

Annotated Source Material Relevant to the Hebrew Calendar

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Introduction

Scripture tells us that the Hebrew calendar originated with God, not the Babylonians or any other human culture. The reason for this calendar was solely for the observance of God's holy days – not for business. The Hebrew calendar is strictly liturgical – not commercial. The Roman calendar is basically geared for commerce. God synchronizes His holy days with the yearly planting and harvesting seasons to illustrate His plan of salvation for all mankind – a foreshadowing of the resurrections. Planting and harvesting are controlled by the cycles of the moon in conjunction with the sun. It is therefore impossible to go entirely to a solar calendar, eliminating the lunar cycle from the process of calculation, and still observe God's holy days in their seasons as God has ordered (Exo. 12).

Archeological evidence shows that the Hebrew calendar was calculated from its very inception and that these **calculations** have always been based on the new moon of Tishri, *extending forward* (calendrically) into the spring. I refer to the fact that God calculates His liturgical year from Tishri then back to Nisan. Never does he calculate from Nisan to Tishri. Now He cannot do this as He set the seasons by climate and harvest, not by equinox and solstice. All farmers understand that the calendar year is set from the end of the harvest to the beginning of the harvest. We must plan the harvest from the harvest! There is no other way! They were *never based* on the spring equinox, extending into the fall. The **observance** of the holy days has always begun with Nisan 14 – the beginning of the liturgical year. By this means, observance of the holy days is kept in season. Using the spring equinox to determine the beginning of the year was never practiced by the Levitical priesthood, nor was observation of the new moons the sole basis by which they determined the beginning of each month. Observation of the new moons was used only as visual verification of the calculated calendar.

It is equally important to understand why intercalation and postponement were introduced into the Hebrew calendar. In the beginning, there was no need for these adjustments. It was not until astronomical changes altered the time cycle in the eighth century BC, at the time of the prophet Isaiah and King Hezekiah of Judah, that calendric intercalation and the practice of postponement were introduced. Both began at the same time in history. It was the direct supernatural intervention of God that altered the heavens and necessitated these changes in the Hebrew calendar.

The Babylonians came to Hezekiah to learn the new calendar adjustments from the Hebrews. The heavenly signs that accompanied the destruction of the Assyrian armies at the gates of Jerusalem at Passover had been witnessed by all the nations around. It was at this time that God brought about changes in the solar system that resulted in $365\frac{1}{4}$ days in the year. The Babylonians took notice of these great events and approached Hezekiah for help. Despite help from the Hebrews, the Babylonians never refined intercalation and postponement

to match the accuracy of the Hebrew calendar, nor did the Egyptians, Assyrians, Romans or Greeks. God obviously revealed the secret of intercalation and postponement to the Hebrews so that His people could continue to worship Him on His holy days, in their season.

“The Story of the Aleph Beth”

The Story of the Aleph Beth is a book concerned with the development of the Hebrew alphabet and details the story of the *Gezer Calendar*. The *Gezer Calendar* is the third most ancient artifact relevant to calendric issues. The most ancient artifact is the *Izbet Sartah Abecedary* dated circa 1200 - 1000 BC. You will find a facsimile of the *Izbet Inscription* on page two hundred nineteen of *The Text of the Old Testament* by Ernst Würthwein. The *Izbet Inscription* shows that ancient Hebrew was written from left to right.

The importance of the *Gezer Calendar* is that it shows that as early as the twelfth century BC, the Hebrew calendar began in the fall of the year. You will also find reference to this calendar on page four of *The Text of the Old Testament*. Tie these facts in with the story of David and Jonathan centering around the *molad* of Tishri circa 1060 BC (II Samuel 20). The *Gezer Calendar* was the calendar of Samuel, Saul, David and Jonathan.

“Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions: Volume I Hebrew and Moabite Inscriptions”

The actual text of the *Gezer Calendar* is given (in ancient Hebrew) with an English translation. As you will see when you obtain a copy of the book, the *Gezer Calendar* began at Tishri in the fall of the year; i.e., with the months of vintage and olive harvest, progressing through the winter months into the spring and summer months. *The ancient Hebrews did not use the spring equinox in their calculations*. You will find a detailed exegesis of the Hebrew beginning on page three of the same book.

“Studies in the Prehistory of the Jewish Calendar”

This 1989 Phd. dissertation proves that the ancient Hebrews had a formal calendar. There is a calendar in the Old Testament! Robbins points out that the months of all early calendars were numbered – not named. Excellent footnoting and an extensive bibliography are provided. The dissertation is three hundred pages plus.

“Greek Science in Antiquity”

Marshall Clagett demonstrates that the Egyptians used two calendars: a solar calendar for commercial purposes and a lunar calendar for agricultural purposes. **The Egyptian lunar calendar ran from the dark of the moon to the dark of the moon. This was the only lunar calendar to do so until Ted Phillips introduced the practice in 1993.**

“Elements of The Jewish and Muhammadan Calendars: with Rules and Tables and Explanatory Notes on the Julian and Gregorian Calendars”

Burnaby exposes the folly of the claim that Rabbi Hillel II *invented* the Hebrew calendar in 358 AD (see paragraph 13 beginning page 15). Burnaby also demonstrates (from Rabbinic material) that the Levitical priesthood continuously used a calculated calendar centuries before Rabbi Hillel II was born. He reveals why the calendar was finally published in the late fourth century AD.

It was the Levites and not the Jews who had been charged with the responsibility of maintaining the calendar. The Hebrew calendar was given to Israel by God Himself (Exo. 12). He charged the Levitical priesthood with its care and maintenance. Moses (a Levite) was given details of the calendar at the time of the Exodus (Exo. 12). Aaron then assumed

responsibility of this newly revised calendar of fifteenth century BC. Calendric revision was necessary due to the universal cataclysm which struck the earth at the time of the Exodus. (See Velikovsky's *Worlds in Collision* for details and verification of this fact.) In a very real sense, therefore, the Hebrew calendar is Levitical – not Rabbinic. It predates Rabbinic history by more than twelve hundred years (Moses to beginning of Rabbinic movement 200's BC).

“Persia and the Bible”

Yamauchi demonstrates that the work of Ezra (a Levite of the priestly line) and Nehemiah (a prince of Israel) actually occurred one hundred years earlier than most scholars believe – moving their story back into the sixth century BC where it belongs. Placing Ezra and Nehemiah in their proper historical and Biblical setting is vital to understanding the postponement question. (See page one hundred fifty-five for references relating to the calendar of the period of Ezra and Nehemiah.)

“The Fifth Century [BC] Jewish Calendar at Elephantine”

Dr. Horn's work is one of the most important in helping us understand the ancient Hebrew calendar. His monograph demonstrates that the seventh-century calendar (corresponding to the time of King Manasseh of Judah) of the Levitical outpost of Elephantine, Egypt, was calculated – new moons were only used as visual verification of the accuracy of their calculations. This Levitical calendar was intercalated, and the same rules of postponement were applied as are used to this very day. Dr. Horn correlates this Hebrew calendar with the Babylonian and Persian calendars of sixth century BC. He also demonstrates that this calendar was calculated beginning with the molad of Tishri. The title of Horn's monograph should read: *“The Seventh and Sixth Century Hebrew Calendar at Elephantine.”*

“The Athenian Year”

This book addresses the problems that the Greeks faced in constructing a calendar and in observing the new moons. The Greeks never got close to an accurate calendar! The entire calendric history of the Greeks demonstrates that observation of the new moon and utilization of the spring equinox as a major factor in the equation does not work. Aristotle confirms this fact in his writings, complaining bitterly of the hopeless state of calendric astronomy during his time. Parker and Dubberstein write of this in their material on ancient calendars.

“The Sacred and Civil Calendar of the Athenian Year”

This book is extremely valuable in elucidating the Galatians' problem. It presents evidence of calendar intercalation by the Greeks going back centuries before the time of Christ. It also provides good references and footnoting relevant to the problems that confronted Greek astronomers as a result of observing the new moons.

“The Calendar of the Roman Republic”

This book is also extremely valuable in elucidating the Galatians' problem. It presents evidence of calendar intercalation by the Romans going back centuries before the time of Christ, and provides good references and footnoting relevant to the problems of Roman astronomers due to observing the new moons. Included is an excellent reconstruction of an ancient Roman calendar. Saturday was the most important day of the Roman calendar until it was replaced by Sunday circa 100 AD.

“What Do We Mean By Jabneh?”

This journal article addresses the question of the authority and activity attributed to the post-temple (70 AD) court at Jabneh. As this article shows, the Jabneh court did not have the

authority to invent or modify the calendar, as anti-postponement schools arbitrarily claim.

This historical fact exposes the utter falseness of claims being made by Ted Phillips, James Russell, John Trescott, Frank Nelte, Armstrong (of Australia) and others concerning supposed Rabbinic authority to interject postponements (at the time of Hillel 11) simply for reasons of worship.

Such reasoning is a classic example of faulty cause and effect. After the time of Hezekiah (late eighth century BC), it was necessary to adjust calendric mathematics to match the new astrophysics of the sun, earth and moon – *the cause*. Refinements to the calendar (postponements) enable us to worship God on His holy days according to His Word (not rabbinic caprice) – *the effect*.

“Jewish Calendar Mystery Dispelled”

This book is of great value in explaining calendar mechanics and why postponements are necessary.

“Ancient Jewish Calendation: A Criticism”

This valuable critique by Richard A. Parker of Grace Amadon’s calendar article of 1942 was published in the *Journal of Biblical Literature*, pp. 227 - 280. The critique is well footnoted. Richard A. Parker is one of the most famous calendar scholars of the twentieth century.

“The Crucifixion Calendar”

Grace Amadon responds to Parker’s critique of her 1942 article in the same issue of the *Journal of Biblical Literature*. Grace Amadon is a worthy scholar and provides a provocative analysis of the Crucifixion Calendar. I believe she was an astronomer at the Naval Observatory.