coming is according to the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, 10 and with all deceit of unrighteousness in those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, so that they might be saved. 11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, 12 so that all those who do not believe the truth, but delight in unrighteousness, might be condemned. (2 Thessalonians 2:7-12)