

ALL ABOUT GOD'S CALENDAR

GOD'S CALENDAR VS ROMAN-JEWISH CALENDAR

(Note: Many 'Sabbath Keepers' no longer keep God's holy days. (R.F.)

Should we celebrate God's holy days? And IF we do, should we keep those days according to the Jewish calendar, or does God have a different calendar? Do the rabbis have the authority to change the calendar and manipulate when the days of the month fall, or has God already done this and shown us in the Bible how and when we are to worship Him? What are the oracles of God? The question we all have to ask is, do we really want to know the truth? If we are not willing to accept truth when we find it, not willing to obey God, we may as well throw our Bibles in the garbage and go to work next Sabbath. There are many different tools Satan uses to divide the Church; doctrine, greed, lust for power and worship of a man just to name a few. One of the most effective attacks Satan has launched upon the world is to deceive us on the holy days. He has accomplished this in different ways. Some of the most dedicated Christians are deceived into thinking the 4th commandment doesn't have to be kept so they go to Church on Sunday. Others think that Sunday is the Sabbath. Satan has counterfeited God's holy days with his own; Easter, Halloween, Christmas, etc. Perhaps the most tragic deception of all is that most of the people who do keep the Sabbath and observe God's annual holy days, keep the holy days at the wrong time! I make that statement with mixed emotions because it is an effective wedge Satan has used to drive between the Sabbath-keeping Churches. Many of us before we learned better followed the so-called "Jewish" calendar with our "church friends". We were following a corrupted calendar because we listened to men and not God. There is irrefutable proof that the "Jewish" calendar in use today is NOT the calendar God gave Moses. It is NOT the calendar of the Bible that all the patriarchs, prophets, Jesus, the disciples and the early Church observed. The Encyclopedia Judaica says the current calendar was forced upon the Jew's in the third century by the Roman Government right about the time that they forced Sunday on the Christians. The Romans instituted it not the Jew's. Hillel II went along with it to save his own neck; it wasn't his idea, but more about this later. Let's examine the true calendar given to us in the Bible free from man's rules and corruption. This is the calendar that Jesus kept as our example, the calendar that the disciples taught to the converts. Let's look at its origin, how it works and its purpose. God appointed certain times of the year as holy. He made an appointment for us to observe these holy convocations. He made a covenant with man and said these set times were a sign to the world that whoever belonged to Him would observe these days (Exo 13:3-9, 31:12-17). If we are going to observe them we must do it on the right day.

PURPOSE OF THE CALENDAR

The first thing we have to understand is the purpose of the calendar that God gave us and how it works. The best source for that is the Bible. Gen 1:14, "Then God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years." God made the lights in the heavens (the sun and the moon) for days and years. Psa 104:19, "He appointed the moon for seasons; the sun knows it's going down. God made the sun and the moon to determine when the seasons are. He intended us to have a calendar that was governed by the sun and the moon so we could tell the day, the season and the year. The reason we need to know this is so that we can determine when to celebrate God's commanded holy days. A quick look at Leviticus the 23rd chapter shows us that God commands us to worship Him on certain days of specific months. In order to do this He has given us a visible sign (the sun and the moon) so we know when these times occur. The first time I was told we were supposed to determine the months by the sighting of a new moon I asked a few questions and was informed that the Jew's control this because they were given the "Oracles of

God" and cited Romans 3:2. I looked it up and sure enough there it was. I didn't know what the oracles were but it sounded pretty important with God's name beside it unfortunately, most of the people who cite this verse don't know what it means either. It's a deceptive tactic used by a minority of men who want to manipulate us into doing what they say, not God. Let's examine this verse and see what it says and more importantly what it means. Rom 3:1-2, "What advantage then has the Jew, or what is the profit of circumcision? Much in every way! Chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God. What does the word oracles mean? It is Strong's number 3051 (log'-ee-on) an utterance (of God). Does everyone understand that? It is an utterance of God. What does this mean? The NIV version translates it correctly. Rom 3:2, "Much in every way! First of all, they have been entrusted with the very words of God. "What are the oracles of God? It's so simple! It is the preservation of the scriptures, God's words or utterances. This has absolutely NOTHING to do with the calendar! The Jew's were to preserve God's words for the world and they did that. They did not have the authority to change or alter them, they could only preserve them.

ROME FORCES CALENDAR CHANGE

Some claim that it was the rabbi's idea to change the calendar in 358 A.D. However, no man has the authority to change God's laws; not the Pope nor even a Jewish rabbi named Hillel II. God gave us a visible calendar to observe and He told us how and when to observe it in the Bible. It's not confusing or complicated like some people want to believe. Let's look and see how the Romans forced a corrupt calendar on the Jews. After the temple was destroyed in 70 A.D., the high priest was without a sanctuary. He was like a minister without a Church. The position he held could no longer be carried out without the temple. Instead of a high priest as their spiritual leader, the Jew's had a NASI, pronounced (naw-see). He was the head rabbi or chief leader, like the Pope is the leader of the Catholic Church. In 351-352 A.D. the Jew's revolted against the Roman emperor Gallus & his commander Ursicinus and lost. After this, the Romans limited the power of the NASI and forced him to give up the authority to proclaim the new moon and the fixing of the festivals. Hillel II agreed with this to save his neck and sold out God's law. A calculated calendar was instituted and published with its rules in 358 A.D. (Encyclopedia Judaica, Hillel II).

HOW THAT CALENDAR WORKS

According to Rosh Hashanah 1:3-8, during the time when Jesus was on earth, the high priest would hold court in the Temple to determine when the new moon was. It was based on the testimony of three credible witnesses who had seen the crescent of the new moon. Once a new moon had been declared fires would be lit on the Mount of Olives to notify those who were not in Jerusalem. According to the Mishna, six witnesses were dispatched with a hand-delivered message that the new moon was sighted over Jerusalem. This was done because God designed a calendar for Israel to keep and it was their duty to follow and observe it properly. The high priest had no authority to hear testimony that the crescent of the new moon was sighted and then declare the month would begin one or two days later! That would have been a sin. That is in essence what happens today with the Hebrew calendar and that is why once we realize this, it can NEVER be followed! One of Hillel's rules is that no two Sabbath's fall consecutively. Therefore the calendar is manipulated so that Rosh Hashanah (Feast of Trumpets) never falls on a Sunday, Wednesday or a Friday. This keeps the Day of Atonement from falling on a Friday or a Sunday, which would make two Sabbath's in a row. There is no biblical authority for this. In fact, the Mishna contains rules for an altered service when this happens. This proves that the calendar Jesus observed was not altered like it is today! In order to keep two consecutive Sabbaths from occurring, Hillel inserted and deleted days which God has not commanded. The normal year which God commands us to follow has 354 days with a leap-year-month added seven times every nineteen years. The present Hebrew calendar has 353, 354, 355, 383, 384 and 385 days!

SIX DIFFERENT TYPES OF YEARS!

Hillel took out or added days to different months in the year to change which day of the week all of the feasts fall on. In 1979, the 1st day of Nisan on the Hebrew calendar was March 29, one day before the new moon over Jerusalem. On March 25, 1982, the 1st of Nisan was two days before the new moon. In 1984 and 1985, the 1st of Nisan fell on the same day as the new moon both years. The other months are no better. Tishri 1 (Feast of Trumpets) fell on the new moon in 1984, but in 1986 it was two days before the new moon. This is proof that the Hebrew calendar is not accurate and does not coincide with God's commands of beginning the month with a new moon over Jerusalem. do you see the problem with Hillel's calendar? It doesn't always begin a month with a new moon. God intended the month to begin with the sighting of the new moon crescent over Jerusalem. Why Jerusalem you might ask? Because that's the place He chose as His headquarters. The temples were built there and when Jesus returns His kingdom will be there. It is the city of our appointed feasts (Isa 33:20). That is why the calendar is determined from the new moon crescent over Jerusalem! We can't set it from Texas, Pennsylvania, or anywhere else. Some people want to pretend that calculating the new moon calendar is a complex and difficult thing. This couldn't be further from the truth. God designed a system that a child could understand. If Israel ever lost track of time, all they had to do was look up in the sky and when they saw a small crescent of the moon that just appeared, they knew it was the first day of the month. If you wanted to know what month it was, look at the fields. Was the barley green and ready for harvest? The month was Nisan. Were the fall crops ready for harvest? It was Tishri, the seventh month. It's not impossible to have a calculated calendar that accurately predicts when the new moon will be over Jerusalem. The lunar cycle is 29 days, 12 hours, 44 minutes, and 2.8 seconds. New moon calendars exist today and are available to anyone who requests them. Computer programs also exist that can determine when the new moon crescent will be visible over Jerusalem. These programs are accurate to within two minutes over a period of 4,000 years forward or backwards in time. So why don't the rabbis who realize this correct this situation? They are no different than any other men. Just like the SUNDAY keepers make arguments for a SUNDAY worship, or Christmas observers make feeble arguments for a pagan celebration, the rabbis say it really doesn't matter and that it is too much of a convenience to have two Sabbaths in a row. SINCE WHEN IS THE SABBATH A BURDEN? The truth is that this is now their tradition and the Jewish people follow this tradition even though it is not Scriptural. What do you think God says about that? He tells us to use the sun and the moon to calculate dates and to let Him worry when they fall in the week. We can't tell Him we don't want the year to start on a Sunday, a Wednesday or a Friday for convenience sake because it's easier to worship Him on days we choose rather than when He chooses!

MEN BLOWING MORE SMOKE

If you ask most Church of God organizations who sets the holy days they will give you a couple of false answers. Let me clearly state at the onset that God almighty and Him alone determines the calendar. These men, however, will tell you that the Church has this authority, (and of course since they run the Church this means them and not God). THIS IS A LIE! It is the same lie that the Catholics use to argue that the Pope's authority is equal to Christ's when they substituted SUNDAY for God's Sabbath. The Church can only TEACH others about God's holy days, they have absolutely no authority to sanctify one day or the other. Almost every Church of God correctly observes Pentecost today on a Sunday. Do you realize that this is NOT when the Jew's observe it! that's right. They always observe it on Sivan 6 no matter what day of the week it falls on! When someone tells you the Jew's determine the calendar, ask them why they refuse to follow it and observe Pentecost with them? Do you realize that when Jesus returns we will observe the New Moons with Him? Isaiah 66:23, "And it shall come to pass that from one New Moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, all flesh shall come to worship before Me,

says the LORD." Do you think that we will worship Jesus two days before the new moon or will it be on the day of the new moon? After all, we will be in Jerusalem and we will see the crescent. The Jew's today celebrate the new moon every month at the Synagogue but not always on the correct date because sometimes Hillel's calendar is off by more than two days from the crescent over Jerusalem. A rabbi from a Reform Synagogue was asked about this. "Rabbi, because in the Hebrew calendar days are inserted or deleted so no two Sabbaths fall consecutively, Rosh Hashanah Trumpets) might not fall on the day of a crescent. Does a man, even well-intentioned Jewish rabbis have the authority to change the day a Sabbath falls on? answer: "I don't know, I think so. But that's why we celebrate them for two days in a row, just in case". That's right. The Jewish people celebrate the annual holy days and the new moon for two days in a row. Look at any Jewish calendar that is sold in a Synagogue and you will see that the annual holy days, Trumpets, New Moons, etc., are observed for two days. In all fairness, this is not the real reason it is done. This is a practice that dates back to the dispersion. The bad part is that it allows people to rationalize the change in their minds.

THREE EXCUSES NOT TO OBEY

There are basically three reasons Church leaders give for following the present day adulterated Jewish calendar:(1) Romans 3:2, the oracles of God. We have already proven this does not include the calendar.(2) Matthew 23:2-3, The scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat.(3) Mat 18:18, The Church can bind what it wants. Lets look at the 2nd reason and what seat Moses sat in. Mat 23:1-3: "Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples, saying: `The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do'". Does this mean we should obey and follow whatever the rabbi's do today? In John 9:13-16, Jesus was accused of violating the Sabbath for healing a blind man. He obviously rejected the Pharisees interpretation on how to observe the 4th commandment. In Matthew 15:1-3, the scribes and Pharisees said the disciples broke their tradition of washing their hands before they ate. Jesus told them they broke the commandment of God for the sake of their traditions. In verse 6, Jesus said the scribes and Pharisees violated the commandment of God with their traditions. They do this today with changing the calendar. So what did Jesus mean in Mat 23:3 when He said, "Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do. Is this a contradiction? Jesus taught his disciples to disobey the traditions of the elders when it contradicted the Bible. He said some of their traditions conflicted with the law of God. The scribes and Pharisees do not have the authority to change God's laws. What is Moses' seat? Moses had a different function than Aaron in ancient Israel. The Levitical priesthood were descendants of Aaron, not Moses. Moses was in charge of the civil government (Ex 18; Num 11:11-17; 12:8; Deu 1:9-18). Moses was not a priest, his brother Aaron was. (John 1:17; Ex 4:14-17; Heb 7:11). Moses' seat means the civil governmental authority; the scribes and Pharisees were in charge of the civil government. Jesus referred to the authority of civil government in Mat 23:1-3, not the law of God. Most Pharisees were not priests, they were not the descendants of Aaron. Jesus compared everything they said with the Bible, and when it disagreed with the Bible, He rejected it. When they added extra rules to Sabbath keeping, He rejected them too. This is what we have to do with their rules and traditions on changing God's calendar. Some people think Jesus taught that we should follow the Pharisees; well the Pharisees rejected Jesus as the messiah, does that mean we should too? I think everyone understands that argument is without merit. Paul said that everything he learned as a Pharisee he counted as dung (Phil 3:8). Lets look at the 3rd reason, in Matthew 18:18 Jesus said what the Church bound on earth would be bound in heaven. Does this mean that Jesus gave the Church leaders the authority to rewrite God's law? NO! Only a complete novice would believe that. So what was Jesus talking about then? He was giving the Church authority to make decisions settling grievances and problems with the membership. Read the verses before this. Matthew 18:15-17 talks about going to a brother with a grievance. Verse 18 is talking about disfellowshipping, NOT the binding of an adulterated calendar that changes God's holy convocations!

Jesus gave the Church authority to settle grievances in accordance with 1 Corinthians 6. He gave the Church authority to decide things such as meeting in the morning or the afternoon, to rent a building or buy one, etc. Jesus never intended for us to use His statements to violate the law by observing a corrupted calendar. The Church does not bind the calendar, nor do the rabbis. God determines when we will worship Him. He did this when He created the sun and the moon to govern the seasons. For those who won't accept this, do you refuse to drive your car on Sabbath like the orthodox Jew's in Jerusalem? Do you observe Pentecost on Sivan 6? Do you worship God in a Synagogue and not in a Church? Do you observe the holy days in the Synagogue? If the Pharisees are in charge of the calendar, they are in charge of everything else, too! You can't pick and choose selected teachings, if you are going to follow the Pharisees then follow them on everything. Join a synagogue, that is where they are today! He leaders who knowingly observe an erroneous system for determining God's holy days are guilty of the same sin that Jeroboam committed in 1 Kings 12:32. He ordained a counterfeit feast on the fifteenth day of the eighth month at Bethel. Because of this sin, Israel was destroyed and taken into captivity.

THE JEWS WILL OBSERVE GOD'S CALENDAR AGAIN When asked, an important Orthodox rabbi from Jerusalem who is involved in the rebuilding of the temple, if the Jews would ever revert back to the new moon calendar that God gave Moses. His answer, "YES, when the temple is rebuilt, the Sanhedrin will be reestablished and they will once again hold court each month and take testimony from witnesses who have seen the new moon and declare the beginning of the month. These rabbis are not stupid men. They realize that when God says the high priest is to enter the holy of holies on the tenth day of the seventh month; he better enter on the real tenth day. They might not want to change today because of tradition, but they have already decided to abandon Hillel's calendar when the temple is rebuilt. What about you? Are you going to follow men and their tradition, or are you going to follow Jesus, His disciples, the prophets and Moses, and obey God? You can't have it both ways. Making a decision to keep different days can drive a wedge between you and your friends in another organization, especially if you are now in a smaller minority of Sabbath keepers. The question is should we disobey God for convenience or just to keep harmony in the Church? I think you can see that it really isn't even a question. There are some people who will get upset when this subject is brought up. They say we should keep quiet about the facts and not "rock the boat". Should we also keep quiet about the weekly Sabbath? If we did, we could all meet on Sunday in unity with our neighbors, and preach soothing doctrines that would assure the Church would be full. We need to teach the truth and reach out to our brothers with love, NOT compromise our beliefs in an attempt to make ourselves more appealing to other groups. I say since God is the one who created the calendar, follow it and let Him work out the problems. One Church of God leader calls the obedience and following of God's directives unnecessary righteousness. He says we'll use this as a stumbling block to others saying only we have the key. He says we'll exclude them saying we know something they don't and we will claim they can't enter the Kingdom because of it. This man would rather have us be lukewarm. Sometimes God tells us to do a hard thing like sell all that we have and give it to the poor. If He told us that we had to stand on our head while we prayed we should do it faithfully. If you want to call obedience to God unnecessary righteousness, you're sadly confused. God calls not obeying Him and breaking His Sabbath an abomination. Jesus also had a lot to say about leaders who deceive their followers and cling to traditions that are lies Don't ever let yourself fall into that category.

WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

We should be keeping the Memorial of Christ's sacrifice and the other feasts according to the heavenly calendar like Jesus did. We should try to the best of our ability to be as accurate and as faithful as we can. As long as we're human we will never be perfect but that's not an excuse to disobey God now. Like all of our other shortcomings when we did them in ignorance, as soon as we learned the truth we went

to God in repentance and asked His forgiveness. This can also be done with observing God's annual holy days at the wrong time. However, if you know the truth and continue to disobey God, you will suffer the consequences. In other words, God expects nothing less than complete faithfulness and obedience. Pick up your cross and follow Christ letting the others bury the dead. Like the song goes "trust and obey, there's no other way". For those who become offended by this truth, where does the Bible say we should hide truth? Where is one example of Jesus or the disciples compromising God's laws to promote harmony? Jesus lost 120 disciples because He told them something they found hard to accept. Paul caused untold riots by preaching the truth that the leaders wanted to hide. It was because he refused to compromise that the people hated him so much that they beat him and tried to kill him. What is wrong with keeping the holy days with the same calendar Jesus used? When Christ returns will you have to tell Him you knew that you worshiped Him on the wrong day but it was more convenient? If the high priest entered the holy of holies on the wrong day God struck him dead. This is the God who is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow. Jos 24:15, "...choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, ..But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

To find out about the origin of today's calendar, read Hillel II in the Encyclopedia Judaica and Rosh Hashanah in the Mishna. There are also booklets and literature available from other ministers and Churches of God that observe the God's new moon calendar: Churchlight Publications, Lantana Christian Church of God, and Herb Solinsky, etc. In writing this study all the information is borrowed from other sources (the original is the Bible). It is not written to "raise up" a Church or a group, nor to support a ministry or for self-glorification most other works. This paper was written because there is a lack of understandable published information on God's calendar since Satan has successfully deceived most Sabbath keeping people on this subject.

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As you can see this is not my article but Ronnie and I could not disprove it. I love this author's closing statement, too. Whoever he is I thank him. R.F.