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EXODUS 34:22

THE SCRIPTURE CONCERNED

> And thou shalt observe the feast of weeks, of the firstfruits of wheat harvest, and the feast of ingathering AT THE YEAR'S END. (Exodus 34:22 AV)

THE MEANING PEOPLE DRAW FROM THIS TRANSLATION

When people are forced to acknowledge the existence of this Scripture, they typically will claim that this scriptural requirement for the Feast of Tabernacles is met as long as at least A PART of the Seven Day Feast of Tabernacles is after the autumn equinox (Northern Hemisphere). Others assert that this Scripture does not set any time constraints at all for the observance of this Feast.

THE MISTRANSLATION

The Hebrew text for this verse does not say anything about "the year's END". That is a mistranslation.

The expression "at the year's end" is a translation of the Hebrew "tekufat ha-shanah". This expression is made up of two nouns, the word "tekufah", translated as "end", and the word "shanah", translated as "at the year's".

This noun "tekufah" (or "tekuphah") is used only four times in the Old Testament.

Jewish encyclopaedias, the Talmud and many other Jewish reference works will freely acknowledge that this word "tekufah" has exactly TWO meanings. Firstly, it refers to the only FOUR "TURNING DAYS" in the solar year that can be predicted in advance, the two equinoxes and the two solstices. Secondly, it refers to THE FOUR SEASONS which start on those four "turning days". It has no other meanings, and certainly not the meaning "end".

The word "tekufah" has the identical characteristics as the Hebrew word "chodesh", which has the TWO meanings of: the new moon day, and the month that starts with that new moon day. Both these Hebrew words pinpoint A SPECIFIC DAY (a solstice or equinox for "tekufah", and a new moon day for "chodesh") and also A PERIOD OF TIME THAT STARTS WITH THAT SPECIFIC DAY (an annual season for "tekufah", and a month for "chodesh").

With BOTH these Hebrew words, when they are used to refer to a period of time, that period of time can NEVER start before the "specific day" that is identified by the word. Thus, a period of time known as "chodesh" can NEVER start before a new moon day, and a period of time known as "tekufah" can NEVER start before one of those four annual "turning days". Such periods of time can ONLY start with the specific days identified by these words.

It is well-known that in Exodus 34:22 the expression "tekufat ha-shanah" is a specific reference to the autumn equinox (on September 23), and therefore this Scripture makes quite clear that the Feast of Tabernacles can NEVER start before the autumn equinox.

This subject is also discussed in more detail in my article "The Meaning of Tekufah". See also the article on Exodus 23:16.

THE SOURCE OF THIS WRONG TRANSLATION

The King James Translation introduced this mistranslation, and many other English language translations followed this lead.

THE CORRECT TRANSLATION

> And thou shalt observe the feast of weeks, of the firstfruits of wheat harvest, and the feast of ingathering at the turn of the year (Exodus 34:22, Darby, JPS, NAS, NIV, NRSV, etc.)

It is understood that "at the turn of the year" here refers to the autumn equinox.

THE MEANING OF THIS CORRECT TRANSLATION

The correct translation of this verse makes clear that no part of the Feast of Tabernacles may ever be BEFORE "the turn of the year", before the autumn equinox on September 23. The incorrect translation of "at the year's end" obscures this intended meaning to some degree.

IN SUMMARY

Exodus 34:22 lays down a very specific requirement for the correct calendar. A correct calendar will never place any part of the Feast of Tabernacles into the season of summer before the "turning day" of the autumn equinox.

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