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A RIGHT APPROACH AND ATTITUDE TO THE CALENDAR QUESTION

It seems that many people have taken firm positions on the calendar question, be it for or against the Jewish calendar. Mostly the intent seems to be to defend these positions without regard to evidence to the contrary that may be presented. I personally don't have a position to defend. I would simply like to know what is RIGHT in the sight of God. It is towards that end that I have tried to carefully examine this whole question.

Thus I believe that the right approach is as follows:

1) IF the present Jewish calendar has God's blessing and support, then there should be some positive evidence IN THE BIBLE for God's support. Let that evidence be presented by those who feel they have it.

2) In a religious sense there is NOTHING inherently good about something, simply because it has a "Jewish" origin. The Jewish religion and its customs are as far removed from the truth of God as is every other false religion. The Talmud PROVES this beyond any shadow of doubt.

3) So we should examine the Jewish calendar without any bias, neither for nor against, with an open mind, and on its own merits. It creates an unfair bias in favour of the Jewish calendar to attach labels like "the SACRED calendar" or "GOD'S calendar" to the calculated Jewish calendar. Such labels are totally unjustified, and they are certainly not claimed by the Jews themselves.

4) IF we find problems with the Jewish calendar, then we should at the very least be willing to acknowledge these problems.

5) The FIRST criteria that need to be taken into account are any BIBLICAL requirements for the right calendar. These must ALWAYS take precedence over the customs and traditions of men.

6) Historical indications regarding features of the calendar that was in use during the time of Christ's ministry should be given serious consideration. Any features introduced at a later time MAY be valid and justified, but that needs to be carefully examined and assessed.

7) Finding faults with OTHER calendars that some people have adopted, does not justify retaining faults that are inherent in the Jewish calendar. Two "wrongs" never make a "right".

8) We need to clearly understand the astronomical facts which any and every calendar has to take into account. We need to also understand THE IMPACT these facts have on any calendar, including on the present Jewish calendar.

9) It is only once we have correctly assessed ALL of the biblical requirements for a correct calendar that we can then evaluate the Jewish calendar against these requirements and, if necessary, construct a correct model which will meet God's approval.

10) God is willing to overlook our "times of ignorance". What people in our recent past may have done (e.g. Mr. Armstrong) is really not the issue. What God NOW expects from us is summed up by the Apostle James: "Therefore to him that KNOWS to do good, and does it not, TO HIM IT IS SIN" (James

4:17).

11) We need to recognize that any arguments about "dates" of events that are mentioned in the Bible are NEVER "BIBLICAL EVIDENCE". Biblical evidence refers to clear biblical statements that express SPECIFIC FEATURES God desires a correct calendar to have, or to direct statements from God regarding God's feelings for a specific calendar. Deductions and inferences we might make regarding the dating of specific events mentioned in the Bible are never on the same level as clear biblical statements. The reason is that it is NEVER possible to prove that the same results (assuming that the dates that were deduced for a specific event mentioned in the Bible are actually correct) would not also have been achieved by a calendar based on nothing more than observing the first visibility of the new crescent.

So arguments and inferences from real or theorized dates are useless in proving the existence of the present Jewish calendar. THE ONLY THING arguments about dates can PROVE CONCLUSIVELY is that the present calculated calendar could NOT have been used. The reason for this flip-side of "arguments about dates" is because such arguments AGAINST the calculated Jewish calendar require no theorizing. They only require an acceptance of premises that the supporters of the Jewish calendar assert to be true.

In plain language: IF people insist that the present Jewish calendar was used 2000 years ago, or 2500 years ago, or 4000 years ago, THEN it is perfectly acceptable to apply the data of the present Jewish calendar to specific years during the time when it is claimed that this calendar was in use. Those who claim that the present calendar was in use back then, must be willing to see that calendar applied to specific years at the time of its supposed existence.

12) We need to be careful to not read our own ideas into any Scriptures, like the reference to "the oracles of God" in Romans 3:2. This Scripture must be examined on its own merit, evaluating objectively what the Apostle Paul, the author of this statement, actually had in mind when he used this expression.

So can we objectively evaluate ALL the Scriptures that have a bearing on what a correct calendar must look like? Can we objectively face up to ALL the astronomical facts that apply to the Jewish calendar? Can we objectively examine all of God's statements about "new moons"?

If we can do this, then we can reach a realistic evaluation of the Jewish calendar.

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