

Historical Evidence of The Observed Lunar Calendar Used in the Second Temple

Presenting the Preponderance of Evidence

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Forward

This presentation provides ancient astronomical sightings and objective historical documentation as overwhelming evidence of the single authoritative calendar that was used by ancient Israel and the priests of the Second Temple. **This Observed Lunar Calendar was the only official calendar of ancient Israel, and was used for at least 590 years during the Second Temple Era.** This Observed Lunar Calendar is therefore the more authoritative calendar choice, and therefore should be used today.

This presentation will establish the existence of the Observed Lunar Calendar. **It will document the calendar's rules by using astronomical sightings and historical events having ancient dates which they provided.** This presentation will document that there was only one official Lunar Calendar of Israel, and document its official use between circa BC 520 and circa AD 850.

This documentation will include the evidence that the same Observed Lunar Calendar was used regionally, from India to Ethiopia. It was used by the Second Temple's priests, and used by the

early Church, at least through AD 70, and beyond. This documentation will include the evidence that the same Observed Lunar Calendar was used by both western and eastern Jewish communities, at least through circa AD 225. This same Observed Lunar Calendar of Israel is therefore the historical calendar of authority, and should be the preferred calendar by us today.

As further substantiation, this presentation will also establish that the current Jewish Calendar (the Hillel II Calendar) was a created compromise, and did not exist prior to circa AD 390. It will further document that **the Hillel II Calendar was not even used for at least nine generations after AD 390**. This documentation shows that Hillel's calendar was only intended to be a temporary measure, created in desperation, in reaction to severe persecutions and the loss of consistent communication. This presentation will assert that the temporary measure of Hillel ben Judah to create the Hillel II Calendar is no longer needed.

Because of the overwhelming preponderance of historical documentation, this presentation will conclude that a switch should be made from the AD 390 authority of Hillel ben Judah, to the older and official calendar authority of the Second Temple priests. This conclusion will ask the reader to agree that the Observed Lunar Calendar of the Second Temple Era was the official calendar of ancient Israel, and therefore is the preferred calendar for today.

Road Map

Because none of us were living in ancient times, all we really can know is what we can find to read. For this reason, **this presentation will rely upon presenting an overwhelming preponderance of objective historical evidence**. It is the goal of this presentation to provide so much interrelated and collaborating historical evidence, that there can be only one logical conclusion.

Because this presentation will bandy dates spanning hundreds of years, in order to better keep these large time spans in perspective, dates will often be followed by the number of generations being represented. Generation #1 starts in BC 520; Generation #2 starts in 500 BC, and so forth every 20 years. In ancient times women married and had children in their early teens. Thus using "20 years" per generation is actually being quite conservative.

The same Observed Lunar Calendar that was used by ancient Israel and the priests of the Second Temple, and the early Messianic Congregations, for at least 590 years, that is, **for at least 30 generations**.

To substantiate the Observed Lunar Calendar there is much reading, including many other external documents. However, the more casual reader may derive the same conclusion by only reading the overview presentation in this document.

There is a huge amount of information in this presentation. To help simplify the task of comprehension, this document is written in a non-standard format. This document is written in such a manner that **the reader is expected to skip reading all of the details, until they want to read them**. Later, the reader can click on the GOTO links to read the details.

To obtain the OVERVIEW: Read from here to the "Conclusion" below, and do not click on any of the GOTO links. Do not forget to read the footnotes too. Later you will be comfortable enough to click on the GOTO links for the technical details.

Think of the GOTO links as bouncing down to read some specific details about a specific topic, and then being able to bounce back up again to continue on reading the overview. At the bottom of each link is a "Back" hot-spot button. Click on the "Back above" hot-spot and it will bounce you back to where you came from.

Why does the Calendar Issue Even Exist?

The issue of determining which calendar to use cannot be avoided. In [Genesis 1:14](#) YHWH created "appointed times" (Strong's #4150). Whatever you may decide is the definition of a "appointed times", in [Leviticus 23:2](#) YHWH provides the calendar dates for each of His "appointed times". Thus, YHWH established a calendar of events, pinning each of His "appointed times" to a specific day of a specified month. Everyone who strives to observe YHWH's commanded calendar of events must therefore choose which kind of calendar to follow.

Even though you personally may not decide which calendar to follow, your group or church leaders must still decide. Typically, every group and congregation has someone who is responsible for telling everyone else when the Holy Day services will be held. These leaders must decide which kind of calendar authority they will use to fix their group's Holy Day services.

Why Not Just Use The Jewish Calendar?

Typically, most observers of YHWH's Holy Days currently use the "Jewish Calendar". To state this more accurately: most Holy Day observers use the calendar of the Jewish Rabbinical Tradition, published by Hillel Ben Judah circa AD 390 ¹, and is formally called the "Hillel II Calendar" ². However, there are five primary reasons why the Hillel II Calendar is being challenged:

1. When the Hillel II Calendar was first published, it was categorically rejected by most Jewish communities in Asia Minor / Persia. Instead, most of the Jewish and Christian communities ignored Hillel ben Judah's Calendar, and for at least the next 400 years, over 20 generations, until circa AD 850, continued to use an observed lunar calendar. This movement to begin using the Hillel II Calendar is what caused the Karaite separation from what today is called the Rabbinical tradition.

Evidence demonstrates that the Hillel II Calendar did not become widely used in the west until after AD 800, around Generation #66. In this timeframe the Karaite Jews were separated themselves. The Karaite Jews rejected the Rabbinical Tradition, the Mishnah, Talmud, the Hillel II Calendar,

¹ Jewish Encyclopedia, vol. 3, 1901, article "Calendar": gives the date as 359 CE, but clarifies that the date is not known with certainty. Other Jewish scholars date its publication as late as AD 500. Since the Mishnah and Talmud, finished circa AD 550, do not even hint at the Hillel II Calendar's existence, it is reasonable to conclude that this calendar may have been published near AD 390, but was not widely used until after the Talmud.

² The Comprehensive Hebrew Calendar: Pages 1 - 2. **"Using the calendar methods defined by a special committee, called the Calendar Council (Sod Haibbur), Hillel ben Judah formally sanctified all months in advance, and intercalated all future leap years (bissextile years), until such time as a new, recognized Sanhedrin would be established in Israel."**

and to this day follow an Observed Lunar Calendar ³. Even today many Jews are neither Karaite nor Rabbinic, and use an observed lunar calendar. This history directly challenges the claim that the Hillel II Calendar is the "Only Official Jewish Calendar", as many Jewish communities flatly reject its use.

<GOTO: [Rabbinates Changed Calendar While Others Retained Original](#) below Back2 >

2. The Hillel II Calendar's rules did not exist prior to its publication, and was never historically used for official Holy Day determination by the Second Temple's ⁴ priesthood restarted by Ezra. Since the observed lunar calendar's rules used by the Second Temple's priesthood have been discovered, and documented in this presentation, the Hillel II Calendar is superseded.

<GOTO: [Official Hillel II Book States The Original Method Was Observed](#) below Back5 >

3. The Hillel II Calendar is a calculated calendar, based upon astronomical averages for the solar and lunar cycles, does not compensate for the annual shift in the equinoxes, assigns certain months with a fixed number of days, and applies "postponement rules" which shift the first day of the 7th month and Atonement. To many this computing method is contrary to the Biblical statements of Genesis 1:14, which declare that the sun and moon are to be used to determine the appointed times.

4. Many years have the Hillel II Calendar calculating the 6th month to be the 7th month instead, thus placing Trumpets, Atonement, and the Feast of Tabernacles a full month too early. For example, in the year 2002 the fall ⁵ Holy Days were scheduled in the summer. The next occurrence of having the Feast start in the summer is in 2018.

5. The Hillel II Calendar is no longer needed. Even in its prolog the Hillel II Calendar is presented as being only a temporary calendar. Quoting "The Comprehensive Hebrew Calendar", on page 2: "**Hillel II formally sanctified all months in advance, and intercalated all future leap years, until such time as a new, recognized Sanhedrin would be established in Israel**". Because of the intense persecution against the Jews, many Jewish communities became isolated. Hillel Ben Judah created a new calendar based upon calculations so that even the isolated communities could keep the new moons and Holy Days on the same days.

³ The modern Karaite calendar is the same as the original observed calendar, with the exception of their definition for intercalating a year. Rather than use the spring equinox, many use a literal meaning of the original Hebrew name of the first month, "green ears" of barley. They therefore wait for the new crescent in which a sufficient amount of "green ears" of barley are present. Circa AD 850 the Karaites split again, one group retaining the "green ears" definition, while the splintering group went back to the original spring equinox definition.

⁴ Ezra 6:15: Second Temple is finished on Adar 3, in the 6th year of Darius, 515 BC.

⁵ The term "Fall Holy Days" is not in the Bible. However, simply review the list of harvested crops that were a part of the Feast of Ingathering. Although harvesting times vary by region, few farmers will assert that these crops are completely harvested in the summer. Secondly, the astronomical data confirms that a 2nd 6th month **was always inserted to keep Atonement in the autumn**. Starting Atonement, **which is the first day of the Sabbatical and the Jubilee yearly cycles**, in the summer **was never allowed**.

However, today we are not isolated. Hillel ben Judah's temporary measure is no longer needed. We can return to the original and preferred method of using the observed lunar calendar. Today we have computers, telephones, and the Internet. Today we can run a computer program to compute the astronomical conditions required to determine the lunar calendar. Today all communities worldwide can be unified using the original rules of the observed lunar calendar of ancient Israel and the Second Temple's priests.

History of the Observed Lunar Calendar

Through archaeology and historical research **the following statements may be firmly established as facts** (use the GOTO links to read the substantiating details):

Abraham and the Elite Scholars

Only a select few were allowed to be educated to be astronomers and calendar experts. These select few were educated at elite academies. These academies were established throughout Asia Minor, Persia, and Palestine. **Graduates were priests and scribes, and officiated in the courts of the kings and governors in the regions in which they lived.** Some graduates (who qualified) from these academies also served as priests at Jerusalem. **It was the astronomy scholars who were responsible for determining the calendar used in the Temple.** It was the Sanhedrin who was responsible for administering the decisions made by the astronomy scholars. **The Sanhedrin did not decide the calendar. Rather, the astronomy scholars of the synod made the calendar determinations, and then told the Sanhedrin what to do.**

<GOTO: [Calendar Experts Were Highly Educated Elite](#) below Back9 >

<GOTO: [Abraham Taught Egyptians Astronomy, and Fought Astrology](#) below Back22 >

<GOTO: [Sanhedrin Was A Governing Body Started 57BC](#) below Back10 >

<GOTO: [Calendar Synod Was Separate From The Sanhedrin](#) below Back11 >

Astronomy versus Astrology

As suggested in the book of Daniel, historical documents have been uncovered which confirm that there has always been a major distinction between the astrologers and pagan priests, from the astronomers, scribes, and YHWH's priests. They co-existed, they attended different academies, but the astrologers were always esteemed to be the lower class. For example, in Babylon the higher class astronomers would not even greet the lower class astrologers on the street. In Jerusalem the astrologer could be stoned to death.

<GOTO: [Astronomy Versus Astrology](#) below Back35 >

<GOTO: [Babylonian Astronomers Were Not Astrologers](#) below Back12 >

<GOTO: [Magi Were Babylonian Astronomer Priests, Not Astrologers](#) below Back24 >

<GOTO: [Answer: Babylonians Were Pagans And Their Calendar Was Pagan](#) below Back38 >

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Daniel and the Persian Empire

Daniel was made the overseer of the king's court. This also included the astronomers and priests. Through Daniel the observed lunar calendar used by Israel became the calendar of the Babylonian and Persian empires.

See this study: http://www.caeno.org/pdf/Porten_Egyptian-Babylonian_dates.pdf analyzing the dates for "Jewish Contracts within the Persian Culture". By the time of Ezra ⁶ the same observed calendar was used throughout the Persian Empire, from India to Egypt.

<GOTO: [Scholars Determined Calendar, Kings Made the Letters Sent Out](#) below Back14 >

<GOTO: [Entire Greater Region Used The Same Observed Calendar](#) **Error! Reference source not found.** Back17 >

<GOTO: [Persian King Issues Passover Edict](#): below Back31 >

<GOTO: [Observed Calendar Used For At Least 30 Generations](#) below Back3 >

Ezra And His Academies

Ezra setup academies that educated each generation of astronomers and priests for Israel's priesthood. The Sadducees were of these graduates, those of the nobility and educated to be the priesthood. It was the Sadducees that were the graduates of the academies of Ezra, and knew the secret rules of the observed lunar calendar. **It was the Sadducees, not the Pharisees, which were responsible for the official calendar used to administer the New Moons and Holy Day ceremonies in the Second Temple.**

The eastern Jewish communities were religiously tied to Jerusalem, politically powerful, and unhindered by the ruling government. The eastern communities kept the same observed lunar calendar and Holy Days as those in Jerusalem, Palestine, and Egypt.

The signal fires which were lit in Jerusalem in accordance to the observed calendar, which was the responsibility of the Sadducees to determine, were also unhindered and welcome in Babylonia / Persia. Because the same priesthood-graduates lived throughout the greater region, and with the signal fires for communication, **the entire greater region keep the exact same observed lunar calendar and Holy Days.** This synchronization was predominant from the time of Ezra until at least AD 163. Some evidence suggests up to AD 193.

<GOTO: [Sadducees Were The Temple's Official Calendar Authority](#) below Back26 >

<GOTO: [Sadducees Came From Aristocratic and Priestly Families](#) below Back37 >

<GOTO: [Babylonian/Palestinian Authorities Diverging In 163 AD](#) below Back13 >

Same Lunar Calendar Used Regionally Up To AD 70

Because the Babylonian and Persians used the same observed calendar as did Israel ⁷, the ancient astronomy and historical data from Babylon and Persia can be used to discover the rules of the

⁶ It is outside of the scope of this presentation to debate the year in which Ezra 7:6-9 occurred. Elephantine Letter C17 shows that Darius-I was also called Artaxerxes. The 7th year of Darius-I is 516 BC. Thus, Ezra 6:15 places the Second Temple circa 515 BC.

⁷ There is much over-emphasis on the importance of the "pecking order" for the scholars living in Babylon, versus the scholars living in Jerusalem or Palestine. The rules for calendar determination are not that complicated. Rather, what happens is that there are years in which the moon's cycle is so close to an intercalary rule, that sometimes the "leading astronomers" must be consulted to make a determination for the whole. It is simply unimportant where the "leading astronomers" were living in the year of a close call. Where they live and where they convened to make a decision was simply not important.

observed calendar used by Israel during the Second Temple Era. This claim is substantiated in these other three documents:

- **"The Elephantine Double Dated Letters"** (PDF):
- **"The 'Spring-Passover-Rule' Was Never Used"** (PDF):
- **"Month-by-Month Reconstruction From 531 BC to 377 BC"** (PDF):

<GOTO: [Current Sabbath 7 Day Cycle Has Not Been Broken](#) below Back25 >

[Observed Calendar Rules same in Jerusalem and Babylon in BC 587 and AD 70]

<GOTO: [Observed Calendar Was Being Used In BC 4](#) below Back29 >

[Observed Calendar Rules same in Jerusalem in BC 4]

<GOTO: [Calendar Of Jerusalem Was The Calendar Of Asia Minor](#) below Back41 >

Once all of the details of the above technical study documents have been comprehended, the result is an overwhelming preponderance of evidence; that the Second Temple Era priests and scribes used a closely guarded, regionally applied, and consistent calendar.

Same Lunar Calendar Still Used Between AD 70 and AD 225

After the destruction of the Second Temple in AD 70, the Sadducees, being so dependent upon the existence of the Temple and the administration of the priesthood's daily duties, as a political force ceased to exist. The Pharisees immediately established themselves as the new Sanhedrin and central authority of Israel, including the office of the Nasi which determined the official calendar.

<GOTO: [Pharisees Gained Control After Temple Destroyed In AD 70](#) below Back34 >

<GOTO: [Sanhedrin After AD 70 Were The Pharisees, Sadducees Left](#) below Back36 >

<GOTO: [Rise Of Pharisees In Persia After AD 135:](#) below Back33 >

The Pharisees did not immediately change the rules to the observed lunar calendar. The observed calendar remained consistent throughout the early Christian Church.

<GOTO: [New Moon Announcements Made Without Jerusalem Sanhedrin](#) below Back16 >

<GOTO: [Calendar Rules Consistent From Generation To Generation](#) below Back18 >

Talmud Preserves Lunar Calendar Use

New generations of Pharisees slowly inserted new calendar rules. Most of the inserted rules dealt with close-calls and additional criteria for determining when to intercalate a year. However, even with the new rules the calendar used by the Pharisees was still primarily the same original observed lunar calendar of the Second Temple Era. **It was still an observed, not a calculated, calendar.**

<GOTO: [Mishnah and Talmud Written By The Pharisees](#) below Back27 >

<GOTO: [Talmud Preserves Observed Calendar, Including 2nd 6th Months](#) below Back21

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What is important is that the historical evidence demonstrates that they did cooperate, they did convene, they did communicate, and they did try to work things out in order to keep the greater region unified with a single calendar.

The Hillel II Calendar versus the Lunar Calendar

However, due to very severe persecutions from the Roman Christians many western Jewish communities were cut off from having consistent communication with the Palestinian Sanhedrin. Hillel ben Judah, as High Priest of the Sanhedrin, decided to create a computable calendar so that all Jewish communities could determine for themselves the new moons and Holy Days.

<GOTO: [Original Calendar Academies Still Existed In AD 350](#) below Back4 >

<GOTO: [Hillel Calendar Was Temporary Reaction To Christian Persecutions](#) below Back19

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<GOTO: [The First Month Is Never In Winter](#)
THIS IS A MAJOR HISTORICAL QUOTE below Back20 >

<GOTO: [Mishnah/Talmud Saturated With Examples Of Observed Calendar](#) below Back6 >

<GOTO: [Mishnah/Talmud Saturated With Examples Against Postponements](#) below Back7

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<GOTO: [Passover Dates Of AD 343 Were Not From Hillel II Calendar](#) below Back28 >

<GOTO: [Hillel II Calendar's Foundational Tenets Were Fabricated](#) below Back32 >

<GOTO: [Hananiah Fixed The Calendar In AD 140, Was Ruled Wrong!](#) below Back15 >

Between AD 390 and AD 550

The Hillel II Calendar, although published, was not used by the Rabbinical Sanhedrin until sometime after AD 550. **The Talmud confirms that an observed, not a calculated, lunar calendar was still being used at least as late as AD 550.**

<GOTO: [No Trace Of Original Hillel II Calendar In The Talmud](#) below Back1 >

<GOTO: [Answer: Are Not The Jews In Moses' Seat](#) below Back39 >

Between AD 550 and AD 1200, the Rabbinic Jews

However, due to the persistent Christian persecutions against the Jews in Europe, the Hillel II Calendar slowly began to be used instead. By the time of Rabbi Maimonides, who lived circa AD 1200, it was well established in Europe and Alexandria Egypt.

Between AD 800 and AD 1200, the Karaite Jews

Even though the Hillel II Calendar was gaining in use by the Rabbinical Tradition, it was never accepted by all Jewish communities. Circa AD 800 the Karaite Jews rejected the Rabbinical Tradition and the Hillel II Calendar, **and continued to use the customary observed lunar calendar**. This demonstrates that even as late as AD 800 an observed lunar calendar, not a calculated calendar, **was still considered to be the customary calendar of Israel.**

< [The Karaite Korner](#) (Website) >

Rabbi Maimonides and the Karaite Jews

By the time of Rabbi Maimonides the Rabbinical and the Karaite Jews were entrenched in opposition. Even in the same city, the Rabbinical and the Karaite Jews each had their own separate communities and schools. They did not even allow marriage between each other. Even today each group proclaims and keeps its own Holy Days.

Summary Of The History

The preponderance of the objective historical evidence combine to identify the existence of an official observed lunar calendar, used by the Second Temple's priests, the Sadducees, and kept by the early Christian Church for at least 10 generations. The evidence demonstrates that the preferred calendar of ancient Israel was to use an observed lunar calendar, never a calculated calendar. The evidence also shows that various forms of an observed calendar were used by Israel after the Second Temple. This means that from at least BC 520 to at least AD 800, **which is over 67 generations, an observed lunar calendar was the authority.** The rules of the observed lunar calendar of the Second Temple Era are known. This calendar is the older tradition, and was the official authority of the Second Temple, and therefore supersedes all other calendars, including the Hillel II Calendar.

How Do We Know the Calendar's Rules?

The ancient astronomers observed an astronomical event in the sky, recorded the date of the event according to their own calendar, and then went about their business. Today we can read their recorded astronomical events, and then calculate the 'Astronomical Julian Dates' of the events they saw. From this we can derive with certainty the exact rules they used to determine the calendar they used. **We are not guessing, we are letting them tell us their rules.**

For example: one artifact describes an event, a new crescent seen after sunset that occurred in the 37th year of Nebuchadnezzar II on the first of Nisan. From this account it is immediately known that they started that month beginning the night of the visible new crescent, and not the Molad (the moment when the sun, moon, and earth are all aligned). If it were from the Molad, then the event would have been recorded as Nisan 2 or 3.

<GOTO: [Definition Of New Moon](#) below Back8 >

Additionally, by other evidence it is known that his 37th year places this crescent to be on the night of (Julian Calendar) April 22, 568 BC. From this it is known that they did not use the alleged "Spring Passover Rule"⁸, but rather intercalated a 2nd 12th month, an Adar II, that year. That is, the previous month was declared to be a 2nd 12th month, **because that previous month's crescent occurred in the winter**, four days before the spring equinox. It was still winter, so they waited a full month for the next crescent, after the spring equinox.

⁸ This is a title used to refer to the idea that the new year's first month's new crescent can be in the winter, as long as the 15th of that month (which is the Passover) still falls in the spring. This "alleged rule" is not mentioned in the rules of calculation for the Hillel II Calendar, nor was this "alleged rule" used by the official calendar of the Second Temple.

This is an example of analyzing just one recorded ancient event. From this single event two rules have been deduced: months begin with the visible new crescent, and new years begin after the spring equinox.

By performing similar analysis on another unrelated second recorded event, it is discovered that they used the exact same rules. By applying this same analysis **on hundreds of other recorded events**, spanning over 500 years, **it is discovered that they were consistently using the exact same calendar rules**. To read an in-depth example of how this analysis is done: Read "**Example of Doing an Analysis of an Artifact**".

By analyzing ancient astronomical events recorded in many regions, such as in Egypt, Persia, and in Jerusalem ⁹, **it is discovered that the exact same calendar rules were also used in each of these regions too, with no deviation from the rules**.

This discovered consistency is considered quite logical, because history records that those responsible for providing the ancient calendar's dates were all scribes, priests, and astronomers who graduated from the same line of elite academies. In fact most scribes and priests were blood relatives of each other.

For the highly technical details:

Read: "**The 'Spring-Passover-Rule' Was Never Used**" (PDF)

Read: "**The Elephantine Double Dated Letters**" (PDF)

Read: "**Month-by-Month Reconstruction From 531 BC to 377 BC**" (PDF)

From this preponderance of objective historical evidence, it can be stated that the calendar rules, used by the academy graduates for at least 30 generations, is known. Other documents demonstrate that variations of the Second Temple's observed lunar calendar were used all the way up into the Middle Ages.

Thus, analysis has identified an ancient, authoritative, and official calendar, maintained by generations of elite academy graduates, used by the Second Temple's priesthood from BC 520 through the time of Jesus (Yahoshua) and the early Christian Church. At least 30 generations were born, lived, and died using this single official lunar calendar system.

If only a few ancient events were found to analyze, it could not be said with any conviction that their calendar rules were understood. If some events were found which conflicted with the previous analysis, lingering doubts would have to be admitted. **But the fact is that there are hundreds/thousands of astronomical events recorded, and they all match!** All events match with the exact same calendar rules, **there are no exceptions** ¹⁰. There are no data points which introduce doubt.

⁹ The Book of Calendars. Frank Parise, ed. Copyright 1982 to Facts On File, Inc. 460 Park Av. South, New York, NY 10016. ISBN 0-98196-467-8. Page 3, quote: "**Its [the calendar taught by the Babylonia academies] influence extended from Greece and Egypt in the West, down the Arabian peninsula in the south, over to India in the East, and northward into the Himalayas.**"

¹⁰ Some may cite records of Greek and Roman government officials arbitrarily deciding to adjust their local calendars as they please. But we are not interested in the Greek and Roman local calendars. They are not an authority for the Temple. Their calendar systems

With this much consistency in evidence it can be stated that we know the calendar rules they employed. Further, since the astronomical evidence spans over 590 years of the Bible (30 generations) and the historical evidence after the Messiah spans over 800 years (another 40 generations), **we can be confident that we have identified an authoritative calendar system to supersede all other calendar systems.**

The Rules of the Observed Lunar Calendar

The rules are actually very simple, and **they follow exactly with the instructions given in the "Book of Enoch":**

1. The **lunar day** begins at sunset, with a seven day weekly cycle. The Sabbath and the weekly cycle have never been disrupted.
2. The month begins upon the observation ¹¹ of the new crescent, or if obscured, the month begins after sunset of the 30th day of the previous month.
3. The "First Month" **is a declared title**, not a count ¹². The "First Month" is declared to be the "First Month", regardless of the math of "counting". It is the first new crescent after the spring equinox ¹³. This results in some years having two 12th months, Adar II, declared.
4. The month of Tishri **is a declared title**, not a count. The "Seventh Month" is not Tishri, rather Tishri is that month which is proclaimed to be Tishri. It is the first new crescent in which that month's 10th day starts after the autumn equinox ¹⁴. Starting Atonement, **which**

were not the same calendar system as determined by the official academies. The calendar adjustments of the Greeks and Romans are not relevant to the Temple's official calendar.

¹¹ Observation means that someone is standing at a fixed location on the earth, and is visually verifying that the expected (by calculations) new crescent is visible. The term "observation" does not mean that calculations and predictions were not employed. There are massive numbers of clay tablets to verify that the astronomy scholars computed in advance the expected dates for the beginnings of the seasons, eclipses, and when each new crescent should be visible. However, they did not rely upon the calculations, but relied upon actual observation before making any official proclamations. They relied upon their calculations only when conditions were too poor for visual verification.

¹² A title is a name given to something. The priests declared a month to have the title "Nissan" or "Tishri". A count is a sequence. Months were not named sequentially because one followed the previous. This concept may seem strange to our western thought process. We are taught to always number things in sequence. But in the ancient world things were called what they were called because someone in authority declared it to be so. For example, Joseph was declared to be Jacob's firstborn in terms of inheriting the birthright, even though Joseph was not sequentially the firstborn of Jacob.

¹³ The English word definition of "equinox" is a complication. This complication is not important unless the new crescent is within two days prior to the astronomical spring equinox. Using the astronomical definition for equinox will work fine.

¹⁴ This rule shows that the ancient priests thought it very important to keep Atonement, the Feast of Tabernacles, and the Jubilee Cycles in the autumn season.

- is the “New Year’s Day” for the Sabbatical and the Jubilee yearly Cycles, in the summer was never allowed. This results in some years having two 6th months, Ellul II. For example, the year 2007 had a 2nd 6th month added to keep the festivals in their seasons.
5. In the years in which the expected ¹⁵ 1st or 7th months fell too close to the expected equinox, the leading astronomy scholars of the day would exchange letters, or even meet together, seeking to (quoting) “Unify all Israel” with a common decree. By the time the close-call occurred, everyone knew the procedure they would follow to determine ¹⁶ if there would be any intercalation ¹⁷.

A 2nd 6th Month Does Not Make the Feasts be in the 8th

To some it seems “wrong” to insert a 2nd 6th month, as this makes the Feasts occur in the 8th month counting from Nissan. **Please recognize that this is “Western Thinking”**. We are taught to think in sequential terms of 1,2,3,4,5,6,7 because we logically want to count things. **But the ancient Temple priests did not count months, they proclaimed months. That is, they named them what they were**. We often call the 2nd 12th month the 13th month because we want to count months. But it is not the 13th month, it is the month proclaimed to be “The 2nd Adar”.

The ancient Temple priests declared the months to be named what they determined they should be. When the ancient priests decided they needed to intercalate, they proclaimed that month to be Adar II instead of Nissan, because that is what they decided that month was to be. The same with the 2nd 6th month. We know it is a 2nd 6th month, but then we logically count it and think it is the 7th month. But it is not the 7th month, it is a “2nd Ellul”. This is because months are proclaimed, not counted. We often call Tishri the 7th month because most of the time it just so happens to be the 7th count from Nissan. But, Tishri is not the 7th month, it is that month which is proclaimed to be Tishri, because that is what has been decided it is to be.

¹⁵ The ancient astronomy scholars used mathematics to calculate the moon's expected appearance and eclipses.

¹⁶ Close-calls are complicated when the sun and/or moon are obscured. Being obscured means that accurate measurements are not possible, and the visual sighting of the new crescent cannot occur. The ancient astronomy scholars developed procedures to follow if ever such ambiguity prevented them from making a declaration based upon astronomy. For example, they might look at the barley harvest, at pigeon molting, rain conditions, and other natural cycles as additional evidence for spring and fall. The Talmud talks about such contingency procedures, but we have no record of the Temple's observed calendar ever being overridden by physical concerns. For example, there is no record of the Second Temple's priests saying: “By the Calendar rules his should be the first month, but the roads are wet, so we are intercalating the year instead.” There is no record of something like this ever happening.

¹⁷ Intercalation is done in order to keep certain of the Holy Days in their seasons. Intercalation is the result of determining that a specific new crescent occurs too soon to be declared as the 7th or 1st month, and so, the new crescent is instead declared to be a 2nd 6th or a 2nd 12th month, thereby allowing the 7th or 1st month to occur one month later.

Common Objections, And Answers

The Babylonians Were Pagans, So Their Calendar Is Pagan

Objection: “Everyone knows the Babylonian priests were pagan astrologers. Scripture says: ‘Come out of her my people’. You are asking us to follow a pagan Babylonian calendar.”

Answer: Historically, this is simply not a true sentence. The evidence has already been presented demonstrating this historical fact. Even so, one of the most difficult tasks this presentation must accomplish is the reply to this objection. Most readers have been taught an anti-Babylonian bias. How can this presentation overturn everything the reader has been taught about the Babylonian's connection with sorcery? Most readers have been taught that anything and everything labeled “Babylonian” is automatically pagan. Most readers have been taught that anything and everything associated with “Babylonian Astronomy” is automatically "Astrology".

However, the issue is not the origin of the lunar calendar; the issue is its documented use by the temple priests of YHWH. The objection relies upon the fact that the word “Babylonian” is perceived as a “fright word”. Let's win the argument because we use frightening words. Instead try saying it is the “Persian” or “Sumerian” Lunar Calendar.

Regarding the specific topic of the observed calendar after BC 520, and the temple scholars which determined the lunar calendar dates for the Babylonian / Persian kings after BC 520, **the reader is asked to seriously reevaluate this biased position, based upon the following evidence:**

1. A calendar is not a religion. Astronomy is not astrology. A calendar's existence is independent of how a religion may decide to use it. For example, the astronomers declare that today is the first day of the year. By itself this pronouncement makes no religious claims. One religion may use this information to sacrifice chickens, while another religion may use the exact same information to have a Holy Day to YHWH.
2. The historical evidence shows that it was Abraham and his family descendants who became the astronomy priests of the greater region. Whether the astronomy experts were pagan or righteous makes no difference to which calendar they used, as long as the calendar rules they used were consistent. For example: two astronomers, one pagan the other righteous, declare that today is the first day of the year. As long as both use the same calendar rules, their religion is a separate topic from the calendar. Thus, even a pagan priest can use astronomy to declare the observed lunar calendar, just as the priests of YHWH.
3. The historical evidence shows that the observed calendar far predated the Babylonian Empire. In fact, it even predated the Exodus. Astronomy records were kept in ancient libraries, and these records dated back to circa BC 1650. Further, notice that calendar dates are specified in the Bible prior to the Exodus. YHWH did not reveal a whole new calendar system to Moses. YHWH only told Moses to change which month was to be regarded and called “the first month”. Prior to that, the first month was in the autumn, Tishri. The calendar dates given in the Exodus was one of the three primary calendars of Egypt that Moses would have been taught while in Pharaoh's court. It already existed. YHWH only changed the order of counting the months. Consider Exodus 12:41. It states that Israel came out of Egypt “even the selfsame day”. This can only be stated as a fact when the calendar of Moses' day also existed 430 years earlier than the Exodus event.

<GOTO: [Observed Calendar Is The Same As Was Used In BC 2180](#) below Back30 >

4. The evidence shows that those who determined the observed calendar held credentials as graduates from elite academies. These academies existed prior to the Babylonian empire, and continued throughout the period of Ezra, on into the Middle Ages. The evidence shows that these academies taught the same calendar rules, and jealously guarded this science as secret¹⁸. The point is that it does not matter if an academy is located in Babylon, in Palestine, or located in Alexandria. The label: "a Babylonian Academy" does not mean that the academy was pagan, nor does its physical location within the Babylonian / Persian Empire effect the science of astronomy, or the observed calendar's rules.

5. The book of Daniel reveals several key facts of Babylonian history:

A. The Chaldeans were listed separately from the sorcerers and astrologers. They were separate groups of people. The astronomers were Chaldeans and held the higher social rank.

B. Daniel, by interpreting the dream, had just saved the lives of each of these groups. Socially, in their "Honor – Shame" culture, they were now "totally in his service".

C. Daniel was given authority over everyone in the land. **Daniel was now in authority over the scribes, the priests, the Chaldeans, the sorcerers, and the astrologers.** Even if one argues that Jewish-based astronomy academies did not exist in Babylon prior to BC 580, it remains that they would exist in Babylon after Daniel took over. Daniel was now in a position to ensure that Hebrew-based academies were also established in Babylon. Daniel could now ensure that their graduates became the king's officials, priests, scholars, and scribes. Daniel could now ensure that their graduates became the officials, priests, scholars, and scribes in all communities throughout the empire. In essence, **Daniel was now in charge of the king's court, and the calendar system used throughout Babylon.**

D. The story of Esther, circa BC 485 [Generation #2], (especially 8:2,15; 9:3-4,30; and 10:1-3), describes the Persian empire as consisting of 127 separately governed regions (having 127 separate courts), **from India to Ethiopia.** Jewish communities were in each of these regions. By the end of the story, Esther and Mordecai became very wealthy landowners, having direct access to the king. Further, Mordecai was advanced by the king, and became feared by all the governors and people of the empire. **Anyone in the empire wanting a key appointment or favor would have to seek Mordecai's approval.** He became a great leader "seeking the wealth of his people". Over time the Jewish communities would have elite education, high credentials, key appointments, legal titles, and protected land ownership. Remember that **all of the enemies of the Jews were now dead, or were now converted to Judaism.** No one could object as **Mordecai was able to actively advance the prestige of all Jewish communities from India to Ethiopia, and elevate the Jewish nobility into key positions throughout the vast Persian Empire.**

6. By the time of the rebuilding of the Second Temple, circa BC 515, the entire empire was coordinated with a single observed lunar calendar, **and this calendar system must have been approved by Daniel, and later by Mordecai, and those officiating after them.** Ezra was a descendant of Aaron. He was a bloodline priest. In Ezra 7:6: **"This Ezra went up from Babylon; and he was a ready scribe in the law of Moses, which the Lord God of Israel had given: and the king granted him all his request, according to the hand of the Lord his God upon him."** Ezra 7:25: **". . . set magistrates and judges, which may judge all the people that are beyond**

¹⁸ Rival academies and groups were the astrologers and the masons. When analyzing historical evidence, keep in mind that many other academies also existed at the same time, but taught their own astronomy (Zodiac) for a much different use. For example, most temples and palaces were built by the masons. They had their own schools with their own graduates.

the river, all such as know the laws of thy God; and teach ye them that know them not.” To be a scribe means that Ezra was a graduate of a Babylonian / Persian academy. Ezra was therefore an astronomer-priest which knew the rules of the observed lunar calendar. Notice that the king granted whatever Ezra asked, and Ezra established magistrates and judges in Jerusalem and in all the greater region.

7. Once the Temple was rebuilt; sacrifices, new moons, and Holy Days were observed with sacrifices. The focal point of authority for the observed calendar switched back to Ezra in Jerusalem. Ezra and his Temple priest successors became the central authority for the temple's calendar. These Temple priests later became the political/religious force known as **the Sadducees**.

8. From circa BC 520, **for about 30 generations**, until the Temple was destroyed in AD 70, sacrifices, new moons, and Holy Days were observed using the exact same observed calendar. Letters were written, whether they be from Babylon, Egypt, or Jerusalem, that used the same observed calendar to record the dates of weddings, business transactions, battles, and astronomical events. There are literally over 100,000 clay tablets of this nature, just in the British Museum in London alone.

9. From AD 70 all the way into the Middle Ages many Christian and Jewish communities, especially those in Asia Minor, continued to use the observed lunar calendar, and did not use (specifically rejected) the Hillel II Calendar.

Thus, it does not matter if the graduate is from “a Babylonian Academy”. It does not matter if our modern history books call the observed lunar calendar “the Babylonian Calendar” instead of calling it “the Sumerian Calendar”. In the case of the observed calendar, any association with “Babylon” or “Babylonian” does not mean that the calendar is pagan. It just means that the same observed calendar was also used in the towns and Jewish communities of Babylon too. The same argument is presented for the association with “Egypt” or “Egyptian”. It just means that the same observed calendar was also used in Egypt too. <Back38 above >

Are Not The Jews In Moses' Seat?

Objection: Matthew 23:2, quote: **“The scribes [Sadducees] and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you to observe, that observe and do . . .”** Romans 3:2, quote: **“ . . . unto them [Jews] were committed the oracles of God.”** It is not the provenance of Christians to settle Jewish calendar disputes. In my community the Jewish calendar is the Hillel II Calendar. The Jews, not Christians, have the authority to establish the calendar, so that is what we should use.

Answer: Scripture must be viewed in the perspective of other scriptures. The New Testament is full of examples of Christians not submitting to the Jewish authorities. For example, the early Christians were commanded by the Sanhedrin to not use the name of the Messiah anymore. This was a command. Did the first Christians observe whatsoever they were bid by the Sanhedrin? Acts 5:29, quote: **“Then Paul and the other apostles answered and said, we ought to obey God rather than men.”** Also, note that few Christians today keep the same Day of Pentecost as is listed in the Hillel II Calendar.

The reason why Christians do not observe everything the Jews bid is because **there is a huge difference between having the responsibility to guard the truth, versus, the responsibility to command the truth.**

For example: the referee of a basketball game is given the responsibility to guard the truth in that he blows the whistle whenever someone breaks one of the rules. But you would get very upset if the basketball referee started to change the rules during the game. They can enforce, but they cannot change the rules.

The question therefore is: “Do the scribes and Pharisees (the Jews) have the responsibility to guard the oracles of YHWH, or, the responsibility to command the oracles of YHWH?”

If you answer “guard the rules”, then you would have to reject the Rabbinical changes made to the original observed lunar calendar. **Their duty was to enforce the rules, not to change the rules.**

If you answer “command the rules”, then you would have to not only accept the Hillel II Calendar, but all of the other Rabbinical Traditions they bid people to observe over the years. You would have to accept every other command, edict, duty, dress, and habit that has been passed down throughout history from the rabbis and their writings. This would include the Mishnah and Talmud. You would also have to keep Pentecost as they bid, and recite the 18 blessings of the Amida, including the “blessing” (a curse) against Christians and other heretics.

The point is that it is unreasonable to take the position that the Jews have the authority to command or change the oracles of YHWH. The oracles of YHWH are YHWH's, not the Jews. Sitting in Moses' seat does not mean they have the authority to change the rules, but rather they only have the responsibility to administer the rules. Therefore, if they change the rules, **we are not obligated to follow them as they change things.** <Back39 above >

Supporting Documentation and Commentary

THERE IS NO ORDER OR LOGIC TO THE ARRANGEMENT OF THE FOLLOWING QUOTES AND COMMENTARY. THE READER IS EXPECTED TO USE THE "GOTO LINKS" TO JUMP DOWN TO READ THESE SECTIONS BELOW.

No Trace of the Hillel II Calendar in the Talmud

The Jewish Encyclopedia, article "Calendar": **"... A permanent calendar, still in force, was introduced by Hillel II, Nasi of the Sanhedrin about 360 C.E. It is uncertain what the calendar of Hillel originally contained when it was generally adopted. In the Talmud there is no trace of it."**

[Notice that part of the debate also includes whether the Hillel II Calendar being used today was actually what Hillel ben Judah sanctified circa AD 390. It is possible that the Hillel II Calendar used today is a corruption of his original. Since it is not even mentioned in the Talmud, finished circa AD 550, there is a gap of about 200 years, 10 generations, where Hillel's calendar must have lain in a library, unused. It is this large gap in time, publication near AD 390 but not being used or referenced in the Talmud near AD 550, that allows us to conclude that Hillel's pronouncement was initially rejected by the Jewish communities, and only much later taken seriously.] <Back1 above>

Rabbinates Changed Calendar, Others Retained Original

Strong's Bible Encyclopedia, article "New Moon", [circa 1200 AD, Generation #86] quote: **"According to Maimonides, the Rabbinists altered their method [by following the Hillel II Calendar] when the Sanhedrin ceased to exist, and have ever since determined the month by astronomical calculation, while the Karaites have retained the old custom of depending on the appearance of the moon."**

[The Hasting's Bible Dictionary quotes the above, and follows by stating that **the Karaite Jewish congregations set their own feast days by observation** up to the time of Maimonides, the late 12th century AD. Notice two groups are identified, separated by which calendar method they used. Maimonides followed the Rabbinical tradition. The Karaites are recorded to have, quote: **"Rejecting the authority of the Talmud, they put their emphasis on the Bible"**, and employed the original lunar calendar methods. Perhaps the two most important points to notice from this evidence is that:

- 1) the Hillel II Calendar was being rejected even as late as AD 1200, and
- 2) the Karaites continued in tradition, which was to follow an observed lunar calendar.

Note that an observed calendar had to have still been in use even up to AD 800 for the Karaites to continue to use **"the old custom"**.

Maimonides, circa AD 1200, lived over eight hundred years, 40 generations, after the Hillel II Calendar was created. **This evidence demonstrates that an observed lunar calendar was used by Israel and the Jewish communities from at least BC 520 all the way to beyond AD 1200, which is over 86 generations.**

From this it is manifest that **the Hillel II Calendar was not universally accepted as being the one and only calendar of the Jews**, and in fact it is still rejected by the Karaite and other Jewish communities to this day.] <Back2 above>

Original Calendar Academies Still Existed In AD 350

Jewish Encyclopedia, vol. 3, 1901, article "Calendar", page 500, [Generation #44], context is the creation of the Hillel II Calendar, quote: **"The political difficulties attendant upon the meetings of the Sanhedrin became so numerous in this period, and the consequent uncertainty of the feast-days was so great, that R. Huna b. Abin made known the following secret of the calendar to Raba in Babylonia: Whenever it becomes apparent that the winter will last till the 16th of Nisan, make the year a leap-year without hesitation."**

[Notice that the academy scholars and the secrets for calendar determination were still being practiced in Babylonia at the time of Hillel ben Judah's Sanhedrin. They could even write letters to each other. Since the observed calendar waits for the first crescent after spring, the answer provided actually betrayed no valuable family calendar secrets. This evidence demonstrates that neither Hillel ben Judah nor his synod of experts knew the secret knowledge of the rules governing calendar determination. They were embroiled in political debate and uncertainty. They had to ask the calendar authorities in Babylonia for help, and they got only one question answered, in a very ambiguous manner.] <Back4 above>

Observed Lunar Calendar Used For At Least 30 Generations

The Comprehensive Hebrew Calendar, Page 2, [Generations #1 through #30, plus 30], quote: **"This method of observation and intercalation [the observed calendar] was in use throughout the period of the second temple (516 b.c.e. - 70 c.e.), and about three centuries after its destruction, as long as there was an independent Sanhedrin."**

[This quote states that the observed calendar was the official calendar of the Second Temple Era, and was used from the time of Ezra through the time of Jesus (Yahoshua), the early church, and about 30 generations beyond. The early church did not use a fixed calendar. They used the observed lunar calendar.] <Back3 above>

Official Hillel II Calendar Says Original Was Observed

The Comprehensive Hebrew Calendar: pages 217-227: Page 217, [Generation #127], quote: **"(Nowadays the day, hour and parts of each Molad are announced before the Proclamation of the New Moon in the Sabbath morning service preceding the week of the New Moon. This custom keeps alive the memory of the time when the Sanhedrin sanctified the months on the basis of observation. It calls our attention to the fact that today we determine our New Moons and holidays according to the decision of Hillel's Beth Din.)"**

[There is no doubt that the Hillel II Calendar is based upon a man's decision, and that his calendar is not the same calendar that was used before him. The Hillel II Calendar is fixed by calculations, while the previous calendar was based upon actual observation. Experts who tell you that the Hillel II Calendar was used prior to the decision of Hillel's Beth Din, or that it is the same calendar as was used by Jesus (Yahoshua) or by Moses, are simply very ignorant of history. There is no ambiguity on this point.] <Back5 above>

Mishnah/Talmud Used the Observed Calendar

There are many misrepresentations regarding the calendar system employed by the Jewish scholars prior to Hillel ben Judah's new calendar. For example, readers may have been told that they employed a fixed 19 year cycle, which then defined the length of each month. This information is in error. Both the Mishnah and the Talmud (writings of Rabbis after 200 AD and up to 550 AD) **are saturated with examples which demonstrate that their calendar was still totally based upon actual observation, and followed no assigned patterns.** To provide just a couple of examples:

"The Mishnah" by Herbert Danby, Oxford University, 1933, [Generations #30 through #44], quote: **"7. R. Judah says: If at the New Year a man feared that [the month] might be intercalated (5: In cases of such delay of evidence of the appearance of the new moon) he may prepare two Erubs and say . . ."**; and quote: **"11. Of the New Year. After sunset on the night of the 29th of Elul [6th month] they treated the coming day as a Festival-day [Trumpets] in case witnesses arrived the next day to report that the new moon was visible the previous evening. If they did not come that day, the next day was made a Festival-day [Trumpets], and the day before was counted as the 30th of Elul."**

[As late as AD 550 the Mishnah and Talmud record that the Rabbinical communities used lunar observation to determine the calendar. However, the Talmud also records deviations from the original observed calendar; in that they inserted new rules that changed the way in which they decided if a year was to be intercalated. Even so, the new rules do not support the Hillel II Calendar's foundational premises of using fixed length months and fixed 19 year cycles.] <Back6 above >

Mishnah/Talmud Give Examples against Postponement Rules

The Mishnah, translated by Danby, Oxford Press, page 113, [Generations #30 through #44], quote: **"3. Beds may be spread on the night of Sabbath for the Sabbath day, but not on the Sabbath for the night following the Sabbath. R. Ishmael says: Garments may be folded up and beds spread on the Day of Atonement for the Sabbath [Atonement is on Friday]; and the fat pieces of the Sabbath offering may be brought on the Day of Atonement. R. Akiba says: They may bring neither those for the Sabbath on the Day of Atonement [Atonement is on Friday] nor those for the Day of Atonement on the Sabbath."**

[NOTE: The Hillel II Calendar's postponement rules prevent Atonement from ever occurring on Friday or Sunday.]

Page 117: **"if a Festival-day falls after the Sabbath the child is circumcised on the eleventh day; and if the two Festival-days of the New Year fall after the Sabbath the child is circumcised on the twelfth day. 6. R. Eliezer says: On a Festival-day next to a Sabbath, whether before it or after it . . ."**

[NOTE: The Hillel II Calendars postponement rules prevent Festival days from falling on a Friday or a Sunday.]

(I) mMeg. 1:4, in the time frame of Rabban Gamliel (80 - 116 C.E.): **"If the Megillah has been read in the First Adar [during Purim], and then the year is intercalated, it must be read again in the Second Adar."**

[This demonstrates that, even after the time of the Messiah, the decision to intercalate could still be made at any time, based upon actual observation, and was not determined 'ahead-of-time', nor by a fixed 19-year cycle. The Hillel II Calendar employs a 19 year cycle, and has all months and the number of days within each month fixed, without regards to actual observation.] <Back7 above >

Definition of 'The New Moon'

There is much debate over the definition of the term "new moon". The debate asks if the term refers to the molad, the earliest visible crescent before conjunction, or after conjunction, or at the full moon? All four possibilities have foundation in historical fact. For example, based upon the ancient records of dates given for observed solar eclipses (which are molad conjunctions) and lunar eclipses (which are full moons) it is manifest that the ancient Chinese, circa BC 1850, used the molad method. One of the three known Egyptian calendars used the waning crescent moon. Many Muslims and astrologers also use the waning crescent moon. The Babylonians, Persians, and Israelites used the earliest visible new crescent moon. Some American Indians used the full moon. In this presentation the term "new moon" will always refer to the earliest visible new crescent after conjunction, unless noted otherwise.

More significantly, the "Book of Enoch" defines the lunar month to begin at the sighting of the visible new crescent after the conjunction. Read [The Enoch Calendar with Synchronization](#)
<Back8 above >

Calendar Experts Were Only the Highly Educated Elite

Early Man and The Cosmos. Pages 11-12, quote: **"After only a single year of collaboration, however, Strassmaier and Epping managed to demonstrate that the Babylonian scribes had predicted the motion of the moon with startling mathematical precision. ... It is certain, however, that Babylonian sky watchers was an elite activity. Only intensively trained scribes could master the five hundred basic signs of cuneiform writing; the priests and kings were illiterate, relying on the scribes to inform them of portents and predictions related to the sky. The scribes were secular officials, but their quarters were often attached to the temple. Later on, their skills seem to have been passed down among a few aristocratic families. The exclusiveness of their knowledge ensured a remarkable continuity in the keeping of records. When the Assyrian scholar - tyrant Ashurbanipal (668 - 630 BC) founded his great library at Nineveh, ... he took care to preserve astronomical documents from the old Babylonian Period [taken] more than a thousand years earlier [astronomy records back to 1650 BC]."**

[Although it may be speculation on the part of the above quoted author regarding the illiteracy of the priests and kings of Babylon, it is still certain that the knowledge and duty of astronomical prediction about eclipses and seasons of the year, and their official monthly calendar, **was held exclusively by an elite group of well-educated scholars.** It was the elite scholars who were the only ones who knew the rules to determine the beginnings of years, months, festivals, and predicting seasons and eclipses. These elite scholars could be priests, but they did not have to be priests, they could be scribes. Notice that the secret knowledge was kept "in the family" and passed down through the generations. Also notice that **the records of these Babylonian scribes dated**

back to circa BC 1650, which is before the Exodus. This is further evidence that the observed lunar calendar existed at the time of Moses.] <Back9 above >

Sanhedrin Was a Governing Body Started BC 57

Encyclopedia Judaica, vol. 14, 1971, pages 836 – 839, [Generations #24 through #30], quote: **"The first historical mention of the Sanhedrin is in the statement of Josephus that in 57 BCE Gabinius divided the country into five synedria (Ant. 14:91) or synodoi (Wars 1:170). . . . Common to all these theories is the erroneous assumption that there can be only one Sanhedrin in a city. In reality, a Sanhedrin can be the king's or ruler's council, a body of high officials; a congress of allies or confederates, a military war council, etc. . . . The Romans apparently withdrew their recognition of the Sanhedrin when they dissolved the patriarchate."**

[It is very important to note that there can be more than one Sanhedrin existing at the same time. A Sanhedrin is simply "a governing body". Notice that since the concept of the Sanhedrin, as a governing body over the Temple's administration, started so late in history, Generation #24, then the question of: "who had the authority to determine the calendar prior to BC 57, for 23 generations?" has to be answered. The answer is that calendar determination was performed by the astronomy scholars who were graduates from the elite academies, who may or may not be priests in their local community.

After the destruction of the Temple, the Sanhedrin of the Jerusalem Temple ceased to exist. The Sadducees, as a functioning political party, was finished in Jerusalem. This opened the door for many other regional Sanhedrins, and new startup Sanhedrins, to each claim to have "the authority to act as the Nasi" for themselves. This is important to remember as historical evidence is evaluated. **Just because a historical document talks about a Sanhedrin's proclamations, does not mean that the Sanhedrin was recognized as having any authority beyond the city or region they represented.** It certainly does not mean that the Sanhedrin was recognized by all other Jewish authorities in Asia Minor.

In fact this is a major point. After the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, the primary and obviously authoritative Sanhedrin over the Temple ceased to exist. Later the Pharisees started up new Sanhedrins in Palestine, but also the Sadducees continued their Sanhedrins in the east Persian regions. The struggle between these two factions is the post Temple history that is being discovered.] <Back10 above >

The Calendar Synod Was Separate From the Sanhedrin

Hasting's Bible Dictionary, article "New Moon", [Generations #1 through #44], quote: **"There was no fixed calendar till the fourth century C.E. and the new moon was declared from actual observation. The eye-witnesses were carefully examined on the 30th day of each month (especially of the months of Nisan, Ab, Elul, Tishri, Chislew, and Adar), and, if the testimony of the witnesses was accepted, that day was declared 'sanctified' by fiat of the Sanhedrin."**

[Notice there were two groups, one group knew the rules for determining the calendar, and interrogated the witnesses, while the Sanhedrin was a different body which sanctified their finding and made it official.]

Another example: Mishna Rosh IIIa-Shanna, i, 4, quote: **"... Hence the authorities at Jerusalem, from the remotest times, ordered messengers to occupy the commanding heights around the metropolis, on the 30th day to communicate it to the synod; for the sake of speed, they were even allowed, during the existence of the Temple, to travel on the Sabbath and profane the Sacred Day."**

[Notice that the witnesses reported to "the synod", not to the Sanhedrin.] <Back11 above >

Babylonian Astronomers Were Not Astrologers

Early Man and The Cosmos. Walker & Company, NY. Copyright 1984. Library of Congress CCN 83-42727. ISBN 0-8027-0745-9. Page 16, quote: **"By the beginning of the Christian era, ... the Greek historian Strabo writes: 'In Babylon, a settlement is set apart for the local astronomers, the Chaldeans, as they are called, who are concerned mostly with astronomy; but some of them who are not approved by the others, profess to be astrologers'."**

[Notice that even as late in history as the first century AD, that the distinction between astronomy and astrology was well understood by Strabo and his readers. Very importantly, notice that most history books and television documentaries are wrong. It was the "Babylonian Astronomers" who were the ones called "Chaldeans". The astrologers, who may or may not have also been Chaldean, were of a much lower social class.

It was the astrologers who were the lower social class, and were not approved. In their culture, to not be approved meant that the astronomers held the astrologers to be social outcasts, and would not even greet them in public. This gives evidence that the Babylonian Chaldean astronomers (think about the Magi bearing gifts to Jesus/Yahoshua) were an honored and prominent class, even as late as the Christian era, Generation #26. Of major importance is that **the vital distinction between astronomy and astrology was known by both the Greeks and the Babylonians at the time of the Messiah.**] <Back12 above > <Back23 below >

Scholars Determined Calendar, King Only Made It Official

Essays on Jewish Chronology and Chronography, Ben Zion Wacholder, KTAV 1976. H.U.C.A. 43 (1971), "Visibility of the New Moon In Cuneiform and Rabbinic Sources", [Generations #1 through #30], page 62, quote: **"Many texts, especially from the Neo-Babylonian period, allude to the fact that the scholars determined the period for the intercalation of the month (based upon the visibility of the new moon), informed the king of this, who in turn instructed the Babylonian temple as to the official proclamation of the month, and they, the officials of the Babylonian temple, instructed those of neighboring cities.**

From one text we learn that the king orders Addaru intercalated (YOS 3 115). In a second, six people write to the temple administrator, people qualified to enter the temple, and the assembly of Eanna, that the king has ordered Addaru intercalated. The recipients of the letter are to see that the proper rites are performed, and to be sure it is done promptly (YOS 3 152)."

[On page 64 it summarizes a similar procedure for Jerusalem's Temple. The astronomy experts (in the Jerusalem synod) interviewed the witnesses and declared a decision. The Sanhedrin then disseminated the decision to other communities via signal fires.

Notice this evidence categorically states that it was the astronomy scholars who held the authority for determining the calendar. The king and the temple officials only followed the determinations of the astronomy scholars by administering their findings to the other communities. The same relationship and duties were held between the Sanhedrin and the calendar priests of the synod.]
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Hananiah Tried To Fix The Calendar, Was Ruled Wrong!

Jewish Encyclopedia, vol. 6, 1910, article "Hananiah (Hanina)", [Haninah Hananiah Hanina 140 AD, Generation #33], <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haninah> quote: **"Believing that Roman tyranny had succeeded in permanently suppressing the religious institutions [academies] which, in spite of the Jewish dispersion, had held the remnants of Israel together, Hananiah attempted to establish an authoritative body in his new home [in the Babylon region]. To render the Babylonian schools [academies] independent of Palestine, he arranged a calendar fixing the Jewish festivals and bissextile years [years having 13 months] on the principles that prevailed in Palestine. . . .**

In March 139 or 140 A.D., a message arrived from Rome announcing the repeal of the Hadrianic decrees; soon thereafter the surviving rabbis, especially the disciples of Akiba [a famous but deceased calendar scholar whose academy was in Palestine], convened at Usha, and reorganized the Sanhedrin with Simon b. Gamaliel II as president. They sought to reestablish the central authority, and naturally would not brook any rivals. Messengers were therefore dispatched to Nehar-Pekod, instructed to urge Hananiah to acknowledge the authority of the parent Sanhedrin [the new Judean Sanhedrin], and to desist from disrupting the religious unity of Israel.

The messengers at first approached him in a kindly spirit, showing him great respect. This he reciprocated, and he presented them to his followers as superior personages; but when he realized their real mission he endeavored to discredit them. They, for their part, contradicted him in his lectures; what he declared pure they denounced as impure; and when at last he asked them, 'Why do you always oppose me?' they plainly told him, 'Because thou, contrary to law, ordainest bissextile years [years having 13 months] in foreign lands'.

The Jerusalem Talmud relates that the deputies, to impress upon him the enormity of secession from the parent authority, publicly parodied Scriptural passages. One of them substituted 'Hananiah' for 'the Lord' in 'These are the feasts of the Lord' (Lev. xxiii. 4). Another recited, 'Out of Babylonia shall go forth the Law, and the word of the Lord from Nehar-Pekod,' instead of 'Out of Zion' and 'from Jerusalem' (Isa. ii. 3). When the people corrected them by calling out the proper readings, the deputies laconically replied, 'With us!' Yer. Ned. vi. 23a).

They also declared that the steps taken by Hananiah and his followers were tantamount to building an altar on unholy ground and serving it with illegitimate priests. Altogether, they pointed out, his course was a renunciation of the god of Israel.

The people [Jewish community] recognized their error and repented, but Hananiah held out. He appealed to Judah b. Bathyra, then in Nisibus, for support; but the latter not only refused to participate in the secession movement, but prevailed on Hananiah to submit to the orders emanating from the Judean Sanhedrin. Hananiah ended his life peacefully in Babylon."

[A bissextile year is to decide to intercalate a year with an extra 13th month. Both Hananiah's and Hillel's calendars fixed the determination of future bissextile years. **Notice that the calendar academies were "in authority", and were holding Israel together, using the same calendar as they used before, as late as AD 140.** Notice that the reason for Hananiah thinking that he needed to establish a fixed calendar in AD 140 was exactly the same reason Hillel ben Judah thought that he needed to establish a fixed calendar 200 years later, about 10 generations later. But notice that Hananiah's peers and superiors **felt that to arrange a calendar fixing the bissextile years was akin to establishing a false religion.** The central authority felt most strongly that to do such a deed was **"a renunciation of the God of Israel"**.

Remember that this struggle is circa AD 140, several generations after the Temple was destroyed. This struggle was over "authority", and was about **who proclaims the observed lunar calendar for both the Judean and the Babylonian regions,** a regional calendar.

This struggle cannot be interpreted as a dispute over who makes the mathematical calculations for a pre-calculated calendar. The fact that the dispute included the topic of when to have a year with 13 months, is ample proof that the issue was not about a pre-calculated Hillel II type of calendar.

This historical account is a very strong indictment against those using a pre-calculated pre-sanctified calendar.] <Back15 above >

New Moon Announcements Made Outside Of Jerusalem

Hasting's Bible Dictionary, article "New Moon", [Generations #30 through #38], quote: **"The new moon was announced in Judea till the year 225 A.D., when the declaration was made in Tiberius."**

[There is much significance to this simple statement. Foremost is that **the observed lunar calendar was still being determined and proclaimed by the Rabbinical Tradition in Tiberius as late as AD 225,** Generation #38.

This means that at least the first ten generations of Christians, even in Palestine, used an observed lunar calendar.] <Back16 above >

Entire Greater Region Used the Same Lunar Calendar

"Babylonian Chronology 626 B.C. - A.D. 75" by Richard Parker and Waldo Dubberstein. Copyright 1956 by Brown University Press, Providence, Rhode Island. Library of Congress CCN 56-10735. Page 2, [Generations #1 through #30], quote: **"The three letters (three of the Elephantine letters) together give the impression that the orders for intercalary months were issued by the king in Chaldean Babylon, then by the priestly officials at Babylon after Persia took over. ... The orders transmitted to the temple officials at Uruk look very much like 'form letters', and it seems reasonably certain that they were sent to temple officials throughout Babylonia."**

[Remember that these priests were graduates from the same academies. It was they who told the king, and the king made their determination official. This evidence shows that the whole of the Babylonian empire was unified with a single calendar. Thus, for a time, even Ezra and the Jerusalem Temple's priests used the same calendar as decreed from Babylon. Later, the Palestinian

academies and graduates established themselves as the central calendar authority for all Israel, including those communities in Asia Minor / Persia.

The reader is reminded that Jewish/Israeli communities existed all over Asia Minor and the greater region (even Europe and India). Esther 8:9 specifies that the Persian Empire was divided into 127 separate regions from India to Ethiopia. The academies of Ezra existed throughout the Babylonian and Persian Empire. The academy graduates learned the same calendar rules, were the officials in their local community, and believed it was their duty to keep "All of Israel United" in new moon and Holy Day observances. The object was not to serve just those around Jerusalem. All communities were told and expected to follow the exact same calendar.] <Back17 above >

Calendar Rules Consistent From Generation to Generation

From "Essays on Jewish Chronology and Chronography", page 65, footnote 12 in the context of Rabban Gamaliel cross-examining witnesses, [Generations #1 through #32]: **"The implication is that Rabban Gamaliel was a professional astronomer, who could calculate the presence of the new moon without witnesses. . . . Rabban said to the Sages: 'Thus, I have received from the school of my grandfather . . .'**"

[This evidence is very important for three reasons:

- 1.) It confirms that they did calculate the moon's cycles, but still waited for witnesses. Their calendar was an observed calendar, with calculations used as reference, obscured visibility, and close-calls.
- 2.) It demonstrates that the astronomy scholars were still performing their calendar determination duties for Israel, which included the examination of witnesses, even after the destruction of the Temple, on into the years AD 80 – AD 116. They were still administering an observed lunar calendar.
- 3.) This is more evidence that the rules for calendar determination were consistent from the Second Temple Era up to at least AD 116, throughout the early Christian church. Notice that these rules were taught to Rabban Gamaliel through **"the school of my grandfather"**. This one sentence tells of the existence of an old and immediately recognized authoritative academy, and of the family tree of graduates who learned the calendar determination rules. By deduction, this evidence shows that the calendar rules used in AD 116 were consistent with the calendar rules taught over the years by these established academies. Thus, the evidence is that **the calendar rules were handed down from one generation to another, and remained consistent throughout the time of Jesus (Yahoshua) and the early church.**] <Back18 above >

Hillel II Calendar Meant Only As A Temporary Reaction

History Of The Jews, by Heinrich Graetz, 1927, Vol. 2, Chapter XXI, page 573, [Generation #44], quote: **"In order to put a stop to all difficulty and uncertainty, Hillel II introduced a final and fixed calendar; that is to say he placed at everyone's disposal the means of establishing the rules which had guided the Synhedrion up till then in the calculation of the calendar and the fixing of the festivals. With his own hand the Patriarch destroyed the last bond which united the communities dispersed throughout the Roman and Persian empires with the Patriarchate. He was more concerned for the certainty of the continuance of Judaism than for the dignity of his own house, and therefore abandoned those functions for which his ancestors, Gamaliel II and Simon his son, had been so jealous and solicitous."**

[One has to feel a high degree of respect for Hillel ben Judah, a man willing to diminish himself for the sake of the continuance of Judaism. Given the severe persecutions and disrupted communications, the decision to fix the calendar for a while seems a reasonable reaction. Even in the Jewish Calendar's prolog it identifies the fixed calendar as being a temporary measure. It may be considered that Hillel never-ever thought that his temporary calendar would still be used 1600 years later, 81 generations.]

Page 574, [Generations #44 through #86], quote: **"The oppression which fell upon the inhabitants of Palestine [by the Christian church], and which gave rise to Hillel's calendar, augmented the importance and influence of Babylonia, and although Christianity could boast of having broken up the academies and destroyed, so to speak, the Temple of the Law in Judea, the destruction was nevertheless merely local. In Babylonia the study of the Law acquired so vigorous an impetus that the achievements of ancient times were almost eclipsed; the study of the Law was now celebrating the period of its maturity."**

[This evidence brings out two major points:

- 1) is that Hillel ben Judah knew that his decision would split the Roman occupied Jewish communities from the Persian occupied Jewish communities. This alone informs us that previously they were acting as one unified community. But the Roman communities needed a reaction to the persecutions. The Persian communities had no such situation, and could continue to use the same observed lunar calendar as before.
- 2) is that the Hillel II Calendar was a stop gap solution to a situation that is no longer a reality. If Hillel ben Judah did not have the persecution and communication problems, he would not have created a fixed calendar solution. Without the bad situation, he would have continued as before, meaning that the Hillel II Calendar would never have existed.

This perspective changes the way in which the term "authority" is viewed. From this perspective **it is not a matter of importance that Hillel ben Judah had or did not have the authority to change the calendar. It is instead a matter that the observed calendar method was and still is the more ancient method, and therefore is the original preferred authority.**

With this perspective, the Hillel II Calendar was only a temporary measure to be used until such time as the preferred observed lunar calendar method could be used once again. In Asia Minor / Persia the preferred calendar method continued to be used, while in the west Hillel's temporary measure slowly became dominant.] <Back19 above >

The First Month Is Never In Winter

Below is historical evidence that the first lunar month must begin after the spring equinox when the sun is in the first zodiac-sign. The lunar year is not based on only looking at the moon, nor on a ripening barley harvest, nor on "just so long as Passover is in spring". The "Observed Calendar of the Second Temple" was based on the sun, and the moon, and the Zodiac.

This evidence shows that the same calendar method was used at the time of this documentation, circa AD 320, back through the time of Christ circa AD 30, back to at least circa BC 220 when the Septuagint was translated. This means that the same "Lunar Calendar" was used for at least 28 generations, and **was the calendar used at the time of the Messiah's Passover prophecy fulfillment.**

This evidence leaves no doubt which calendar was used for the Temple's Holy Days, nor which calendar Yahoshua and the early Church used. **Also notice that this evidence tells us that the Church was still keeping the Passover Festival and Unleavened Bread, on the exact same day as the Jewish Community calculated, as late as AD 320.**

In Contrast: the Hillel II Calendar allows the first month to begin while the sun is still in the winter zodiac-sign. Notice the forceful criticism of such a practice as being "**an extraordinary mistake**". The ancient Lunar Calendar never allowed Abib/Nisan to begin while the sun was still in winter. (Penguin Books) "**Eusebius: The History of the Church From Christ to Constantine**" Circa AD 320 the mathematician Anatolius of Alexander is condemning the proposed lunar calendar changes, which allowed the lunar year to begin in winter. "**FROM THE CANONS OF ANATOLIUS ON THE EASTER FESTIVAL**", pages 252-253:

[Begin Quote]

"On this day the sun is found not only to **have reached the first sign** of the Zodiac, but to be already passing through the fourth day within it.

This sign is generally known as the first of the twelve, the equinoctial sign, the beginning of months, head of the cycle, and start of the planetary course. But the sign before that is the last of the months, the twelfth sign, last stage, and end of the planetary circuit. [Notice the sun's position within the Zodiac is part of the Lunar Calendar.]

For this reason I am convinced **that those who place the first month in it** [starting Abib/Nisan when the sun is still in winter], and fix the Paschal 'fourteenth day' accordingly, **make a great and indeed an extraordinary mistake**.

This is not my own suggestion: the Jews were aware of the fact long ago, **even before Christ's time**, and observed it carefully. [Notice the ancient Lunar Calendar never allowed this method.]

We can learn it from the statements of [citing a long tradition of experts who knew] Philo, Josephus, and Musacus, and not them only but still earlier writers, the two Agathobuli, famous as the teachers of Aristobulus the Great. He was one of the Seventy who translated the sacred and inspired Hebrew Scriptures for Ptolemy Philadelphus and his father; he also dedicated commentaries on the Mosaic Law to the same kings.

These authorities, in explaining the problems of the Exodus, state that the Passover ought invariably to be sacrificed after the spring equinox, at the middle of the first month; and that this occurs when the sun is passing through the first sign of the solar [Notice the 'this occurs' is the fixing of the lunar first month after the sun's position is past the **solar equinox**, then counting 14 days to Passover.], or as some of them call it, the zodiac cycle. [Note that only a lunar calendar can have both the sun and moon be in the Zodiac's first sign and also be on the 14th day, and with a full moon.]

Aristobulus adds that it is necessary at the Passover Festival that not only the sun but the moon as well should be passing through an equinoctial sign. There are two of these signs, one in spring, one in autumn, diametrically opposite each other, and the day of the Passover is assigned to the fourteenth of the month, after sunset; so the moon will occupy the position diametrically opposite the sun, **as we can see when the moon is full**: the sun will be in the sign of the spring equinox, the moon inevitably in that of the autumnal.

I am familiar with many other of their statements, in some cases probable, in others claimed as final proofs, by which they try to show that the festival of the Passover and Unleavened Bread ought always to be kept after the equinox [by context this is referring to those in error who allow a winter new year "just so long as Passover is in spring"]. But I decline to demand such a structure of proof from those from whom has been removed the veil on the Law of Moses; for them it remains now with face unveiled at all times to reflect like a mirror Christ and the life of Christ, His lessons and sufferings. That the first month according to the Hebrews includes the equinox can be shown also by reference to Enoch." [The Sumerian Lunar Calendar circa BC 2250 also demonstrates this too.]

End Quote

Also notice that the credentials of the astronomy scholars follow the scholar's name, not the academy's name they came from. <Back20 above >

Talmud Preserves Observed Calendar, and 2nd 6th Months

Essays on Jewish Chronology and Chronography: page 71 under "Conclusions", having the context of talking about the Hillel II Calendar, [Generations #2 through #54], quote: **"(3) The Talmud still appears to preserve the older system of observation of the lunar crescent, if we may take written record as reflecting actual procedure. It would seem, therefore, that the system of calendation preserved in 1st or 2nd century rabbinic texts preserves a system which was in use before 481 B.C.E. and continued in use even after a new one [the Hillel II Calendar] was introduced in Babylonia. The talmudic system [in context this means the Hillel II Calendar] could not have been adopted until -- at the earliest -- 359 C.E., and possibly as late as the seventh century of the Christian era."** Another example is on page 69: **"... the state of affairs in the Talmud reflect a procedure in which it was still conceivable to intercalate Ullul II [this is adding a 2nd 6th month] as one of the intercalary months, though it was officially discouraged."**

[Notice that the older calendar system was the observed calendar, and that it was used back to BC 481. This correlates with the Elephantine letters of the same period, showing that the observed calendar of Israel and the calendar of Babylon were exactly the same calendar.

Also note that the Hillel II Calendar did not exist at all prior to its creation circa AD 359, and was not adopted until after AD 600. But especially notice that as late as AD 550, Generations #54, (the Talmud was finished circa AD 550) that the calendar the Rabbis used was still an observed lunar calendar, which would allow declaring 2nd 6th months as required.] <Back21 above >

Abraham Taught Egyptians Astronomy, Fought Astrology

"The Works of Josephus", Translated by William Whiston. Copyright 1987. Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, Massachusetts, 01961-3473. ISBN: 0-913573-86-8. From "The Antiquities Of The Jews", Chapter 7, Paragraph 1, Page 38., There has always been a distinction between astronomy as a science and astrology as a religion. Abraham was a renowned astronomer who it is said: **"taught the Egyptians a more perfect science of astronomy"**. Abraham speaking to the Egyptians, quote: **"That there was but one God, the Creator of the universe; and that, as to other gods [in context meaning the stars and planets], if they contributed anything to the happiness of men, that each of them afforded it only according to his [the Creator's] appointment, and not by their own power.'** This his opinion was derived from the irregular

phenomena that were visible both at land and sea, as well as those that happen to the sun and moon, and all the heavenly bodies, thus: 'If [said Abraham] these bodies had power of their own, they would certainly take care of their own regular motions, but since they do not preserve such regularity, they make it plain, that in so far as they cooperate to our advantage, they do it not of their own abilities, but as they are subservient to him [the Creator] that commands them; to whom alone we ought justly to offer our honor and thanksgiving.' "

[From this several points emerge:

- 1) is that the Egyptians believed that the sun, moon, and planets effected men, which of course is the fundamental tenets of astrology. **This is evidence that the religion of astrology existed over 1100 years prior the Babylonian astrologers.**
- 2) is that Abraham knew about the science of astronomy which studies the Creator's handiwork by investigating the motions of the sun, moon, and planets through the heavens.
- 3) is that the primary purpose behind Abraham's speech was to convince the audience to worship the Creator who commands, rather than the sun, moon, and planets who are nothing but the servants of the Creator.
- 4) is that Abraham was the expert astronomer. He would have taught his children the art of astronomy. It is Abraham's descendants who would later become the educated elite priests which knew astronomy, and who would determine the calendar for the nations.] <Back22 above >

Magi Were Babylonian Astronomer Priests, Not Astrologers

Strabo, "The Geography of Strabo", translated by Horace Jones, 11,9,3, [Generations #14 through #30], quote: **"That the Council of the Parthians . . . consists of two groups, one that of the kinsmen, and the other that of the wise men and magi, from both of which groups the kings [of Parthia] were appointed [only from the royal family, the Arsacids]."**

Rawlinson, "The Sixth Oriental Monarchy", Page 86: **"[The Magi, known as Magistanes] were a powerful body, consisting of an organized hierarchy which had come down from ancient times, and was feared and venerated by all classes of people. Their numbers at the close of the Empire, counting males only, are reckoned at 80,000; they possessed considerable tracts of fertile land, and were the sole inhabitants of many large towns or villages, which they were permitted to govern as they pleased."**

[The ancient culture was extremely social-class-conscious. That the Magi belonged to a social class that was feared and venerated by all other classes is a very important clue. The Chaldean astronomers were the only social class that matches this evidence.

Read the account of the Magi in Matthew, and note all of the clues showing the high social status of these men. The Magi were granted immediate audience with King Herod. All Jerusalem was effected by their presence. Herod answered their questions. Herod did not hinder them, even though they were going to recognize a new king to eventually replace him and his sons. They had wealth, and the authority to recognize who the "King of the Jews" would be. God lead them to Jesus (Yahoshua), and God gave them a dream to go home another way. God guided and protected these Magi. God worked with and through the Magi, and did not do these things through the local Temple authorities.

<GOTO: [Babylonian Astronomers Were Not Astrologers](#) above Back23 >

(The remaining commentary assumes that you have read this above link.)

However, nearly all modern authoritative references seem to say just the opposite about the Magi. Quoting from just a few encyclopedias and references will convey the confusion. **“The Magi were specialists in interpreting the signs in the heavens. According to the dialogue "Alcibiades", ascribed to Plato, the Persian Magi practiced a form of spiritual mysticism which was their religion.”**

“Magi (Majusian): From old Persian language, a priest of Zarathustra (Zoroaster).”

“Encarta: Magi, priestly caste in ancient Persia. They are thought to have been followers of Zoroaster, the Persian teacher and prophet. Professing the doctrines of Zoroastrianism, they practiced a ritual that involved pouring libations of milk, oil, and honey over a flame while chanting prayers and hymns. Gradually, the religion of the magi incorporated Babylonian elements, including astrology, demonology, and magic. (The word magic is derived from the word *magi*.) By the 1st century AD, the magi were identified with wise men and soothsayers.”

It seems that the ancient Greek historian Strabo, and the others, are being contradicted. However, just read some other quotes which begin to unravel the confusion:

“The word "Magi" is the plural form of the word "magus" (from old Persian "magu") which designates a member of an ancient Near Eastern priestly caste.”

“Ancient Syria has been successively ruled by the Egyptians, Babylonians, Hittites, Chaldeans and Persians.”

The Chaldeans were a people, a historical bloodline that were powerful enough to actually rule territory, like Syria. Therefore the confusion is clarified by combining two rhymes of the same paradigm: “All Magi are Chaldeans, but not all Chaldeans are Magi”, and, “All Magi practice astronomy, but not all astronomers practice astrology.”

The Magi were Chaldeans, of that bloodline, and they were Persian priests having a bloodline dating back to ancient antiquity. But within the ranks of these Persian priests there were both astronomers and astrologers. Both co-existing at the same time.

This same confusion is experienced when describing any population and their religious practices. For example: “All Elders are Christians, but not all Christians are Elders”, and, “All Elders practice ‘Bible-Studying’, but not all ‘Bible-Studiers’ practice ‘Bible-Code-Interpretations’.” With the above rhymes: reading an historical reference about there being “Elders” in Babylon which practice “Bible-Code-Interpretations”, does not mean that all other “Elders” in Babylon must also be doing the same thing. It also does not mean that all Christians must therefore practice “Bible-Code-Interpretations”.

Likewise, reading an historical reference about there being “Magi” in Babylon / Persia which practice “astrology”, does not mean that all other “Magi” are also astrologers.

The encyclopedias and references are not properly distinguishing between the Chaldean bloodline, the Magi who are priests, and the specific groups of Magi practicing different religions as priests.

The evidence shows that some Magi were highly esteemed astronomers having their own land, and openly rejected the astrologers, while other Magi were astrologer priests. It was the Magi-

Astronomers which were the higher social class, and that the Magi-Astrologers who were the socially outcast. It was a group of the higher class Magi-Astronomers which traveled to worship Jesus (Yahoshua) as the recognized king of the Jews.] <Back24 above >

Current Sabbath 7 Day Cycle Has Never Been Broken

"The Talmud the Steinsaltz Edition", Volume XIV Tractate Ta'anit Part II, Copyright 1995 by Israel Institute for Talmudic Publications and Milta Books, ISBN 0-679-44398-3, pages 206. It says the following regarding the destruction of the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem, built by Solomon, and destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar's army, quote: **"When the Temple was destroyed for the first time at the hands of Nebuzaradan [captain of the guard], that day was the ninth of Av, and it was the day following Shabbat [a Sunday], and it was the year following the Sabbatical Year . . . And similarly when the Temple was destroyed a second time at the hands of Titus, the destruction occurred on the very same day, on the ninth of Av."**

"The Babylonian Talmud, Mishnah Tract, 'Arakin 11b, quote: **"The day on which the first Temple was destroyed was the ninth of Ab, and it was at the going out of the Sabbath [i.e. Sunday] and at the end of the seventh [Sabbatical] year. . . . The same happened the second time [the second Sanctuary's destruction]."**

[In II Kings 25:8-9 it is learned that the first Temple was destroyed in the 19th year (non-accession counting method) of king Nebuchadnezzar. These ancient records provide a clear example of reporting two known events, the destruction of Solomon's Temple in BC 587 and Herod's Temple in AD 70, as occurring relative to a Sabbath day.

Both in BC 587 and in AD 70 the observed calendar had the 9th of Ab as a Sunday, which is the 9th began Saturday night as the Sabbath ended. The other years around these dates do not match the historical record. The years BC 588 and BC 586 do not match, and the years AD 71 and AD 69 do not match. Neither is there a match when forcing the alleged "Spring Passover Rule" to be used. Only (the Julian evening of) 08/26/587 BC and 08/04/70 AD using the observed lunar calendar yield the 9th of Ab leading into a Sunday.

In BC 587 the alleged "Spring Passover Rule" was definitely not used. They intercalated, not allowing spring to begin on the month's 4th day, that is, the intercalated crescent occurred in winter by 3.5 days, so they waited a month to begin the next year.

This is very important evidence. The fact that these two Sabbath references match demonstrates that the observed lunar calendar was used circa BC 587, and was still being used circa AD 70. It also demonstrates that the weekday in which the Sabbath day falls upon, Saturday, has not been corrupted for the last 2600 years.

Since it was the Creator Himself, after the Exodus circa BC 1497, which laid out the manna to demonstrate which days were work days and which days were Sabbaths, and since Israel's culture and priesthood lineage has not been broken, it is easily concluded that the weekly seven day cycle has not been interrupted throughout history.] <Back25 above >

Sadducees Were the Temple's Official Calendar Authority

"The New Bible Dictionary, s.v. "Calendar", [Generations #1 through #30], quote: "In general, the Jewish calendar in NT times (at least before AD 70) followed the Sadducean reckoning, since it was by that reckoning that the Temple services were regulated."

[This is important evidence because it identifies which of the two rival religious factions, the Sadducees or the Pharisees, actually controlled the Temple and priests, and therefore held the official authority to determine the Temple's calendar. The Sadducees and their academies were the official calendar authorities, the official Nasi. Their pronouncements regulated the Temple priests, and therefore Israel. The Pharisees and their academies were not official calendar authorities.]
<Back26 above >

Mishnah/Talmud Written By the Pharisees

Achtemier, Harper's Bible Dictionary, s.v. "Mishnah", [Generation #36 on], quote: "The Mishnah is a collection of rabbinic laws arranged in sixty-three tractates and six orders which cover agricultural tithes, public feasts, marriage (especially economic arrangements), torts, sacrifices at the Temple, and ritual purity. Created about AD 200 in Palestine under Rabbi Judah the Prince, the text underwent some evolution and was interpreted and its teachings modified by the Palestinian and Babylonian Talmuds.

The Talmuds (Palestinian and Babylonian) are commentaries on the Mishnah. The Palestinian Talmud covers the first four orders of the Mishnah and was completed in the mid-fifth century CE [near 450 AD]. The Babylonian Talmud covers the Mishnaic orders of feasts, women, damages and sacrifices, and was completed in the mid-sixth century CE [near 550 AD]. The Babylonian Talmud was more fully edited than the Palestinian, and became authoritative for most of [Rabbinic] Judaism because of the dominance of the Babylonian community well into the Islamic period. All of these documents postdate the period of the Second Temple and were compiled by the Pharisees and their descendants. There are only passing references to the calendar in these documents, and nowhere can you find a detailed accounting. It is also true that contradictory statements can be found within the confines of the Talmud."

[Note that the Mishnah and Palestinian and Babylonian Talmud are documents written 200 to 500 years, 10 to 25 generations, after the Temple was destroyed. They were written by descendants of the Pharisees, who did not have the official calendar authority of the Sadducees that regulated the Temple priests. The Mishnah and Talmud, as a line of historical record, represent the Rabbinical Tradition. These documents do not represent the official calendar of the Temple's priests that was used from BC 520 through AD 70, 30 generations of the Bible.

Even so, the Mishnah and Talmud document an observed calendar being used. The Hillel II Calendar is not even hinted at. This means that, although the Pharisees were slowly adding new rules governing when to intercalate a year, they were still fundamentally following an observed lunar calendar, all the way up to at least AD 550. This then demonstrates that the observed lunar calendar was used for at least (520 BC + 550 AD) 1070 years, 54 generations, and included over 24 generations of the western Jewish communities.

The preponderance of evidence suggests that the Pharisees, after the destruction of the Temple, further separated themselves from the dominance of the Sadducees, and slowly began to insert new

rules for intercalation. After the failed Jewish rebellion of AD 132, when all Jews were expelled from Jerusalem, the Pharisees started academies in Babylonia. These academies were rivals of the more ancient academies of Ezra which taught the observed lunar calendar without the Pharisee's new rules.

Regardless of the motive, this much is certain. Any calendar derived by the Pharisees, and documented as the Rabbinical Tradition is in the same classification as all of the other calendars invented by men of other Jewish sects. We do not care about any of the other calendars found in archaeology. We only care to discover the calendar that was officially used by Ezra and the Second Temple's priests. Changes introduced after AD 70 by the Rabbinical Tradition are historically interesting, but they do not affect the rules of the original observed lunar calendar.

Only the Sadducees represented the succession of priests and academies from Ezra. As a political force, only the Sadducees determined the official calendar that was then used to assign the priests duties, and to administer the Temple's services on the Holy Days. Although we may not agree with many of the doctrines of the Sadducees, doctrine is not the issue. The issue is finding the official calendar used in the Temple. The calendar of the Second Temple Era was the observed lunar calendar, generally called "The Sumerian Lunar Calendar" known to exist circa BC 2250.]
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Passover Dates Of AD 222 Not From Hillel II Calendar

Handbuch der Mathematischen und technischen Chronologie, 3 vols, Friedrich Karl Ginzler, Leipzig, J. C. Hinrich'sche Buchhandlung (1906, 1911, 1914), vol 3, Page 376,

<https://archive.org/stream/handbuchdermathe03ginzuoft#page/236/mode/2up>
tells how the Jews of Alexandria surrendered their Passover dates to Antiochus for the years AD 222 through AD 333, and that those dates do not match dates as computed using the rules of the Hillel II Calendar. These dates do demonstrate the use of a lunar calendar, having the 1st day start at the observed new crescent.

[This is substantial evidence that the Hillel II Calendar did not exist prior to its publication.]
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Observed Calendar Was Being Used In BC 4

Josephus, Antiquities, Book 17, Chapter 6.4, [Generation #26], quote: **"This Mattias the high priest, on the night before the day when the fast was to be celebrated, seemed, in a dream, to have conversation with his wife; and because he could not officiate himself on that account, Joseph, the son of Ellemus, his kinsman, assisted him in that sacred office. But Herod deprived this Mattias of the high priesthood, and burnt the other Matthias, who had raised the sedition, with his companions, alive. And that very night there was an eclipse of the moon."**

[This event is the food-fast on the night before the day of Purim, Adar 14th and 15th, in some unstated year near Herod's death. There were only two lunar eclipses between BC 5 and BC 1 that were in the winter. These two choices are (Julian):

- 1) Tuesday morning around 3:24 AM on 03/13/4 BC and
- 2) Thursday night around 10:55 PM on 03/23/5 BC.

With both choices, the only way to place those eclipses on Adar 15th is to **NOT employ the alleged Spring Passover Rule**. When the alleged Spring Passover Rule is not used, and the observed calendar is used, it happens that both choices fall on Adar 15th. **Whichever eclipse this event is referencing, it is manifest that they were using the observed lunar calendar's rules**, in which the next year's first month's crescent must be in the spring.] <Back29 above >

Observed Calendar Is the Same As Was Used In BC 2180

“The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible”, Vol. 1, 1962, Abingdon Press, “Calendar”, Page 484, quote: **“Calendars combining both solar and lunar reckoning were, however, widely used throughout the Near East even in very ancient times, and the Hebrews probably always had a lunar-solar calendar. . . . A lunar-solar calendar was adopted by the first Babylonian dynasty (ca. 1830-1550 B.C.), and became effective in Assyria during the first millennium B.C. The Babylonians gave Semitic names to the months, but in most other respects this calendar was substantially the Sumerian calendar of Nippur as observed in the third dynasty of Ur (ca. 2180–1960). This calendar reckoned the year from one vernal equinox to the next, while counting months from new moon to new moon, with an added month when this was needed to make up the discrepancy. These lunar months were of thirty days length except when a new moon occurred on the thirtieth day, in which case this would become the first day of the new month.”**

[It is outside of the scope of this presentation to analyze the observed lunar calendar prior to Ezra, circa BC 520. However, notice that the ancient lunar calendar of Ur computes the years from equinox to equinox, and declares a 13th month when needed. These are the same rules for both.

Consider, if there were no years with close-calls, then the calendar of BC 2180 would yield the exact same calendar as the observed lunar calendar of the Second Temple Era. It is staggering to think about the lunar calendar of Ur also being used before the flood by Noah ¹⁹, and even by Adam and Eve.] <Back30 above >

Persian King Issues A Passover Edict

A. Cowley, Aramaic Papyri of the 5th Century, p. 60ff., 1923 - Ed. Myer, Der Papyrusfund von Elephantine, p. 96, 1912, [Generation #6]: One papyrus letter, No. 21, is a **“Passover Edict”** issued by King Darius II, circa BC 423 to BC 405, to the Jewish soldiers at Elephantine Egypt. Although the papyrus is badly damaged, it is still visible that the Elephantine soldiers were admonished by the king to keep the Passover from the 15th through the 21st according to the specifications given.

¹⁹ Many describe “The Enoch Calendar” as defining a fixed 364 day year. However, this is not what the “Book of Enoch” says. But taking this misunderstanding, many Bible students read Genesis 8:3 as describing 5 months in the 150 days of the flood, and conclude that all months in Noah's day had exactly 30 days. However, this is not necessarily the answer. The observed lunar calendar can have four 30 day months in a sequence of five months, totally 149 days. Because the ancients counted inclusively (having no value of zero), the 150 day value specified is really a 149 day count after the event of the first day. Thus, the observed lunar calendar may have been used even in Noah's time.

[Notice that the Persian king issued a religious edict to the Jews in Egypt. Notice further that the Persian king agreed to let his Jewish soldiers be off duty so that they could observe the Jewish religion's holy time. This is more evidence that the Persian kings and the Jewish priests of Ezra fully cooperated, and used the same calendar.] <Back31 above >

Hillel II Calendar's Foundational Tenets Were Fabricated

“The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 BC – AD 135)”, Emil Schurer, vol. 1, 1973, rev. & ed. By Geza Vermes, Fergus Millar, T. & T. Clark, p. 591, [Generations #31 through #36], quote: **“It would, however, be a mistake to conclude that, except in some particular Jewish circles, the duration of the month was fixed in advance. This cannot yet have been the case even in the time of the Mishnah (c. AD 200). For the entire legislation of the Mishnah rests on the presupposition that, without any previous reckoning, each new month began when the new moon became visible. As soon as the new moon's appearance was confirmed by trustworthy witnesses before the competent court in Jerusalem (later in Jamnia), it was ‘sanctified’, and messengers were sent out in all directions to announce the opening of the new month . . . As it was obviously known with a fair degree of accuracy when the new moon was to be expected, every effort will have been made to fix it on the correct day. But the duration of each individual month was not fixed. This is confirmed by the following to passages in the Mishnah: (I) mEruv. 3:7; ‘If before the New Year a man feared that [the month Elul] might be intercalated ...’, (2) mArak. 2:2, ‘In a year there are never less than four full months [of thirty days], nor do more than eight months require to be considered.’ The first passage discloses that it was by no means determined in advance whether a month [even the 6th month] was to have 29 or 30 days. And the second passage shows how uncertain the calendar was [length of each year] under this empirical system: . . .”**

[There is no doubt that the Hillel II Calendar, or the use of a 19 year cycle, did not exist when the Mishnah was written, circa AD 200. Hillel's calendar fixes the month of Elul, the 6th month, to always have exactly 29 days ²⁰. Also, there is no concept of any “postponement rules” being used in the Mishnah or the Talmud.

Notice that the foundational premises to which the Hillel II Calendar is based, (they being fixed length months, fixed bissextile years, and include “postponement rules”), are all absent in the Mishnah, and prior history. Without a historical basis, it can only be admitted that the concepts forming the basis of the Hillel II Calendar, (as allowing fixed length months, fixed bissextile years, and “postponement rules”), were all fabricated by Hillel's synod circa AD 390.] <Back32 above >

Babylonian/Palestinian Authorities Diverging Circa AD 163

“The Jewish Encyclopedia”, Vol.3, 1901, 1910, p. 500, [Generations #33 through #36]: [quote] **“Under the patriarchate of Simon III (140 – 163 AD) a great quarrel arose concerning the feast-days and the leap-year [bissextile year], which threatened to cause a permanent schism between the Babylonian and the Palestinian communities – a result which was only averted by the exercise of much diplomacy.”** [end quote]

²⁰ This footnote is part of the quoted text: **“It is clear from mSheb. 10:2 that the later rule according to which Elul must always have 29 days, did not exist at that time.”**

[Circa AD 163 there appears to be a major divergence in the rules for calendar determinations. Notice that this account can only be talking about an observed lunar calendar. **It cannot be talking about a fixed pre-calculated calendar.**

Up until that time both eastern and western communities were still being synchronized, using the same observed lunar calendar. But in AD 163 either the Babylonian or the Palestinian calendar authorities tried to deviate from the ancient rules. Notice that the argument was between eastern and western communities, and therefore between Rabbinical and non-Rabbinical academies. Other evidence shows that it was the Rabbinical line of Palestinian authorities which began to add extra rules to the calendar. By trying to implement their “new rules”, they started to cause a major schism with the eastern communities, which obviously refused to accept their changes.

This evidence also demonstrates that Christian communities in the east were still following the same unchanged observed lunar calendar as late as AD 163, Generation #35, that is, seven generations of Christians.

The next paragraph, p. 500: [summary] ...tells how the Samaritans, circa AD 163 – AD 193, confused the Jews by lighting false new moon signal fires. This confusion caused the Jews to switch to using messengers instead. This then caused the more remote communities to have to begin to keep two days holy instead of one. [end summary]

Notice that this Samaritan deception **did not occur until five generations after the destruction of the Temple in AD 70.** Generations #1 through #34 had good communications while using the observed lunar calendar.] <Back13 above >

Pharisees Gained Control after Temple Destroyed In AD 70

Encyclopedia Judaica, vol. 13, 1971, pages 363 – 366, [Generations #11 and up], quote: **“The Pharisees' first bid for power was made in a period two centuries after the Babylonian exile during the struggle to remove the Temple and religious control from the sole leadership of the aristocratic Sadducees. The inception of the synagogue worship traced to this time is seen as an attempt by the Pharisees to undermine the privileged authority exercised by the Sadducees. Ceremonies originally part of the Temple cult were carried over to the home, and learned men of non-priestly descent began to play an important role in national religious affairs. While the priesthood exhausted itself in the round of Temple ritual, the Pharisees found their main function in teaching and preaching the law of God [to the populous].**

The conflict between the lay and priestly factions of the supreme council and tribunal, the Sanhedrin, regarding the interpretation of the Torah when decisions were required on questions arising in daily life, gave the Pharisees the opportunity to incorporate popular customs and traditions into the Temple cult and the religious life of the people.

In general, the Pharisees admitted the validity of an evolutionary and non-literal approach toward the legal decisions and regarded the legal framework of the Oral Law as equally valid as the Written Law. A serious conflict eventually developed between the Pharisees and the Sadducees over the approach to these problems, and two distinct parties emerged, with theological differences entangled with politics.

The antagonism between the Pharisees and Sadducees extended to many spheres outside the religious domain and eventually became a fundamental and distinctive one. . . . Under John Hyrcanus the Pharisees were expelled from membership in the Sanhedrin. . . . Pharisaic strongholds of learning were later founded by such "exponents" as Shammai and Hillel and Ishmael and Akiva. . . .

. . . By the time of the Hasmonean revolt [circa 165 BC], it had become evident that the Pharasaic theological doctrines were giving utterance to the hopes of the oppressed masses and affecting the entire life of the Jews. This hope was especially seen in doctrines which included belief in the resurrection of the dead, the Day of Judgment, reward and retribution in the life after death, the coming of the Messiah, and the existence of angels, and also divine foreknowledge along with man's free choice of, and therefore responsibility for, his deeds. . . . The apostle Paul himself had been a Pharisee, was a son of a Pharisee, and was taught by one or the sect's most eminent scholars, Gamaliel of Jerusalem. . . . The active period of Pharisaism extended well into the second century C.E. and was most influential in the development of Orthodox Judaism. After the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E., it was the synagogues and the schools of the Pharisees that continued to function and to promote Judaism."

[This evidence clearly records two factions. Notice that it was the Sadducees which administered the Temple and priesthood. Our encyclopedias are written from the point of view of one of these factions, the Rabbinical Tradition. This means that in order to capture both sides of the struggle, we have to read between the lines. What is not said, but must also be true, is that the rival power, the Sadducees, being so totally dependent upon the existence of the Temple and its priesthood, lost out in AD 70. When the Romans destroyed the Temple they killed most of the priests. In AD 135 the Romans attempted to completely wipe out the Nasi, the high priest responsible for determining the calendar, and all of his relatives. By AD 135 only the Pharisees (non-priests) remained in Palestine to carry on the Jewish religion. Certainly the Sadducees would consider this post Temple political situation to be very biased.] <Back34 above >

Rise of Pharisees in Persia After AD 135

Encyclopedia Judaica, vol. 4, 1971, page 38, [Generations #31 and up], quote: **"When the Temple was destroyed, the Romans quickly employed Josephus to absolve them of war-guilt, and he addressed himself specifically to 'our brethren across the Euphrates'."**

[The destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem was a major war crime. Tiberius, the Roman general, ordered that the Temple was not to be harmed. But the Roman soldiers either disobeyed or blundered, so that the Temple was set on fire on Ab 9, 70 AD. Because so many Israelites from all over the world made pilgrimages to the Temple, and looked to Jerusalem as the center of their religion, the Romans were very fearful of reprisals, especially from the Parthians, Scythians, and Egyptians.]

Quote: **"Pharisaic Judaism exercised little influence in Babylonian Jewry before the destruction of the Temple. Only two Pharisaic authorities resident in the Parthian empire are known. . . . The first rabbinical academies were established in Parthian territory as a direct consequence of the Bar Kokhba Revolt [circa 132 AD]. . . . Nathan, son of the exilarch [the head of Babylonian Jewry], was sent by his father to Palestine for studies with Akiva. The exilarch probably extended a warm welcome to Palestinian refugees, and certainly made use of the graduates of their academies in his courts and administration. Among Babylonian**

Jewry was a class of native-born aristocrats, who probably acted, like other Parthian nobles, as local strongmen. In attempting to create a central administration for the Jewish community, the exilarch found useful the well-trained lawyers coming out of the Pharisaic-rabbinic schools, who were eager to enforce "the Torah" as they had learned it in Pharisaic traditions, and, unlike the Jewish nobility, were dependent solely upon the exilarch for whatever power they might exercise. For his part, the exilarch made use of the rabbinical bureaucrats to circumvent the power of the local Jewish nobility. Their claim to exposit "the whole Torah" as revealed to Moses at Sinai would have won for themselves and their patron considerable popular attention and support. The Palestinian schools after 140 [AD] were anxious to retain control of the new academics in Babylonia. When, therefore, in about 145 C.E. Hananiah, nephew of R. Joshua b. Hananiah, presumed to proclaim the Jewish calendar in Babylonia, the Palestinians sent two sages, one of them the grandson of the last high priest in Jerusalem, to rebuke him."

[Once the Temple was destroyed and the priests killed or scattered by the Romans, the Sadducees lost political influence in Palestine. But the Pharisees restarted the Sanhedrin in Palestine, and claimed the office of the Nasi for all Israel. Over the years after AD 70 the Pharisees established many academies, wrote the Mishnah, the Palestinian Talmud, and the Babylonian Talmud, and became known as the Rabbinical Tradition. Over the years after AD 70 the Pharisees added many rules and offsets to the calendar. Eventually Rabbinical Tradition fully endorsed the Hillel II Calendar.

The Pharisees only gained influence in Babylonia after AD 132, giving evidence that at least five generations, over 100 years, of Christians and Jews used the original observed lunar calendar for their religious worship. Once established in Babylonia with their own academies and political clout, the Pharisees retained themselves in Palestine as the central authority.

What is lost in this commentary, but needs to be stated, is that the original authoritative academies of Ezra, the elite academies of the old political power and of the Jewish nobility in Persia, these institutions had long been established in Babylonia / Persia. Thus, what is not being said is the tremendous power struggle between these two factions. This struggle would ultimately manifest itself in the use of two different calendars, western and eastern. The Rabbinical Tradition eventually gained access into Babylonia, but it is important to remember that the original academies of the Sadducees did not just "go away". They also continued to graduate scholars, as rivals to the Rabbinical Tradition.] <Back33 above >

Astronomy versus Astrology

A distinction will be made between what is taught every day within our modern society, and what is historically true in ancient times. It is true that today everyone is taught to associate the Zodiac and ancient astronomy with astrology. The Babylonian astronomer is assumed to really be an astrologer. It is also true that these teachings are in error.

What is true historically is that the religion of astrology has been practiced since before the flood. After the flood the practice of worshipping the "Host of Heaven" was a rival religion to that of worshipping the Creator, just as it is today. Also true is that through the practice of astronomy the astrologers are enabled to promote their religion. The science of astronomy does not have anything to do with astrology, but astrologers must use the science of astronomy to practice their religion. But what is not true is that the religion of astrology invented the Zodiac with its twelve constellations, nor that astrology was ever sanctioned as legitimate by those who practiced

astronomy. Ancient cultures always made a distinction between astronomy as a science and astrology as a religion. <Back35 above >

Sanhedrins After AD 70 Were the Pharisees, Sadducees Are Gone

“The Theory and Practice of Rhetoric at the Babylonian Talmudic Academies from 70 C.E. TO 500 C.E. as Evidenced in the Babylonian Talmud”, by Gerald Marvin Phillips, Western Reserve University, September 1956, quote: **“Although the first Academy is considered to be that of Johanan b. Zakkai, founded in 70 C.E., the [Talmudic] Academies did not spring into existence suddenly. Some form of higher education [academies of the Sadducees] existed during the pre-exilic period, since many of the early authorities cited in Talmud were educated at such institutions. The organized schools emerged from the periodic meetings held by the Scribes [Sadducees] some time before the beginning of the Christian era. The schools were quite closely connected to the informal legislative bodies organized by the Pharisees during this period and the recurring phrase, "Great Assembly", probably refers to these predecessors of the academies. . . . The first problem confronting the founders of the new school was the reorganization of the religion. With the Temple destroyed, it was necessary to group the religion around another central core. This required that some legislative body decide on the many questions that arose, such as fixing of the calendar, regulation of ritual law and the role of the sacrifice. With the establishment of this legislative body at the academy, the beginnings of the aristocracy of education which was to arise, were made.**

The Academy of Jabneh attempted to meet the needs of the time by educating a new generation of scholars, and by attempting to replace the former aristocracy of priesthood and landed nobility [the Sadducees] with an aristocracy based on the Pharisaic ideas of scholarship. This task was successfully accomplished at Jabneh. . . . The work begun by Johanan b. Zakkai was completed by Gamaliel II, who took over as head of Jabneh at the death of Johanan. Despite his authoritarian personality, Gamaliel managed to get the remnant of the Jews in Palestine to recognize this academy as the central authority in all political and religious matters. Several other academies had sprung up, and all of these were brought under the control of Jabneh. . . . After Gamaliel, the site of the main academy shifted several times. Despite continuing warfare and recurring persecutions, there was always at least one Academy in Palestine which maintained itself as the center of the religion. After an ill-fated revolt in 132 C.E., rabbinical synod was held at Usha, which led to the final redaction of the Mishnah. This was the work of R. Judah Ha-Nasi, known simply as Rabbi.

Up to the time of Rabbi, Babylon, which was by far the larger Jewish community, had remained subordinate to Palestine. With the intensification of Roman persecution after the death of Rabbi, the Babylonian Academies became the more important than the Palestinian. In Babylon the Jewish religion was not only tolerated, but was even allowed an autonomous government under the Babylonian rulers. . . . The Babylonian Academies were organized on the same lines as the Palestinian. They had essentially the same heritage and were confronted with similar problems. Consequently, though the Talmudic Academies existed in two geographical areas, they shared a common development, and represent one complete unit.”

[This evidence primarily shows how successful the Pharisees were in supplanting the Sadducees from Palestine after the destruction of the Temple. It was the Pharisees that established new

academies in Palestine immediately after 70 AD. It categorically states that the express purpose of creating these new academies was to create a new aristocracy of Pharisee scholars to replace the former aristocracy (of the Sadducees). It was the Pharisees that reestablished the Palestinian Sanhedrin, so the Pharisees completely controlled its membership. Notice that there is no distinction made between the Sanhedrin of Jabneh and the academy at Jabneh. The school was the central authority. Notice that the larger Jewish community was in Babylon, not Palestine, and that the Rabbinical academies in Palestine and Babylon were essentially a single unit of scholarship, but was not significant until after AD 132.

This evidence combines with other evidence to demonstrate that the Pharisees took control of the calendar in Palestine after AD 70. Their line of academies and Sanhedrins established after AD 70 are not the same line of academies as represented by the Sadducees, or the successors of the Sanhedrin of the Second Temple Era. The new calendar rules which the Rabbinical Sanhedrins later insert are a departure from the original and official calendar of the Second Temple's priests, which the Sadducees (not the Pharisees) were responsible.] <Back36 above >

Sadducees Came From Aristocratic and Priestly Families

“Gates To Jewish Heritage”, by David E. Lipman, [Generations #19 through #30], http://www.jewishgates.com/file.asp?File_ID=40 , quote: “As early as 151 BCE there were clearly different political parties of Jews in Judea. Under the rule of the Hasmoneans, these groups vied for power. Most of the documentary materials describing these different political forces were written by the winning political group, the Pharisees, so their descriptions of their political adversaries are suspect.

The first of these groups was the Sadducees. They came primarily from large land-owning aristocratic families and priestly families. Many were involved in the sacrificial cult of the Second Temple. For most of the Hasmonean period, and probably until the year 70 CE, they were politically powerful. However, they did not write anything for posterity, so we know about them only from their opponents, the Pharisees.”

[This is evidence that the Sadducees were primarily the bloodline priests and wealthy land owners of Jewish society. They would be the sons of powerful relatives. Notice that they left no written documentation about themselves, all we know is what the Pharisees have told us. This evidence combines with other evidence to show that the Sadducees were the political force representing the nobility, the priesthood, and the official observed calendar of the Second Temple Era.

Quoting again, [Generations #1 through #35]: **“The Babylonian Jewish Community, From Second Temple Times to the Fifth Century: There was a group of Jews who never left Babylonia after the Babylonian Exile in the 6th century BCE. This community more or less thrived. Living since 129 BCE under Parthian rule, a loosely knit semi-feudal state, it was able to develop its autonomous institutions with little interference from the royal government. The Parthians who always feared Roman intervention welcomed Jewish opposition to Rome, at least until the time of Hadrian. The Parthians established a Jewish liaison between the government and the Jewish community, the exilarch, who thus became the head of Babylonian Jewry. Descended allegedly from the House of David, proud of their genealogical purity, the exilarchs wore the kamara, the sash of office of the Parthian court, and disputed precedence with high Parthian officials. The community which they headed was both numerous (estimates of its number vary from 800,000 to 1,200,000) and well-based economically, comprising a fair number of farmers and many traders who grew rich as intermediaries in the profitable silk trade between China and the Roman Empire passing**

through Babylonia. The Jews enjoyed not only freedom of worship, autonomous jurisdiction, but even the right to have their own markets and appoint market supervisors (agoranomoi). In 226 CC [224 AD] the Sassanids conquered the Parthians. They were devout Zoroastrians, and there was some tension between the new political leadership and the Jewish community. However, after a period of troubles and disagreement at the beginning of the reign of Shapur I (241–272), better relations were gradually established with the king. . . . So long as there was a Temple, Jerusalem was the religious center for the Jewish people. With the Temple's destruction in 70 CE, the relations of the Babylonian Diaspora with Israel were characterized by ambivalence.”

[The eastern Jewish communities were virtually autonomous for hundreds of years, at least 30 generations. They could practice their own religion, have their own academies, and govern as they pleased.

This is evidence that prior to AD 70 the eastern communities were not isolated from Jerusalem, but were prosperous and free. Their academies which taught the observed calendar were unhindered. The pilgrims who traveled from the east to worship in Jerusalem were unhindered. The Magi-Astronomers who traveled to worship Jesus (Yahoshua) were unhindered. The Jewish nobility whose sons became the priests of the Sadducees were unhindered. **Very importantly, the eastern communities looked to Jerusalem as their religious center.**

This then is evidence that the signal fires which were lit in accordance to the observed calendar, which was the responsibility of the Sadducees to determine, were also unhindered and welcome in Babylonia / Persia. This then enabled Babylonia / Persia, and the greater region, to keep the exact same observed calendar and Holy Days as in Jerusalem. This synchronization would have been predominant from the time of Ezra until at least AD 163. (Remember in AD 163 to AD 193 the Samaritans lit false signal fires, so that messengers were used instead. Ground travel was extremely slow compared to visual signal fires. Messengers would arrive too late for the more remote communities. This then forced the remote communities to begin the practice of keeping two days holy instead of one.)] <Back37 above >

The Calendar of Jerusalem Was the Calendar of Asia Minor

See this study: http://www.caeno.org/pdf/Porten_Egyptian-Babylonian_dates.pdf analyzing the dates for “Jewish Contracts within the Persian Culture”. Jewish dates and Persian dates are the same dates. **The entire region used the exact same lunar calendar.**

Notice there is a huge gap, from BC 351 to BC 4, with no data points directly attributed to Jerusalem. Well, this is not exactly the case. Archaeology has discovered astrology horoscopes found in Jerusalem. A scholar must be extra careful with ancient horoscopes, as astrologers often used the waning crescent to count days, and also cited the months based upon the constellation the sun was in (not where the moon was). For example, an astrologer could specify the date of a lunar eclipse as occurring on the 17th of Tammuz (4th month), when by the observed lunar calendar that eclipse was on the 14th of the 3rd month (Sivan).

However, in this case, using astronomy, because of the specified positions of the planets, each horoscope can be dated to their exact times. For example two of them date to BC 263 and BC 258. The lunar dates given in these horoscopes also match the observed lunar calendar, demonstrating that the observed lunar calendar in Jerusalem remained unchanged from BC 351 down to at least BC 258.

Further, the Books of Maccabees in the Septuagint are filled with Jerusalem dates tied to events of other nations. For example: II Maccabees 15:36 **“And they ordained all with a common decree in no case to let that day pass without solemnity, but to celebrate the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which in the Syrian tongue is called Adar, the day before Mardocheus' day.”** The points to notice is that the Syrians had a corresponding month, so they had to be using the same calendar, and that the 13th day of the 12th month was exactly the same day as a known Syrian holiday on the 13th day of Adar, so again, they had to be using the same calendar. Evidence like this further demonstrates that the entire region was using the same observed lunar calendar.

It is also very important to point out that no historical documents have been discovered which specify a lunar date for an event, but then tells us that some other region will think it is some other lunar date. For example, undiscovered are any historical accounts that say something like this: “On the 13th of the 12th month, but in Babylon it was the 12th of Addaru, but in Syria it was the 14th of Adar”. This fact alone, that dates are specified in the Bible and all other ancient manuscripts as being a single value, with no hint of non-conformity. This strongly suggests that all of the scribes, who were the ones who recorded history, throughout the entire region were consistently using the same official calendar as their reference.

By acknowledging the other presented evidence which demonstrates that the elite academies of the Sadducees taught each generation the exact same calendar rules, unchanged from **“our forefathers”**, we may conclude that the official calendar of the Second Temple Era, proclaimed and administered by the sons of the sons of the Sadducees, remained consistent.

By understanding that the graduates from these elite academies were the sons of the nobility, and that it was those graduates which became the officers, scribes, and priests for the kings and governors in the regions in which they lived, then the consistency found in the observed lunar calendar for the whole Asia Minor area becomes completely expected. <Back41 above >

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