

March 2000

Frank W. Nelte

DOES GOD EXPRESS AN OPINION ABOUT 'THE JEWISH CALENDAR'?

In our examination of the present Jewish calendar we have found a number of things. For example, it has become quite clear that the present Jewish calendar:

- A) Mostly starts the year in the spring, but SOMETIMES starts the year in the winter.
- B) Mostly places the Feast of Tabernacles into the autumn, but SOMETIMES places the Feast of Tabernacles to start in the summer.
- C) Mostly has the Days of Unleavened Bread fall late enough in spring for some barley to be ripe enough for the wave offering, but SOMETIMES places the Days of Unleavened Bread so early in spring that no barley would be available for the wave offering, which represented Jesus Christ's sacrifice being accepted by God the Father on our behalf.
- D) Was only instituted by Hillel II in 359 AD, and that it has features that are different from the calendar which was used by the Jews during Christ's ministry and during the first century AD.
- E) Prevents Atonement from falling on a Friday or on a Sunday, but that during Christ's ministry Atonement DID fall on both, Fridays and Sundays. This shows that the calendar in use during Christ's ministry did NOT have the "dehiyyot", the postponement rules.
- F) Prevents the Sunday during Unleavened Bread from ever being the 3rd or the 5th or the 7th Day of Unleavened Bread, implying that God the Father will never accept the sacrifice of Jesus Christ (i.e. "the wave offering") for the 3rd or the 5th or the 7th 1000-year period of the overall 7000-year period of His plan of salvation. Thus the present Jewish calendar limits God.
- G) Is up to 15 HOURS in error in calculating "the molad of Tishri", the new moon conjunction of the seventh month of the year, which molad calculation is supposedly accurate to within three and one-third SECONDS of the actual conjunction.
- H) Has at its core calculations that absolutely require the existence of the Julian calendar, and that the calculations are useless if the Julian (or Gregorian) calendar does not exist, and therefore these calculations could not possibly have existed before the Julian calendar came into existence.
- I) Has a starting date (i.e. 3761 B.C.) which is based on a deliberate forgery of history (i.e. the Seder Olam), and which forgery had the explicit purpose of trying to obscure that Jesus Christ's ministry did actually fulfill the 70-weeks prophecy of Daniel 9.

There are clear biblical statements in regard to some of the above points that show that these things are not acceptable, that they violate biblical instructions. These are things I have addressed in previous articles. But a question that arises is:

DOES GOD EXPRESS ANY DIRECT OPINIONS OR FEELINGS ABOUT THE JEWISH CALENDAR?

HOW TO IDENTIFY DIRECT BIBLICAL REFERENCES TO THE CALENDAR

The word "calendar" does not appear in the Bible.

Our English word "calendar" comes from the Latin language. It is derived from the plural Latin word "calendae, calendarum". Something that might be of interest in this regard is the following.

Here is a quotation from "Compton's Interactive Encyclopedia", from the article "Calendar":

"The early Romans also used a calendar that was based on the moon. The year in this calendar was 355 days long. The months corresponding to March, May, July, and October each had 31 days; February had 28 days; and the rest had 29. An extra month was added about every fourth year.

The high priest regulated the calendar. On the calends, or day of the new moon, he announced to the people the times of the nones (first quarter) and ides (full moon) for that month. The word calendar is from the Latin word kalendae."

[Comment: "Calendae" is also alternatively spelled "kalendae", though "calendae" is the more common form.]

Notice that the word "calendar" comes from the Latin word that refers to THE DAY OF THE NEW MOON!

From Langenscheidt's Latin Dictionary we learn that the Latin word for OUR English CONCEPT of "calendar" is actually "fasti, fastorum", which refers to: "a register of judicial days, calendar, annals". The Latin word "calendae, calendarum" refers to: the calends, first day of each month. This also agrees with Webster's Dictionary, which defines "calends" as: "the first day of the ancient Roman month from which days were counted backward to the ides".

So here is the point of all this information:

The root word from which our English word "calendar" is derived refers to THE DAY OF THE NEW MOON, THE FIRST DAY OF THE MONTH. Even in the ancient Roman world (i.e. prior to 46 BC when Julius Caesar instituted his calendar reform) the new moon and the start of a new month were synonymous and inseparable. This link was severed when Julius Caesar introduced his calendar in 46 BC. Julius Caesar's calendar CHANGED the way months and years were observed throughout the Middle East until then. The start of a new month had always been linked to the new moons, for all societies in that part of the world, including Israel and Judah. And that link was severed by the Julian calendar, which became the calendar of the Roman Empire.

Prior to the Julian calendar being introduced, societies did not think in terms of "a calendar"; they thought in terms of "new moons" (or "months") and in terms of "years". So prior to 46 BC you don't really find people referring to "a calendar" ... since the word "calendar" originally really meant nothing other than "the day of the new moon".

SO THEREFORE YOU DON'T FIND THE WORD "CALENDAR" IN THE BIBLE! BUT YOU DO FIND MANY REFERENCES TO "NEW MOONS"!

When Julius Caesar changed things by introducing his calendar (and later when Pope Gregory XIII introduced the Gregorian calendar), people could hardly express this change by referring to "new

moons", since these calendars (Julian and Gregorian) totally disregarded the new moons. So we find that then a new word was coined for the English language, the word "calendar". But even then this word "calendar" was still derived from the Latin word meaning "NEW MOON". This is because anciently NEW MOONS IDENTIFIED A CALENDAR! The very purpose of observing "new moons" was to keep track of the passage of time, to keep track of "the calendar".

So when we want to know what GOD has to say about "the calendar", then we need to look at what God says about "THE NEW MOONS"!

And even as anciently in Latin "calendae" referred to BOTH, the new moon and the month, so likewise in Hebrew the word "chodesh" refers to BOTH, the new moon and the month. The fact that these two rather divergent cultures (i.e. the Hebrew or Jewish culture and the Roman or Latin culture) both had one word that meant both, "the new moon" and "the month" (or "the first day of the month") shows that anciently in both these societies (as well as in all the other Middle Eastern societies) the concept WE TODAY refer to as "the calendar" was embodied in "THE NEW MOONS". [Since the Julian calendar removed all connections with the new moons, the Latin word for "month" is "mensis"; but the Latin word "calendae" referred to "the day of the new moon" or "the first day of the month", which is the precise meaning of the Hebrew word "chodesh".]

SO LET'S EXAMINE WHAT GOD SAYS ABOUT "NEW MOONS"!

THE BOOK OF ISAIAH

The prophet Isaiah opens his book as follows:

The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. (Isaiah 1:1 AV)

Isaiah prophesied for about 50 years, starting before the death of King Uzziah and continuing into the time of King Hezekiah. While Hezekiah was king of Judah in the south, the Assyrians carried the northern kingdom of Israel (or "house of Israel") into captivity.

Note that Isaiah wrote this book during the time of Hezekiah (i.e. he wrote this down at the time when the northern kingdom had already gone into captivity). He could not have mentioned the kings Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah without having come to the time of Hezekiah. So Isaiah was given prophecies by God over a long period of time, but he only wrote them down into this BOOK of Isaiah towards the end of his life.

Next, notice the very clear statement in the opening verse of this book that the visions Isaiah saw were CONCERNING JUDAH AND JERUSALEM!

The same point is again made repeatedly throughout this book. For example:

The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw CONCERNING JUDAH AND JERUSALEM. (Isaiah 2:1 AV)

For, behold, the Lord, the LORD of hosts, doth take away FROM JERUSALEM AND FROM JUDAH the stay and the staff, the whole stay of bread, and the whole stay of water, (Isaiah 3:1 AV)

For JERUSALEM is ruined, AND JUDAH is fallen: because their tongue and their doings are against the LORD, to provoke the eyes of his glory. (Isaiah 3:8 AV)

And now, O inhabitants of JERUSALEM, AND men of JUDAH, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. (Isaiah 5:3 AV)

And I will clothe him with thy robe, and strengthen him with thy girdle, and I will commit thy government into his hand: and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of JERUSALEM, AND TO THE HOUSE OF JUDAH. (Isaiah 22:21 AV)

O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O JERUSALEM, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of JUDAH, Behold your God! (Isaiah 40:9 AV)

That confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messengers; that saith to JERUSALEM, Thou shalt be inhabited; and to the cities of JUDAH, Ye shall be built, and I will raise up the decayed places thereof: (Isaiah 44:26 AV)

So this book opens with the statement that the vision of Isaiah is CONCERNING JUDAH AND JERUSALEM.

It is also well-known that this is a book of PROPHECY! Isaiah is the first of the three "major prophets". Many sections in this book refer to the end-time and to the millennium. So with this brief background let's now examine the first chapter of Isaiah.

Isaiah 1:2-3: All of Israel has rebelled against God. This included ALL of them (i.e. the northern house of Israel, which was already in captivity by the time Isaiah wrote this down; and also the southern house of Judah, which was still independent under King Hezekiah at the time of Isaiah writing this down). The house of Israel was already in captivity and this book was given to the house of Judah (the priests kept it in the Temple), to whom it is also addressed.

Isaiah 1:4: They had departed from God.

Isaiah 1:5: So God had punished them. The northern house of Israel had already gone into captivity.

Isaiah 1:6: They were in deep trouble.

Isaiah 1:7: The northern kingdom had been destroyed by the Assyrians.

Isaiah 1:8: And the country was desolate.

Isaiah 1:9: At that point in time "a very small remnant" of Israel was still free, the southern kingdom of Judah had NOT been conquered by the Assyrians, though the Assyrians had laid waste large portions of the country.

Isaiah 1:10: This verse is addressed to the Jews, the people of Jerusalem. God speaks about "you rulers of Sodom" and "you people of Gomorrah". God likens JERUSALEM to Sodom and Gomorrah.

SO THIS IS A SECTION WHICH IS SPECIFICALLY ADDRESSED TO THE JEWS!

Isaiah 1:11: God now refers to the sacrifices that THE JEWS brought at the Temple in Jerusalem. The

northern kingdom of Israel had long ceased, since the death of Solomon, to bring any sacrifices to the Temple in Jerusalem. God says that He does not delight in the blood of these sacrificial animals.

Isaiah 1:12: This speaks about "WHEN YOU COME TO APPEAR BEFORE ME". This too was at the Temple in Jerusalem and is addressed to the Jews.

Now let's look at Isaiah 1:13-14:

Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. YOUR NEW MOONS AND YOUR APPOINTED FEASTS MY SOUL HATETH: THEY ARE A TROUBLE UNTO ME; I AM WEARY TO BEAR THEM. (Isaiah 1:13-14 AV)

These verses are rendered as follows in Green's 1993 Literal Translation:

Do not add to bringing vain sacrifice; its incense is an abomination to Me. I cannot endure the new moon and sabbath, the going to meeting, and the evil assembly. MY SOUL HATES YOUR NEW MOONS AND YOUR APPOINTED FEASTS. THEY ARE A BURDEN TO ME. I AM WEARY OF BEARING THEM. (Isaiah 1:13-14 LIT)

The Hebrew in verse 13 translated as "I cannot away with" (or as "I cannot endure" in Green's Literal Translation) is "lo ookal". "Lo" is the negative adverb meaning "not" or "no". And "ookal" is the first person singular qal imperfect form of the verb "yakol". In Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament this verb "yakol" is defined as follows:

- 1) to be able, can
 - a) to be able to bear
 - b) to be able to bring oneself to do anything
 - c) to be able lawfully, i.e. to be lawful, or permitted to anyone
- 2) to be powerful, to prevail

It might be helpful to understand the difference between the "perfect" and the "imperfect" moods in Hebrew verbs. Where the "perfect" refers to a completed action and expresses "the fact", the "imperfect" refers to an action or process which is incomplete and which adds colour and movement by suggesting "the process" preliminary to its completion, thereby being more vivid and pictorial than the "perfect". In the verb we are looking at this "imperfect" mood is used.

The Hebrew expression translated as "the calling of assemblies" is the same as "the calling together of convocations", a term that is used for religious meetings, church services.

So in Isaiah 1:13 God says that "He is not able to bear or endure, He cannot lawfully accept THE NEW MOONS AND SABBATHS AND THE CHURCH SERVICES OF THE JEWS"! This verse is addressed to the Jews!

Now the question is:

WHY DOES GOD SAY THIS? WHY DOES GOD FEEL THIS WAY ABOUT "THE NEW MOONS"
AND "THE SABBATHS" AND "THE CHURCH SERVICES" OF THE JEWS? WHY?

Well, the next verse explains God's feelings further.

God not only can't put up with or endure the Jews' new moons, but God goes even further by emphatically stating:

"MY SOUL HATES YOUR NEW MOONS AND YOUR APPOINTED FEASTS!"

The Hebrew word here translated as "hates" is "saneh", and it is the normal Hebrew verb for "to hate". So it really does say that God HATES the new moons and "appointed feasts" of the Jews!

However, there is a mistranslation here. The Hebrew translated as "appointed feasts" is the word "mow'ed", and "mow'ed" simply does NOT MEAN "FEAST"! It really means "a gathering" or "an assembly", something like "a church service", but NOT "A FEAST"! The Hebrew word for "feast" is "chag", and "chag" is the Hebrew word used to refer to "Unleavened Bread" and "Pentecost" and "Tabernacles", but it is NOT used for any of the annual Holy Days and it is also not used for the weekly Sabbath Days.

[Comment: "Mow'ed" is used 223 times in the Old Testament; 150 times it is correctly translated as "congregation", 13 times as "season", 12 times as "appointed", 12 times as "time", 4 times as "assembly", and 23 times it is INCORRECTLY translated in the KJV as "feast". "Mow'ed" really does not refer to FEASTING AND CELEBRATING SOMETHING, that meaning is conveyed by the word "chag". There is a big difference in meaning between the expressions "the tent OF THE CONGREGATION ("mow'ed")" and "THE FEASTS ("chag") of the ETERNAL". Bible translators have generally blurred the distinctive meanings of "chag" and "mow'ed", by translating BOTH of these words in some cases into English as "feasts", but that has only created confusion.]

So now back to Isaiah 1:14.

Whereas in verse 13 God mentioned THREE things (the new moons, the Sabbaths, and the religious meetings or church services), in verse 14 God only states that He hates TWO things: "YOUR NEW MOONS" and also "YOUR RELIGIOUS MEETINGS"! For some reason God here chose NOT to mention "Sabbaths" in connection with the things He HATES.

So again the question is: WHY would God possibly HATE "the new moons" of the Jews, and WHY would He highlight this hatred for their new moons in the very introduction of a book of prophecy that is devoted primarily to a discussion of end-time events?

The second part of verse 14 explains WHY God hates their new moons and their religious meetings. Notice:

" THEY ARE A TROUBLE UNTO ME; I AM WEARY TO BEAR THEM!"

The word translated as "a trouble" is the noun "torach", meaning "burden or trouble". This noun is formed from the verb "tarach", which verb Gesenius defines as "TO CAST DOWN, TO THROW".

The verb translated as "I am weary" simply means "I AM TIRED OF ...".

The verb translated as "to bear them" is "nasa" and it has a large section devoted to it in Gesenius'

Lexicon. As the verb is here used with the "qal" stem, I will only list the meanings Gesenius gives for this qal stem. They are:

- 1) to take up, to lift up
 - a) to lift up the hand, in swearing
 - b) to lift up one's head
 - c) to lift up one's own countenance
 - d) to lift up the eyes
 - e) to lift up the voice
 - f) to lift up, to take up any thing with the voice, as a song
 - g) to lift up the soul to anything
 - h) my heart has lifted me up
 - i) to lift up in a balance

- 2) to bear, to carry
 - a) to endure
 - b) to bear any one's sin
 - c) to bear to anyone, to bring
 - d) to carry away
 - e) to take away any one's sin

- 3) to take, to receive, to take hold of
 - a) to take, i.e. to marry a wife
 - b) to accept the person of any one
 - c) to take the sum, the number of anything

So when we put these 3 expressions together:

- they are a trouble to me
- I am weary or tired of ...
- to bear them

... here is what we have. GOD SAYS:

"YOUR new moons and YOUR religious meetings ...

A) are a burden and a trouble because THEY CAST DOWN SOMETHING;

B) I am tired of putting up with this "casting down" of things which I have set up;

C) I am tired of bearing and carrying your sins in regard to "YOUR new moons" and "YOUR religious services".

From Isaiah 1:15 onwards God points out that He will not help the Jews as long as they are unrepentant. He then shows that He certainly will accept REAL repentance. In Isaiah 1:21 God is still speaking to Judah and to Jerusalem by a very clear reference to Jerusalem with the words: "HOW IS THE FAITHFUL CITY BECOME A HARLOT!"

So the context in the first 21 verses has not changed; the whole section is addressed to Judah and to Jerusalem. Now the principles contained in this section of the Scriptures most certainly have a far greater application than to just the Jews. The principles apply to all people, but the reference to "YOUR NEW MOONS" and to "YOUR RELIGIOUS DAYS OR GATHERINGS" is directed first and foremost TO THE JEWS! At the end of the age, which is the main topic of this Book of Isaiah, it is ONLY THE JEWS who really HAVE SOMETHING TO DO WITH "THE NEW MOONS".

So we have seen that God HATES THEIR NEW MOONS, because those new moons cast down something, which casting down God is just tired of putting up with!

Now I don't have an agenda! I just want to know THE TRUTH! And when God in a book of prophecy for our present time tells me that He HATES the new moons of the Jews, then I want to know WHY!

When we are dealing with the Creator God of this universe, then it is ALWAYS more important to ask the question "WHY ...?" than to ask the question "WHEN ...?" or to ask the question "WHERE ...?" or the question "HOW ...?". When I examine prophetic Scriptures, I am not really all that concerned about "WHEN and WHERE things are to happen"; primarily I want to know WHY will certain things happen? WHY will some be protected, while others will not be protected?, etc.. I believe that God really does want us to understand the WHY for things that will take place, while leaving the WHEN and the WHERE and the HOW up to Him, until HE chooses to reveal these things to "his servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7).

So I believe there is A REASON WHY God tells us that He hates the new moons of the Jews. I do not believe that this is just some incidental and insignificant, as it were "off-the-cuff", comment by God. God does not speak "idle words"! THERE MUST BE A REASON FOR THIS REFERENCE TO "NEW MOONS"! And especially, God does not express HATRED for something without meaning exactly what He says!

So exactly what is it about "their new moons" and "their religious meetings" that makes God so angry? In Isaiah 1:14 we have an unmistakable expression of the anger of God. This should be of the utmost concern to every single one of us.

So why is God so angry with the new moons and the religious meetings of the Jews?

ANOTHER LOOK AT "NEW MOONS"

From Leviticus chapter 23 it is clear that God requires His people to observe both, the weekly Sabbath days, and also the annual Feasts and Holy Days. But there is no reference to observe new moons in a religious sense, other than one specific new moon (of the seventh month) being the day of an annual

Holy Day (Day of Trumpets).

And while we can find references to kings having special meals on the day of a new moon, we don't see new moons being observed with religious convocations, as was the case for the Sabbath days. Nor do we see any examples throughout Christ's ministry (i.e. in the gospel accounts or even in the Book of Acts) of religious meetings taking place on the new moons. Nor does the Church of God in the present age have religious meetings on the new moons.

Next, an examination of Isaiah chapter 1 shows that God is not really speaking in this context about "Baal worship" or some other forms of "idolatry" being practiced by the Jews. God's indictment against them in this chapter is that they were doing evil (Isaiah 1:16) and were motivated by greed and covetousness (Isaiah 1:23). God's reference to "Sodom and Gomorrah" (Isaiah 1:10) is a reference to their depraved and perverse state of morality. But idolatrous practices are not mentioned in this chapter.

And remember, this is the introductory chapter of a book that is largely devoted to prophecies for our present time.

So regarding "NEW MOONS":

When God did not anywhere in the entire Old Testament instruct any kind of RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE of all the "new moons", and when there is no record of the people of Israel and of Judah ever having had religious observances on the "new moons", and when there is no example of Jesus Christ or the early apostles ever having had religious observances on the "new moons", and when there is no indication of any kind in Isaiah chapter 1 that the Jews may have used "new moons" for any kind of "pagan" or "idolatrous" observances ...

... WHY WOULD GOD POSSIBLY "HATE" THEIR NEW MOONS?

I mean, there is no record that they were doing anything wrong on these new moons, and, for that matter, God hadn't required them to do anything in particular on the new moons. So what was or is making God angry about their new moons? And why was God angry with their church meetings?

Exactly what were their new moons and their church services CASTING DOWN and making God TIRED of having to put up with, when God hadn't even instructed any kind of religious observances for the new moons? And why would God include this in a book of prophecy intended for our age?

TWO POSSIBLE OPTIONS:

THERE ARE TWO POSSIBLE OPTIONS FOR WHY GOD HATES THEIR NEW MOONS AND THEIR CHURCH SERVICES!

The reason for God HATING these things has to be either:

- because of WHEN they had "their new moons" and "their religious meetings".

Or it has to be:

- because of WHAT they were doing on "their new moons" and in "their religious meetings".

It could also be a combination of these above two points.

Let's look at the "new moons" first, and then we'll look at "the religious meetings" next.

Can we see that God's HATRED for "the new moons of the Jews" (i.e. "YOUR new moons") simply has to mean that EITHER the Jews were doing something wrong on those new moons, something God strongly disapproves of, OR the Jews were (or are?) keeping THEIR new moons at a time God does not approve of? Since there is no indication that THEIR MANNER of keeping their new moons was wrong or pagan or idolatrous, it makes THE TIMING OF THEIR NEW MOONS VERY SUSPECT AS THE REASON FOR GOD'S HATRED!

When God had not commanded anything specific to be done on the new moons, and when there is no record of the Jews having any religious activities on the new moons, then this only reinforces the idea that God HATES THE TIMING OF THE JEWISH NEW MOONS!

"The timing" of their new moons would not have anything to do with particular religious activities on those new moons, since none were commanded. But "the timing" of their new moons would impact on THE CALENDAR (remember that the Latin "calendae" refers to "the day of the new moon"). And therefore the timing of their new moons impacts on ALL THE RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES FOR THE WHOLE YEAR!

In Old Testament Hebrew THE ONLY WAY to refer to the concept of "the calendar" was to speak about "NEW MOONS"! There simply was no other way the language allowed you to tell people something about "the calendar"!

Further, the Hebrew text of Isaiah 1:14 has the suffix "khem" (which is the masculine plural pronoun "YOUR") attached to both, "new moons" and "appointed meetings". God is very distinctly referring to "YOUR new moons" and to "YOUR religious days or meetings" in this verse.

God mentions "the new moons" (i.e. the calendar) first, because the new moons then become THE FOUNDATION for when they would place "their appointed feasts" in the year. Thus, a one-day postponement of "the new moons" would result in a one-day postponement of ALL "their appointed feasts", i.e. of all their "religious days". And a one-day postponement would have the effect of removing the God-appointed Feasts and Holy Days by one day from when GOD instructed those Feasts and Holy Days to be observed, thereby clearly changing those feasts and Holy Days from being "God's" feasts into being nothing more than "YOUR appointed feasts"! It should be fairly easy to understand GOD'S HATRED for such manipulation.

So now let's look again at Isaiah 1:14. In this verse God tells us, in effect:

"YOUR CALENDAR AND YOUR RELIGIOUS DAYS MY SOUL HATES! THEY ARE A TROUBLE TO ME (i.e. THEY CAST DOWN WHAT I HAVE ESTABLISHED) AND I AM TIRED OF PUTTING UP WITH THIS REJECTION OF MY INSTRUCTIONS!"

People like to read "pagan feasts" into this verse, but pagan customs don't feature anywhere in Isaiah chapter 1. And there is no record that the Jews ever resorted to practicing "pagan customs on the new moons". But they DID resort to manipulating God's instructions in MANY ways, something to which Jesus Christ Himself also bore witness during His ministry. And they DID manipulate God's instructions for the calendar. Even at the time of Christ's ministry they had ALREADY manipulated God's instructions to the point of keeping a "late afternoon Passover" at the end of the 14th of Nisan. And the Pharisees had also already manipulated God's instructions to come up with a Sivan 6 date for Pentecost.

Understanding that God is in Isaiah 1:14 expressing hatred for WHEN they had placed "their new moons" and "their appointed feasts" should also help us to understand why in this verse God does NOT include "Sabbaths" in the list of things He hates. They still had THE TIMING of the Sabbaths correct, and they still do today have this timing correct. Manipulating the calendar has not affected the timing of the weekly Sabbaths. So Isaiah 1:14 does not mention the Sabbaths.

THE USE OF PRONOUNS

Notice how God uses the pronouns "MY" and "YOUR".

In Leviticus 23:2 God clearly says:

Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, Concerning the feasts of the LORD, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, even THESE ARE MY FEASTS (i.e. MY mow'eds or MY assemblies). (Leviticus 23:2 AV)

In Isaiah 1:14 God clearly says:

YOUR NEW MOONS and YOUR APPOINTED FEASTS (i.e. YOUR mow'eds) my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. (Isaiah 1:14 AV)

Comparing these two passages should show us that "MY mow'eds" are not at the same times as "YOUR mow'eds"!

In Ezekiel 44:24 God is speaking about the priests teaching people during the millennium, and God clearly says:

And in controversy they shall stand in judgment; and they shall judge it according to MY judgments: and they shall keep MY laws and MY statutes IN ALL MINE ASSEMBLIES (Hebrew is MY mow'eds); and they shall hallow MY sabbaths. (Ezekiel 44:24 AV)

Green's Literal Translation renders Ezekiel 44:24 as follows:

And in a dispute, they shall stand to judge, they shall judge it by MY judgments. And they shall observe MY laws and My statutes IN MY APPOINTED FEASTS (Hebrew is MY mow'eds), and they shall sanctify MY sabbaths. (Ezekiel 44:24 LIT)

The obvious implication here is that God differentiates between "MY Holy Days" and "YOUR Holy Days". They are not the same! It should be equally clear that when God says "YOUR NEW MOONS" in Isaiah 1:14, He means something different from what would amount to "MY NEW MOONS". Now since no religious services are commanded for the "new moons", since their only purpose is to establish a calendar which will keep track of the passage of time, therefore it follows that what God, in speaking to Judah and to Jerusalem, refers to as "YOUR new moons" must be AT A DIFFERENT TIME FROM WHEN GOD CONSIDERS THE NEW MOONS TO BE!

If Isaiah 1:14 was supposed to refer to Judah being involved in some pagan practices on the actual correct new moon days, then God would not have called them "YOUR new moons". God would, in all likelihood, have focused on the wrong pagan practice (as He has done in other Old Testament

passages) and identified that practice. The expression "YOUR new moons" implies that they are not when others, who also observe the skies, figure THEIR new moons to be. If we ask someone: "When do you keep YOUR Sabbath?", we are expecting an answer other than "Saturdays". If we expect the answer "Saturday", we would not ask about "YOUR Sabbath".

When God wants to express anger and hatred at pagan festivities, then He uses the Hebrew word "chag", the word which means "feasts". Thus, for example, in the Book of Amos God is speaking about the time of the "Day of the LORD" in Amos 5:18-20. Then God says in the very next verse:

I HATE, I DESPISE (Hebrew REFUSE, REJECT) YOUR FEAST DAYS (Hebrew YOUR chag), and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies. (Amos 5:21 AV)

In this passage God is expressing hatred and rejection and contempt for pagan customs like Christmas and Easter. Their "timing" in the year is immaterial to God's feelings about them. And where Isaiah 1 is addressed to the Jews, Amos chapter 5 is very clearly addressed to "THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL" (Amos 5:1), the so-called "Christian nations" of the ten tribes that went into Assyrian captivity at Isaiah's time.

Think about this carefully.

The fact that God in Isaiah 1:14 refers to "YOUR new moons" means that the Jews are NOT keeping the new moons (i.e. their calendar is supposedly based on each month starting with a new moon) AT THE CORRECT TIME! That is what God is telling us by using the pronoun "YOUR"!

THIS SCRIPTURE IS A PROPHECY!

The whole Book of Isaiah is a prophecy. It focuses on events future to the time when Isaiah lived. It speaks about our age and on beyond into the millennium.

Now "the calendar" was not really a problem during Old Testament times. The fact that all the nations around Israel and Judah had exactly the same calendar (i.e. they all started their months with the days of the new moons) meant there was no pressure or motive to make any changes. This continued into the time of the New Testament, when Jesus Christ and the apostles also freely used the same calendar which was used by the Jews in general. Each month started with the day of the new moon, which was proclaimed based on eyewitnesses having reported seeing the new crescent. This continued to beyond the destruction of Jerusalem, and to beyond the completion of the writing of the New Testament.

[Comment: By the time of the New Testament the Julian calendar was in use throughout the Roman Empire. The Jews were using THEIR calendar only for religious purposes; their secular dealings were mostly controlled by the Julian calendar.]

But by 358/359 AD a totally new "calendar" had evolved. "New moons" were calculated by a formula which is at times up to 15 hours in error; postponement rules were introduced to make the calendar conform to certain "traditions"; and a system of intercalating a 13th month seven times in every 19 years was adopted which ignored that the year must always start in the spring. And so from 360 AD onwards the Jews followed a calendar which REPEATEDLY placed the Passover into the winter, and which REPEATEDLY placed the entire Feast of Tabernacles into the summer, blatantly ignoring God's instruction in Exodus 34:22. Even today the Jewish calendar still disregards God's instruction in Exodus 34:22.

And so there are now people in the Church of God who think that God likes to play games. There are people who believe that God doesn't really mind if we push the calendar around a little bit, so that it

becomes more convenient for us. There are people who think that God says:

"We all know that TODAY is actually the new moon day, but I don't really mind if you prefer to claim that tomorrow, or even the day after tomorrow, is the new moon day. We don't need to be so picky as to want to be right and correct with establishing the new moon days. It doesn't really make a difference to ME. As long as you boys down there on Earth are happy with the system you come up with, what difference does it really make whether your proclamations of the new moon days correspond to reality or not? And as far as "the seasons" are concerned, I'm sure you understand that I would kind of like the year to start in the spring, and I would kind of like the entire Feast of Tabernacles to fall into the autumn, BUT THERE IS NO NEED FOR YOU TO FRET OR WORRY if sometimes you start your year a little bit before the end of winter, and if sometimes you have a little bit of the Feast of Tabernacles fall into the summer; that isn't really a big deal to Me. As long as your heart is right, I don't really mind such minor conflicts with my ideal preferences for the start of the year and for the Feast of Tabernacles. And I certainly wouldn't want to expose you to the stress of having to challenge the traditions you have inherited. I fully understand why you want to sometimes start the year in the winter and why you sometimes want to start the Feast of Tabernacles in the summer. So don't worry about it; it's okay by Me."

Is that what YOU believe? IT IS WHAT ALL THOSE WHO DEFEND THE USE OF THE PRESENT JEWISH CALENDAR BELIEVE! But to those who believe that, God says:

"YOUR CALENDAR AND YOUR APPOINTED RELIGIOUS DAYS MY SOUL HATES!"

Isaiah 1:14 is a prophecy for the end-time. God knew that the Jews would change the calendar after Christ's ministry. God knew that His instructions in many areas would be replaced by human traditions, as indeed was ALREADY the case during Christ's ministry (Matthew 15:3; Mark 7:7-9; etc.). God knew they would at some point after Christ's ministry also manipulate the calendar to suit their own purposes. And that is something God HATES!

So back to our original question: Does God express any direct opinions or feelings about the Jewish calendar?

"New moons" was the only way you could express the concept of "a calendar" in Old Testament Hebrew. And when God says concerning Judah and Jerusalem (Isaiah 1:1), THE ONLY PLACE ON EARTH TODAY where the Jewish calendar with "THEIR" new moons is in use: "I hate YOUR new moons", then I don't see how I can avoid drawing the conclusion that in this book of prophecy God is expressing A HATRED FOR THE PRESENT JEWISH CALENDAR?!

There is no other possibility!

Frank W. Nelte