

Why use the Conjunction Moon to begin the month???

sightedmoon.com/questions-about-the-calculated-vs-conjunction-moon-why-2/

By Joseph F. Dumond

January 10, 2014

News Letter 5849-047

9th day of the 11th month

5849 years after the creation of Adam

The 11th Month in the Fourth year of the third Sabbatical Cycle

The Third Sabbatical Cycle of the 119th Jubilee Cycle

The Sabbatical Cycle of Earthquakes Famines, and Pestilences

January 11, 2014

Shabbat Shalom Brethren,

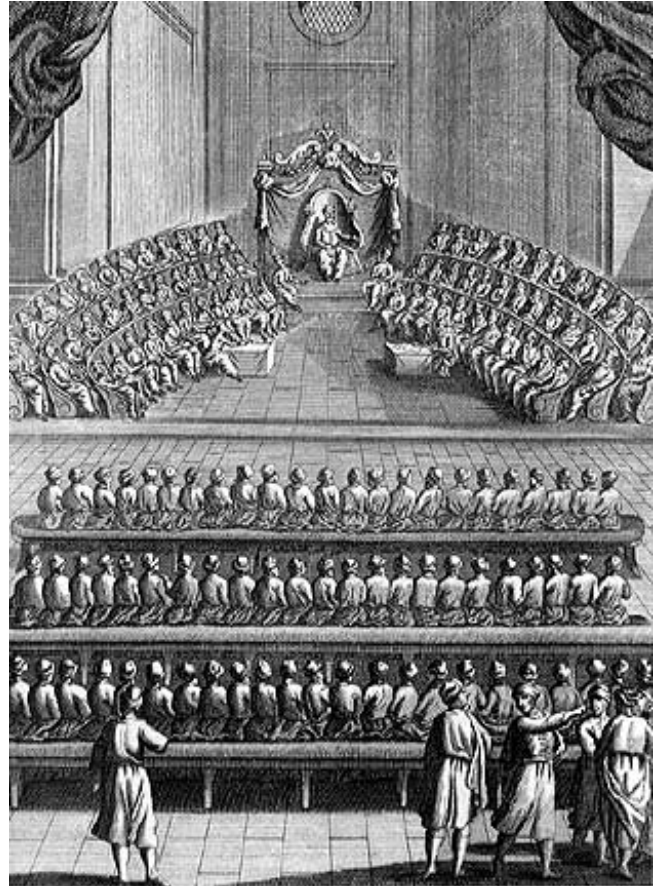
56 years ago today, on the Gregorian Calendar, my Mother and Father gave birth to their first-born son. As I reflect back over those 56 years I am surprised to see the things I have been able to do and the places I have been allowed to go. I have been blessed beyond measure. But to learn the treasures about Yehovah that I have come to learn are, by far, the most

valuable. To be able to share them with people who themselves have set their lives in order to learn and to grow closer to Yehovah is again an awesome privilege. So I thank you all for allowing me to share what I have come to know with you as you seek to learn more about our Father. Please share with each of the buttons above or forward to your friends.

Now before you all jump on me for making this statement about my birthday, I have been thinking on this and would like to share the following which I have shared with another on Face Book. And here is what I thought:

Yehshua was born at some point in time and in ignorance the world celebrates that day on December 25. They have been deceived into celebrating Satans day.

So ask yourself, would Yehovah send His Son on just any old day? No, He would not. He tells us of this day in Isaiah 7:14 and Revelation 12:1-4. He wanted us to know this day. It is right there in the constellation of Virgo, also known in Hebrew as Bethula. We have written about this in https://sightedmoon.com/sightedmoon_2015/conjunction-or-sighted-which/



There is one Holy Day of Lev 23 that the Jews do not understand why they keep. They literally do not know why it is there. The Feast of Blowing. Yom Teruah, the Feast of Trumpets.

This past week I was watching TV on PBS and it was about the queen of England, HRM Queen Elizabeth. When she was inaugurated they had trumpets blowing and crowds cheering by the millions. Blowing trumpets are done to let us know the King comes. It is this very same thing that took place on Shavuot when Yehovah came down on Mt. Sinai, announcing His arrival.

Exo 19:16 And it happened on the third day in the morning, that there *were* thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mountain. And the voice of the trumpet was exceedingly loud, so that all the people in the camp trembled. 17 And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet with God. And they stood at the lower part of the mountain. 18 And Mount Sinai was smoking, all of it, because Jehovah came down upon it in fire. And the smoke of it went up like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked greatly. 19 And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and became very strong, Moses spoke, and God answered him by a voice. 20 And Jehovah came down upon Mount Sinai, on the top of the mountain. And Jehovah called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up.

Yehovah has a very special day called the Feast of Trumpets which is the birthday of Yehshua on September 11th, 3 B.C. We keep the Feast of Trumpets as a memorial every year to commemorate this and to know that on this day in the future He will come again.

Lev 23:24 Speak to the sons of Israel saying: In the seventh month, in the first *day* of the month, you shall have a sabbath, a memorial summons, a holy convocation. 25 You shall do no work of labor but you shall offer a fire offering to Jehovah.

The word translated “memorial summons” is

H8643 ?????? t^erû?âh *ter-oo-aw'*

From H7321; *clamor*, that is, *acclamation* of joy or a *battle cry*; especially *clangor* of trumpets, as an *alarum*: – alarm, blow (-ing) (of, the) (trumpets), joy, jubile, loud noise, rejoicing, shout (-ing), (high, joyful) sound (-ing).

And this word H7321 is;

H7321 ???? rûa? *roo-ah'*

A primitive root; to *mar* (especially by breaking); figuratively to *split* the ears (with sound), that is, *shout* (for alarm or joy): – blow an alarm, cry (alarm, aloud, out), destroy, make a joyful noise, smart, shout (for joy), sound an alarm, triumph.

And this is where we get Yom Teruah from.

My birthday is January 11. 1958. I do not know what that is according to Yehovah's calendar. But that was the day my parents welcomed into this world one who was called to be a member of the family of God. The same as each of you. And because you do keep the Sabbath and the

Holy Days and you are learning about and going to keep the Sabbatical year in 2016, you, too, are called to be a son or daughter of Yehovah the same as I am.

Should we recognize birthdays? I see nothing wrong in acknowledging them. Yes, they have been used in the past for evil- such as John the Baptist being killed on Herod's wife's birthday. I do not see a need for huge celebrations. But on the day each person is born Yehovah has created a future heir to the Kingdom. Each birth is a miracle. And for this we all should be thankful. When we are in the Kingdom of Yehovah it will be said of those who are born during that time;

Psalm 87:5

But of Zion it shall be said, "This one and that one were born in her;" And the Most High Himself will establish her.

We have now begun to use Google. If you are a member of Google's circles we love for you to be connected with us. The potential reach this provides along with tying in our web site and youtube videos and audio files is amazing. We are excited by the potential this tool provides us. Please add us to your circles and join with us as we share this message of the Sabbatical and Jubilee years and the curses that are coming.

Last week we announced to you that the New Moon was sighted in Israel. And we also announced who it was that sighted the moon for us because we need more than one witness. One of those people was Dr. Roy Hoffman who runs the [Israeli New Moon Society](#). Dr. Hoffman is an Orthodox Jew who teaches at Hebrew University as a Professor (if I have my facts right). The following is the main page of his web site:

“The commandment (*mitzvah*) of sanctifying the month is the first one which the Children of Israel were commanded on leaving Egypt. This commandment is of great importance because the dates of the festivals, including over 60 commandments, depend on it. In addition to sanctifying months according to the appearance of the New Moon, the Hebrew calendar depends on leap years (extended by an extra month) that depend on the position of the Sun, ripeness of grains, *etc.*

For over a thousand years, the Hebrew calendar has been fixed by calculation. Today, the Hebrew calendar does not match that fixed by observing the Moon. 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 and is widely recognized. 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 re-established. Likewise, there is increasing involvement in the Temple, red heifer, *etc.* Of course, we are not intending to change the current calendar (this is a task for 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. There is still plenty of room to improve on the existing criteria using observations and analyzing them in relation to physical, meteorological and physical parameters. We, the Israeli New Moon Society, are asking the public at large to join us by trying to observe the New Moon at the beginning of each month. The Israeli New Moon Society was founded for this purpose 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.

The Israeli New Moon Society presents the subject from the point of view of Rabbinical Orthodox Judaism. Those interested in the use of new Moon sighting from different religious viewpoints should refer to the Moslem, Karaite, Christian and religious ideas that have evolved from a combination of Christianity and Judaism.”

There are a few issues we are going to deal with about the calendar over the next few weeks. This week I want to address the Conjunction moon people; those who go by the calculated Hebrew Calendar also called the Hillel Calendar, to begin each month and thus use a dark moon to determine when the Holy Days are. We are now in the 11th month and this means that the Holy Days of the new year in the first month will be here very soon. It is time to get this confusion sorted out for those of you who do not know for sure.

Are you aware, as Dr. Hoffman has said above, that the current Hebrew Calendar has only been in place for over 1000 years. ONLY!!! In addition, Dr. Hoffman goes on to say:

“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 re-established.”

What this means is that the month, at one time, used to be determined by observation of a

crescent moon to begin the month and to determine when the Holy Days were in the 1st and 7th month. He also says that once the Sanhedrin is re-established, the sighting of the moon; that is, the sighting of the first visible crescent will be re-instituted. Which means the current calculated Hebrew calendar is going to be done away with soon.

So I have some questions for all of those who keep the Conjunction Moon to begin the month. No, I am not trying to shame or embarrass anyone. I am seriously trying to show those, with ears to hear, truths that they may not have considered.

1st question:

When was the Talmud written and why?

What is the Talmud?

The Talmud is a collection of rabbinical writings that interpret, explain and apply the Torah scriptures.

The Talmud was written between the second and fifth century CE, yet Orthodox Jews (religion facts article) believe it was revealed to Moses along with the Torah and preserved orally until it was written down. The Talmud is thus known as the “Oral Torah,” with the first five books of the Tanakh designated the “Written Torah.”

The answer to my question is then: The Talmud was written between the 2nd and 5th Centuries C.E. and they record what the leading Jewish teachers of that time believed the Torah, the first 5 books of the bible, taught us.

Now why was this Talmud recorded?

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hillel_II

Hillel II, (Hebrew: ??? ?????, Hillel the Nasi) also known simply as **Hillel** held the office of Nasi of the ancient Jewish Sanhedrin between 320 and 385 CE. He was the son and successor of Judah III. He was a Jewish communal and religious authority, circa 330 – 365 CE. He is sometimes confused with Hillel the Elder, as the Talmud sometimes simply uses the name “Hillel”.

In two instances his name is quoted in connection with important decisions in Jewish law: in one, Jose ben Abin expounds to him a law; in the other, Hillel cites a mishnah to establish a law (Yer. Ber. ii. 5a; Yer. Ter. i. 41a).

He is traditionally regarded as the creator of the modern fixed Hebrew calendar. However this attribution is tenuous. It first appears in a responsum of R. Hai Gaon (early eleventh century) cited by R. Avraham b. Hiyya in his Sefer Ha'ibbur, written in 1123. The topic of that responsum

is the 19-year cycle for leap-year intercalations, so the most that can be inferred from that attribution is that Hillel was responsible for the adoption of that cycle for the regulation of the distribution of leap-years. Scholars who have studied the history of the Hebrew calendar are in general agreement (and there is much evidence for this in the Talmud itself and in other rabbinic sources) that in practice, the evolution of the calendar into its present form was a gradual process spanning several centuries from the first to about the eighth or ninth century CE. The champion of the view that the calendar was developed in the eighth or ninth century CE is Sacha Stern. This quote is from page 184-5 of his book Calendar and Community

“Of far greater importance, however, is a much later document from the Cairo Geniza: a letter of a Babylonian exilarch – one of the main leaders of the Rabbanite community – with detailed calendrical instructions for the year 835/6 CE. The letter reveals that Passover (15 Nisan) in that year was due to occur on a Tuesday; whilst according to the present-day rabbinic calendar, it should have occurred on Thursday. According to the exilarch, the setting of Passover on Tuesday was dictated by a concern to avoid visibility of the new moon before the first day of the month. This concern does not exist in the present-day rabbinic calendar. Once discovered and published in 1922, the exilarch’s letter proved beyond doubt that almost five hundred years after R. Yose and ‘Hillel the Patriarch’, then fixed calendar in its present-day form had still not been instituted.”

Rabbinic tradition ascribes to him an enactment which proved of incalculable benefit to his coreligionists of his own and of subsequent generations. The Jewish calendar is luni-solar. That is, its months are synchronized with the phases of the moon, but its average year length approximates the mean length of a solar year. The purpose of the latter is to ensure that the festivals, all of which occur on fixed dates of the lunar months, are also observed each year in the seasons designated for them in the Bible. To ensure the former, occasional intercalations of a day in a month were required; to ensure the latter, occasional intercalations of an extra month in a year were required.

These intercalations were determined at meetings of a special committee of the Sanhedrin. But Constantius II, following the precedents of Hadrian, prohibited the holding of such meetings as well as the vending of articles for distinctly Jewish purposes.

The entire Jewish community outside the land of Israel depended on the calendar sanctioned by the Judean Sanhedrin; this was necessary for the unified observance of the Jewish holidays. However, danger threatened the participants in that sanction and the messengers who communicated their decisions to distant congregations. Temporarily, to relieve the foreign congregations, Huna ben Abin once advised Ravanot to wait for the official intercalation: *When you are convinced that the winter quarter will extend beyond the sixteenth day of Nisan declare the year a leap year, and do not hesitate* (R. H. 21a). But as the religious persecutions continued, Hillel decided to provide an authorized calendar for all time to come, though by doing so he severed the ties which united the Jews of the diaspora to their mother country and to the patriarchate.

The answer to my question as to why the talmud was written down, is sort of explained above. The Talmud was written because the Temple had been destroyed in 70 C.E. and the Roman Empire at that time and afterward for the next couple hundred years were making it very difficult for the Sanhedrin to meet or gather and declare the beginning of the year or the new month so that they could all keep the Holy Days at the same time. In fact those messengers who went to the other countries with this information were more and more often killed to prevent those Jews from knowing the right times.

” But Constantius II, following the precedents of Hadrian, prohibited the holding of such meetings as well as the vending of articles for distinctly Jewish purposes.”

From the article above we can learn that it was Nasi Hillel who created the current Hebrew Calendar out of necessity. We are not faulting him for what he did. From the above article we also learn that the “Hillel Calendar” or, as it is now called the “Hebrew Calendar,” did not even begin to be uniformly kept until some time after 836 C.E.. And at this same time we also learn that Rabbi Yose had a hand in this as well. We speak of Rabbi Yose in our book “Remembering the Sabbatical Years of 2016.”

It was not until later in 1123 C.E. that another paper was written on this calendar by Hai Gaon

However this attribution is tenuous. It first appears in a responsum of R. Hai Gaon (early eleventh century) cited by R. Avraham b. Hiyya in his *Sefer Ha'ibbur*, written in 1123.

The Hillel Calendar was still not in effect as late as 1123 C.E. Maimonides was born in 1135 C.E. But it would not be until many more years when he was a renown sage that he would codify the Hillel Calendar and make it the law to be observed by all Jews at that time. Rambam, as he was called, would die in 1204 C.E.- so the Hillel Calendar would have been instituted before this date of 1204 C.E.

The Hebrew or Jewish calendar (הַלְּוִיחַ הַיְּבְרִי, *ha'luach ha'ivri*) is a luni-solar calendar used today predominantly for Jewish religious observances. It determines the dates for Jewish holidays and the appropriate public reading of Torah portions, yahrzeits (dates to commemorate the death of a relative), and daily Psalm readings, among many ceremonial uses. In Israel, it is used for religious purposes, provides a time frame for agriculture and is an official calendar for civil purposes, although the latter usage has been steadily declining in favor of the Gregorian calendar.

The calendar used by Jews has evolved over time. The basic structural features of the early calendar are thought to have been influenced by the Babylonian calendar, including the seven-day week, the lunisolarintercalary adjustment and the names of the months. Until the Tannaitic period (approximately 10–220 CE) the calendar employed a new crescent moon, with an additional month normally added every two or three years to correct for the difference between twelve lunar months and the solar year. When to add it was based on observation of natural agriculture-related events.^[1] Through the Amoraic period (200–500 CE) and into the Geonic period, this system was gradually displaced by the mathematical rules used today. The principles and rules were fully codified by Maimonides in the Mishneh Torah in the 12th century. Maimonides' work also replaced counting “years since the destruction of the Temple” with the modern creation-era Anno Mundi.

Because of the roughly eleven-day difference between twelve lunar months and one solar year, the length of the Hebrew calendar year varies in the repeating 19-year Metonic cycle of 235 lunar months, with the intercalary month added according to defined rules every two or three years, for a total of seven times per 19 years. Even with this intercalation, the average Hebrew calendar year is longer by about 6 minutes and $25^{+25}/57$ seconds than the current mean solar year, so that every 224 years, the Hebrew calendar will fall a day behind the current mean solar year; and about every 231 years it will fall a day behind the Gregorian calendar year.

And just to be clear on Maimonides, as to when he lived and died, here is one more quote.

Mosheh ben Maimon (מֹשֶׁה בֶּן מַיְמוֹן), called Moses Maimonides (*/maʔmʔnʔdiʔz/ my-mon-i-deez*) and also known as Mʔsʔ ibn Maymʔn (Arabic: *موسى بن ميمون*), or RaMBaM (רמב"ם) – Hebrew acronym for “Rabbeinu Mosheh Ben Maimon” – English translation: “Our Rabbi/Teacher Moses Son [of] Maimon”), was a preeminent medieval Spanish, Sephardic Jewish philosopher, astronomer^[5] and one of the most prolific and influential Torah scholars and physicians^{[6][7] [8]} of the Middle Ages. He was born in Córdoba (present-day Spain), Almoravid Empire on Passover Eve, 1135, and died in Egypt on December 12, 1204.^[9] He was a rabbi, physician, and philosopher in Morocco and Egypt.

These quotes raise many other topics we could discuss, but I want to stick to one point and one point only this week. That is when was the current Hebrew Calendar (again, also called the Hillel Calendar), when was it created and implemented.

The answer thus far is that this calendar was created by Hillel out of necessity due to Roman restrictions on them. It never came into common practice or use until Maimonides codified it in the 12th century which was just over 800 years ago now. **Just 800 years ago!!!**

OK, so now we have established that fact. The current Hebrew Calendar is just over 800 years old. Now I would like all of those who support the Hillel Calendar, with all the backup Scriptures you quote each time this subject comes up, to now consider what the Talmud states. And keep in mind the Talmud was written before the Hillel Calendar was created.

Why would the Talmud record the following events and rules if they were not using the **sighting** of the moon to begin the month?

<http://www.sacred-texts.com/jud/bar/bar062.htm>

3. Messengers went forth (from Jerusalem) in six months: in "Nisan" (the first month of the New Year) for the Passover; in Abib 8 for the fast; in "Elul" for the new year; in Tishri for the regulation of the Feasts; in

4. For two months 4 they may profane the Sabbath, for Nisan and for Tishri, because in them the messengers went forth to Syria, and in them they regulated the feasts. And during the existence of the Temple they might profane it in all the months for the regulation of the offerings.

5. If the moon 5 appeared high and clear, or did not appear high and clear, the witnesses may profane the Sabbath on account of it. R. José says, "if it appeared high and clear, they may not profane the Sabbath on account of it."

6. It happened that more than forty pairs of witnesses were passing through, when R. Akivah detained them in Lydda. Rabban Gamaliel sent to him, "if thou thus detainest the people, it will be a stumbling-block in the future."

7. When father and son have seen the new moon, they must go (before the Sanhedrin), not that they may be combined together, but in order that, should the evidence of either of them be disallowed, the other may be combined with another witness. R. Simeon says, "father, and son, and relatives in every degree, may be allowed as competent witnesses for the new moon." R. José says, "it happened that Tobias, the physician, his son, and his freed slave, saw the new moon in Jerusalem, and the priests accepted his evidence, and that of his son, but disallowed his slave; but when they came before the Sanhedrin, they accepted him and his slave, but disallowed his son."

9. "He who has seen the new moon but cannot walk?" "They must bring him on an ass or even in a bed." Those afraid of being waylaid may take sticks in their hands, and if they have a long way to go, they may take provisions. If they must be a day and a night on the road, they may profane the Sabbath in travelling to testify for the new moon; as is said, "These are the feasts of the LORD, which ye shall proclaim in their seasons."

This next section is a bit long but most of it deals with the sighting of the moon and how to qualify the witnesses and how to encourage them to come.

Tractate Rosh Hashana

Chapter II

Ordinances about the witnesses concerning the new moon, the hoisting of the flags and how it was consecrated by the Beth Din

MISHNA: If the witness was unknown another was sent with him to testify to his character. In former times they would receive evidence (about the appearance of the moon) from any one; but when the Boëthusians commenced to corrupt the witnesses the rule was made, that evidence would only be received from those who were known (to be reputable).

GEMARA: What is meant by “another” (in the above Mishna)? Another pair (of witnesses). It seems also to be so from the statement of the Mishna. “If the witness was unknown? Shall we assume that it means one (witness)? Surely the evidence of one was not received, for this transaction was called “judgment” [Psalms, lxxxi.] (and two witnesses are necessary)? What, then, does “the witness” mean? That pair; so also here, “another” means another pair. Is, then, the evidence of one not accepted? Have we not learned in a Boraitha: It once happened that R. Neherai went to Usha on the Sabbath to testify (to the character) of one witness? He knew that there was one witness in Usha, and he went to add his evidence (and thus make two witnesses). If that is so, what does it tell us? One might suppose that, as there was a doubt (that he might not meet the other witness), he ought not to have profaned the Sabbath (by travelling to Usha as a single witness); therefore he comes to teach us (that even in such a case of doubt the Sabbath might be violated).

When Ula came (to Babylon, from Palestine), he said: They have already consecrated the new moon in Palestine. Said R. Kahana: (In such a case) not only Ula, who is a great man, is to be believed, but even an ordinary man. Why so? Because men will not lie about a matter that will become known to every one.

“In former times they would receive evidence from any one, etc.” The rabbis taught: How did the Boëthusians corrupt the witnesses? They once sought to deceive the sages, and they bribed, with four hundred zuz (silver coins), two men, one belonging to their party and one to ours. The former gave his evidence and went out, to the latter they (the Beth Din) said, “Tell us what was the appearance of the moon?” “I went up,” replied he, “to Maale Adumim, 1 and I saw it crouching between two rocks. Its head was like a calf, its ears like a goat, its horns like a stag, and its tail was lying across its thigh. I gazed upon it and shuddered, and fell backwards; and if you do not believe me, behold, here I have two hundred zuz bound up in my cloth.” “Who induced you to do this?” they asked. “I heard,” he replied, “that the Boëthusians wished to deceive the sages; so I said to myself, I will go and inform them, lest some unworthy person may (accept their bribe), and come and deceive the sages.” Then said the sages: “The two hundred zuz may be retained by you

as a reward, and he who bribed you shall be taken to the whipping-post (and be punished).” Then and there they ordained that testimony should be received only from those who were known (to be of good character).

MISHNA: Formerly bonfires were lighted (to announce the appearance of the new moon); but when the Cutheans 2 practised their deceit, it was ordained that messengers should be sent out. How were these bonfires lighted? They brought long staves of cedar wood, canes, and branches of the olive tree, and bundles of tow which were tied on top of them with twine; with these they went to the top of a mountain, and lighted them, and kept waving them to and fro, upward and downward, till they could perceive the same repeated by another person on the next mountain, and thus, on the third mountain, etc. Whence did these bonfires commence? From the Mount of Olives to Sartabha, from Sartabha to Grophinah, from Grophinah to Hoveran, from Hoveran to Beth Baltin; they did not cease waving the burning torches at Beth Baltin, to and fro, upward and downward, until the whole country of the captivity appeared like a blazing fire.

GEMARA: The rabbis taught: Bonfires were only lighted to announce the new moon that appeared and was consecrated at the proper time (after twenty-nine days). And when were they lighted? On the evening of the thirtieth day. Does this mean to say that for a month of twenty-nine days the bonfires were lighted, but not for a month of thirty days? It should have been done for a month of thirty days, and not at all for a month of twenty-nine days. Said Abayi: That would cause the people a loss of work for two days (because they would wait to see if the bonfires would be lit or not and thus lose a second day). 1

“How were these bonfires lighted? They brought long staves of cedar wood ,” etc. R. Jehudah says: There are four kinds of cedars: the common cedar, the Qetros, the olive tree, and the cypress. Qetros says Rabh is (in Aramaic) Adara or a species of cedar. Every cedar, said R. Johanan, that was carried away from Jerusalem, God will in future times restore, as it is written [Isa. xli. 19]: “I will plant in the wilderness the cedar tree,” and by “wilderness” He means Jerusalem, as it is written [Isa. lxiv. 19]: “Zion is (become) a wilderness.” R. Johanan says again: Who studies the law, and teaches it in a place where there is no other scholar, is equal to a myrtle in the desert, which is very dear. The same says again: “Woe to the Romans, for whom there will be no substitution,” as it is written [Isa. lx. 17]: “Instead of the copper, I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood, copper, and for stones, iron.” But what can He bring for R Aqiba and his comrades (who were destroyed by Rome)? Of them it is written [Joel, IV. 21]: “I will avenge (but for) *their* (Aqiba’s and his comrades’) blood I have not yet avenged.”

“And whence did these bonfires commence?” From Beth Baltin. What is Beth Baltin? “Biram,” answered Rabh. What (does the Mishna) mean by the captivity? Said R. Joseph, “Pumbeditha.” And how was it that the whole country looked like a blazing fire? We learn that each Israelite took a torch in his hand and ascended to the roof of his house.

MISHNA: There was a large court in Jerusalem called Beth Ya’azeq, where all the witnesses met, and where they were examined by the Beth Din. Great feasts were made there for (the witnesses) in order to induce them to come frequently. At first they did not stir from there all day (on the Sabbath), 1 till R. Gamaliel, the elder, ordained that they might go two thousand ells on every

side; and not only these (witnesses) but also a midwife, going to perform her professional duties, and those who go to assist others in case of conflagration, or against an attack of robbers, or in case of flood, or (of rescuing people) from the ruins (of a fallen building) are considered (for the time being) as inhabitants of that place, and may go (thence on the Sabbath) two thousand ells on every side. How were the witnesses examined? The first pair were examined first. The elder was introduced first, and they said to him: Tell us in what form thou sawest the moon; was it before or behind the sun? Was it to the north or the south (of the sun)? What was its elevation on the horizon? Towards which side was its inclination? What was the width of its disk? If he answered before the sun, his evidence was worthless. After this they introduced the younger (witness) and he was examined; if their testimony was found to agree, it was accepted as valid; the remaining pairs (of witnesses) were asked leading questions, not because their testimony was necessary, but only to prevent them departing, disappointed, and to induce them to come again often,

GEMARA: Do not the questions (asked by the Mishna), “was it before or behind the sun?” and “was it to the north or to the south?” mean the same thing? Answered Abayi: (The Mishna asks) whether the concave of the crescent was before or behind the sun, and if (the witness said) it was before the sun, his evidence was worthless, for R. Johanan says: What is the meaning of the passage [Job, xxv. 2]: “Dominion and fear are with him; he maketh peace in his high places?” It means that the sun never faces the concave of the crescent or the concave of a rainbow.

“*What was its elevation on the horizon? Towards which side was its inclination?*” In one Boraitha we have learned: If (the witness) said “towards the north,” his evidence was valid, but if he said, “towards the south,” it was worthless; in another Boraitha we have learned the reverse. It presents no difficulty; in the latter case it speaks of the summer, while in the former it refers to the winter.

The rabbis taught: If one (witness) said its elevation appeared about as high as two ox-goats and another said about as high as three, their testimony was invalid, but either might be taken in conjunction with a subsequent witness (who offered similar testimony). The rabbis taught (If the witnesses say): “We have seen the reflection (of the moon) in the water, or through a metal mirror, or in the clouds,” their testimony is not to be accepted; or (if they say we have seen) “half of it in the water, and half of it in the heavens, or half of it in the clouds,” their evidence carries no weight. Must they then see the new moon again (before their testimony can be accepted)? Said Abayi: “By this is meant that if the witnesses testify that they saw the moon accidentally, and they then returned purposely and looked for it, but they saw it not, their evidence is worthless.” Why so? Because one might say they saw a patch of white clouds (and they thought it was the moon).

MISHNA: The chief of the Beth Din then said: “It (the new moon) is consecrated,” and all the people repeated after him: “It is consecrated; it is consecrated.” Whether the new moon was seen at its proper time (after twenty-nine days) or not, they used to consecrate it. R. Elazar b. Zadok said: If it had not been seen at its proper time it was not consecrated, because it had already been consecrated in heaven (*i.e.*, of itself).

GEMARA: Whence do we deduce this? Said R. Hyya b. Gamda quoting Rabbi, in the name of R. Jose b. Saul: It is written [Lev. xxiii. 44]: “Moses declared unto the children of Israel the feasts of the Lord,” from which we deduce that (as Moses, who was the chief in Israel, declared the feasts

to Israel, so also) the chief of the Beth Din should announce the words, "It is consecrated."

"All the people repeated after him: It is consecrated; it is consecrated." Whence do we deduce this? Said R. Papa: It is written [Lev. xxiii. 2]: "Shall proclaim." "Othom" (them). Do not read "Othom," but Athem (ye)—*i.e.*, which ye, all the people, shall proclaim. R. Na'hman b. Itz'hak, however, said: We know it from the words [ibid.]: "*These are my feasts,*" *i.e.*, (*these people*) shall announce my feasts. Why are the words "It is consecrated" repeated? Because in the scriptural verse just quoted we find it written "holy convocations" (*literally*, announcements, and the minimum of the plural expression is two).

"R. Elazar b. Zadok said: If it had not been seen at its proper time it was not consecrated," etc. We have learned in a Boraitha, Pelimo 1 said: If the new moon appear at its proper time it was not customary to consecrate it, but if it appeared out of its proper time they used to consecrate it. R. Eliezer, however, said: In neither case would they consecrate it, for it is written [Lev. xxv. 10]: "And ye shall consecrate the fiftieth year;" *years* should be consecrated, but not *months*. Said R. Jehudah in the name of Samuel: "The halakha prevails according to R. Elazer b. Zadok. Said Abayi: There can be a support to this from the following Mishna, viz.: "If the Beth Din and all Israel saw the new moon (on the thirtieth day) and if the examination of the witnesses had already taken place, and it had become dark before they had time to announce 'It is consecrated,' the month (just passing) is intercalary." That (the month) is intercalary is mentioned (by the Mishna), but not that they said "It is consecrated." It is not clear that this is a support for Abayi's argument, for it was necessary to say that it was intercalary, or we would not have known that the next day was the intercalary day. One might have thought that, since the Beth Din and all Israel saw the new moon, it was apparent to all, and that the month does not become intercalary; therefore he teaches us that (nevertheless the month becomes intercalary).

MISHNA: R. Gamaliel had on a tablet, and on a wall of his upper room, illustrations of the various phases of the moon, which he used to show to the common people, saying: "Did you see the moon like this figure or like this?"

GEMARA: Is this permitted? Have we not learned in a Boraitha that the words "Ye shall not make anything with me" [Ex. xx. 20] mean, ye shall not make pictures of my ministers that minister before me, such as the sun, moon, stars or planets? It was different with R. Gamaliel, for others made it for him. But others made one for R. Jehudah, yet Samuel said to him: "Thou, sagacious one, destroy that figure!" 2 In the latter case the figure was embossed, and he was afraid that one might suspect the owner (of using it as an idol). Need one be afraid of such suspicion? Did not that synagogue in Shephithibh of Neherdai have a statue (of the king), yet Rabh, Samuel and Samuel's father and Levi went there to pray and were not afraid of being suspected (of idolatry)? It is a different case where there are many. Yet R. Gamaliel was only one. Yea, but he was a prince, and there were always many with him; And if you wish you may say that he had them made for the purpose of instruction, and that which is written [Deut. xviii. 9], "thou shalt not learn to do," means but thou mayest learn, in order to understand and to teach.

MISHNA: It happened once that two witnesses came and said: We saw the moon in the eastern part of the heavens in the morning, and in the western part in the evening. R. Jo'hanan b. Nouri

declared them to be false witnesses; but when they came to Yamnia, Rabbon Gamaliel received their evidence as valid. (On another occasion) two other witnesses came and said: We saw the moon on its proper day, but could not see it on the next evening of the intercalary day. R. Gamaliel accepted their testimony, but R. Dosa b. Harkhenas said: They are false witnesses; for how can they testify of a woman being delivered (on a certain day) when on the next day she appears to be pregnant? Then R. Jehoshua said unto him: I approve your opinion. Upon this R. Gamaliel sent him (R. Jehoshua) word, saying: "I order thee to appear before me on the Day of Atonement, according to *your* computation, with your staff and with money." R. Aqiba went to him (R. Jehoshua) and found him grieving. He then said to him: I can prove that all which R. Gamaliel has done is proper, for it is said: "These are the feasts of the Lord, holy convocations which ye shall proclaim," either at their proper time, or not at their proper time, only *their* convocations are to be considered as holy festivals. When he (R. Jehoshua) came to R. Dosa b. Harkhenas, the latter told him: "If we are to reinvestigate the decisions of the Beth Din of R. Gamaliel, we must also reinvestigate the decisions of all the tribunals of justice which have existed from the time of Moses till the present day; for it is said [Ex. xxiv. 9] Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and seventy elders went up (to the Mount)." Why were not the names of the elders also specified? To teach us that every three men in Israel that form a Beth Din are to be respected in an equal degree with the Beth Din of Moses. Then did R. Jehoshua take his staff and money in his hand, and went to Yamnia, to R. Gamaliel, on the very day on which the Day of Atonement would have been according to his computation, when R. Gamaliel arose and kissed him on the forehead, saying: "Enter in peace, my master and disciple! My master—in knowledge; my disciple—since thou didst obey my injunction."

GEMARA: We have learned in a Boraitha that R. Gamaliel said to the sages: "Thus it has been handed down to me from the house of my grandfather (Zamalill the elder) that sometimes the new moon appears elongated and sometimes diminished. R. Hyya saw the old moon yet on the morning of the twenty-ninth day, and threw clods of earth at it, saying: 'We should consecrate thee in the evening, and thou art seen now? Go, hide thyself!'"

Said Rabbi to R. Hyya: "Go to Entob and consecrate the month and send back to me as a password 1 'David, the King of Israel, still lives.'"

The rabbis taught: Once it happened that the heavens were thick with clouds and the form of the moon was seen on the twenty-ninth of the month (of Elul), so that the people thought that New Year's Day should be then proclaimed, and they (the Beth Din) were about to consecrate it. Said R. Gamaliel to them: Thus it has been handed down to me by tradition, from the house of my grandfather, the consecration of the moon cannot take place at a period less than twenty-nine and a half days, two-thirds and .0052 (*i.e.*, seventy-three 'Halaqim), of an hour. On that self-same day the mother of Ben Zaza died and R. Gamaliel delivered a great funeral oration, 2 not because she specially deserved it, but in order that the people might know that the new moon had not yet been consecrated by the Beth Din.

"*R. Aqiba went to him, and found him grieving.*" The schoolmen propounded a question: "Who found whom grieving?" Come and hear. We have learned in a Boraitha: "R. Aqiba went to R. Jehoshua and found him grieving, so he asked him: 'Rabbi, why art thou grieving?' And he

answered: ‘Aqiba, I would rather lie sick for twelve months than to have this order issued for my appearance.’ Rejoined R. Aqiba: ‘Rabbi, permit me to say one thing in thy presence which thou thyself hast taught me.’ R. Jehoshua granted him permission, and R. Aqiba proceeded: ‘It is written [Lev. xxiii. 2, 4 and 37]: Three times ‘shall proclaim Othom (them), which should, however, not be read Othom (them), but Athem (ye), which would make the verse read, “Ye shall proclaim.” Now the threefold “ye” signifies that even if ye were deceived by false pretences and changed the day of the festivals, or even if ye did it purposely, or even if ye were held to be in error by others—once the dates had been established they must so remain.’ With the following words R. Jehoshua answered R. Aqiba: Aqiba, thou hast comforted me; Aqiba, thou hast comforted me.”

“*When he (Rabbi Jehoshua) came to R. Dosa b. Harkhenas,*” etc. The rabbis taught: The reason that the names of those elders are not mentioned, is, in order that one should not say: Is So-and-so like Moses and Aaron? Is So-and-so like Nadabh and Abihu? Is So-and-so like Eldad and Medad? (And how do we know that one should not ask thus?) Because, it is written [i Sam. xii. 6]: “And Samuel said unto the people the Lord that appointed Moses and Aaron “and in the same connection it is written [ibid. 11]: “And the Lord sent Jerubaal and Bedan and Jephtha and Samuel.” [Jerubaal is Gideon; and why is he named Jerubaal? Because he strove against Baal. Bedan is Sampson; and why is he named Bedan? Because he came from Dan. Jephtha means just what it is (*i.e.*, he had no surname or attribute).] And it is also written [Ps. xcix. 6]: “Moses and Aaron among his priests, and Samuel among those who called upon his name.” The sacred text regards the three common people equal with the three noblest, to teach us that Jerubaal was in his generation like Moses in his; Bedan in his generation was like Aaron in his; Jephtha in his generation was like Samuel in his generation. From all this one must learn that if even the commonest of the commoners is appointed leader by a community, he must be considered as the noblest of the nobility, for it is said [Deut. xvii. 9]: “And thou shalt come unto the priests, the Levites, and unto the judge that shall be in his days.” (Why does the passage say “in those days”?) Can you imagine that one could go to a judge who was not in his days? (Surely not! But by these words Scripture teaches us that a judge is to be held “in his days” equal in authority with the greatest of his predecessors.) We find a similar teaching in Eccles. vii. 10: “Say not thou that the former days were better than these!

“*He took his staff,*” etc. The rabbis taught: (R. Gamaliel said to R. Jehoshua): Happy is the generation in which the leaders listen to their followers, and through this the followers consider it so much the more their duty (to heed the teachings of the leaders).

We have now established that the Talmud was written before the Hillel Calendar came to be used. We have established that the Talmud records how witnesses would come to report to the Beit Din (The Sanhedrin or Jewish High Court of 70 Elders) that they had seen the Crescent Moon to begin the month. And that, in the first and seventh month, these witnesses and messengers were allowed to break the Sabbath in order to come to the Beit Din and to go to the other communities and let them know the crescent moon had been seen and the month sanctified.

We have also shown you that the conjunction moon never came into use until the 12th century

C.E. and that once the Sanhedrin begins to sit again that they will reinstate the sighting of the Crescent Moon to begin the month.

So my last question to those who insist on keeping the conjunction moon to determine when you keep the Holy Days is this:

Yehovah is going to ask if you understood these historical facts. Then He is going to ask you why you never returned to keeping His appointed times when HE said to do so and why you continue to refuse to obey Him. So my question, too, is why? Why do you continue to follow rules made by men and not follow what Yehovah commands? Why?

We continue this weekend with our regular Triennial Torah reading which can be found at?https://sightedmoon.com/sightedmoon_2015/files/TriennialCycleBeginningAviv.pdf

11/01/2014

Gen 19

Judges 14-15 Ps 38-40

Mat 24

The Sins of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19)

Sodom has clearly been a corrupting influence upon Lot and his family. In order to save his unknown guests, Lot offers to bring his unmarried daughters out to the threatening mob. Of course, it is possible that this was a ploy to give his guests a chance to escape.

Nevertheless, even drawing such attention to his daughters put them at grave risk. Either way, it is clear that Lot was not putting his trust in God. Of interest, it may be noticed that Lot apparently had at least two other daughters who were married (verse 14). Yet being under the authority of their scoffing husbands, they do not escape the city's destruction.

As for the utter depravity of Sodom and Gomorrah, as well as the other cities of the plain, it was fully confirmed by the visit of the two angels. When confronted with the phrase "Sodom and Gomorrah," most identify their sin as being homosexuality. But that was not their only grievous sin. In Ezekiel 16 God says that their sins included "pride, fullness of food, and abundance of idleness; [and] neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. And they were haughty, and committed abomination before Me" (verses 49-50). Considering Abraham's example of humility and diligence in care of the visitors he received in Genesis 18, we can see from Ezekiel's condemnation that Sodom and Gomorrah had transgressed the basic boundaries of morality and social custom. Their entire lifestyle was one of self-exaltation and indulgence, indifference to others and social injustice.

Consider for a moment our modern societies. Never have we been wealthier, more secure in our daily needs, with so vast an array of leisure options. But, at the same time, we are plagued with poverty, homelessness, corrupt politicians, unjust laws, courts more concerned with procedure and the rights of criminals than with justice, and social systems and customs that violate God's instructions. Surprising as it may sound, even many churches' popular religious practices are nothing more than a recycling of ancient pagan customs God repeatedly condemns in the Scriptures. While God desires for mankind to repent—to humbly turn to Him

and begin living His way of life—it will be necessary that He “come down” again in judgment for that to occur on a broad scale. Yet God is slow to anger and abundant in mercy—and for that we should be truly thankful.

Samson’s Marriage (Judges 14)

Samson’s life as a deliverer for Israel stands in sharp contrast to the other deliverers God raised up for Israel. Despite such promising beginnings, Samson showed himself susceptible to being foolishly enticed by the world. God did not want the Israelites intermarrying with pagan gentiles, but Samson took a Philistine woman as his first wife. Also, Samson, as a Nazirite, should have avoided any uncleanness, but he took the honey from the carcass of the lion, which would have rendered the honey unclean (compare Leviticus 11:24-38). In short, Samson was a hardheaded man, but God would use that as a means of provoking the Philistines and delivering Israel.

The marriage of Samson, and the trickery that attended it, also shows that Samson was easily manipulated by the object of his desire. Neither his first, unnamed, wife, nor the woman Delilah would prove to be loving, faithful wives—but, rather, willing tools in the hands of the Philistine oppressors. Moreover, Samson seemed to be generally blind to their deceptions.

These kind of strange personal characteristics in a deliverer of Israel seem to be contradictory to the purposes of God. But in the case of Samson, God intended to use just such a man to seek an occasion against the Philistines (14:4). God can use the most unlikely of instruments to accomplish His purposes, even the very weaknesses and sins of men. If this is so with the weaknesses of God’s servants, how much more when His servants purge themselves of sin and weakness and become truly holy and spiritually strong! Let us all strive to be just such excellent tools in the hands of our awesome God.

Foxes and Firebrands and the Jawbone of an Ass (Judges 15)

The shenanigans at Samson’s marriage, and the giving of his wife to another, provoked him into taking vengeance on the Philistine oppressors. He wrought havoc on their harvest. To do this, he trapped foxes—or jackals, as the Hebrew can also be translated (which seems more likely as jackals, unlike the more solitary foxes, traveled in packs, making it easier to catch them in greater numbers). He then tied torches—“firebrands” as the King James Version has it—between the tails of pairs of these jackals or foxes before releasing them into fields of grain, vineyards and olive groves. One can imagine the panic-stricken animals, unable to run in a straight line, zigzagging all over the fields, setting them on fire wherever they ran, thus burning whole crops. Samson became a wanted man, and it was his own people who turned him over to the Philistines.

Another element in the Christlike symbolism of Samson’s life: Samson is turned over to the Philistine oppressors by Israelites of the tribe of Judah; Christ is turned over to the Roman oppressors by Israelites of the tribe of Judah.

Samson then slew a thousand Philistine men with the jawbone of a donkey. His utterance in verse 16 after slaying the Philistines is poetic, as the New King James Version indicates. However, the translation into English does not do justice to the Hebrew play on words. The Moffatt Translation is perhaps better: “With the jawbone of an ass I have piled them in a mass.” At least Samson realizes that the strength and power he had to perform this incredible feat came from God. “You have given this great deliverance by the hand of Your servant,” he acknowledges (verse 18). He even calls on God to further deliver Him from thirst, which God does.

All this is building to a grand climax as God continues to seek an occasion to deal with the Philistines.

“O LORD.... Remove Your Plague From Me” (Psalms 38-39)

Psalms 38 begins a group of four related psalms that closes Book I (i.e., Psalms 38-41). These four psalms are linked by central themes. All are confessions of sin in the midst of troubles—the troubles in at least three of these being serious illness and enemies (while the other, Psalm 40, concerns enemies rising during a time of distress, which could also be related to a time of illness).

As the sicknesses in these psalms are a result of sin on David’s part, it is possible that they are all one and the same sickness resulting from the same sin. It could be, as suggested in the Bible Reading Program comments on Psalm 6, that the plague David suffers is the one he prayed to come on him in place of the populace after he sinned in the numbering of Israel (see 2 Samuel 24; 1 Chronicles 21). However, the Bible does not actually say whether or not David was then afflicted. The sicknesses in these psalms could well concern another time. The betrayal in Psalm 41 may hint at the time of national rebellion under Absalom with the assistance of David’s friend and counselor Ahithophel (if deep depression contributed to David becoming physically ill at that time, though the Bible does not tell us).

The NIV translation of Psalm 38’s superscription refers to the psalm as a “petition.” The King James and New King James give the more literal rendering of this verbal phrase (which is also found in the superscription of Psalm 70) as “To bring to remembrance.” Though God knows our needs, He nevertheless expects us to remind Him of them in prayer—perhaps to remind ourselves of our need for Him and His help.

David confesses his sin, which he labels foolishness, and asks for relief from God’s heavy hand. God chastens him because of His sin (verses 3, 5). Sickness is not always due to a person’s sins (see Job 1-2; John 9:1-3). But sometimes it is, as the numerous instances of God sending plague as punishment attests. Proverbs 3:11-12 explains that God’s chastening is done out of love—just as a father disciplines his son. The book of Hebrews quotes these verses (12:5-6) and goes on to comment further, explaining how it all works toward a positive outcome (verses 7-11).

The ordeal leaves David weak from festering sores (verse 5) and inflammation (verse 7). He is depressed by guilt (verse 4) and a lack of peace (verse 8). In verse 10, David speaks of his

failing strength and the light having gone out of his eyes. We saw similar expressions in 6:7 and 13:3. In its note on 6:7, the Zondervan NIV Study Bible says: “In the vivid language of the O[ld] T[estament] the eyes are dimmed by failing strength (see 38:10; 1Sa 14:27, 29...Jer 14:6), by grief (often associated with affliction: 31:9; 88:9; Job 17:7; La 2:11) and by longings unsatisfied or hope deferred (see 69:3; 119:82, 123; Dt 28:32; Isa 38:14).” This idiom has passed over into English. We sometimes speak of the light, spark or sparkle having left someone’s eye—meaning the person has no further sense of joy in living.

Friends and family won’t come near David in his illness (verse 11). Enemies conspire against him (verse 12). Isolated and absorbed in his suffering, he has no way to know what’s going on and no one to talk to—like a deaf and mute person (verses 13-14). His silence may also be part of a conscious effort to avoid saying something rash or foolish to or before others and thereby sinning further, as he says in the next psalm (39:1-2).

But David hopes in God to hear and answer His prayer (38:15). His silence is only before other people. To God He pours out His heart, confessing his sin and pleading with God to deliver him soon (verses 15-22). Indeed, if the other sickness psalms concern this period, then David had much to say to God as He composed these prayerful hymns.

The middle of the superscription of Psalm 39, which may be part of a postscript to the previous psalm, says “To Jeduthun,” referring to “one of David’s three choir leaders (1Ch 16:41-42; 25:1, 6; 2Ch 5:12; called his ‘seer’ in 2Ch 35:15). Jeduthun is probably also Ethan of 1Ch 6:44 [and] 15:19; if so, he represented the family of Merari, even as Asaph did the family of Gershon and Heman the family of Kohath, the three sons of Levi (see 1Ch 6:16, 33, 39, 43-44)” (Zondervan NIV Study Bible, note on Psalm 39 title). The end of the superscription, “A Psalm of David,” no doubt goes with Psalm 39.

In this prayer David is “deeply troubled by the fragility of human life. He is reminded of this by the present illness through which God is rebuking him (vv. 10-11) for his ‘transgression’ (v. 8)” (note on Psalm 39).

As the psalm opens, we see that David has made a determination to not speak aloud, presumably of his anguish, lest this make its way to his or God’s enemies. The Expositor’s Bible Commentary notes on verse 2 that he “fears that he may be misunderstood or that he may speak irreverently and give occasion to the enemy. For the sake of God, he vowed to be silent in his suffering.” Yet verses 8-9 make it appear that David did not want to admit to detractors that his sickness was a result of God punishing him for sin. So the sin he was now guarding against could have been that of defending his reputation against criticism that might have been just (if not coming from hypocrites). Whatever the reasoning, it may help to explain his silence in the previous psalm, especially if it concerns the same illness (see Psalm 38:13-14).

At last, David says that he had to vent his anguish and frustration (verse 3). But it seems that he does the venting to God (verse 4). He begins by basically asking, “Okay, when am I going to die? How much time do I have left?” (as it seemed this could be the end)—and complaining

that human life is fleeting, like the few inches of a handbreadth in length and a wisp of vapor in substance (verses 4-6, 11). All that people did seemed so pointless (verse 6). This is the theme running through the book of Ecclesiastes.

Still, David hopes in and prays for God's healing (verses 7, 10, 12-13). He notes that he has lived not as one tied to this world but as a "stranger" or "alien" (a foreigner to this evil world) and a "sojourner" (a traveler or passing guest). And this has not been on his own but rather, as he says to God, "with You" (verse 12). The book of Hebrews says that God's saints "all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland...a better, that is, a heavenly country" (Hebrew 11:13-16; compare 1 Peter 2:11-12). So in saying what he did, David was not only reminding God of his relationship with Him, but he was also expressing his hope in God's Kingdom. If it was time for him to die, he trusted in His future with God.

Yet David is not resigned to death. He still prays that God will remove His gaze so that he may regain strength and not die (Psalm 39:13). This does not mean, as some commentators suggest, that David is praying for God to leave him alone. For on his own David could never recover. Rather, we should understand the terminology in light of Psalm 80:16, which says that God's people perish at the rebuke of His countenance. The idea is that when He gazes on them in anger, they wither and are consumed. So Psalm 80 repeatedly asks that God would cause His face to shine—to smile favorably. David is likewise pleading for God to turn away His angry gaze of judgment—and, as stated in verse 7, he is hopeful that God will.

"I Am Poor and Needy; Yet the LORD Thinks Upon Me" (Psalms 40-41)

In its note on Psalms 40-41, the Zondervan NIV Study Bible states: "Book I of the Psalter closes with two psalms containing 'Blessed is the man who' statements (40:4; 41:1), thus balancing the two psalms with which the book begins (1:1; 2:12). In this way, the whole of Book I is framed by declarations of the blessedness of those who 'delight in the law of the LORD' (1:2), who 'take refuge in him' (2:12), who 'do not look to the proud' but make the Lord their 'trust' (40:4) and who have 'regard for the weak' (41:1)—a concise instruction in godliness."

Some Bible commentators have proposed that Psalm 40 itself is actually two separate psalms combined into one—a conclusion deriving from the fact that verses 1-10 praise and thank God for deliverance He has brought while verses 11-17 lament and plead with Him for deliverance that has not yet come. Moreover, most of this latter section (verses 13-17) is substantively identical to Psalm 70. Yet we may recall that Psalm 27 was also a combination of thanksgiving and lament. As in that psalm, the idea here may be recalling God's past deliverance to muster confidence that He will deliver David from his present circumstances. Zondervan states in its introductory note on Psalm 40: "The prayer begins with praise of God for his past mercies (vv. 1-5...) and a testimony to the king's own faithfulness to the Lord (vv. 6-10...). These form the grounds for his present appeal for help (vv. 11-17...)."

Psalm 70 is probably best explained as a borrowing of part of the lyrics of the appeal section of Psalm 40 to stand on their own as a different song—or at least a special rendition. (The tune was probably different since the words have been altered somewhat.)

As we will see, David's words in Psalm 40 foreshadowed the circumstances of the Messiah, Yeshua Messiah, as the book of Hebrews quotes Psalm 40:6-8 as referring to Him.

In verse 1, "the Hebrew translated I waited patiently is literally 'waiting I waited'" (Nelson Study Bible, note on verse 1). Though time was moving on and no rescue seemed forthcoming, David still trusted. He would not give up hope in God's deliverance. And his confidence was well placed—for God did deliver him.

The "horrible pit" of verse 2 could represent death. The Expositor's Bible Commentary states: "The 'pit' is a frequent synonym of Sheol, the grave (88:3; Prov.1:12; Isa.14:15). In the 'pit' people are powerless (88:4), held down by the slime and mud (40:2)" (note on Psalm 88). Yet here in Psalm 40 it may simply represent a seemingly inescapable situation into which he was sinking lower and lower (compare 69:2)—as contrasted with him then being lifted from the mud and set upon a rock (40:2). Perhaps a double metaphor is intended. Yeshua may have been alluding in part to this verse when He spoke of establishing His Household on a rock (i.e., Himself) so that the gates of Hades (the grave) would not prevail against it (Matthew 16:18). And given the messianic prophecy of this psalm, we may also see in all these verses Yeshua thinking of times God the Father had previously delivered Him as He prayed to God while enduring His final trial.

David next states that God "has put a new song in my mouth" (Psalm 40:3a). God may have inspired him to compose an entirely new psalm. Or David may have meant that God gave him a sense of renewed wonder and appreciation accompanied with renewed energy and joy (see the Bible Reading Program comments on 33:3). And from David's praise and rejoicing, many would realize what God had done and would be led to place their trust in Him (40:3b)—the key to blessing and happiness (verse 4).

David declares that no one can understand the enormity of God's works or of His thinking (verse 5). How many thoughts He has. How He organizes His thoughts. What He thinks about each of us. "The things You planned for us no one can recount to you; were I to speak and tell of them, they would be too many to declare" (verse 5, NIV; compare 139:17-18). God does reveal some of His thoughts and intents concerning His people—and they are wonderful: "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you...thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope" (Jeremiah 29:11).

David then mentions his understanding of what God is really looking for from people. It was not the physical sacrifices of the sacrificial system but a desire to follow His way—a desire David himself had (Psalm 40:6-8). The words here, describing various offerings in the sacrificial system generally, may have followed his presentation of a ritual offering. Verse 6 should not be understood to mean that there was no actual requirement for physical sacrifices. There certainly was at that time—but only as part of a desire to obey God. What God required was

not the sacrifices and offerings in and of themselves—but a heart of obedience from which sacrifices and offerings would naturally flow as God so determined. David surely remembered the story of Samuel correcting Saul for failing to grasp what God thinks is important: “Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams” (1 Samuel 15:22; compare also Psalm 51:16-17; Jeremiah 7:22-23). We will see more about this in going through Psalms 50 and 51.

David recognizes in Psalm 40 that rather than just a token physical offering, what God really wants is the devotion of David’s entire self. So David offers himself as an offering (compare Romans 12:1; 2 Corinthians 8:5). He says, “Behold I come; in the scroll of the book it is written of me” (Psalm 40:7). What was David talking about? It concerned having God’s law written in his heart (verse 8). Perhaps he realized that the Torah (the Law) and indeed all of Scripture was written for him personally, just as it is for all of us—to describe the character that he and all of us must have. But in David’s case there may have been more to it. As the Lord’s anointed king, David had to write out on a scroll his own personal copy of the Book of the Law, keeping it with him and reading it all his days, internalizing it and living by it for the sake of himself, his kingdom and his family (Deuteronomy 17:18-20). So David expressed his continuing commitment to fulfill all of it.

Of course, the One who completely and absolutely fulfills all of Scripture’s requirements, including the sacrifices and the ultimate role of Anointed King—who presented Himself before God as the very quintessence of all offerings—is Yeshua Messiah. And in the book of Hebrews we see Psalm 40:6-8 quoted as the words of Yeshua (Hebrews 10:1-10)—as they in fact were, David having been inspired by Him—and are told that the entire sacrificial system pointed to Christ’s ultimate sacrifice. Yeshua lived His life wholly dedicated to God and then offered Himself as the true atoning sacrifice for the sins of all mankind. Psalm 40 is thus a messianic psalm—making the rest of it likely applicable to Yeshua as well.

It should be noted that the second line of verse 6 as translated from the Hebrew Masoretic Text, “My ears you have opened [or ‘dug’ or ‘pierced’]” (to hear and accept God’s law, it would seem), is not quoted this way in the New Testament. Rather, the same translation found in the Greek Septuagint is given: “But a body You have prepared for me” (see Hebrews 10:5)—that is, to offer up to God. In a footnote on Psalm 40:6, Expositor’s says that the Septuagint rendering “represents a paraphrastic interpretation of a difficult Hebrew phrase” (that is, it paraphrases what seems to be the point here based on surrounding clauses). Even if not technically accurate (though it could be), the Septuagint rendering used in the New Testament is true and is certainly implied in context—that God wanted not animal bodies but David’s own body presented as an offering for serving God’s purposes (and, in ultimate fulfillment, that the body of Yeshua Messiah was to be the consummation of sacrificial offering—in both life and death).

David goes on in Psalm 40 to remind God of what he has done since being saved from death. “O LORD, you Yourself know...” he says at the end of verse 9. And what had he done? Besides determining to continue in obedience to God, as we saw in verses 6-8, we further read

that he saw the need to spread the word about God and His deliverance. David was the king of Israel and a prophet. He had a great responsibility to teach His people. “I have proclaimed the good news of righteousness in the great assembly” (verse 9a). That is, he hadn’t kept it to himself but had proclaimed it to the throngs at the temple gathered for worship.

Interestingly, the phrase “proclaimed the good news” is found in the New Testament as “preached the gospel”—and Yeshua Messiah, prophesied in this psalm, certainly did that (as did those He commissioned with the same task). Note that David uses the phrase “good news of righteousness.” Expositor’s notes on verses 9-10: “The Lord’s righteousness (sedeq) is expressed in any act ordered on behalf of his people’s welfare and the execution of his kingdom purposes. By his righteous acts they are delivered, prosper, and enjoy the benefits of the covenant relationship.... Righteousness in this sense is synonymous with ‘salvation’ in the broadest sense. The nature of God’s righteous acts is explicated by the other perfections. He is faithful to his covenant people, in accordance with his promises (33:4), resulting in the ‘salvation’ of his people.”

David further stated how he declared God’s faithfulness and salvation and hadn’t concealed the truth from anyone (40:10). We should realize that one important way David proclaimed all this is through these very psalms we are studying. He composed them to be performed publicly—so the people could learn from them, learn to sing them and join in. And again, we should further consider that the One who inspired not just Psalm 40 but all the psalms was the living Word of God, who later became Yeshua Messiah.

In the remaining verses (11-17), David makes his present appeal, seeing his troubles as the result of his sins (verse 12) and enemies who want to destroy him (verses 13-15). Though it is not specifically stated, it could be that his present crisis is serious illness, as in the other three psalms of Book I’s concluding group of four—his weakened state and isolation giving opportunity to his enemies to rise up.

Yeshua Messiah, we realize, committed no sins—but He took the sins of the whole world onto Himself when He was crucified. In that light, it is interesting in verse 12 that David does not ask for forgiveness (as Christ did not need to). David merely speaks of his iniquities overwhelming him. Perhaps David had already repented but still saw what was happening as the consequences of his sins. Yet when applied to Christ, this would mean that the sins of others (including David’s)—now committed to Christ as the sin-bearer—were bringing on Him the horrible consequences He had to face at the end of His human life. And of course Yeshua had to face taunting enemies just as David had to (verses 13-15).

In verse 16 David declares that even in the midst of troubles, those who love God and His salvation should “say continually, ‘The LORD be magnified!’” This gives further explanation to the first part of the psalm and argues in favor of Psalm 40 being one psalm.

David closes in verse 17 with a final appeal. The reference to himself as “poor” is not meant materially (see also 34:6; 41:1). The sense here is of being lowly and oppressed—of being “weak” instead of powerful (see 41:1, NIV). David is speaking of his condition of humility and

abasement (and perhaps poor health)—and, as he also says here, his grave need for help. The help he needs can come only from God, and he prays that God will intervene quickly—as Yeshua must have prayed during His final ordeal (and as all of us should pray during our trials today).

Matthew 24

3 ... Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?

4 For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many

It is important to place this verse (as with all the “New Testament”) back into its Hebrew context. Yeshua is saying that many will come in His name. The final “anti-Messiah” will not come in opposition to Yeshua, but will be a counterfeit who will deceive almost everyone (i.e., verse 24 below).

A legitimate question to ask here is; How will this person be able to pull this off? After all, aren't there countless books, movies and web sites available today warning people about him (calling him the “Antichrist”), and describing everything that is going to happen in the last days?

In fact, a Christian book on the end-times/Antichrist, “The Mark,” by Tim Laheye, was the number one book on the New York Time bestseller list in the month of December 2000. This was not a religious book list. It was the secular hardcover list — so it would seem more than just Christians who are buying this.

As people everywhere are seemingly becoming “well aware” about what is coming, then one must ask; Where is the deception forecast by Yeshua? Also, where is the “lack of faith” to be found throughout the world, as prophesied by Him? (Luke 18:8) After all, doesn't over one-third of the planet declare themselves to be His followers?

Some people explain this problem by forecasting a great “rapture” of Christians and those “left behind” will believe some far-fetched reason responsible for this (i.e., UFOs), or have their memories “erased” somehow. This would then explain the great “lack of faith,” prophesied.

The problem with these end-time scenarios is that they all come from a Torah-less base. By “Torah-less,” we mean a faith that is not in continuation with that which God established prior to Yeshua's arrival (as He did not do away with this faith, i.e., Matthew 5:17-21, Romans 3:31). This includes any “faith” that may even include certain elements of Torah (as any counterfeit faith will).

A more difficult question to ponder is this; Are all the supposed “disciples of the Messiah” in the world today following the Torah-preaching Yeshua of the Hebrew Scriptures? Or is their view of the Messiah one that tells them that “they are not under the law (Torah)?”

This subject will be discussed in detail in our Revelation study over the spring and summer of 2001. See also [Not Subject to the Law of God?](#) in the YashaNet library.

6-8 And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows.

9 Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.

The Messiah cannot be separated from the Torah, nor from His Name.

10 And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.

11 And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.

When people come to a faith in Yeshua, based in Torah, some of their worst enemies may be their friends and family — including those who think that they are the ones with the “truth” and that the Torah-observant person is even doing Satan's will (by supposedly bringing them into the “bondage of law”).

12 And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.

Iniquity may be considered the same as sin, which is defined according to one standard — God's Torah:

1 John 3:4 – Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law [Torah]: for sin is the transgression of the law [Torah].

Torah is what we are to use as our criteria to know if we are following God:

James 1:25 – But whoso looketh into the perfect law [Torah] of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work [Torah], this man shall be blessed in his deed.

13 But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

Yeshua places a stipulation, that we are to endure. The idea of some “guaranteed salvation” based on simply “what you believe” is foreign to the Hebrew Scriptures.

Paul did not even make such a claim for himself:

Philippians 3:11-14 – If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Messiah Yeshua. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Messiah Yeshua.

14 And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all

nations; and then shall the end come.

Yeshua makes it clear that the gospel message does not reach the ends of the earth until the very last days before He returns. This is the Torah-based Gospel that He and the original community of believers preached.

The false Messiah, being a man of “lawlessness” (2 Thessalonians 2:3), and his followers, will preach a Torah-less “gospel” in the name of “God.”

15 When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)

There was a previous fulfillment to this verse about two centuries before Yeshua spoke these words. Antiochus IV Epiphanies became king of the Syrian-Greeks who ruled over Israel. He commanded the Jews to do away with Torah and accept the Greek culture and religion. He bore down ruthlessly on his Jewish subjects and defiled the temple, placing a Hellenistic priest in charge and sacrificing pigs on the altar. This led to a successful revolt under Judah Macabee, the rededication of the Temple and the Feast of Chanukah, which we see Yeshua Himself celebrating in John 10:22.

Yeshua’s words forecast yet another one that will come in opposition to Torah.

22 And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened.

God has promised to reunite all of Israel — the “lost tribes” of the northern Kingdom under Ephraim with the southern Kingdom under Judah. These are the elect along with those gentiles who join them.

24 For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

Those whose faith is grounded in Torah will be less likely to be deceived as Torah is God’s truth. Any concept of “faith” independent of God’s Torah is a lie. God will allow those rejecting this truth to be deceived:

2 Thessalonians 2:11-12 – And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

“Unrighteousness” is defined solely by God’s Torah.

29 Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:

How can a star fall from heaven? As this is not possible, it gives us a clue that this verse might contain a deeper meaning. (Also, if the sun was darkened, all life would cease to exist, and this does not happen at this time either.)

Although there may be some literal physical fulfillment of these things, Yeshua is very much speaking in metaphorical terms. These hidden aspects of the last days will be addressed in our Revelation study.

30 And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

The term “tribes of the earth,” is an incorrect translation. Yeshua is speaking of a fulfillment of Zechariah’s prophecy. The correct translation is tribes of “the land,” (of Israel):

Zechariah 12:10-12 – And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart;

31 And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

The “gathering of the elect” is a fulfillment of Zechariah’s prophecy (above). God will regather all of Israel to their Messiah and to the land of Israel. The “trumpet” is representative of the Shofar, which is found throughout Hebrew literature that is concerned with Messiah and the “end times.”

This trumpet blast could very well be the “last trump” prophesied by Paul in two of his letters:

1 Corinthians 15:52 – Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 – For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

A common Jewish belief was that all people would die before God instituted His Kingdom and the World to Come (Olam Haba). Paul states that this is not the case, that some would enter the Kingdom of God without dying first.

The reference to His gathering His elect, “from one end of heaven to the other,” in verse 31, is likely a reference to the dead raised incorruptable (in 1 Corinthians 15:52) and the dead in Messiah (1 Thessalonians 4:16).

Our Revelation study will explore all of these themes in greater detail.

34 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.

This study will not enter the long time debate over what Yeshua meant by “generation.” Suffice it to say, He is speaking of a chain of events (the “footsteps of Messiah), that once they begin, will not stop until He comes.

36 But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.

37 But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

We know that evil permeated the earth to such a degree in Noah’s time, that God intervened by killing all but a handful of people. Again, at the end of days, there will be widespread destruction.

This “days of Noah” will be dealt with in detail in our Revelation study. (Revelation shows a great deal of demonic activity in the last days.)

Jude 1:14-16 – And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him. These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men’s persons in admiration because of advantage.

40 Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken ...

The terminology here (one shall be taken), is the same used for Jewish nuptial language in John 14:1-3. Contrary to some popular modern theologies, the “marriage in heaven” between Messiah and His people comes after the time of Tribulation on earth, and makes up the first seven years of the Millennial Sabbath:

Revelation 19:1-9 – And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. And again they said, Alleluia And her smoke rose up for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia. And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great. And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for

the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.

This marriage involves more than the Lord and His righteous ones, as Scripture tells us that New Jerusalem, which is “our Mother” (Galatians 4:26) is the bride (Revelation 21:2).