



TORAHFAMILY

ARTICLE

Calendar Confusion

When it comes to the Hebrew calendar, you'll find several variations. In fact, when I spoke at a Sukkot event in Canada back in 2014, we actually had seven different versions represented. So which one is right? Well, that obviously depends on who you ask.

To add to the calendar confusion, there has been some talk on the internet recently saying that those who follow the biblical calendar, regardless of the calendar version, observed the fall Holy Days a month too early this year. Peaking my interest, I briefly looked into it. However, I couldn't find anything in the scriptures to support the reasonings that were being presented. Yet, because I have never considered myself a "pro" when it came to the topic of the Biblical calendar, I contacted several friends whom I consider knowledgeable in that area.

After some brief e-mails, they confirmed my thoughts that it was wrong. They even provided the same verses in showing why. Yet, it was that same evening that another friend of mine contacted me. He informed me that he had some friends that were planning to celebrate the Fall Holy Days in October. He said they had planned it from the beginning of the year. I asked him if he wouldn't mind finding out their reasoning for this and let me know. He contacted me the next day with that information and I have to confess, it got me thinking. The information that was presented to me was not the same from what I had heard before.

After reviewing and testing the information, I couldn't prove it wrong. I contacted my calendar expert friends again with this new information to discuss their thoughts. I requested them to

only provide Biblical proof to show that this view of the calendar was wrong. Of course, this doesn't necessarily prove it right. I simply didn't want to use quotes from man and his perspective to defend my current understanding of the calendar. My friends couldn't find anything from the scriptures to prove it wrong.

E-mails continued back and forth with several of them. The more we looked into it, the more we kept saying "I really think this is right.". It finally got to the point where we said "I think we need to celebrate the Holy Days this month".

And so we are.

I have to confess that I have often been intimidated when discussing the topic of the Biblical calendar. It just seemed like such a "big" topic. Plus, every time I heard it explained I found myself smiling and nodding while thinking to myself "What in the world are they saying?". Have you ever been there before?

I've always thought "surely our Heavenly Father would not make such an important topic so difficult to understand." As my friends and I looked further into this understanding of the calendar, we found ourselves focusing on and discussing the simplicity of this calendar.

It seems there are and will always be calendar debates and discussions. Well, at least until Yeshua returns anyway. I can't imagine someone willing to debate Him. That all being said, I simply want to provide everyone a brief overview of this understanding. While I currently believe this understanding to be true, I confess that I am still researching and praying about it.

There is additional information that was given to me at the bottom of this article that will provide further details if you wish to review them for yourself. Each PDF file is only two pages each.

Since coming to the Hebrew understanding of the faith, I have always heard that the Barley played a major role in creating the Hebrew calendar. Some believe it is the main determining factor while others say it only serves as a witness.

I have several problems with this view. First, we are never told in the Bible that the barley is a requirement for the calendar. This view is always implied and assumed through various verses but never proven by these verses. In Genesis 1 however, we are clearly told what is required for the Hebrew calendar.

[Genesis 1:14](#) And God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark seasons and days and years,

This is from the mouth of YHWH Himself. There is no mention of Barley. YHWH does not declare anything else for determining His mo'edim, days and years.

Second, using a crop that is planted by man is using something that is based on man. What if the season is overwhelmed with rain and prevents the proper timing for planting? That would throw off the timing of the harvest as well. That would also in turn, push the beginning of the calendar back.

Relying on something that is done by man is unreliable. Furthermore, what about times of famine? Jacob, a patriarch of the faith, moved to Egypt because of the 7 year famine. The scriptures tell us that nothing grew during those years.



Mix of Barley & Wheat

[Gen. 45:6](#) For two years now there has been famine in the land, and for the next five years there will not be plowing and reaping.

The famine was not only in Egypt. It was literally all over.

[Genesis 41:57](#) And all the countries came to Egypt to buy grain from Joseph, because the famine was severe in all the world.

So Jacob/Israel - a patriarch in the faith - had no barley to determine the calendar. But YHWH also never instructed that physical barley should be used to determine the calendar either. Then, doesn't it make sense that Jacob would have followed the sun, moon, and stars just as YHWH instructed in Gen 1:14? That is what this calendar uses, and only uses.

Personally, I believe determining YHWH's calendar is a lost art that was once considered so basic that even children knew how to do it. As silly as that may sound, I think of canning food. I remember my grandma talking about canning foods along with many other things you can imagine, all while she was just a little girl. Why? Because those skills were considered basic, fundamental, and required for everyday life back then. But who needs to do that today when anyone can go to a store to buy any canned food in vast quantities and varieties? Right?

Likewise, who needs to figure out the calendar when you can buy one at the store? See what I'm saying? Though it is truly simple to understand YHWH's calendar, it is something we have simply neglected to understand throughout the generations.

Some have said that the barley has to be abib (the ripeness or freshness of the barley) in order for the priest to use and present it as a wave offering at First Fruits. The priest is indeed required to wave the sheaf of barley as described in Leviticus.

[Lev 23:10-11](#) Speak to the Israelites and say to them: When you enter the land I am going to give you and you reap its harvest, bring to the priest a sheaf of the first grain you harvest. He is to wave the sheaf before the LORD so it will be accepted on your behalf; the priest is to wave it on the day after the Sabbath.

However, I have found nothing that tells us that the condition of the barley has to be fresh. It simply has to be present for the Day of First Fruits.

The commandment requires the priests to bring the first fruits and wave it before YHWH. It does not specify the condition of the first fruits. If the Barley of the first fruits happens to be harvested when it's fully ripe and then dried by the Day of First Fruits, that would mean that the priest would wave dried/dead barley in the air before YHWH making it appear as if it was alive again; by waving it in the breeze. What better picture of the resurrection of our Savior on the day of First Fruits? He who was dead, is now alive again.

The cycles of the annual calendar (years) vary and this will cause the start of the year to be later or earlier than others. So there will be times when the barley will indeed be fresh by the time it is presented as a wave offering during First Fruits. But there is also nothing in the scriptures that says it has to be fresh when waved. Not that I have found yet.

Since the two PDF files below explain in detail the reasons why the barley doesn't have to be fresh, I simply want to give you the basic idea.

As given in Genesis chapter one, the sun moon and stars govern the appointed times. During this year's spring season we saw the equinox take place hours after the conjunction of the moon. For many including myself, that puts the start of the new year on that month. However, after many discussions and investigation, it seems that may not be the month to start the

year.

For those who follow the conjunction calendar, we know there are two interpretations. The 1st will say whatever Hebraic day the conjunction of the moon lands on, that is considered the first day of the month. The 2nd view says when the conjunction of the moon lands on a certain Hebraic day, it will be that following evening that starts the new month.

In other words, if the conjunction happens at 4pm in the afternoon, the 1st view says that day with the conjunction is the first day of the new month. Where as the 2nd view will say that following evening is the first day of the month.

The 1st view is the most accepted view in determining the year by the way of the equinox. They say that whatever month the vernal equinox lands in, that is the first month of the year. So, if the vernal equinox lands 3 days after a new moon, that new moon was the beginning of the year. Furthermore, if the vernal equinox lands on the 28th day of that month, that month is still considered the beginning of the new year.

The 2nd view of determining the year is equally similar to the 2nd view calculating the month. That view calculates the month by observing the lunar conjunction first and starting the first day on the following evening. Likewise, we first identify the vernal equinox and then start the year at the next lunar conjunction. After the equinox is identified the following new moon determines the year.

So, just as the first day of the month comes **after** the conjunction, the first month of the year comes **after** the equinox.

This year, the conjunction of the new moon came before the equinox. So according to this calendar, the new year should have started at the following new moon - one month later.

If any of this peaked your interest, I would encourage you to examine the information below; the PDF files explains this fairly well. Also provided are two links explaining the constellation of Virgo and how she is holding a sheaf of barley. This shows how the sign of the barley actually could have started in the stars but was later believed to be the barley of man.

For those who wish to observe the Holy Days this month, the dates are as follows:

Mo'ed	Start	End
Yom Kippur	Evening of Oct 22nd	Evening of Oct 23rd
1st day of Sukkot	Evening of Oct 27th	Evening of Oct 28th
8th day of Sukkot	Evening of Nov 3rd	Evening of Nov 4th

We will continue to diligently research this topic. No matter what calendar you choose to follow, we all look forward to the day when Yeshua returns and explains it all for us.

Blessings & Shalom!

TorahFamily.org

This first PDF discusses how to determine the new year.



Starting the Biblical new year (click text)

This second PDF discusses the topic of the Barley.



Barley (click text)

Original Barley article found here:

<http://www.therefinersfire.org/barley.htm>

Pages regarding the constellation Virgo:

<http://earthsky.org/constellations/virgo-heres-your-constellation>

<http://earthsky.org/brightest-stars/speed-on-to-spica-the-15th-brightest-star>