

## Admissions on the Calculated Rabbinical Calendar

taken from <http://www.truthontheweb.org/admit.htm>

The following excerpts, from various Jewish and CRC-observant “Church of God” sources, document the truth concerning the gradual development of the calculated calendar, the tenth century A.D. origin of the current CRC, the errors of the CRC, and the historical reckoning of the new moon and new year.

“The history of the Jewish calendar may be divided into three periods—the Scriptural, the Talmudic, and the post-Talmudic. The first [Scriptural] rested purely on the observation of the sun and the moon, the second [Talmudic] on observation and reckoning, and the third [post-Talmudic—still used today] entirely on reckoning.[1]” (The Jewish Encyclopedia article: “Calendar, History of” pp.498)

“The beginning of the months were determined by direct observation of the new moon. Then those beginning of months (Rosh Hodesh) were sanctified and announced by the Sanhedrin, the Supreme Court in Jerusalem, after witnesses testified that they had seen the new crescent and after their testimony had been thoroughly examined, confirmed by calculation and duly accepted.” (Arthur Spier, The Comprehensive Hebrew Calendar, p.1, section: HISTORICAL REMARKS ON THE JEWISH CALENDAR)

“For over a thousand years, the Hebrew calendar has been fixed by calculation.[2] Today, the Hebrew calendar does not match that fixed by observing the Moon.[3] 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.[4] 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 (without the permission of 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.” (Above quote taken from the website of the Israeli New Moon Society [[http://www.geocities.com/royh\\_il/](http://www.geocities.com/royh_il/)], which was founded 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. They are adherents of Rabbinical Orthodox Judaism and its calculated rabbinical calendar).

“The Jewish calendar as now observed is the product of a long historical development.” (The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. 2, p.631)

“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.” (Cecil Roth, editor, Encyclopaedia Judaica, Vol. 5, p.50, article: Calendar)

“The Talmudic Rabbis [ca. first half of the third century C.E. (i.e., prior to 250 C.E.) to the end of the fifth century C.E.] recognised the variation in length of the synodic month...and hence they determined the beginning of every month separately by observation of the new moon as well as by calculation.” (W.M. Feldman, *Rabbinical Mathematics and Astronomy*, Hermon Press, 1965, p.123)

“Further, Gans points out, that it is hardly likely that R. Gamaliel would speak of a mean [i.e. average] synodic month, as in his time the ‘fixed’ calendar was not yet in use.” (W.M. Feldman, *Ibid*, p.124)

“For as the beginning of a month was fixed on the accredited evidence of witnesses who reported having seen the new moon soon after sunset on a certain day, it was the duty of the Calendar Council not only to test their evidence by stringent cross-examination...but also to ascertain, by mathematical calculation, whether the moon could, in fact, be seen at that particular moment at the particular place from which the witnesses came.” (W. M. Feldman, *Ibid.*, p.160)

“In mishnaic times [the Mishnah was completed ca. 200 C.E.], though the authorities were familiar with astronomical calculations, the new moon was fixed on the basis of observation, which meant that, as a rule, the bet din formally proclaimed the New Month only after it had heard evidence of witnesses who had actually seen the new moon.” (Encyclopaedia Judaica, Volume 14, article: Rosh Ha-Shanah, p.311)

“The Mishnaic tractate Rosh Hashanah describes the way in which the calendar was determined in the days before there was a set, calculated calendar which we have today. Witnesses would appear before the Sanhedrin each month to testify that they had seen the ‘new moon.’ They were carefully cross-examined and, if the judges were satisfied, the Sanhedrin proclaimed the beginning of a new month.” (Behold, A Moon is Born! How the Jewish Calendar Works, Arnold A. Lasker and Daniel J. Lasker, *Conservative Judaism*, 41:4, Summer, 1989, p.8)

**“But unless all indications are deceitful, they did not in the time of Jesus Christ possess as yet any fixed calendar, but on the basis of a purely empirical observation, on each occasion they began a new month with the appearing of the new moon...”**  
**[5] (Emil Schurer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ*, p.366)**

“Now there are ten festivals in number, as the law sets them down....The third [festival] is that which comes after the conjunction, which [festival] happens on the day of the new moon in each month. ...(140) Following the order which we have adopted, we proceed to speak of the third festival, that of the new moon. First of all, because it is the beginning of the month, and the beginning, whether of number or of time, is honourable. Secondly, because at this time there is nothing in the whole of heaven destitute of light. (141) Thirdly, because at that period the more powerful and important body gives a portion of necessary assistance to the less important and weaker body; for, at the time of the new moon, the sun begins to illuminate the moon with a light which is visible to the outward senses, and then she displays her own beauty to the beholders.” [6] [first century Jew, Philo Judaeus, *The Special Laws*, II, XI. (41), XXVI. (140) & (141), as translated by C.D. Yonge in *The Works of Philo: New Updated Edition, Complete and Unabridged in One Volume*, Hendickson Publishers, 1993, pp.572, 581]

“Jews calculated the month according to the phase of the moon, each month consisting of either twenty nine or thirty days, and beginning with the appearance of the new moon. But this opened a fresh field of uncertainty. It is quite true that every one might observe

for himself the appearance of a new moon. But this would again partly depend on the state of the weather. Besides, it left an authoritative declaration of the commencement of a month unsupplied. And yet not only was the first of every month to be observed as 'New Moon's Day,' but the feasts took place on the 10th, 15th, or other day of the month, which could not be accurately determined without a certain knowledge of its beginning. To supply this want the Sanhedrin sat in the 'Hall of Polished Stones' to receive the testimony of credible witnesses that they had seen the new moon. To encourage as many as possible to come forward on so important a testimony, these witnesses were handsomely entertained at the public expense. If the new moon had appeared at the commencement of the 30th day — which would correspond to our evening of the 29th, as the Jews reckoned the day from evening to evening — the Sanhedrin declared the previous month to have been one of twenty-nine days, or 'imperfect.' Immediately thereon men were sent to a signal-station on the Mount of Olives, where beacon-fires were lit and torches waved, till a kindling flame on a hill in the distance indicated that the signal had been perceived. Thus the tidings, that this was the new moon, would be carried from hill to hill, far beyond the boundaries of Palestine, to those of the dispersion, 'beyond the river.' Again, if credible witnesses had not appeared to testify to the appearance of the new moon on the evening of the 29th, the next evening, or that of the 30th, according to our reckoning, was taken as the commencement of the new month, in which case the previous month was declared to have been one of thirty days, or 'full.' It was ruled [much later in history, and by the so-called "rabbis," not God] that a year should neither have less than four nor more than eight such full months of thirty days" (Alfred Edersheim, *The Temple: Its Ministry and Services*, pp.156-157)

"It is generally accepted that the Jewish festivals were, in Biblical times, fixed by observation of both the sun and the moon. Gradually, certain astronomical rules were also brought into requisition, primarily as a test, corroborating or refuting the testimony of observation....It has been authoritatively proved that in spite of a more advanced knowledge of astronomy the practice of fixing the new moon and the festivals by observation was in force as late as the latter part of the fifth century [C.E.]....It was only after the close of the Babylonian Talmud, in the sixth or perhaps later, in the seventh century, that the observation of the moon was entirely given up, and a complete and final system of calendation introduced [in the tenth century]." (Henry Malter, *Saadia Gaon: His Life and Works*, Chapter IV, *Saadia's Controversy with Ben Meir*, pp.70-88, Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1921)

"...Rejecting the fixed calendar as a heretic innovation, the Karaites held that by law of Scripture the beginning of the months must be determined by the appearance of the new crescent and no other means, and that this had been the practice of ancient Israel at all times. Rabbanite refutation of this extreme assertion found its most outspoken exponent in Saadia Gaon, who went to the opposite extreme in 'demonstrating' that the fixed calendar, computation of molad and tekufah, has the force of a Mosaic-Sinaitic law that had been followed at all ages of the past [like some in the CoGs proclaim], while observation of the new crescent was merely a passing episode in the history of the Jews, introduced at the time of the Sadducees to show that it confirmed the correctness of the prescribed calendaric regulation by calculation. Although this contention could easily be refuted by the Karaites as fanciful to the point of ridicule, Saadia's prestige was so great that his theory was accepted even by leading scholars....Maimonides [12th century A.D] is one of the few medieval Rabbanite authorities known to have taken issue with Saadia's and his followers' contention, and his refutation amounts to unmitigated reproach, indeed to expression of intellectual as well as religious indignation. [Maimonides commented:] 'I am truly astonished over a personage who rejects clear evidence, asserting that the religion of Israel was based, not on observation of the new moon, but on calculation alone—and yet he [Saadia] affirms the authority of all these (just mentioned) Talmudic

passages! I think indeed that he did not believe his own assertions, but he merely wished to repel his [Karaite] adversary by any notion that just occurred to him, be it true or false, when he had found himself unable to escape the force of (his adversary's) argument.” (The Code of Maimonides, book II, treatise 8, translated by Solomon Gandz, Yale Judaica Series, Volume XI, pp.lii-liii)

“...the Gregorian calendar is solar, the Jewish one is lunar. The latter evolved over a period of many centuries, going through a number of formulations, much experimentation, and a great deal of controversy....Despite the fact that the Jewish calendar finally became fixed in 358 C.E. [i.e., it may have been around this time that the formulation of the set calendar was initialized], there was no end to the criticisms and disputes leveled at its inaccuracies for centuries thereafter.” (Nathan Ausubel, The Book of Jewish Knowledge, An Encyclopedia of Judaism and the Jewish People, pp.70-71, 1964.)

“In the time of the Sanhedrin there were no published calendars as there are today. The Sanhedrin declared the beginning of each month when the moon was actually sighted. On the thirtieth of each month they would accept testimony of anyone who had seen the new moon the night before. Anyone who had seen the new moon after sunset on the night after the twenty-ninth day of the month would go to the Sanhedrin the next day. If the Sanhedrin determined that the reports were reliable and that the moon had actually been seen, they would declare that day to be the first day of the new month. If, on the other hand, the moon was not seen the night before, that day would be the thirtieth of the old month. The next day would be the first day of the new month. No month was ever longer than thirty days because even if the moon was not sighted at all, the thirty-first day would automatically be declared the first day of the new month. On the other hand, no month was ever less than twenty-nine days because the first possible day to declare the new month was the day after the twenty-ninth.

The Sanhedrin used a similar method to determine whether the year should be a regular year or a leap year...Each year, in the month of Adar, they would determine how much longer the winter would last. Their determination was based upon weather and agricultural conditions, and upon calculations of the date of the spring equinox. If they came to the conclusion that the next month would be spring already, they would declare it a regular year and the next month would be Nisan. If, however, they decided that it would not be Spring for another month, they would declare the next month Adar Sheni, and it would be a leap year...it was impossible to know in advance whether a particular year would be a regular year or a leap year or whether a particular month would have twenty-nine or thirty days, since the final decision of both these things was made by the Sanhedrin year by year and month by month. [The length of the month was never determined until the thirtieth day actually arrived and the length of the year was generally not determined until the month of Adar. So you can see that it was impossible to ever publish a calendar.](#)” (Understanding the Jewish Calendar, Rabbi Nathan Bushwick, Moznaim Publishing Corp., New York/Jerusalem, 1989, p.51)

“In 432 B.C.E. the Athenian astronomer Meton had reformed the Athenian calendar on the basis of a cycle of nineteen years, consisting of 235 lunar months adding one month seven times in the cycle to take care of the excess (235 is 7 more than 19 times 12). This calendar was widely adopted, and was eventually [in post-Talmudic times] followed by the Jewish teachers...” [7] (The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. 2, p.632)

“The intervals of intercalation were at first irregular [i.e., they were not set in a fixed calculated pattern such as the current CRC's 19 year cycle of intercalating the 3rd, 6th, 8th, 11th, 14th, 17th, & 19th years of its cycle], intercalation being in part due to the

prevailing state of the various agricultural products....R. Akiva (died 135 [A.D.]) once intercalated three successive years..." (Cecil Roth, editor, Encyclopaedia Judaica, Vol. 5, p.50, article: Calendar)

"...intercalation [i.e., including a 13 month in a year] was carried out as the need arose, on the basis of an empirical observation made on each occasion without any advance calculation. The following two passages demonstrate that this was still the case in the time of the Mishnah: (1) mMeg. 1:4...(2) mEduy. 7:7...The two passages are so clear that they require no further commentary...there was absolutely no calculation [of intercalary months] in advance." (Emil Schurer, The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ, p.593)

["This method of observation \[i.e., new crescent\] and intercalation \[i.e., adding a thirteenth month based on the season and status of the barley crop\] was in use throughout the period of the second temple \(516 B.C.E. - 70 C.E.\), and about three centuries after its destruction, as long as there was an independent Sanhedrin. In the fourth century, however, when oppression and persecution threatened the continued existence of the Sanhedrin, the patriarch Hillel II took an extraordinary step to preserve the unity of Israel. In order to prevent the Jews scattered all over the surface of the earth from celebrating their New Moons, festivals and holidays at different times, he made public the system of calendar calculation which up to then had been a closely guarded secret. It had been used in the past only to check the observations and testimonies of witnesses, and to determine the beginnings of the spring season." \(Arthur Spier, The Comprehensive Hebrew Calendar, p.2\)](#)

"The day begins and ends at sunset, or more precisely, after dusk when the first three stars of medium size appear.[8] This rule applies to the theoretical beginning and ending of Sabbaths, festivals, fast days and the hours for the daily prayers. However for calendar calculations, especially for the computation of the Moladot (the times of the new moon) and the Tekufot (beginnings of the seasons), the day begins and ends at 6 o'clock in the evening, Jerusalem time. — The beginning and duration of the months depend on the Moladot and the time which elapses from one Molad to the next one (lunation). The average figure given by tradition for this interval is 29 days and 12 hrs and 793 parts" (Arthur Spier, The Comprehensive Hebrew Calendar, p.13)

"Nowadays the day, hour and parts of each Molad are announced before the Proclamation of the New Moon in the Sabbath morning service preceding the week of the New Moon. [This custom keeps alive the memory of the time when the Sanhedrin sanctified the months on the basis of observation \[of the new crescent\].](#) It calls our attention to the fact that today we determine our new moons and holidays according to the decision of Hillel's Beth Din. [9]" (Arthur Spier, The Comprehensive Hebrew Calendar, p.13)

"It is uncertain what the calendar of Hillel originally contained, and when it was generally adopted. In the Talmud there is no trace of it." (The Jewish Encyclopedia, "Calendar, History of", pp. 502-503, Funk and Wagnalls, 1903)

"The name Rosh Ha-Shanah as it is used in the Bible (Ezek. 40:1) simply means the beginning of the year, and does not designate the festival. The months of the year were counted from the spring month (Ex. 12:2), later called by the Babylonian name Nisan. The month known by the Babylonian name Tishri is, therefore, called the "seventh month" in the Pentateuch. When the festival on the first of this month is recorded, it is referred to as the festival of the seventh month and a day of "memorial proclaimed with the blast of horns," or "a day of blowing the horn" (Lev. 23:23-25; Num. 29:1-6). In the Bible, the festival lasts one day only; the two-day festival arose out of the difficulty of

determining when the new moon actually appeared.” (Encyclopedia Judaica, volume 14, article: Rosh Ha-Shanah, pp.305,306)

“Môlêd is a Hebrew word meaning renewal, rejuvenescence. It would be properly applied to the phase of the moon at the instant of time when her Conjunction with the Sun takes place. It is, however, commonly used not for the actual time of New Moon, but for the computed time, which governs the commencement of each year and of each Cycle... The length of a Lunation, as adopted by the founders of the present permanent calendar, is a constant quantity, whereas the Lunations of the true Moon are variable in their duration. The Moon of the Jewish Calendar is a mean or average Moon moving uniformly, in the same way as the artificial Moon of Hilarius [i.e., the “moon” (molad) of the CRC is likewise artificial], which is used in the Julian and Gregorian Calendars.” (S.B. Burnaby, “Elements of the Jewish and Muhammadan Calendars”, London: George Bell & Sons, 1901, p.40)

“The moment that the moon passes between the Earth and the sun is called the Molad - the birth of the moon. It is the theoretical beginning of the new month” [10] (Understanding the Jewish Calendar, Rabbi Nathan Bushwick, pp.39-40 –emphasis mine)

“Every month of God’s Calendar begins about the time of the new moon when the moon’s first faint crescent is visible at sunset in Jerusalem. According to the Roman calendar a new moon may occur at any time during the month. Most people today probably don’t even know when a new moon appears.” (Herman Hoeh, The Crucifixion Was Not On Friday, p.34)

“...the present Jewish calendar originated in Babylon during the period of the Gaons—the religious leaders who dominated academia as heads of various Babylonian academies (Ency. of Religion and Ethics, s.v. “Calendar”). One of the Gaons asserted that the existing calendar system was of great antiquity and the new moons and festivals had always been established by calculation. His view was that the observation of the moon had not been put to use until the third century BC, its purpose to demonstrate the accuracy of calculation, this, in order to refute dissenters. His view was that calculation and observation had always agreed. His arguments were soundly repudiated by both Karaites and Talmudists on the basis of Talmudic records (ibid).” (The Hebrew Calendar: Is It Reliable?, Bethel Church of GOD 1999; slightly reworded from: Church of God, The Eternal’s article of the same title from 1994)

“God’s months begin with the new moon....The observation of the new moon is to be made from Jerusalem, not from the North American continent. The seven to ten hours difference in time between Jerusalem and the part of the country (i.e. United States) you live in will make actual observation of the new moon from America misleading... The appearance of the new moon in the western sky just after sunset is used to determine the beginning of a new month.” (Kenneth Herrmann, The Good News magazine, March 1953, article: “God’s Sacred Calendar,” p.8, col.1&2)

“The first day of the new year always begins with the day nearest the Spring equinox [11] when the new moon is first visible to the naked eye AT JERUSALEM (not in the United States).” (Herbert W. Armstrong, “WHEN, and How OFTEN, Should We Observe THE LORD’S SUPPER?,” second to last paragraph—emphasis HWA’s)

“God established four units of time for mankind. These are: the day, the week, the month, and the year. The heavenly bodies were set in their place for the purpose of marking time (Gen. 1:14-18)...By the time the Babylonians had developed a sound thinking astronomy it was easy to tell from previous observations of the moon exactly when each

new moon would appear. However, it was still customary to continue watching the sky for the first appearance of the crescent (Asimov, pp. 65-66)...The Babylonians used the first appearance of the crescent to mark the beginning of the month. The Egyptians, however, used the time when the old crescent was invisible in the morning as the beginning of their month. The Jews followed the Babylonian method (Segal, p. 254). The Egyptian custom of using the old crescent is akin to our modern use of the conjunction as the marker...The lunar month was used uniformly throughout the ancient Near East and the Mediterranean area and [began with the sighting of the first lunar crescent.](#)" (The Hebrew Calendar: Is It Reliable?, Church of God, The Eternal 1994)

"In the churches of God it has been generally assumed—though not a Jewish belief—that the calendar itself is 'holy,' that it was directly inspired by God and handed down to Moses, that the Jewish authorities are charged with its maintenance...There is no evidence that it was especially 'divinely revealed' for Israel. It is a humanly devised secular calendar...It was not a divinely revealed calendar. That is, not 'holy,' not 'the sacred calendar,' not 'God's calendar, but humanly devised, however skillfully...There is no need to postulate 'divine guidance' for the construction of the calendar. And there is no evidence that God did so." (James McBride, article: The Origins of Our Calendar)

"This law further decreed that at the sighting of the new crescent, the first day of the seventh month would be sanctified as a solemn assembly by the blowing of trumpets" (Dwight Blevins and Carl D. Franklin, The Feast of Trumpets 2000 A.D., p.25)

"new moon in Scripture, the visible crescent as seen from Jerusalem. Not the same as the astronomical new moon, which is not visible." (Dwight Blevins and Carl D. Franklin, The Feast of Trumpets 2000 A.D., p.38, section: Glossary of Terms)

"First, the precise time the new moon appears must be determined. Anciently, this was done by sight." (Stephen Flurry and Mark Nash, The Philadelphia Trumpet, April 1996, p.23, article: God's Sacred Calendar)

"One thing is for certain, the fixation of the month in Temple times was determined on the basis of both calculation and observation, a fact you can be sure Jesus was aware of." (The Hebrew Calendar: Is It Reliable?, Church of God, The Eternal 1994)

"It is not the Molad which is all important, but rather it is the appearance of the crescent of the moon that really counts...We don't know when the Jews began using a calculated calendar instead of simply relying on visual observation. Some speculate that the calendar was in existence long before Christ. They base their idea on the fact that the months are called by Chaldean names. The Jews were in captivity in Babylon in the 6th century B.C. Was there a calendar already in existence at that time and did it contain the rules of postponement? ...[In Christ's time the new moon ostensibly was established by observation.](#) There are those today who claim that the only way of calculating the new moon is by exact mathematical calculation. Visual observation is too erratic and could be one to two days off. [What we know from first-century records is that the calendar was operated by observation and controlled by the Sanhedrin.](#) If Christ and the Church followed this habit, then Christ accepted something that some are claiming is unacceptable." (United Church of God Committee Members: Jim Franks, Burk McNair, Peter Nathan, Leon Walker, & Don Ward, Doctrinal Statement Adopted by the Council of Elders on the "Hebrew Calendar" 1997)

FOOTNOTES:

1. Citing the Jewish Encyclopedia as a source, the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia likewise states: “The Hebrew or Jewish calendar had three stages of development: the preexilic, or Biblical; the postexilic or Talmudic; and the post Talmudic. The first rested on observation merely, the second on observation coupled with calculation, and the third on calculation only.” (James Orr, editor, International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Vol.1, article: Calendar, H. Porter, pp.541). [BACK](#)

2. This admission that the current Calculated Rabbinical Calendar (CRC) has only been in use for just over a thousand years is met with agreement from other Jewish sources (such as the previous quote from The Jewish Encyclopedia and footnote #1, and the quote following this of the Israeli New Moon Society—that from Encyclopedia Judaica, which states that the CRC was finalized in the tenth century).

Other religious sources also concur: “Such a continuous calendar, according to tradition that goes back to Hai Gaon (1038), was constructed by Patriarch Hillel II in A.D. 359 (or, according to another version, 500, though by this time the day of Patriarchs was past). But the tradition [that the CRC was fully constructed by Hillel II], which stands quite alone, is confronted with grave objections. Of these the following two are of special weight: (1) The supposed calendar is never referred to in the Talmud, which received its final redaction at the end of the fifth century. Nothing whatever is said there about the length of the month, or the nineteen-year cycle, or anything else of the kind. (2)...Moreover, from the earliest post-Talmudic age we have dates which cannot be reconciled with the regular calendar in use today. [article footnote: “One such date is the year 506, and another the year 776”]

“In point of fact, everything goes to indicate that the calendar, like all other productions of the kind, passed through a developing series of forms, and that it assumed its final shape in the schools of the official representatives of Judaism (called Geonim) in Babylonia. To the period of the Geonim, say the 7th and 8th cents., likewise belong two tractates relevant to the subject. One of these is entitled “Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer”, and contains almost all the elements of the modern calendar (caps. 6-8), but it shows so many instances of self-contradiction that we must assume the presence of various interpolations...” [Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, 1908, Vol.3, article: CALENDAR (Jewish), p.118]

“After centuries of controversies between conservatives relying on observation (of moon and seasons) and innovators recommending calculation, and between religious authorities in Palestine and Babylonia, the system was settled in the 10th century A.D. (in favor of calculation and Babylon).” [Guy Ottewell, The Astronomical Companion, 1994 ed., p.30, under “Calendars (Jewish)”] [BACK](#)

3. “Owing to inequalities in the rate of both the solar and the lunar motion in longitude, the mean conjunction [i.e., molad] may precede or be preceded by the true conjunction.” (Cecil Roth, editor, Encyclopaedia Judaica, Vol. 5, p.46, article: Calendar). The molad does not consistently match any phase of the moon. One month, the molad may occur on the conjunction, while another month, the molad may be on the day of the crescent, while yet another month, it may be a day or two either side of new crescent. See [New Moon/molad Comparison Chart and Expected New Moons and Appointed Times for 2001](#) [BACK](#)

4. The Jews readily admit that the current calculated calendar in use is indeed in error and needs reform. Note the following from Encyclopedia Judaica: “the present [calendar] system was expected to be replaced again by a system based on true values more akin to the earlier Jewish calendar in which New Moon (days of the phasis) and intercalations



were proclaimed on the basis of both observation and calculation.” (Cecil Roth, editor, Encyclopaedia Judaica, Vol. 5, p.47, article: Calendar). “The rebirth of the state of Israel rekindles in us the hope that a new Sanhedrin, recognized by the whole people of Israel, will be established again in our time. It will be the task of the Sanhedrin to make a decision as to when and how the sanctified calendar of Hillel II is to be modified in accordance with the requirements of astronomy and the Torah.” (Arthur Spier, The Comprehensive Hebrew Calendar, p.227). While God’s Word does state that we are to walk within the bounds of the laws of the land (i.e., Romans 13:1-7; Titus 3:1; I Pet 2:11-20), this by no means suggests that we need wait for a new “Sanhedrin” to be formed to follow God’s commands for His appointed times. [When the established laws of men are at odds with the Laws of God, we are by no means bound to such—God’s Law always reigns above](#) (see Acts 5:29 where Peter and the others plainly rejected a ruling of the Sanhedrin in order to obey God instead). [BACK](#)

5. The Mishnah, spanning the time period of 200 B.C. - 200 A.D., contains evidence that the CRC was not in use in the first century, nor even at that time of the Mishnah’s collection into bookform (ca. 200 A.D.). It shows that, unlike the CRC with its postponements, Yom Teruah (Day of Trumpets) could be observed on a Sunday, Wednesday, and Friday; the Day of Atonement could be observed on Fridays and Sundays; the seventh day of the Feast of Tabernacles could be observed on a Sabbath; etc. See our article [A Look Into Postponements](#) [BACK](#)

6. Philo was a Jew who lived from about 20 B.C. to about 50 A.D., and was thus a contemporary of Jesus and His disciples. Philo here testifies of the reckoning of the new moon in their day stating that it occurs “after the conjunction....at this time there is nothing in the whole of heaven destitute of light...because at that period the more powerful and important body gives a portion of necessary assistance to the less important and weaker body; for, at the time of the new moon, the sun begins to illuminate the moon with a light which is visible to the outward senses.” (italicized emphasis mine). [Plainly, Philo testifies that the new moon is the fresh visible crescent.](#) [BACK](#)

7. “The Assuan Papyri yield ample proof of the fact that at the time after the Exile no such fixed cycle was in use among the Jews, and this would appear to be true also of the Talmudic period....Explicit mention of the nineteen-year cycle is first made in post-Talmudic writings. [article footnote: “It is related in the Talmud (Sanhedrin, 12a) that Akiba (first half of 2nd cent. A.D.) reckoned three successive years as intercalary—a fact which proves the non-existence of any intercalary cycle at that time.”].” [Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, 1908, Vol.3, article: CALENDAR (Jewish), p.117]

“As already indicated, the Jewish year is a composite arrangement. Its months are lunar, but from time to time an extra month is intercalated in order to effect an adjustment with the solar year. This was done even before the establishment of a continuous calendar. It was regarded as a matter of special importance that the month of Nisan should not begin before its tequfa (beginning of spring), and a second Adar was intercalated as required; but at that time nothing was as yet known of a regular and periodic intercalation, recurring according to definite rules. Such an arrangement was in all probability first introduced along with the continuous calendar itself, when the Metonic cycle was adopted.” [Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, 1908, Vol.3, article: CALENDAR (Jewish), p.122]

“The earliest known reference to the ‘tequfa of R. Adda’ under that designation is made by Isaac b. Baruch Albalia of Cordova (A.D. 1035-1094); cf. Abraham b. Hiya’s Sefer ha-’Ibbur, iii. 4), but the period it indicates is already referred to by al-Biruni (Arab. text, p. 183 = Eng. tr. p. 163)...this tequfa...agrees with a date (776) mentioned in the

Baraita of Samuel...Moreover, the intercalary system in common use among the Jews, of which we shall treat presently, could never have been framed except on the basis of R. Adda's—not Samuel's—tequfa. In all probability, therefore, its duration was calculated about the 8th cent. A.D., i.e. at the period in which the Jews in the East began to study astronomy, and became acquainted with the *Almagest*.” [Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, 1908, Vol.3, article: CALENDAR (Jewish), p.122—boldface emphasis mine] BACK

8. As Spier relates in the next sentence, the usage of the three stars of the second magnitude is a “theoretical beginning and ending”—not an actual one. This is of Jewish tradition. The former demarcation (i.e., sunset) is the precise end of a day according to Holy Scripture: “...from sunset to sunset...” (Lev 23:32, Schocken Bible Vol. 1, Five Books of Moses, translated by Everett Fox). The CRC however, is not calculated according to the Scriptural “sunset to sunset” reckoning, or even the traditional “three stars” method, but rather is calculated using 6pm as the beginning/ending of a day. Hence, the CRC not only utilizes an erroneous reckoning of the month (i.e., molad), but likewise, an erroneous reckoning of the day. BACK

9. Spier claims this goes back to Hillel, but historic documents show otherwise:

“Here, therefore, we find a corroboration of our theory that the constant calendar of modern Judaism is of relatively late date. The calculation of conjunctions, for instance, cannot have been finally established even as late as A.D. 776, for, according to the Baraita of Samuel, the conjunction of Tishri in that year took place as 4 d. 0 h. 363 p.; while, according to the modern reckoning, it did not occur till 4 d. 3 h. 363 p. This fact is of great importance in the history of the Jewish calendar.” [Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, 1908, Vol.3, article: CALENDAR (Jewish), p.122, col.1, footnote 3] BACK

10. As stated in footnote 3 above, the molad does not consistently match the actual conjunction, or any phase of the moon. The actual conjunction of the sun, earth, and moon occurs in the midst of what is generally three days of the moon being concealed. Given that molad means “birth,” would this concealed moon constitute a birth (i.e., molad)? Is a baby “birthed” at 4 and 1/2 months from conception, in the midst of the nine month gestation period, or rather is it birthed at the conclusion of its concealment in the womb? It is born when we see it (i.e., just as the crescent moon), and not before. BACK

11. Sacred Scripture does not mention the equinox. According to its pages, the first new moon crescent to appear after the barley crop in Israel is found in the stage of growth known as abib is what demarks the first day of the new year. The notion put forth by Herbert Armstrong (as well as many others) that the first crescent sighting nearest the equinox is the head of the year is dispelled by the abib and new moon reports from Israel in 1999. In that year, a fresh crescent moon was sighted the evening of March 18 (a couple days prior to the equinox), however barley was not found to be abib until April 11, and thus the next new moon, sighted on April 17, was the new moon of the abib. Herein in a clear refutation of the myth of “The first day of the new year always begins with the day nearest the Spring equinox.” BACK

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