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SOME GENERAL POINTS REGARDING THE CALENDAR

Here are some points we should keep in mind when we go about establishing a correct calendar.

1) THE BIBLE gives us two main calendar requirements:

A) The months are to start with the new moons.

B) The year is to start with the first new moon in the spring of the Northern Hemisphere.

2) This information has been known by the Church since Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong first looked into the calendar in 1940, and since Kenneth Herrmann first wrote for the Church about the calendar in 1953. The Church has REPEATEDLY specifically stated that with God the year is to start in the spring. The Hebrew expression translated as "the month of ABIB" literally means "the new moon of ears of barley", and this has always been understood by the Jews and by the Church to be a reference to the season of spring. So Exodus 12:2 shows that the year is to start in the spring.

3) When the year is started with the first new moon in the spring, then the other requirements for the calendar (i.e. that Tabernacles must always be fully in autumn, and that the Days of Unleavened Bread must never be so early that no barley would be available for the wave offering) are automatically fulfilled.

4) The Book of Isaiah is primarily a book of prophecy for the end time. The opening chapter is clearly addressed to the Jews, and in Isaiah 1:14 God says to the Jews: I HATE YOUR NEW MOONS, which was the only way in the Old Testament Hebrew language for saying: I HATE YOUR CALENDAR!

5) So we have a responsibility to determine precisely what it is about the calendar of the Jews that God HATES and that makes God "WEARY OF PUTTING UP WITH". What features of their calendar does God HATE?

6) I don't believe (as I will explain later) that "attempting" to use the invisible precise new moon conjunctions is what God hates about the present Jewish calendar. Nor is a desire to be practical the problem. It seems clear to me that what God hates about their calendar is twofold:

[Comment: I say "ATTEMPTING to use the invisible conjunctions" because the molads of the Jewish calendar are in fact up to 15 hours in error when compared to the actual times of the new moon conjunctions.]

A) The attitude of MANIPULATING the new moons, by means of their postponement rules, in order to make things easier for themselves (i.e. they don't want certain Holy Days to fall on certain inconvenient days of the week).

B) The attitude of A TOTAL DISREGARD FOR SEASONAL REQUIREMENTS that God has stipulated for the start of the year, and for specific Feasts. This total disregard for the seasonal requirements God has spelled out is further exemplified by the Jewish tradition of referring to the first day of the seventh month (Trumpets), and which falls either in the summer or in the autumn, as "NEW YEAR", when in fact it isn't the start of the "new year" at all!

7) Within the framework of these biblical requirements it is clear that God has required us (and still does require us) to make some decisions. Since the creation of Adam (when God brought the animals to Adam for ADAM to select names for all the animals) God has always required us human beings TO MAKE SOME DECISIONS! That is intentional by God. The reason is as follows: once God has given us certain instructions or guidelines, by forcing us to make further decisions within the parameters of God's instructions this reveals OUR CHARACTER to God!

Understand this:

It is one thing for God to spell out every last "do and don't" for us and to then see if we will meticulously apply all these "do's and don'ts" in our daily lives. This would reveal whether or not we are willing to OBEY instructions. But such obedience would only partly expose how our minds work, since there is also always the possibility of "reluctant compliance". And so it is an altogether different thing for God to give us laws and instructions in the form of GENERAL PRINCIPLES, which will then force us to make OUR OWN DECISIONS for exactly how God would want us TO APPLY those laws and instructions. These "decisions" we are then forced to make reveal much more about us to God than our obedience to clearly spelled out instructions. These "decisions" show God whether OUR MINDS comprehend His way of thinking, whether we see things as He sees them, and whether we are actively seeking to do "those things that are pleasing in His sight" (1 John 3:22).

God wants to also know that this obedience is WILLING OBEDIENCE, as evidenced by our earnest desire to SEEK OUT His will and His mind on any and every subject. And so God has REPEATEDLY given us human beings instructions and laws of a general nature, to see how we ourselves will approach putting those laws and instructions into practice in our lives. Our character is tested far more by such general instructions and guidelines from God than it is tested by strict compliance with clearly spelled out laws. However, it is never a matter of "either/or". It is always a case of "THESE (faithful obedience to clearly stated laws) we ought to have done, AND NOT LEFT THE OTHER (seeking to faithfully and correctly implement general instructions and guidelines) UNDONE" (see Matthew 23:23).

8) An example of this process would be the matter when David and his companions asked the priest to give them some of the "showbread" as food. While according to the letter of the law it was not right for David to eat of this "showbread" (it was reserved for the priest's family), under the circumstances in which he found himself, David was FORCED TO MAKE A DECISION. The fact that God accepted David's reasoning in this matter (and did not in any way impute this action as some kind of wrongdoing, see Jesus Christ's reference to this incident in Matthew 12:3-4) shows that David correctly understood the mind of God on this matter, whereas by contrast Uzzah did NOT correctly understand the mind of God when he tried to steady the ark of God (see 2 Samuel 6:6-7). In both cases the men involved made decisions that on the surface went against God's instructions; but David's decision was acceptable to God, while Uzzah's decision was not acceptable.

9) While all of God's people lived in a small part of this earth (i.e. in the Middle East) there was never a need for any kind of "dateline". But once people spread around the world, once we developed rapid means of transport and of communications, THEN we were FORCED to decide exactly where on this round earth a new day should start and end. That is one of the decisions God forced us human beings to make, to decide where we would place the International Dateline. And God accepts that decision, like God accepted the names Adam gave to the animals.

10) An example of the consequences of the placing of the International Dateline is as follows:

Attu Island in the Aleutian Islands off Alaska is about 174 degrees east of Greenwich and about 55 degrees north of the equator. Auckland in New Zealand is about 175 degrees east of Greenwich and about 37 degrees south of the equator. At the times of the equinoxes (that's close to Unleavened Bread

and to Tabernacles) day and night are approximately equal, and sunrise and sunset times will be almost at exactly the same points in time for all places on the same longitude, be they north or south of the equator.

This means that when the sun sets in Auckland at the time of the equinoxes, it will at that same point in time (or about 4 minutes EARLIER, to be more precise) also be setting on Attu Island in the Aleutians. However, because it was decided to have the International Dateline run to the west of the Aleutian Islands, THEREFORE at the very same moment as the sun is setting in Auckland on a Friday evening, it will be setting on Attu on a Thursday evening. So while at one place in the Southern Hemisphere it is Saturday noon (local time), it will be Friday noon (local time) at another place in the Northern Hemisphere.

So if anyone desirous of observing the Sabbath travels to Auckland, he'll keep the Sabbath from Friday sunset to Saturday sunset. But for another person who happens to be on the island of Attu that exact same 24-hour block will be Thursday sunset to Friday sunset, and he will therefore only keep the Sabbath 24 hours later than the person in Auckland.

We can apply the following point to either Greenwich or to Jerusalem. The point remains the same. On a round planet we are simply FORCED to decide exactly which places on earth are time-wise AHEAD OF Greenwich (or ahead of Jerusalem for that matter), and which places are BEHIND Greenwich (or Jerusalem). That is not a decision God has made for us in the Bible, but rather, it is a decision God requires us to make, since it affects first and foremost OUR lives and OUR existence, and not really God's life and existence.

11) IF it had been decided to place the International Dateline 15 degrees further west (i.e. at what we call 165 degrees east of Greenwich), THEN people in New Zealand would have the Sabbath 24 hours later than they do under the current system. If it had been decided to place the International Dateline down the middle of the Atlantic Ocean (i.e. at what we call 30 degrees west of Greenwich), THEN people in North and South America would have the Sabbath 24 hours earlier than they do under the current system. A decision had to be made exactly where to place a dateline, and God required US HUMAN BEINGS to make that decision. And it has been made in the form of the internationally recognized and accepted "International Dateline".

12) And so with the calendar:

God has in the Bible given us the key elements for a correct calendar. The year is to start in the spring of the Northern Hemisphere (because that is the hemisphere the people of Israel were in when God gave these calendar instructions), and the months are to start with the new moons. But within that context God STILL requires us to make some decisions. It is simply not correct to say that there is ONE AND ONE ONLY way to apply these biblical instructions. In the same way as there was "the option" of where on this planet we wanted to place the dateline, so there are certain "options" as to exactly how we implement these biblical instructions when it comes to the finer details.

13) THE KEY TO ANY DECISIONS IS ALWAYS "OUR MOTIVATION"!

The motivation of wanting "to manipulate" the calendar to fall in line with our desires or our preferences is NEVER acceptable. Similarly, openly ignoring any seasonal requirements God has recorded in the Bible is also NEVER acceptable.

On the other hand, I don't believe that God disapproves of decisions intended to avoid confusion, decisions intended to settle dubious "borderline cases", decisions motivated by a desire to be practical.

The motivation is always the key!

14) Hebrews 4:12 is a principle we should always keep in mind. It is the principle that God applied when David ate of the "showbread". Notice:

For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of THE THOUGHTS AND INTENTS OF THE HEART. (Hebrews 4:12 AV)

While our wrong outward actions are never right before God, it is important to understand that THE MOTIVATION for such outward actions, be they right or wrong, is always even more important when we are dealing with God. The laws and instructions and guidelines God has given us are to test "the thoughts and intents of our hearts". Are those "INTENTIONS" right before God or not? Towards this end God forces us to make decisions.

15) It is quite clear that during later biblical times the expression "the new moon" referred to the VISIBLE new moon crescent. The invisible new moon conjunction was never referred to as "the new moon". The months were started based on something that could be SEEN in Jerusalem, the first new crescent of the moon.

There are clear reasons for this. However, I do not believe that this is the only way God accepts us starting a month. So while it was right and acceptable to start the months based on first visibility of the new crescent, I believe that it is also EQUALLY ACCEPTABLE BEFORE GOD to start the months with the invisible conjunction. Later I will state my reasons for why I feel this is so.

So as far as I can understand the point is this:

It is not a question of: "the one method is right and the other method is wrong; the one method is acceptable to God and the other method is not acceptable." It is really a question of: during biblical times this is how it was done, and here are the reasons for why it was done that way. TODAY we face a totally different set of circumstances; therefore should we continue to use the method employed during biblical times, which in our circumstances today embodies certain weaknesses, or is another method perhaps more suitable for our circumstances today? By the way I have phrased this question, it should be quite clear that I personally feel that "another method" is far more suitable for our worldwide circumstances today.

16) The calendar in biblical times also made provision for borderline cases and for ambiguous situations. Thus:

A) When the first faint crescent of the new moon was above the horizon and theoretically visible, sometimes eyewitnesses still could not see it, because that part of the western sky happened to have some clouds float by just during those 10 minutes or so after sunset when it would have been visible. Thus a month was started ONE DAY LATER than it should theoretically have been started, had those clouds not obscured visibility during those crucial 10 minutes.

B) First visibility is also influenced by the location of the observer. Thus two observers could be located 10 miles apart, and one sees the new crescent, while the other does not see it. This could be the case even if those observers happen to be in the area of Palestine. Depending on which of these two observers we look to for a report, we could have started the new month in good conscience on one of two possible days.

C) A calendar based on first visibility will always of necessity be somewhat SUBJECTIVE, depending on the keenness of eyesight of the observers. Similarly, there will be times when even those people with the sharpest eyesight will not be able to see that first new crescent, YET the crescent would be visible from the exact same location for someone using a powerful pair of binoculars. What do you decide in such a situation? Again the decision could be to start the month ONE DAY LATER than it theoretically could have been started, simply because we didn't have someone with strong binoculars watching for the new moon.

D) We can calculate the date of THEORETICAL visibility. But what do you do when NOBODY was able to see the new crescent on the day when your theoretical mathematical calculations show that visibility should clearly have been possible? Do you accept your calculations, or do you rely on "eyewitnesses"? Again you have to make a choice.

E) What would you do if a whole congregation of about 500 people is out there looking for that first new crescent, and then THREE people claim that they actually saw it, while 497 other people (if they are honest) will have to admit that they didn't really see anything? It was one of those borderline cases where you really could only have seen the new crescent with a pair of binoculars, but 3 out of those 500 people have exceptionally good vision and they actually "saw something". Would you make a decision based on what those 3 people saw, or would you make a decision based on what those 497 other people DIDN'T see?

F) It gets down to the question of: JUST HOW VISIBLE must that first visibility be? Is it sufficient if some few people with "super vision" state that they saw the new crescent, or should it be visible enough for average people with average eyesight to be able to see it?

G) There is no biblical injunction of any kind to do it this way, but the Jews in New Testament times relied on "witnesses" who asserted that they had seen the new crescent. The interesting thing is that the priests themselves, and for that matter the high priest, didn't get involved in trying to see the new crescent themselves! They left it up to OTHER members of the community to go out and look for the new crescent. Why did they do that? Perhaps it could only be seen from specific vantage points, or perhaps it was not visible to any except those with the sharpest eyesight?

H) If a "witness" had really seen the new crescent, but the high priest didn't believe that the new crescent should be visible till the next evening (based on the calculations available to him), he might decide to just REJECT the witness that this person had brought. The result would be that the high priest actually OVERRULED FIRST VISIBILITY, with the simple claim that this must have been "a FALSE witness", and the witness had no way of forcing the high priest to accept what he (the witness) had in fact SEEN with his own eyes, the first new crescent.

So either when visibility should have been possible but was obscured by clouds, or when the high priest simply didn't like the witness that had been brought by someone (e.g. perhaps two 29-day months in a row?), then he could pronounce the witness to be "unreliable", and the result in either case was that the month actually started the day AFTER first visibility.

None of this type of "postponement" would have necessarily made the decision unacceptable to God, because THE MOTIVATION would not have been one of wanting to "manipulate" the calendar. The motivation would have been one of wanting to correctly handle an ambiguous situation or an extremely difficult situation. Even when the high priest rejected someone's witness, he could have done so from the motivation of being CONVINCED that the witness could not be true because it was simply too early (according to his understanding) for the new crescent to possibly be visible.

17) We should understand that even with the system of going by first visibility, it wasn't just a matter of

starting a new month because any old Tom, Dick or Harry had come forward and claimed that he had seen the new crescent. We need to understand that there was even in that system still someone with AUTHORITY to either accept or to reject the witness that had been brought to him. And if he REJECTED the witness that was brought to him, then that was final in that system during the first century AD. The witness had no recourse to appeal against the high priest's (later the chief patriarch's) decision.

So those people today who would like to follow the biblical example of basing the start of a new month on first visibility should understand that IN NEW TESTAMENT TIMES the system of first visibility always required that ONE MAN WAS IN CHARGE AND HAD THE FINAL SAY, as to whether the "visibility" reported to him was acceptable or not. His decision was final! And yes, at times he probably decided on a day that could technically have been called "the wrong day".

The idea of having a countrywide telephone network and asking people in Los Angeles or in San Francisco or in Dallas or in New Orleans or in Tampa or in New York as to whether the new crescent had been visible in THEIR area, and if they answer in the affirmative to then pronounce the start of a new month IS SIMPLY NOT THE BIBLICAL MODEL!

First of all this type of system has no central control, which was always a key component of the biblical system. The idea of relying on people in diverse areas of the country for establishing first visibility is a system that encourages confusion, by allowing "every man to do that which is right in his own eyes" (like Judges 21:25). In biblical times there was ALWAYS central control, which had the authority to reject without recourse to appeal any witness it did not approve of. In biblical times it was never a case of unqualified and automatic acceptance of any "witness" brought by just anybody. The priest never simply "HAD TO ACCEPT" the witness that was brought to him; he could reject it.

Next, in biblical times the key was whether or not the new crescent was visible IN ONE SPECIFIC LOCATION, THE VICINITY OF JERUSALEM! Whether or not the new crescent was visible in another location (50 miles north or 15 miles west, etc.) was really immaterial. It wasn't a matter of witnesses coming from 20 miles away. It was a matter of witnesses having seen the new crescent somewhere in the vicinity of Jerusalem, and probably reporting back to the high priest within an hour or so of sunset. Whether the new crescent had been visible in Joppa or in Caesarea was never considered. Only the area of Jerusalem was considered for "first visibility".

18) Now that system was fine for what can only be called "a tiny country", Palestine. Relying on first visibility worked well for them. The whole country is in terms of longitude only a few degrees wide, thus not creating any major problems. It is highly unlikely that people in other parts of the country could, except on very rare occasions, have seen the new moon on an evening when it was not yet visible in the area of Jerusalem. But it would not at all be rare, by contrast, for the new moon to be visible one day earlier in Seattle and in San Francisco than it would be visible in New York or in Miami. In a country the size of the United States you have to address the question of:

What do we do when the new moon is visible ONE DAY EARLIER in western parts of the country compared to when it is visible in eastern parts of the country? What if it is visible one day earlier in Hawaii than it is visible in the contiguous continental United States?

Questions of this nature simply never needed to be faced in a small country like Israel. For them going by first visibility NEVER presented any potential conflicts that required some kind of decision that would take considerations like this into account. Changed circumstances frequently require additional decisions or rulings. There are many examples in the Bible where changed circumstances resulted in additional decisions, which in some cases involved a modification of the original instructions. This indicates to us that God will certainly take changed conditions into account in any requirements He may have for us.

I believe that changed circumstances in THE GEOGRAPHIC AREAS for which the calendar will be binding (i.e. today worldwide as opposed to the limited area of a small country like Palestine in biblical times) require us to at least consider and examine possible options that may solve some of the potential problematic situations that could arise as a result of the new worldwide application of the calendar, situations that NEVER had to be faced by those responsible for making the final decisions during biblical times.

19) So as far as basing a calendar on the first visibility of the new crescent is concerned, the point is this:

A) There was always ONE MAN in charge who made the final decision, and he could and did reject witnesses he personally didn't agree with. This made the process somewhat subjective.

B) The biblical system only considered ONE LOCALITY for deciding about first visibility, the general area of Jerusalem. Whether visibility was possible in other areas of the country or not was simply not considered.

C) Since first visibility can at times be EXTREMELY FAINT and VERY BRIEF, there is always the potential of making a decision that could be considered as "wrong". Relying on the sharpness of someone's eyesight in such circumstances makes the process rather subjective.

20) When Hillel II introduced his "fixed" calendar in 358/359 AD, this DID remove all of these very subjective factors from the process of determining the calendar for each month and year. It was also an attempt to come to grips with the situation that the calendar needed to be applied over a far greater geographic area than just the area of Palestine. This attempt to organize the calendar in such a way that it COULD be applied by people in every inhabited area of the world was not wrong at all! Expanded circumstances required a new system that could accommodate these expanded circumstances, while still complying with God's basic instructions. Under such expanded circumstances it was simply NOT FEASIBLE to rely on visual observations in ONE specific location on earth.

21) So Hillel's reliance on the molads, the supposed new moon conjunctions, was not wrong at all. The fact that they were not totally accurate was also not a problem of a wrong attitude or a wrong motivation. The calculations Hillel employed for determining the molads involved the most accurate data available to anyone at that point in time, even though we today can see that sometimes the molad may differ from the actual new moon conjunction by as much as 15 hours.

22) THE PROBLEM with Hillel's fixed calendar was NOT that he had switched from going by "first visibility" (which had always been somewhat subjective ... you claimed that you saw the new crescent while I knew very well that I hadn't been able to see anything) to using the invisible conjunction (known as "the molad"). This change simply took the whole process out of the arena of subjectivity, and replaced it with an objective standard, one that could be applied in any part of the world.

THE REAL PROBLEM with Hillel's calendar was that it introduced "RULES OF MANIPULATION" (known as "the postponement rules") and that it in addition TOTALLY IGNORED the seasonal requirements God had imposed on the calendar.

23) I believe that there are a number of factors that not only make the use of the invisible conjunction for determining the start of each month something which will also meet with God's approval; I believe that using the invisible conjunction TODAY IN OUR AGE is actually more desirable in the eyes of God! Consider the following points:

24) Going by first visibility always required ONE MAN to have the final authority as to whether he would

accept or reject the "witness" that had been brought to him. At no point did this one man make his decision with the thought that the decision he made would also be binding on people living ON OTHER CONTINENTS! He made his decision for people in a relatively small part of this world, a very small part of the Middle East. This one man's authority was recognized and accepted by all the people in his country.

25) UNLESS WE TODAY HAVE "ONE MAN" whose authority we all recognize for making the final decisions about "first visibility", which decisions will inevitably be somewhat SUBJECTIVE if he really is concerned with REAL FIRST VISIBILITY, we need to have a system that OBJECTIVELY determines the start of each month. An objective way of determining the start of each month obviates the need for having ONE MAN who has the authority for making the final decision about whether the new crescent was or was not visible.

26) So unless GOD actually points out to us "one man" in whom HE has vested the authority to make such a final decision in each case about "first visibility", we actually NEED an objective way of determining the start of each month. Since I don't believe that there is any one man alive today whom GOD has chosen to pronounce on first visibility month after month, therefore we cannot stay with the SUBJECTIVE standard of "first visibility". Yet we must stay with the lunar cycle.

27) It is possible to basically CALCULATE first visibility of the new crescent. HOWEVER, there will inevitably be times when the new crescent will simply NOT be visible at all, even though according to our theoretical calculations for first visibility it SHOULD have been visible. This is because "first visibility" can fluctuate anywhere from about 16 hours to about 20 hours after the actual conjunction. The very concept of "first VISIBILITY" is based on something that CAN BE SEEN! So this represents a weakness in the system based on "first visibility". What can be "seen" is always somewhat subjective, and if you really could NOT see something that you THEORETICALLY should have been able to see, then you will be tempted to ignore REALITY in favour of your theoretical calculations. Yet you may CLAIM that your calendar is governed by first visibility.

28) When the calendar was based on first visibility (i.e. in the limited area of Palestine), it was NEVER CONSIDERED that some people would actually be able to see the new crescent ONE DAY EARLIER than people in Jerusalem would be able to see it.

But in a worldwide context it will FREQUENTLY be the case that people in California will be able to see the new crescent ONE DAY EARLIER than people in the Midwest or people on the East Coast of the United States or people in the British Isles or people in continental Europe or people in Jerusalem or people in Africa and in India and in Australia and in New Zealand.

THIS PHENOMENON NEVER ENTERED INTO THE CONSIDERATIONS WHEN THE CALENDAR WAS DETERMINED ON "FIRST VISIBILITY".

29) Now let's understand the principle Jesus Christ expounded in Mark 2:27, that "the Sabbath was made for man, AND NOT MAN FOR THE SABBATH"! Jesus Christ was explaining that the Sabbath was made TO BENEFIT MAN. Without man existing, the Sabbath loses its intended value and meaning. Jesus Christ was putting the Sabbath into its correct perspective, see the whole section in Mark 2:23-28 for more details.

I believe that GOD wants us to understand the same principle about the calendar, namely that "THE CALENDAR was made for man (to benefit from), and not man for the calendar". I believe that God wants us to also see THE CALENDAR in its correct perspective. Think about the principle of Mark 2:27 for a while. This principle does NOT justify "manipulating" the calendar to suit our own convenience, but it does apply to establishing rules that are consistent and that enable us to correctly predict key dates,

even as we can correctly predict when the weekly Sabbath days will occur.

30) Think also about the principle of 1 Corinthians 14:33, that "God is not the author of confusion". And consider further that God does NOT want every man doing "what is right in his own eyes" (see Judges 21:25), because that only ends in death (see Proverbs 16:25). And God's way is one where "all things are done decently and in order" (see 1 Corinthians 14:40).

Thus, while it is clear that the months are to start with the new moons and that the years are to start in the spring, yet the calendar must be of such a nature that it is for our benefit, and that it does not cause CONFUSION! And a worldwide calendar should not depend on SUBJECTIVE decisions, unless God were indeed to reveal someone in whom He has placed the authority to make such subjective decisions.

31) Now the calendar is not some kind of game God is playing with us human beings. It must be PRACTICAL (even as the weekly Sabbath is practical), and it must work without causing confusion. Now IF the basis of the calendar is supposed to be "first visibility", THEN it would obviously be "confusion" if the new crescent were to be visible ONE FULL DAY EARLIER in some areas of the world than in the area for which that "one man with the authority" will determine first visibility.

An example:

Supposing that in Jerusalem the new crescent will be visible for the first time this evening after sunset, but it was already visible after sunset yesterday in Washington and in California and in Texas, etc. Thus IF the new month is pronounced to start this evening after sunset because that is when first visibility will be possible in Jerusalem, THEN this creates confusion because it ignores the reality that the new crescent was already visible one day earlier in many parts of the United States.

32) If, on the other hand, every area around the world were to establish a calendar based on the dates when first visibility occurred IN THEIR LOCAL AREAS, then the confusion would only be compounded many times over! It would mean that God's people in different countries would at times observe the Holy Days on different days from God's people in other countries. It would also mean that there would have to be "MANY MEN" who would be authorized to make the decisions about whether or not first visibility was possible on a given day in their respective areas. It would indeed be a matter of people around the world "doing what is right in their own eyes".

33) I could elaborate further, but it basically boils down to this:

In a small confined local context like the area of Palestine, it is perfectly suitable to employ a subjective standard, like local first visibility of the new crescent, for determining the calendar. But such a subjective standard is not really suitable for a calendar that will be used by God's people scattered around the whole world. A calendar that will be applied worldwide must inevitably be based on some OBJECTIVE standards, standards that don't depend on a person's location on earth.

This is something even Hillel II understood. And so he realized that the only objective standard he could turn to was THE INVISIBLE NEW MOON CONJUNCTION. The principle Hillel based his fixed calendar on was sound and logical. I have earlier already mentioned the problems he introduced.

34) The new moon conjunctions take place at ONE PRECISE MOMENT IN TIME. It doesn't matter where on earth a person may be, the time of the conjunctions is the same for everybody everywhere (though they can be translated into the different local time zones for every area on earth). First visibility of the new crescent, by contrast, is not one specific point in time at all! First visibility TRAVELS around the world as the earth rotates on its axis. So first visibility actually covers a period of 24 hours, from the time the new crescent was visible at the first place on earth until it has become visible at the last place

on earth.

This means that first visibility is rather imprecise compared to the conjunction. And first visibility is also subjective, depending on your location on earth. Exactly which point during that 24-hour period covered by first visibility do you use to determine the start of the new month? The conjunction, on the other hand, is an objective point in time.

35) It is not really a matter of saying that basing the calendar on first visibility is "wrong". It is really a matter of saying that basing the calendar on first visibility in a worldwide context is inadequate and unsuitable, because in a worldwide context first visibility creates confusion and uncertainty. In a worldwide context a calendar based on first visibility also shows a lack of concern for God's people in other parts of the world, and a lack of desire to be in harmony with all members of the "one body" scattered around this globe. It doesn't take into account that the calendar ALSO "was made for man", so we could be united and in harmony with all of God's people everywhere else.

36) There are really only TWO new moons that have any impact at all on the Holy Days. They are the new moon of the FIRST month, and the new moon of the SEVENTH month. All other new moons have no effect on the placing of the Feasts and the Holy Days. To be in agreement with God's seasonal requirements, it is the first new moon in the spring of the Northern Hemisphere that is used to start the year.

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