

BIBLICAL CALENDAR-Part II- Establishing the Biblical Months

Now that we have seen the different kind of calendars, what does the Scripture say? Does the Scripture tell us whether we should follow the sun or the moon or both? If it does, does it tell when we start a year? Or are we left to follow what the civil authorities say?

Generally speaking, when we want to establish what YHWH wants for us, we look at the Scripture. If the Scripture tells us clearly what He desires, we do not have to look elsewhere but simply obey. If He does not, He leaves us to follow what we want within the principles He has established in His Word, and in those cases, the hints from Scripture and Jewish tradition help establish precedent, though they are not conclusive.

So what does the Scripture say?

Lunar Month

First, the Scripture clearly establishes the connection between the moon and months. The very words themselves indicate the relationship. For example:

And all the men of Israel assembled themselves unto king Solomon at the feast in the month (yerach) Ethanim, which is the seventh month (chodesh).

1 Kings 8:2

In the fourth year was the foundation of the house of YHWH laid, in the month (yerach) Ziv: And in the eleventh year, in the month (yerach) Bul, which is the eighth month (chodesh), was the house finished...

1 Kings 6:37 - 38

The word *yerach* means *a lunation* and is the word commonly used for the word *moon*. By implication, it means *month* as can be seen from the passages above, where the word is used as a synonym for *chodesh*, which means *new moon*, and by implication, *the beginning of a month*.

The word *chodesh* comes from the root which means *new* or *to make new*. The word is used for the moon when it is seen again, renewed after a period when it is not seen.

Further, in 1 Samuel 20:5, 18, 24, it is evident that the people celebrated the new moon (*chodesh*), and David, presumably as the King's general and son-in-law, was expected to attend the new moon celebration with King Saul's family. Psalm 81:3 speaks of the new moon (*chodesh*) as a day of celebration. Isaiah 66:23 speaks of a future time when Messiah rules, that all mankind will worship YHWH on new moons (*chodesh*) and Sabbaths.

Thus, in the very words themselves, we note that a month was reckoned from the moon, ie. from the new moon or the very first sliver of the moon after a time when the moon cannot be seen.

Now that we have established that the months were reckoned by the moon, what about the year?

Luni-Solar-Agricultural Calendar

First, we note that the Biblical holydays are closely related to the seasons (for example, the Passover is commanded to occur during the time of the barley harvest in spring). Thus, the calendar cannot be a purely lunar calendar like the Islamic calendar since it must stay in sync with the seasons and thus, with the sun. The Biblical calendar is thus a luni-solar calendar, and more accurately, a luni-solar-agricultural calendar.

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