

Yahweh, the Almighty God of Israel, is with us
"Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet,
and shew my people their transgression,
and the house of Jacob their sins." Isaiah 58:1

Passover

The Days of Unleavened Bread
Study Prayerfully & Study Carefully

Isn't Abib (Nisan) A Month Early?

1. Introduction

- In the year 1997, **A Voice In The Wilderness - Canada** began the month of Abib/Nisan on the 09th of March; it being the new moon nearest the **spring equinox** of 20/21st March.
- In the year 2000, **A Voice In The Wilderness - Canada** began the month of Abib/Nisan on the 06th of March; it being the new moon nearest the **spring equinox** of 20/21st March.
- In the year 2005, **A Voice In The Wilderness - Canada** began the month of Abib/Nisan on the 10th of March; it being the new moon nearest the **spring equinox** of 20/21st March.
- In the year 2008, **A Voice In The Wilderness - Canada** began the month of Abib/Nisan on the 07th of March; it being the new moon nearest the **spring equinox** of 20/21st March.
- Many Feast-day keepers will be asking the question: "**Isn't that a month early?**" Let us answer this question.

2. Divine Directions

In ancient times, Abib's new moon was not decided upon by its proximity to the **spring equinox**. Instead:

- **Jehovah** either told Israel which new moon would begin the year, as in Exodus 12: 2: He said to Moses:
"This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you."
- Or, the Almighty allowed the **Sanhedrin**, the supreme court in Israel, to make the

decision and tell the nation.

3. The Sanhedrin

THE SPRING FEASTS

When direct instruction from **Jehovah** ceased, the **Sanhedrin** would, with the Passover in mind, select Abib's new moon after considering various natural conditions, such as:

- The maturity of the barley harvest so that a sheaf would be available for waving at **Passover**.
- The availability and age of the **Passover lambs**.
- The conditions of the camping sites and roads that would be used by the expected **Passover pilgrims** etc.

No reference was made to the **equinoxes** at these times. There was no need; because Israel was in the Promised land and the above listed natural signs were there for all to see. All that was needed was for the **Sanhedrin** to make a decision and the nation would follow.

4. The Diaspora/The Scattering of Israel

When the Diaspora took place and Israel was scattered around the world, the patriarch **Hillel 11** in the 4th century, made known certain calendar rules which would enable the chosen people of the Almighty to observe the sacred feasts in their **correct seasons**, even though they lived in lands far distant from Israel.

5. The Patriarch Hillel

The rules published by Hillel used the spring and autumn equinoxes as benchmarks for the selection of the new moons of Abib (Nisan) and Ethanin (Tishri); simply because the agricultural conditions in Israel (mentioned at point 3) could be readily determined by the scattered Israelites; no matter in which country they lived. In other words, when the equinoxes are known, then it would be a simple matter to know which new moon to select in order to keep in step with the natural conditions occurring back in the homeland of Israel. This, then, was the basis of Hillel's calendar computations:

- Find the equinox. This will tell of the natural conditions in Israel.
- Select the new moon nearest the spring equinox to begin Abib.
- Then count to the Passover, Pentecost and eventually the autumn feasts in the seventh month.

6. An Incorrect Formula

To calculate when the equinoxes would occur, Hillel adopted the simple but slightly incorrect formula of an astronomer called **Samuel Yarhinai**, who divided the 365 day year into 4 equal parts of 91 days 6 hours. The true length of the year is, however, 365 days, 5 hours and 46.069 minutes; a difference of some **14 minutes**.

- Over the years, this small difference of some **14 minutes** resulted in Yarhinai's spring and autumn equinox dates drifting away from their true astronomical positions of 20/21st March and 22nd September; so that now (17 centuries later) they occur on 7/8st April and 7st October; some **16.5 days** after the correct equinox dates.
- Alas the present Jewish calendar is still geared to these incorrect equinox dates; and that is why - **in certain years** - their new moon of Abib (Nisan) is not the nearest one to the correct equinox; but to the 7/8th April date; thus making the Feast days in that year fall a month later than they would have done had Yarhinai's calculation been absolutely accurate. An example of this is the year 1997, 2000 and other examples are the years 2005 and 2008.
- **In short:** when Hillel first published his calendar rules in the 4th century, Abib's new moon was indeed the one nearest the spring equinox 20/21st March. But now, 17 centuries later, in some years it isn't.

That explains the reason why - in certain years - the A Voice In The Wilderness - Canada calendar begins a month earlier than the Jewish calendar. It's just that we are selecting the new moon nearest the 'correct' spring equinox of 20/21st March.

7. The Autumn Equinox

According to the Scriptures the **Feast of Ingathering** (Tabernacles) should also be near the **autumn equinox**, (the '**tequphah**' or '**tekuphah**') the '**end**' or '**turn of the year.**' Exodus 34:22 And thou shalt observe the feast of weeks, of the firstfruits of wheat harvest, and the **feast of ingathering at the year's end.**

According to Young's Analytical Concordance the Hebrew word '**tequphah**' translated '**end**' in Exodus 34:22 is the '**circuit.**' According to Strong's Concordance the Hebrew word '**tequphah.**' translated '**end**' in this verse means the '**circuit of time.**' I quote Strong's: **08622 t@quwphah {tek-oo-faw'} or t@quphah {tek-oo-faw'}**

- 1) *coming round, circuit of time or space, a turning, circuit*
- 1a) *at the circuit (as adverb)*

In other words, the Feast of Tabernacles should be celebrated at about the time of the autumn equinox (tequphah), when the agricultural year is at an end.

8. A Voice In The Wilderness - Canada

A Voice In The Wilderness - Canada is still following Hillel's guideline of selecting the new moon nearest the spring equinox to begin Abib; the difference being that we choose the new moon nearest the correct date of 20/21st March rather than the new moon nearest 7th April. In the year 2005 and 2008 the new moon nearest the correct spring equinox occurs on 10th (2005) and 07th(2008) March.

- Consequently in the years (1997, 2000, 2005 and 2008) the **Passover Service,**

occurring as it does on the evening of the 14th Abib, will coincide with the spring equinox.

In other words, the sun will be 'passing-over' the equator at about the same time we will be celebrating the spiritual **Passover Service** by partaking of the 'bread and wine.' This is a rare coincidence!

- Also in years (1997, 2000, 2005 and 2008) the autumn feast of **Tabernacles** and the **Last Great Day** will be very near the autumn equinox ('tequphah'), when the sun will be again 'passing-over' the equator!

9. Other Groups

Many other groups, including the Jews, will celebrate the Feasts in year 2005 and 2008 a month later than **A Voice In The Wilderness - Canada** For those wishing to follow the later Feast dates, see the second half of file: **The Annual Sabbaths of Yahweh**. There you will see that we have provided **alternative dates** (a month after **A Voice In The Wilderness - Canada**) for the Feasts in years 2000, 2005 and 2008. Why do we do this? Simply because in the **final analysis**:

- It will not be Hillel's guideline concerning a new moon's proximity to the equinox,
- Or even the natural conditions (mature barley crop, lamb's ages, camping sites etc.) in Israel which guided the ancient Sanhedrin,
- **But whether or not Yahweh gives the promised Signs in the Heavens!**

Let me explain further.

10. Signs in the Heavens

According to the Scriptures, we will know for certain the correct month which starts the year when we see '**Yahweh's promised Signs in the Heavens!**' You see, the Bible tells us that the '**sacred seasons, years and feast days,**' on which the **Creator** has scheduled Himself to do His greatest works (i.e.the death of Messiah at the Passover), **will be high-lighted by celestial displays in the sun, moon and stars!** In fact that is why the sun, moon and stars were created in the first place; to be '**signs for seasons, days and years.**'

Genesis 1: 14: ***"And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years:"***

According to Strong's Concordance, the word translated '**signs**' is '**owth.**'

0226 'owth {oth}

AV - **sign(s)** 60, **token(s)** 14, **ensign (s)** 2, **miracles** 2, mark 1; 79

1) sign, signal

1a) **a distinguishing mark**

1b) **banner**

1c) **remembrance**

1d) **miraculous sign**

1e) **omen**

- 1f) **warning**
- 2) **token, ensign, standard, miracle, proof**

The word translated '**seasons**' is '**moed.**'

04150 **mow`ed {mo-ade'}** or **mo`ed {mo-ade'}** or (fem.) **mow`adah** (2 Chr 8: 13)
{mo-aw-daw'}

AV - **congregation** 150, **feast** 23, **season** 13, **appointed** 12, **time** 12, **assembly** 4, **solemnity** 4, **solemn** 2, **days** 1, **sign** 1, **synagogues** 1; 223

1) appointed place, appointed time, meeting

1a) **appointed time**

1a1) **appointed time** (general)

1a2) **sacred season, set feast, appointed season**

1b) **appointed meeting**

1c) **appointed place**

1d) **appointed sign** or **signal**

1e) **tent of meeting**

This means that every year, we should be on the look out at the times of the **new moons** and the '**sacred seasons**' ('**moeds**') for those '**celestial signs:**' for those '**miraculous omens**' in the sky. We are not to become polarized as to who is right and who is wrong. After having conscientiously made the best choice of month, '**sacred season**' or **feast day** within that season, believers are all to look out for those prophesied '**celestial signals,**' '**ensigns**' and '**banners in the sky!**' When we see them, be it a month early or even a month later than expected, we will all know that very moment, the correct time.

Bear in mind that the promised celestial signs will also mark out the **start of the year**; that is - the **1st day of Abib!** So the year itself and also the **sacred seasons (Week of Unleavened Bread & Week of Tabernacles etc.)** and the **feast days** within those sacred seasons will be **highlighted** by those **signs in the sun, moon and stars!** So we will know for sure what is the true start of the year. Make no mistake, **Yahweh the Holy One of Israel** will not leave us in any doubt as to what He is about to do in the future; whether it be in the year 2005 or 2008 or any other year after that.

Amos 3: 7: ***“Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.”***

With these thoughts in mind, **let us not become hysterical** about what others are doing or not doing. It's like two children in London arguing as to whose wrist watch is telling the correct time. Then they walk past **Big Ben**, the most famous clock in the UK. They look up and actually see the time for themselves. They patiently wait and listen to hear the hour being struck by the famous bell called **Big Ben**. Precisely when it strikes, at that very moment, they both know whose wrist watch is correct. Perhaps they are both wrong. All arguments will cease as both wrist watches are synchronized.

It will be the same when we see the signs in the heavens! All arguments between feast-day-keepers will end immediately. Like little children we will then all know for certain that **Yahweh, the LORD God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel** is displaying the correct time for all the universe to see and take note, that **one of His sacred Years, sacred Seasons or sacred Feast Days has begun.** Only then will we know - for sure. Meanwhile we do the very

best we can. We keep the Feasts on the days we think are correct; and treat with respect the choice of the other brethren who also love **Yahweh's Feasts**.

11. Being Doubly Certain

Yes, we know that others are keeping the feast days (in some years) a month later than **A Voice In The Wilderness - Canada**. So even on those days we will be on the watch for the **celestial signs**. We will not, however, unless we see the signs in the next month, be keeping two sets of Feasts; but we will certainly be on the lookout at both. We can do no more. For are we not like little children who only recently (in my case since **1985**) have learned to tell the date of the Feasts by the Eternal's clock in the sky? This decision to lookout for the **'Signs in the Heavens'** is a returning to the pre-Sanhedrin days when the Creator gave divine directions as to which month would begin the year.

Exodus 12: 2: ***"This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you."***

12. Summary

- In the days of Moses, and possibly even before (Genesis 7: 11, 8: 4-14), **Yahweh** told His people when each year and month was to start.
- Later the **Sanhedrin**, after examining certain natural conditions in Israel, proclaimed the start of each year and the start of each month.
- Still later in the 4th century AD, at the time of the **diaspora** (the scattering of Israel), the patriarch **Hillel** published rules for a calendar which was geared to the **spring** and **autumn equinoxes**.
- **Sad to say:**
 - The formula Hillel used to arrive at the equinox dates was slightly incorrect. It was out by some **14 minutes** each year. This seemingly insignificant error has added up over the centuries; And now some 1700 years later the spring and autumn equinoxes governing the Jewish calendar are supposedly occurring on 7/8th April and 7th October. This difference - in certain years - results in the month of Abib (Nisan) being started a month later than Hillel would have intended.
- **A Voice In The Wilderness - Canada:**
 - Is currently using the old **guideline** of starting the year with the new moon nearest the spring equinox.
 - In the year 1997 it was **09th of March**.
 - In the year 2000 it was **06th of March**.
 - In the year 2005 it was **10th of March**.
 - In the year 2008, it is the **07th of March**.
- **However, A Voice In The Wilderness - Canada**
 - Patiently awaits the celestial signs promised by the Creator in (Genesis 1:14) Signs which will clearly mark out the sacred seasons, days and years in the Almighty's

Calendar. Though we do not keep two sets of Feasts in years when we are a month earlier than others (1997, 2000, 2005, 2008) we do look out for those **celestial signs on both sets of dates** and also **treat with respect** all groups who remember **Yahweh's Feasts**.

For further explanation, please study the **A Voice In The Wilderness - Canada** booklet entitled **The Sacred Calendar of the God of Israel**; especially **Part Two** and the **Appendices**. Also, please read **Jewish Passover Out of Season!** an article written by **Dr. John Zucker**.

AMEN!

In the Son's Name — For the Father's glory.
Elder: *Max W. Mader*

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