

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE BIBLICAL CALENDAR ELM JAN 1996

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These notes, composed from 2013 on, are based on taped lectures given between 1977 and 1997 by Dr. Ernest L. Martin, Ph.D., formerly the Head of Theology for the Worldwide Church of God; he resigned in January 1974 because of his unresolved doctrinal issues with the administration. Sadly Dr. Martin died in January 2002, a great loss to the world and to those who seek Biblical truth.

In this recording Dr. Martin explains the basis of the Biblical calendar, and goes on to give a brilliant yet simple exposition of the transition we make from worrying about obedience to physical law, to rejoicing in spiritual laws by accepting the progressive revelation given by Jesus Christ in the New Testament for His ecclesia who are “in Him” and guided by the Holy Spirit.

There were many different calendars prior to the 1st Century B.C. Each country had their own system and this led to chaos and confusion. Then in the 1st Century B.C., Julius Caesar adopted a calendar based on the movements of the Sun, and he imposed this on the entire Roman Empire, but this was inaccurate due to incomplete knowledge of the Sun's rotation.

The calendar we have in the world today, the Gregorian Calendar, was adopted in 1582 and is solely a Solar Calendar. Ten days were taken out of the year at that time in order to bring the calendar in alignment with the heavens. Our calendar is the accepted worldwide basis for annual, legal, and commercial events so we can know exactly when any event is to take place. This universal acceptance that January 1st and all the dates through the year is when the calendar says they are provides a legal stable framework for human society everywhere. We do have months of course, which are about 30 days in length, but the phases of the Moon are ignored for modern calendar purposes.

The Moslem calendar is purely Lunar, and it circulates backwards eleven days each year to keep in line with the Moon, and the Sun is ignored.

The calendar of the Bible is different in that it is a Solar/Lunar calendar and is based on the 19 year Metonic cycle. Corrections are made to keep the calendar on track with the movements in the heavens by adding intercalary months at specified intervals in the 19 year cycle.

The Passover has to occur at the same time in the year. All months start with a New Moon, which had to be observed wherever the tabernacle was in Moses time, and later by those appointed. The Feast of Tabernacles was always in the Autumn time of the year.

From the Creation to the Exodus, the years began and ended in the Autumn. Then God inspired Moses to change the start of the year to the Spring and create the ecclesiastical/civil calendar, including the Holy Days and other commanded assemblies. As long as Moses was in control, he determined the administration of the law. The High Priest was responsible for observing the beginning of the months. God gave this authority into the hands of the seventy members of the Sanhedrin which was similar in a way to the Supreme Court we have today.

Exodus12:1 And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt saying, 2 This month (Nisan) shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you.

Then the Exodus Passover day was declared which has remained at this date annually ever since.

Exodus12:3 Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying: In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house:

Deuteronomy 31:9 And Moses wrote this law, (the whole law, the commandments and the sacrificial law etc.,) and delivered it unto the priests the sons of Levi (not to the man in the street), which bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord, **and** unto all the elders of Israel.

In the days of Christ, there were Jews scattered all over the known world, and they had to know in advance about the ecclesiastical calendar in order to be able to attend the commanded days at the Temple, which could involve traveling for days, weeks, or months to be there at the appointed time.

In the New Testament, any references to calendar events are clearly accepted by all as being laid down by law. They did not say the Pentecost as we interpret it, the calendar was accepted by all in the Jewish world.

Deuteronomy 31:10 And Moses commanded them, saying, At the end of every seven years, in the solemnity of the year of release, in the feast of tabernacles, 11 When all Israel is come to appear before the Lord thy God in the place which he shall choose, thou shalt read this law before all Israel in their hearing.

Nehemiah explained the same in principle but the principles were put into a context for that time.

The Levites, priests and the elders reviewed the law every seven years.

God invested the authority to set standards and to administer the law to the ruling body of the seventy members of the Sanhedrin which included the calendar calculations, civil and government legal matters, and including weights and measures, and coinage.

Calculating the Biblical Calendar is not an easy task, it is complicated, and requires knowledge of the movements of the heavens, astronomical and mathematical ability to be able to make the somewhat complex calculations. This is in order for it to be correctly calculated with the movements of the moon and the seasons of the year.

An authority had to make these observations and calculations for order to prevail. The whole of the community must be in agreement and accept the calendar produced. This was important not only for the Feast days, but also the settling of debts, and other legal matters.

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In the New Testament, any references to calendar events are clearly accepted by all as being laid down by law. They did not say the Pentecost as we interpret it because it was accepted by all in the Jewish world.

Law is never static, but changes are made according to need, but the principles of law never change.

For instance, the laws concerning the control of horse drawn vehicles had to be modified when the motor car came on the scene, but the principles of responsible behaviour and care did not change.

Christ taught His disciples and the multitudes to obey the Pharisees, not all of them by any means, but those who sat in Moses' seat, the seventy members of the Sanhedrin who had God's authority to administer the law, as at that time they were all under the Mosaic dispensation. Jesus criticized

the behaviour of the Pharisees, but did not say anything against their authority.

Side B

Matthew 23:1 Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples,
2 Saying: The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: 3 All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not. Bind heavy burdens etc.

Jesus was not saying all the Pharisees, but those who were the Elders and the Sanhedrin. Christ did nothing to suggest that they, should not obey the authority vested in the Jews of the Sanhedrin by God, nor did the Apostles or Paul, all clearly accepted the structure of the administration of the law set down by God.

Anyone choosing in this era to put themselves under the Mosaic Law and the Hebrew calendar now, would need to be familiar with the rulings of the Sanhedrin and be willing to accept their authority even to this day concerning how to keep the Sabbath, when the Holy Days are, the judicial system, and so on. We may not have much respect for them or the way they conduct themselves, but it is vital we respect the institution ordained by God, we would not have a choice if we were under the Law.

Paul writing in A.D. 55 in Romans 3:1 What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? 2 Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them (the Jews) were committed (the administration of) the oracles (the Words) of God. Paul also says that if one is to keep the law, then we have to keep them all.

Galatians 4:3 Even so we, when we were children (without the maturity of the Holy Spirit), were in bondage (like a slave or servant) under the elements of the world: 4 But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, 5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. 6 And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

We are now in a totally different relationship with God and His new laws through Jesus Christ.

John 13:34 A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

Ephesians 2:15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity (between us and God), even the law of commandments contained in ordinances (that it was impossible to keep); for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace (between us and God);

Galatians 4:7 Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ. 8 Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods. 9 But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? 10 Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years.

Paul is telling the Christians, that it is time to move on, to let go the old practices which could never lead to salvation, and realize they are now under a completely new system as a result of Christ's death and resurrection. This is where so many denominations go wrong, they have failed to move on, failed to accept that the sacrifice of Christ ushered in a completely new era of relationships with our Creator.

Later as the revelation of the Gospel continued, John makes it even clearer, that in fact, although it is so simply phrased, it is not a new concept, as love for God and our fellow man were actually embedded in the Old Law.

1 John 2:7 Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning.

John further clarifies what he means, in that Christ has shed new light on that law, and that is it "new", because the "darkness" of the enmity with God under the old physical laws is now past, and we are now in a new era of "light".

1 John 2:8 Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.

People who continue to steadfastly put themselves under the "darkness" of the old law blind themselves (with the help of the god of this world) to the new light of the "glorious gospel".

2 Corinthians 4:4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

Jesus was judged by God when He presented Himself to the Father on the Sunday morning, and found to be perfect. According to Hebrews He sprinkled his blood in front of the Father, and was accepted and set on God's right hand for ever.

In the churches that insist on Sabbath observance, and keeping other elements of the Mosaic Law in this era, it is actually impossible for the members of the congregations to keep the Sabbath as it was commanded in the Law of the Old Testament. Those who claim to 'keep the Sabbath' cannot and do not in reality obey all the details of the laws concerning the Sabbath: To rest and not work, not pleasing yourself or enjoying yourself, or saying your own words (Isaiah 58:13), and including travel laws, no cooking, no gathering fuel, no lighting of fires, no work for any servant so that includes using electricity, gas, buses or trains or cars which makes work for others. The penalty for doing any of these things was death!

Those denominations that taught and still teach tithing as a requirement for salvation are actually committing sin by doing so. The Laws concerning tithing are totally impossible to observe in our era as there are no Levites and no Temple, (tithes were to supply the needs of the Temple), and it is a sin to break the law in this manner.

Any ministers who do teach, and insist that others attempt to keep the elements of the Mosaic Law as a condition of salvation, are in fact denying the Lord who bought them.

2 Peter 2:1 But there were false prophets (a false prophet is one who prophesies in God's name and it does not come to pass) also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and (will eventually) bring upon themselves swift destruction.

Such ministers were, and still are, totally without understanding of the total change in the nature and spiritual quality of the Law and our relationship to it, and to God which Christ introduced after His death and resurrection.

Hebrews 7:11 If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called

after the order of Aaron? 12 For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law.

When the Levitical priesthood was superceded by our High Priest, Jesus Christ, at His death and resurrection, and His ascension to the right hand of the Father in heaven, there was a need to change and modify the law.

Ephesians 1:4 According as he hath chosen us **in Him** before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.

We are “in Christ”, and so to speak, are in heaven with Him, and under the spiritual heavenly laws defined in the later writings in the Bible, Ephesians 4,5,6; Colossians 3 and 4; I & II Timothy.

Now we go by Heavenly Laws which are more detailed and spiritual, we are no longer subject to the Mosaic structure.

Philippians 3:20 For our conversation (the conduct of our lives) is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:

The Mosaic physical laws with physical penalties written in stone were replaced by heavenly laws written in our hearts and minds. The Mosaic laws were impossible for human nature to keep; and the heavenly spiritual laws are even harder to observe and obey (actually totally impossible), which is why we have the grace of Jesus Christ who kept them perfectly for us so that we would not be held accountable.

Matthew 16:13 When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? 14 And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. 15 He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? 16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Although this is before the Holy Spirit was generally given on the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit was working with Peter’s mind.

Matthew 16:17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

The disciples did not have the Holy Spirit at this time, and still were slow to understand, because having the Holy Spirit is a vital and crucial factor in our being able to understand God's Word and His plan.

How can you know that you have God's Holy Spirit? If we ask for, and invite the help of the Holy Spirit, and we find that we are not only open to new knowledge and understanding of the Holy Bible scriptures, but begin to see things in a new "Light". That "Light", when it is consistent with the entirety of the Holy Bible can only come from God through the working of the Holy Spirit in our minds and hearts.

A second check is when you find others around you are either 'not interested', or not open to new understanding, and may even be somewhat hostile to your 'strange' beliefs. Perhaps criticism from those close to you of your beliefs might intensify, for as it says:

Matthew 10:36 And a man's foes shall be they of his own household.

Then Jesus explained the very important principle of "binding and loosing" the authority of which has been claimed by the Roman Catholic Church, and also by many other denominations who have a self-appointed hierarchy to control their adherents.

The word 'church' comes from 'cirice' and is connected to the 'cup' used in pagan worship, so the word ekklesia is to be preferred.

Matthew 16:18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter (Petros – a pebble), and upon this rock (Christ) I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. 19 And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. 20 Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ.

But what does "binding and loosing" actually involve according to Jesus Christ? How far does Christ say that authority extends? As always, 'here a little and there a little' is the way to understanding, as that is how the Bible explains and interprets itself.

Here Christ is laying down the rules for dealing with disputes in local congregations, as there is no indication in His teachings to support the building of a "church" organization with an authoritarian hierarchy.

Colossians 2:16 Let no man (certainly not any man's organization, or minister etc.) therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: 17 Which are (or were) a shadow of things to come; but the body (the ecclesia) is of (and under the authority of) Christ.

Matthew 18:15 Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. 16 But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. 17 And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.

Life does not always run smoothly, and people do have difficulties amongst each other, and Christ gives the authority and the rules for how to deal with this. In this simple procedure, in the case of a dispute Jesus says:

1. Go to your brother in the congregation alone, and talk to him about it.
2. If he will not hear you, take one or two others (who know you both) as witnesses with you, so that the matter may be established. If he chooses not to hear you, then...
3. Tell it to the ecclesia, (all the members in the whole world? No!) the local congregation, and the members will exclude him from the group.

Matthew 18:18 Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye (the local group) shall bind on earth (in the local congregation) shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

Jesus carries government of the ecclesia no wider than the local congregation. There should be no person in charge of the whole 'church' and establish a hierarchy, that is not what Jesus is saying.

Matthew 18:19 Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. 20 For where two or three (not all Christians in the world), are gathered together in my name (to make a decision about issues in the congregation) there am I in the midst of them.

Let those who are in governmental position who are determining the calendar and the ecclesiastical rules give you the understanding and you keep it, so long as it is under the law and within the Bible teaching we should obey them, although we should of course obey God rather than

men, but otherwise obey those who are in authority if they are telling you to do things which are not against Christian teaching,

The coming man of sin will exert authoritarian religious and legal control over the whole world claiming the authority of God, as do many churches today.

We, however, at our 'baptism' in Christ have been translated into a heavenly kingdom.

Mark 1:8 I indeed have baptized you with water: but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost. (not with water?)

Several 'baptisms' are mentioned in the Bible, but there is now only one.

Ephesians 4:5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism,

Colossians 1:12 Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light 13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the (heavenly) kingdom of his dear Son: 14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:

Our redemption is not through any attempt of ours at 'keeping the law' or rather failing to keep it, because we are justified by our belief and faith in Jesus Christ.

Romans 3:28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.

Romans 5:1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

Galatians 2:16 Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

Galatians 3:11 But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for: The just shall live by faith.

Our system that we are under is now heavenly, and we no longer need.

Galatians 3:24 Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

Any good things we do are only through God working in our hearts, and when we respond to His lead with 'good works', we shall store up treasures of reward in heaven.

Philippians 2:13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.

Matthew 6:19 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: 20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: 21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.