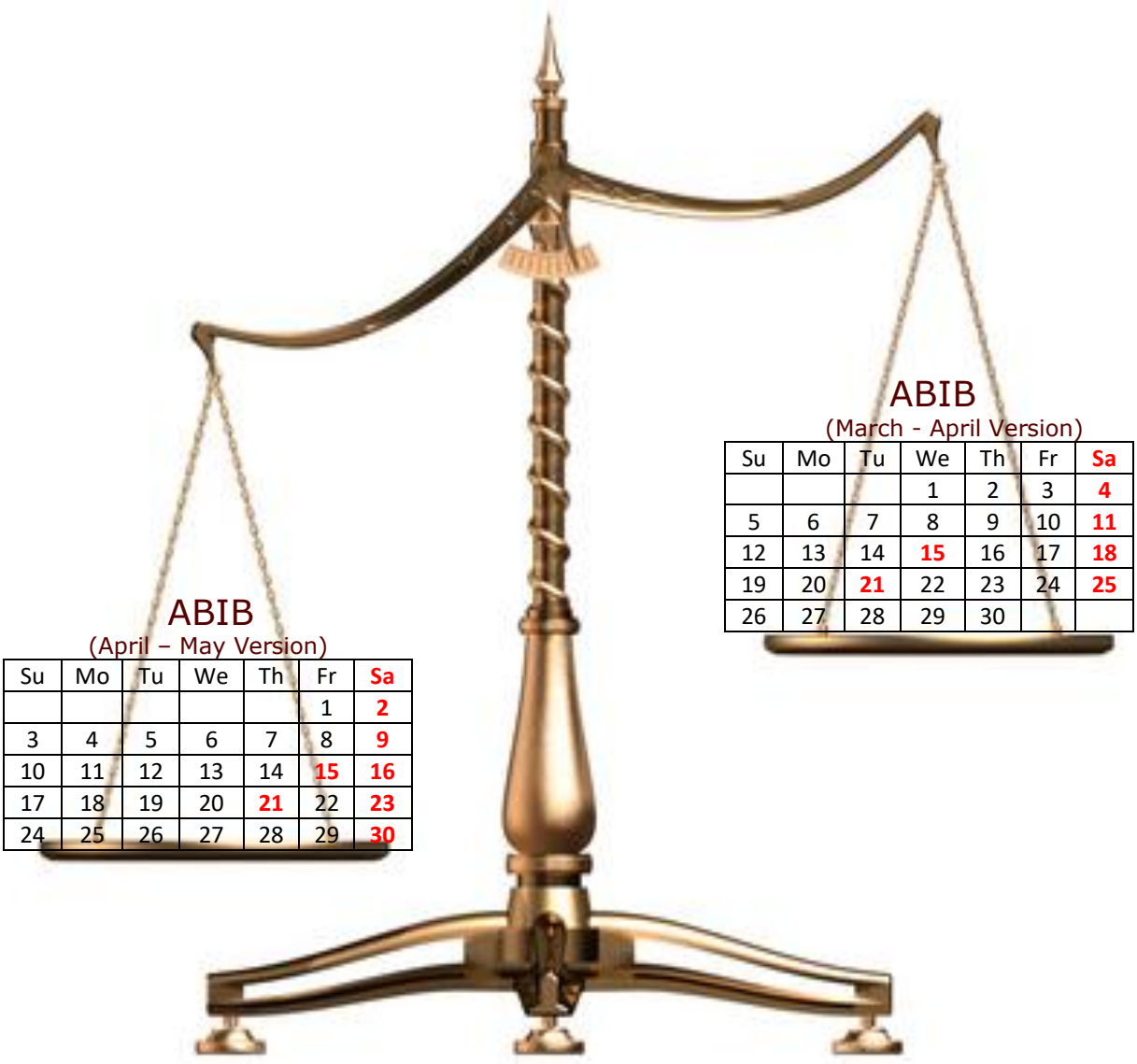
Balancing the Calendar



ABIB
(April – May Version)

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

ABIB
(March - April Version)

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
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26	27	28	29	30		

Larry and June Acheson

Balancing the Calendar

By Larry and June Acheson

For several years, I managed to avoid and evade the calendar debates that are so prevalent within the Yahwist Movement, but inevitably questions arise, and some folks inevitably end up looking "down their noses" at those who don't reckon the Scriptural calendar the same way they do. It wasn't until I was told that the calendar I went by is traced to idol worship that I became motivated to reevaluate everything I had believed to be true. It's not easy to scrap previously-accepted information, but that's what I more or less did. Sometimes getting to the truth requires "wiping the slate clean," or at least trying. Complicating matters is the fact that Scripture doesn't come right out and define a specific method of reckoning the calendar. All I could do was compare information gleaned from various articles, combining it with the results of my own personal research conducted at a university library.

Does the Scriptural year begin with the first new moon following the vernal equinox? Does it begin with the first new moon following the appearance of green ears of barley in Israel? Is the new moon the conjunction? Or is it the first-sighted crescent following the conjunction? Does it matter where on earth the new moon is sighted? Is the new moon the "full" moon? Does the moon have anything at all to do with the Scriptural calendar?

These are all questions I needed to address and resolve as I conducted my own research. There are articles out there composed by authors adamantly validating each of the above-listed options as "the Scriptural calendar." While I was coerced/pressured to check out each one, I was simultaneously compelled to "prove all things" (1 Thessalonians 5:21). This study, as well as its sequel ("Balancing the Calendar II"), represents the culmination of my efforts. By balancing Scripture and the historical record, I believe we come up with an irrefutable calendar.

This is a modified version of the handout given to accompany the presentation I gave at the 2005 Unity Conference held in Cisco, Texas. I am adding June's name to this study because her insights and other contributions have truly made her a co-author.

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Balancing the Calendar

By Larry & June Acheson

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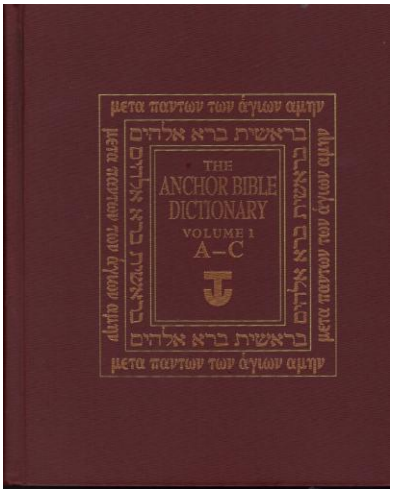
1. The Scriptural Perspective

Through the years, there have been seemingly countless debates over which calendar best represents the one that Yahweh gave to Moses, and each argument (at least the ones we've seen) is based upon an individual's understanding of Scripture.

Since each version of the calendar is based upon an interpretation of Scripture, this means that each version is "Scriptural." Over the years, we have been inundated with booklets or tracts in which the author attempts to persuade us that his Scriptural interpretation is the only one that "really fits" the one used by the ancient believers. The only problem is, after being on the receiving end of so much literature with diverse interpretations, we know that not all of those interpretations can be correct. In fact, only ***one*** of those interpretations can possibly represent the calendar that Yahweh gave to Moses.



It is universally admitted that Scripture alone does not give us all the facts we need. As *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* puts it, "There is no statement in the Bible about how long a year lasted, and the data about its beginning are confusing."[1] *The Anchor Bible Dictionary's* summary evaluation is a truthful one. Nevertheless, many folks who have shared their literature with us are fully persuaded that Scripture is "***very plain***" about when the year begins, and they are certain that their understanding is the only one that fits. Since we have heard so many different versions of these authors' perspective of the truth, each one exhibiting different variables, we know we need to be careful in choosing the one that best fits what we believe Yahweh intends for His children to observe.

Although Scripture doesn't offer detailed instructions for how to determine the calendar, it nevertheless presents clues that we need to keep in mind when we compile our research. First of all, we glean from the book of Genesis that Yahweh gave us lights in the heavens to help us in determining the festivals (Heb. מוֹעֲדִים *moedim*, word #4150 in *Strong's Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary*). For us to know the correct dates for festivals, we must also know how to reckon the calendar. Here's what we read in Genesis 1:14:

> [14] And the Almighty said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons (Heb. מוֹעֲדִים *moedim*), and for days, and years.

It should be noted that the Hebrew word translated "seasons" in the above verse is *also* translated "festivals."[2] Genesis 1:14 is a very well-known and often-used verse when it comes to proving the true calendar of Yahweh, but in the end, all it really tells us is that we are to use the lights in the heavens for determining our seasons, as well as our years. It doesn't tell us when that beginning point is; as a result, we have a controversy on our hands!

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[1] From *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Vol. 1, article "Calendar," Doubleday publishing, New York, 1992, p. 817.

[2] The Hebrew word מוֹעֵד (*moed*) is literally defined as "an appointment, i.e., a fixed time or season," but is also translated "festival" or "season."

2. Exodus 34:22 and The Tekufah

In citing verses of Scripture supporting the vernal equinox as preceding the first month of the year, many folks turn to Exodus 34:22. Here is what Exodus 34:22 says:

> [22] And thou shalt observe the feast of weeks, of the firstfruits of wheat harvest, and the feast of ingathering at the year's end.

The expression "at year's end" in Exodus 34:22 literally reads "at year's tekufah," which many understand as meaning "equinox." The word tekufah is word #8622 in *Strong's* Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary:

> **8622.** תְּקוּפָה **t^eqûwphâh**, *tek-oo-faw';* or תְּקֻפָה **t^eqûphâh**, *tek-oo-faw';* from 5362; a *revolution*, i.e. (of the sun) *course*, (of time) *lapse:*—circuit, come about, end.

As much as some folks want to make this word mean "equinox," the meaning just doesn't fit. First of all, according to *Strong's*, the word means a "circuit." It can mean ***any*** circuit or revolution. According to *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew-English Lexicon*, this word, as used in Exodus 34:22, means "*at the circuit* (completion) *of the year*."[3]

Secondly, this Hebrew word is only used in three other verses of Scripture, and in none of those verses can we clearly define its meaning as "equinox." Here are those three verses:

> 2 Chronicles 24:23 – And it came to pass at the **end** [*tekufah*] of the year, that the host of Syria came up against him (King Joash): and they came to Judah and Jerusalem, and destroyed all the princes of the people from among the people, and sent all the spoil of them unto the king of Damascus.

> I Samuel 1:20 – Wherefore it came to pass, when the **time was come about** [*tekufah*] after Hannah had conceived, that she bare a son, and called his name Samuel.

[Note: The above verse literally reads, "And it happened **at the turning of** the days that conceived Hannah and bore a son …."][4]

> Psalms 19:6 – His [the sun's] going forth *is* from the end of the heaven, and his **circuit** [*tekufah*] unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.

In none of the above verses of Scripture is there any implication that the word *tekufah* can only be understood as a reference to the equinox.

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[3] From *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew-English Lexicon*, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1979 by Jay P. Green, Sr., p. 880.

[4] Based on the literal translation found in *The Interlinear Bible*, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1986 by Jay P. Green, Sr., p. 238.

Moreover, from a historical perspective, none of the ancients understood Exodus 34:22 as being a reference to the autumnal equinox. I, for one, do not recall reading any of the ancients citing Exodus 34:22 as a "proof text" in defense of their belief that the equinox is the event from which the first moon of the year is reckoned. This can be readily observed from the *Septuagint* translation, which was translated into Greek from the Hebrew in the 3rd century BCE. Notice how the translator rendered the word *tekufah*:

> [22]And thou shalt keep to Me the feast of weeks, the beginning of wheat-harvest; and the feast of ingathering in the **middle** [*tekufah*][5] of the year.

I'm not sure if I totally agree with the above translation of *tekufah*, but certainly from Yahweh's perspective the Feast of Ingathering (Tabernacles) is in the ***middle of the year***, not the end, since it occurs six months before the start of the new year in Abib. However, since the word *tekufah* in Exodus 34:22 was not understood as literally meaning "equinox" by the translators of the Septuagint, it becomes clear this is not a verse that we can legitimately use as a proof text in establishing a case for the vernal equinox in beginning a new year. This is especially significant in view of the fact that the translators of the *Septuagint* supported beginning the first month of the year on or after the vernal equinox, as we will see later.

On top of this, even if the word *tekufah* in Exodus 34:22 were to be understood as meaning "equinox," this verse nowhere states that the feast of ingathering must be observed ***after*** the *tekufah*.

I'm persuaded it's always best to allow Scripture to interpret Scripture whenever possible, and with Exodus 34:22, there *is* a parallel passage that I believe allows us to better understand the true intent of the Author. This passage is found in Exodus 23:14-16:

> [14] Three times thou shalt keep a feast unto me in the year.
> [15] Thou shalt keep the feast of unleavened bread: (thou shalt eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded thee, in the time appointed of the month Abib; for in it thou camest out from Egypt: and none shall appear before me empty:)
> [16] And the feast of harvest, the firstfruits of thy labours, which thou hast sown in the field: and the feast of ingathering, which is in the end [Heb. *alah*] of the year, when thou hast gathered in thy labours out of the field.

The above expression "in the end of the year" is universally understood as meaning precisely that … the end of the year, not at the equinox.

Thus, I do not see any justification for promoting Exodus 34:22 as a viable proof text supporting use of the vernal equinox in setting the new year.

[5] The actual Greek word for "middle" is μεσουντος ("mesountos"). However, as we will see in chapter 12, when Philo mentions that Scripture reckons the year "from the vernal equinox," he uses the Greek phrase απο της έαρινης ίσημερίας (*ato tes earinís isimerías*). *Isimerías* is the literal Greek word for "equinox."

3. Many "Scriptural Calendars"

Without a clear text from Scripture to define precisely how and when to begin the new year, and with nothing else to guide us, we are left to come up with seemingly *endless* interpretations of various texts, many of which may be, and are, understood in more than one way. As a result, some folks insist *their* particular interpretation of Scripture is sufficient to prove the "true" calendar. As a consequence to the differing interpretations, we have a vast array of "*Scriptural* calendars"—after all, the interpretations *do* come straight from *Scripture*. The question is, "Which of those 'Scriptural calendars' matches the one given by Yahweh?" Is there a way for us to find out?

While I'm persuaded Scripture should be the "final authority" in determining which calendar Yahweh gave to Moses, it is nevertheless possible to misinterpret Scripture, which in turn results in distortions of the original calendar. An example of these distortions is a calendar being promoted by folks known as "lunar sabbatarians."[6] Lunar sabbatarians regard the weekly Sabbath as being governed by the lunar cycle, which in turn means they believe the weekly Sabbath must fall on certain days of the month—each and every month. Typically those dates fall on the 8th, 15th, 22nd & 29th days of each month, although some lunar sabbatarians go with the 7th, 14th, 21st & 28th days of the month.[7] At the end of each month there are "new moon worship days."[8] Shown below is a calendar illustrating the perspective of lunar sabbatarians who believe the weekly Sabbath must fall on the 8th, 15th, 22nd & 29th days of each month:

LUNAR SABBATARIAN ABIB, 1st Month

(Also showing the last week of the previous month & first week of the following month)

THIRD DAY	FOURTH DAY	FIFTH DAY	SIXTH DAY	SABBATH	EXTENDED WORSHIP DAY	NEW MOON DAY
25	26	27	28	29	[Does not count as a week day] 30	[Does not count as a week day] 1
FIRST DAY	SECOND DAY	THIRD DAY	FOURTH DAY	FIFTH DAY	PREPARATION	SABBATH
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	Passover 14	Unleavened Time 1 Passover (?) 15
Unleavened Time 2 16	Unleavened Time 3 17	Unleavened Time 4 18	Unleavened Time 5 19	Unleavened Time 6 20	Unleavened Time 7 21	Unleavened Time 8 22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
NEW MOON DAY	FIRST DAY	SECOND DAY	THIRD DAY	FOURTH DAY	FIFTH DAY	PREPARATION
[Does not count as a week day] 1	2	3	4	5	6	7

[6] For more information on the beliefs of lunar sabbatarians, we invite you to read our study entitled *Something Different: Lunar Sabbaths*, which may be accessed at our web site (http://www.ponderscripture.org/lunarsabb.html).

[7] I give the reason for the differing dates on the following page.

[8] "New moon worship days" fall on the 30th day (unless the month only comprises 29 days), as well as day 1 of the new month. These extra days were initially presented to us as "extended Sabbaths," but other lunar sabbatarians protested this designation, insisting that they should be called "new moon worship days." Here's how lunar sabbatarian Arnold Bowen explained the reasoning: "RESPONSE; we do not recognize extended Sabbaths and I have never mentioned an extended Sabbath we call it a new moon worship day same as Ezekiel, it is not one of the six work days and therefore the new moon breaks up the cycle of six work days this is an absolute which cannot intelligently be denied. END." This comment was made on July 9, 2005 in an online forum topic titled "**Why you don't count the New moon day when counting out the weeks,"** which was located in the "True Sabbath" forum at EliYah's Forums (www.eliyah.com). This special forum was created in January 2004 and discontinued in 2007.

The above calendar is based on months that begin with the conjunction of the moon. Lunar sabbatarians who go with Sabbaths that fall on the 7th, 14th, 21st and 28th days of each month begin their months with the sighting of the first crescent moon following the conjunction.[9] As you can see, from the perspective of a non-lunar Sabbatarian, lunar sabbaths require observing the weekly Sabbath on a different day of the week each month. This is because, at the end of each month, they have to wait for the upcoming new moon in order for the numerical sequence of weeks to reset itself. In the above example, the weekly Sabbath falls on the day commonly known as *Saturday* during the month of Abib. The following month, Ziv, has weekly Sabbaths falling on the day commonly known as *Sunday*.

The extra days at the end of each month, in addition to the designation "new moon worship days," are sometimes also referred to as "extended worship days."[10] Lunar sabbatarians avoid designating them as "sabbaths" because they don't observe those days the same way as the weekly Sabbath. For example, food preparation and housework/yardwork are permitted on "extended worship days," whereas those activities are not permitted on the weekly Sabbath. Lunar sabbatarians offer no explanations for how and why the understanding about "extended worship days," along with their relaxed limitations, are not presented in Scripture.

The key takeaway here is the fact that lunar sabbatarians believe their interpretation of Scripture is the correct one, i.e., it's *Scriptural*. Their method of reckoning has just enough truth mixed in to persuade many people that the weekly Sabbath is determined by the lunar cycle. The reasoning boils down to three basic components. They start with Genesis 1:14, where, on the fourth day of creation, Elohim set the lights in the heavens, adding, "let them be for signs, and for seasons (*moedim*), and for days, and years." The Hebrew word translated "seasons" is *moedim*, which, as explained in chapter 1, can *also* be translated as "appointments."

Their next step (step 2) is to cite Psalms 104:19, which says, "He (Yahweh) appointed the moon for seasons (*moedim*): the sun knoweth his going down." We thus see that the heavenly light specifically set up for *moedim* / appointments is the moon.

Finally, (step 3) they point to Leviticus 23:1-3:

> 1 And Yahweh spake unto Moses, saying,
> 2 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, Concerning the feasts (*moedim*) of Yahweh, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, even these are my feasts.
> 3 Six days shall work be done: but the seventh day *is* the sabbath of rest, an holy convocation; ye shall do no work *therein*: it *is* the sabbath of Yahweh in all your dwellings.

[9] The reason for the differing dates is the desire to have a full moon at the middle of the month. For months that begin with the conjunction, the moon is generally at its fullest on the 15th; for months that begin with the sighting of the first crescent moon following the conjunction, the moon is generally at its fullest on the 14th.

[10] Lunar sabbatarian Arnold Bowen, in a posting he submitted on 08-27-2005 to the "Philo" thread of the (now-defunct) True Sabbath forum at eliyah.com, wrote the following: "Every month the 4 Sabbaths have six work days between each and the last Sabbath/ worship day of the month is followed by an extended worship day called the New Moon and then the six day intervals begin anew with a Sabbath at the end of each. This is why they are called Lunar Sabbaths, because they are Governed by the moon and not the sun, as the traditional Sabbath is."

This passage identifies the Sabbath as a *moed* / appointment; the verse in Psalms states that the moon is for *moedim* / appointments. Since the Sabbath is one of the *moedim* / appointments, then it, like the feast days, must be determined by the lunar cycle. Or so the reasoning goes.

On the surface, the argument supporting lunar sabbaths *seems* persuasive. Back in 2004, a man commemorated the Feast of Tabernacles with us. He had some rather unorthodox beliefs, such as the belief that photographs are a form of idolatry. At one point in one of our discussions, the topic of lunar sabbatarian beliefs came up. He had never heard of lunar sabbaths. Once I explained the basic concept, he laughed and stated that lunar sabbatarianism is the strangest belief he had ever heard of. I advised him to be careful when confronted by lunar sabbatarians because their arguments seem very compelling if you don't do careful research. Again, he laughed. I argued that I could play "devil's advocate" and give him the lunar sabbatarian arguments—adding that I would have him painted in a corner within five minutes. He took me up on the challenge. I gave him the three components referenced above, and summed it up by stating, "Therefore, the true weekly Sabbath can *only* be based on the lunar cycle." He stopped laughing. He didn't know how to refute the three components. Although I proceeded to explain the flawed exegesis, my explanations didn't seem to resonate with him. Within less than a year, I received word that he had converted to lunar sabbatarianism and moved to Missouri to join like-minded believers in that state.

In my study *Something Different: Lunar Sabbaths*, I present many arguments that refute lunar sabbatarian claims, but the one I find the most compelling is the fact that the Hebrew scholars who translated the Septuagint from Hebrew to Greek in the third century BCE could not have been lunar sabbatarians. Here's why: The Greek word usually translated from *moed* is *kairos*, and such is the case in Genesis 1:14 and Psalms 104:19. However, instead of translating *moed* as *kairos* in the critical verse Leviticus 23:2, the Hebrew scholars chose the Greek word *heortē*, which means "feast" or "holy day." It goes without saying that ***if*** those scholars had been lunar sabbatarians, they would have made certain to show the connection between the weekly Sabbath and the lunar cycle by translating *moedim* as *kairos* in Leviticus 23:2. But they did not. I address this and other claims from lunar sabbatarians in my study, which may be accessed at our web site (http://www.ponderscripture.org/lunarsabb.html).

4. Another "Scriptural Calendar" – the Full Moon = the New Moon!

The lunar sabbatarian interpretation of how the weekly cycle is reckoned is just one of many examples of how we can read the instructions found in Scripture and, without any outside dynamics to guide us, each of us is liable to come up with a different interpretation—and call it "Scriptural." As it is with the weekly cycle, so it is with the Scriptural calendar. I have read numerous articles composed by authors who insist that *their* understanding of the calendar is the correct one. And since they base their understanding of the correct calendar on an intense study of Scripture, each of those calendars is, to the individual who comes up with it, a "Scriptural calendar."

One such calendar is promoted by a group asserting that Yahweh's months begin at the full moon. As with the previous calendars, this calendar is a "Scriptural calendar" because it is based on certain folks' understanding of Scripture after their own diligent study of Yahweh's Word. Before I display a sample of this calendar, I would like to supply an explanatory quotation from this group's website:

> The Full Moon occurs at a specific time. It occurs when the moon is rising in the east as the sun is setting or has just set in the west. It is at this point, when the moon is "fullest," that the "New Moon" occurs beginning the month. Only at this specific time is the moon truly full although it has already looked nearly full for a couple of days. This interpretation of the Full Moon as the New Moon is Scriptural because both the sun and moon are used together to determine the Full Moon and therefore, a new month as in Genesis 1:14 above. In the coming Messianic Age, the **Full Moon** [New Moon] will be used to determine all worship days at the Temple, including the [SEVENTH-DAY] Sabbaths.[11]

Now that I have established the fact that this group believes the full moon represents the first day of a new month, I will reproduce their sample calendar. Ironically, this group is another version of lunar sabbatarians, with weekly Sabbaths falling on the 8th, 15th, 22nd and 29th days of each month; but instead of beginning new months with the *conjunction* of the moon, this group begins them with the *full* moon. That's right, the full moon is the *new* moon:

[11] From the online article titled "Quest for the Hebrew Calendar," by Charles J. Voss. The article was originally posted at www.uhcg.org, which, as of 2025, is discontinued. Also, the author's name is no longer displayed, either on the website or within the article. He now goes by "One Who Cares."

As much as I disagree with the veracity of the above calendar, I have to concede that it *is* "Scriptural"—at least for the person who contrived it. The question is, "Is it ***truly*** Scriptural?" Is the above calendar what Yahweh *really* had in mind for His children? Is there a way for us to know for sure "which" calendar He intended … and ***intends*** … for His children to follow?

5. The Historical Calendar

We need to exercise great caution when proclaiming to go by "Scripture and Scripture alone" because the end result may be a *multiplicity* of calendars designed by uninspired men, all claiming to have found the "true, Scriptural calendar." I haven't even addressed the now-popular "Zadok Calendar," which begins each year on the first Wednesday following the vernal equinox,[12] nor the Jewish "Hillel Calendar," which uses fixed mathematical calculations to align lunar months with the solar year. We even had a man visit us in our home in order to show us that the correct Scriptural calendar is based on the constellations, insisting that the new moon of the seventh month will *always* set in the constellation Leo.[13] One thing is certain: Not *all* of these "Scriptural calendars" can be correct. Might they *all* be wrong?

Zadokite Calendar 2025-2026

ABIB / Month 1 (March/April)

Day 1 (Sunday)	Day 2 (Monday)	Day 3 (Tuesday)	Day 4 (Wednesday)	Day 5 (Thursday)	Day 6 (Friday)	SHABBAT (Day 7)
			1 03/26/2025 **HEAD OF THE YEAR** Psalm 119, 135, 136, 145, 118, HTC*	**2** 03/27/2025	**3** 03/28/2025	**4** 03/29/2025 Psalm 92
5 03/30/2025	**6** 03/31/2025	**7** 04/1/2025	**8** 04/2/2025	**9** 04/3/2025	**10** 04/4/2025	**11** 04/5/2025 Psalm 94
12 04/6/2025	**13** 04/7/2025	**14** 04/8/2025 **PASSOVER** Psalm 93, 94, 133, 143	**15** 04/9/2025 **UNLEAVENED BREAD**	**16** 04/10/2025 **UNLEAVENED BREAD**	**17** 04/11/2025 **UNLEAVENED BREAD**	**18** 04/12/2025 *Full Moon* **UNLEAVENED BREAD** Psalm 95
19 04/13/2025 **UNLEAVENED BREAD**	**20** 04/14/2025 **UNLEAVENED BREAD**	**21** 04/15/2025 **UNLEAVENED BREAD**	**22** 04/16/2025	**23** 04/17/2025	**24** 04/18/2025	**25** 04/19/2025 Psalm 96
Count of the Omer-1 **26** 04/20/2025 **FIRST FRUITS OF BARLEY** Psalm 133	**27** 04/21/2025	**28** 04/22/2025	**29** 04/23/2025	**30** 04/24/2025		

Notes: Have Questions? please email >>> info@zadokway.com

High Shabbat — Spring Equinox: Wednesday March 19th, 2025

*HTC = Hymn to the creator Link >>> Hymn to the Creator

ABIB 1 is also known as The HEAD OF SPRING also a DAY OF REMEMBRANCE

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[12] *Cf.*, for example, "Calendar (Zadok Priestly Calendar)," by Michael Walker of Natzarim Yahshua Family Fellowship.

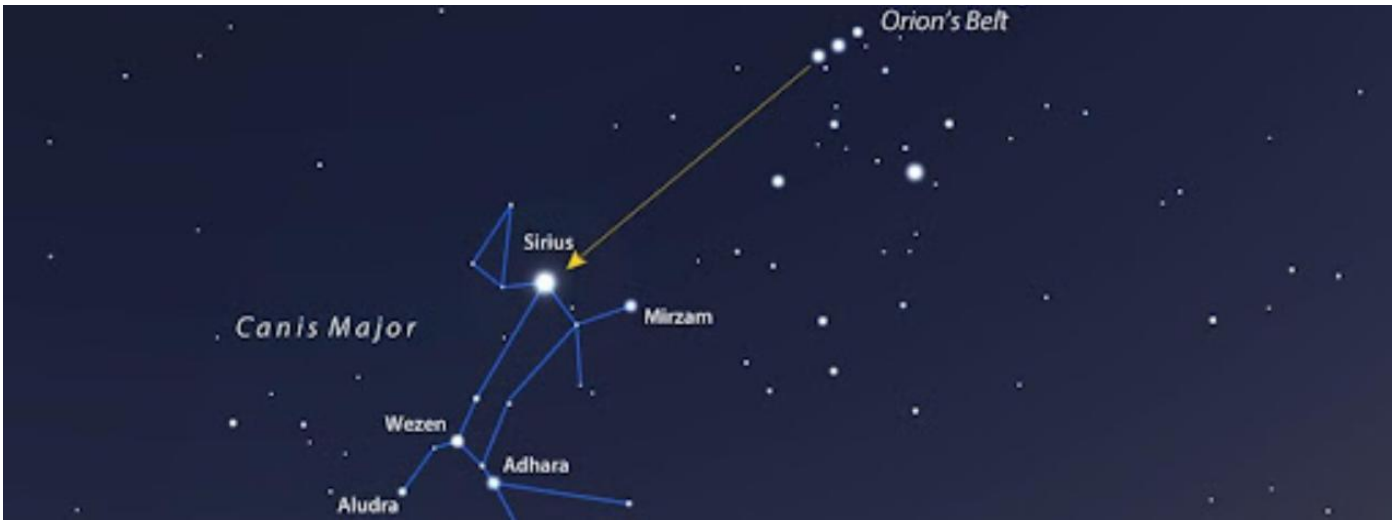
[13] He provides a 13-page document titled "The Beginning of the Year… When… Why?", as well as an accompanying chart to serve as an illustrative guide. On that sheet, he offers the following unsubstantiated remark: "**New Moon occurring when sun is setting in Leo is the 7th moon**." I never could figure out how he reached his conclusion based on Scripture, but his primary proof texts are Genesis 1:14-18 and Exodus 34:22. According to my SkyGlobe software, it is true that the new moon set in the constellation Leo on September 13, 2026. However, on October 2, 2027, the sun will set in the constellation *Virgo*. It appears in the constellation Leo a month earlier, on August 2nd, which poses a problem for the doctrinal belief because he also writes, "However the good news is we have a Scripture in Exodus 34:22 that states to observe the Feast of Ingathering (Tabernacles) at the tequphah (equinox) of the year." This would put day one of the Feast of Tabernacles on August 17, 2027, over a month *prior* to the autumnal equinox.

The Zadok calendar begins each year on the fourth day of the week because that day aligns with the creation account in Genesis, where the sun, moon, and stars (the basis for signs, seasons, days, and years) were created on the fourth day. This calendar does not determine months based on the lunar cycle at all. It is a strictly 364-day solar calendar that divides the year into 12 months of 30 days each, with four intercalary days added to mark the seasons. Although I have seen models of the Zadok calendar, I have yet to read explanations for why we don't read in Scripture the instruction to begin each year with the fourth day of the week. Although I personally find the above calendar to be utterly nonsensical, it makes perfect sense to those who promote it, and yes, they base it on *Scripture*.

History and History Alone?

An alternative to going by "Scripture and Scripture alone" would be to go by "History and History alone." Would ***that*** lead us to the true calendar? Well, as in the case of the *Scriptural* interpretations, there is a multiplicity of *historical* calendars out there. We could go with the Mayan calendar, for example. The Chinese calendar dates to 2637 BCE,[14] so it is certainly a calendar rich in history. Could it be the "true calendar"? Or how about the ancient Egyptian calendar?

Displayed below is how we would reckon our weeks and months if we went by the ancient Egyptian calendar, which began each new year in the summer with the rising of the star Sirius. If we were to go by that ancient calendar, August 2005, the month during which this study was originally composed, would have had to have been considered the first month of the year:



Tekh **Ancient Egyptian First Month** **2005**

First Day	Second Day	Third Day	Fourth Day	Fifth Day	Sixth Day	Seventh Day	Eighth Day	Ninth Day	Tenth Day
1 July 23	2 July 24	3 July 25	4 July 26	5 July 27	6 July 28	7 July 29	8 July 30	9 July 31	10 August 1
11 August 2	12 August 3	13 August 4	14 August 5	15 August 6	16 August 7	17 August 8	18 August 9	19 August 10	20 August 11
21 August 12	22 August 13	23 August 14	24 August 15	25 August 16	26 August 17	27 August 18	28 August 19	29 August 20	30 August 21

[14] *Cf.*, for example, "The Chinese Calendar," by Vigdis Hocken, © Time and Date AS 1995–2026 (https://www.timeanddate.com/calendar/about-chinese.html).

What follows is information I gleaned from the internet describing the ancient Egyptian calendar:

From the article *Festivals*
by Barbara Ann Richter (http://www.hethert.org/festivals.htm)

> The Ancient Egyptian calendar was divided into three seasons of four months each. Each month had three weeks of ten days each, on which the tenth (and later also the ninth) was a day of rest.

From *The Ancient Egyptian Calendar and Festivals: Part One*
by Kerry Wisner

> The civil calendar on the other hand is much easier to calculate than the lunar. Originally the civil calendar was engineered to begin with the day of the appearance of Sirius/Sopdet at sunrise. Despite the fact that the Nile may have already begun to rise this date was considered to be the beginning of the season of Akhet. In the civil calendar each season is composed of four months, each month is made up of three weeks, and each week consisted of ten days. The total number of days in the civil year is 360. At the end of the last month of the civil year five days were added that were considered to be independent from the year. These were viewed as the days in the year on which several gods were born, primarily because these days were outside of the mundane civil calendar and thus of a spiritual nature. These were termed "the Days Upon the Year;" however, Egyptologists refer to them as the epagomenal days.

Sirius Rises on July 23, 2005 …

"On or around the time of July 23, 2005 Sirius rises before the Sun …."[15]

There may be some folks who will examine the above calendar and conclude that it is the "true calendar." However, I hope not! Hopefully, we can all quickly see the missing ingredients to the above calendar that stick out like a sore thumb! First of all, it would be impossible to base the above calendar strictly on the lunar cycle, as we all understand that, with a lunar cycle of 29.5 days, there is no way we can have a 30-day month each and every month! Secondly, we also recognize that Yahweh's weekly Sabbath day occurs each ***seventh day***, not each ***tenth day***!

What, then, is the solution? Do we go by our interpretation of "Scripture and Scripture alone"? Do we go by our version of "history and history alone?"

I propose that each of us should diligently seek to apply the two above methods ***together*** as we investigate the calendar that Yahweh gave to Moses. Scholars freely admit that Scripture doesn't tell us when a year begins or how long a year is supposed to last. This omission leads to ambiguity and opens the door for anyone and everyone to interpret Yahweh's intention the best they can. The key to understanding is going back as far as we can in the historical record to see how the *ancient believers* understood the reckoning of Yahweh's calendar. If our interpretation of Scripture aligns with the understanding of ancient scholars, this serves as a *clue* that we're on the right track.

[15] Taken from the following URL: www.thequantumawakening.com/workshops.htm. NOTE: As of 2026, this website has been discontinued.

I know there is a vast array of proposed calendars offered by the various individuals and groups out there, all claiming to go by "Scripture and Scripture alone." I've only listed a few of the more extreme examples thus far. Some folks insist that the calendar is based upon the conjunction of the moon instead of the sighting of the crescent moon. Others begin the "Scriptural year" in the fall. Many believers, including myself, contend that it begins in the spring. Some groups declare the year cannot begin until green ears of barley have been found in Israel. Other believers are adamant the year begins with the first sighted crescent moon following the vernal equinox. The question is, "Can we find a calendar that not only fits the Scriptural instructions, but ***also*** matches one of the historical calendars recognized by ancient Judaism?"

I believe we can. As I will demonstrate later, there's a reason I titled this study *Balancing the Calendar*.

6. Starting With Scripture

Scripture offers what I feel are excellent clues to help narrow down the possibilities of when the new year begins. In Exodus 12:1-2, Yahweh commands Moses and Aaron that the current month in which He spoke to them was to be the *beginning* of months:

> [1] And Yahweh spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying,
> [2] This month shall be the first month of the year to you.

This text, by itself, doesn't offer us anything to go on, as it doesn't tell us what time of year "this month" was! However, thankfully, the above instructions were given in an approximate time setting, confirming that it was in the spring, as we are about to see. Exodus chapter 12 is where Moses and Aaron received instructions pertaining to the observance of the upcoming Passover ceremony, and the opening verses, as we have seen, indicate that the "moon" they were in is to be reckoned as the first month of the year.

It is very likely the above information was given to Moses and Aaron at the beginning of the month, at or immediately after the new moon, so as to make certain they understood that this particular new moon was the first one of the year. Then, ten days later, they were to select a lamb for each household. *But what exactly marked that new moon?* How could Moses and Aaron discern that a new month had begun? Were they looking at a complex set of calculations establishing that the conjunction of the moon just occurred? *Or* might they have been two witnesses sighting the first crescent moon following its conjunction? I am persuaded this latter scenario is the more likely of the two, so that would be *my* interpretation.[16] *But is that how the ancients understood the beginning of a new month?*

Additional information offered in the book of Exodus indicates that this particular month was either at the time of the barley harvest or shortly afterwards. This is because, as a result of the seventh plague of Egypt (the Plague of Hail), the barley and the flax crops had already been destroyed. We are told the barley was in the "ear" [Hebrew "*Abib*"] and that the flax was "bolled" (flowering stage). This information is given three chapters earlier, in Exodus 9:31-32:

> [31] And the flax and the barley was smitten: for the barley *was* in the ear, and the flax *was* bolled.
> [32] But the wheat and the rie [spelt] were not smitten: for they *were* not grown up.

Scripture does not inform us how much time had elapsed from the destruction of the flax and barley until the beginning of the first month. The question we need to ask is, "When would the Egyptian barley have been in the ear—and when would the Egyptian flax have been in bloom?"

No doubt the answer to this question will be, and *is*, a point of contention for many. In my research, according to the best sources I have found, this event most likely occurred in late January at the earliest, and mid-February at the latest. Here is the information found in by *Commentary on the Old Testament* by Keil & Delitzsch:

---

[16] In my follow-up study "Balancing the Calendar II," I offer a detailed explanation of why I'm persuaded the originally-sanctioned Scriptural month begins with the sighting of the first visible crescent moon following the conjunction (unless, of course, the astronomical conditions on day #30 prevent a sighting).

> These accounts [of the hail and the crops] are in harmony with the natural history of Egypt. According to *Pliny*, the barley is reaped in the sixth month after the sowing-time, the wheat in the seventh. The barley is ripe about the end of February or beginning of March; the wheat, at the end of March or beginning of April. The flax is in flower at the end of January. In the neighborhood of Alexandria, and therefore quite in the north of Egypt, the spelt is ripe at the end of April, and farther south it is probably somewhat earlier; for, according to other accounts, the wheat and spelt ripen at the same time (vid., *Hengstenberg*, p. 119). Consequently the plague of hail occurred at the end of January, or at the latest in the first half of February; so that there were at least eight weeks between the seventh and tenth plagues. The hail must have smitten the half, therefore, of the most important field-produce, viz., the barley, which was a valuable article of food both for men, especially the poorer classes, and for cattle, and the flax, which was also a very important part of the produce of Egypt; whereas the spelt, of which the Egyptians preferred to make their bread (*Herod* 2, 36, 77), and the wheat were still spared.[17]

The above information is corroborated by *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*:

> Furthermore, since in Egypt flax is usually sown in the beginning of January and is in flower three weeks later while barley is sown in August and is harvested in February, both would be exceedingly vulnerable if this plague occurred in the beginning or middle of February (probably a little later than usual with a high Nile year). Wheat and spelt (see Notes) were also sown in August but were not ready for harvest until the end of March.[18]

If it's true that the plague of hail occurred in mid-February, an entire month could very well have elapsed from that event until the day that marked the beginning of the first month of the year.

[17] From *Commentary on the Old Testament*, Vol. 1, C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, Hendrickson Publishers, 2001, originally published by T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1866-91, pp. 319-320.

[18] From *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Vol. 2, Frank E. Gæbelein, Gen. Ed., Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1990, pp. 362-363.

7. The Meaning of "Abib"

Yahweh Himself calls the first month of the year "Abib." This word is word #24 in *Strong's* Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary, and it means "a young ear of grain." It is also defined by *Strong's* as meaning "green." Here is a reproduction of the actual listing found in *Strong's*:

> **24. אָבִיב 'âbîyb**, *aw-beeb';* from an unused root (mean. to *be tender*); *green*, i.e. a young *ear* of grain; hence the name of the month *Abib* or Nisan:—Abib, ear, green ears of corn.

Early on in our feast-keeping days, we were taught that, since the barley was in the "abib stage" at the time of the plague of hail, this means that the next new moon signaled the first new moon of the new year. As we just read from two scholarly sources, such would most likely ***not*** have been the case—based on typical agricultural conditions in Egyptian climate. We were also taught that ***Passover*** must always fall on or after the vernal equinox, which is around March 21st or 22nd. Equipped with this understanding, would it have been possible for the hail to have fallen in Egypt at the time of the "*Abib*" stage of barley, and then have Passover fall on or after the day of the vernal equinox? The answer is yes!

As the two potential scenario calendars displayed below illustrate, if the hail fell on February 12th, the Passover would have fallen on March 25th, well after the equinox.

Twelfth Month – ADAR

		Feb. 10 1	Feb. 11 2	Feb. 12 **3** **Hail**	Feb. 13 4	Feb. 14 5
Feb. 15 6	Feb. 16 7	Feb. 17 8	Feb. 18 9	Feb. 19 10	Feb. 20 11	Feb. 21 12
Feb. 22 13	Feb. 23 14	Feb. 24 15	Feb. 25 16	Feb. 26 17	Feb. 27 18	Feb. 28 19
Mar. 1 20	Mar. 2 21	Mar. 3 22	Mar. 4 23	Mar. 5 24	Mar. 6 25	Mar. 7 26
Mar. 8 27	Mar. 9 28	Mar. 10 29	Mar. 11 30			

First Month – ABIB

				Mar. 12 1	Mar. 13 2	Mar. 14 3
Mar. 15 4	Mar. 16 5	Mar. 17 6	Mar. 18 7	Mar. 19 8	Mar. 20 9	Mae. 21 10
Mar. 22 11	Mar. 23 12	Mar. 24 13	Mar. 25 14 Passover	Mar. 26 15 Feast of ULB	Mar. 27 16 Feast of ULB	Mar. 28 17 Feast of ULB
Mar. 29 18 Feast of ULB	Mar. 30 19 Feast of ULB	Mar. 31 20 Feast of ULB	April 1 21 Feast of ULB	April 2 22	April 3 23	April 4 24
April 5 25	April 6 26	April 7 27	April 8 28	April 9 29		

The calendar depicted above presents a scenario that would allow for ripened barley to be used for the wave sheaf offering during the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Lev. 23:10-11).

The wave sheaf offering is a very important aspect of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. If the barley isn't yet ripe, and *especially* if it hasn't "headed out" yet, there can be no wave sheaf offering. If it can be determined that the barley will not be ripe in time for the wave sheaf offering, then at the time of the new moon, a thirteenth month is declared instead of beginning the new year with the month of

Abib. Displayed below is Leviticus 23:10-11, which underscores the importance of having ripe barley in time for the Feast of Unleavened Bread:

> [10] Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest.
> [11] And he shall wave the sheaf before Yahweh, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it.

Although not specified in the above verses, it is universally agreed and accepted that the "firstfruits of harvest" is *barley*. Again, if the barley isn't ripe in time for the wave sheaf offering, then it is obvious we should have intercalated a "thirteenth month" to the old year instead of prematurely beginning the new month and calling it *Abib*.

One thing about the above calendar that we need to notice is the fact that the barley which was destroyed by the hail was **Egyptian** barley, *not* the barley in Israel. Furthermore, in the account of the plague of hail, we are not told how "ripe" the Egyptian barley was. As we will see shortly, the state of *Abib* can be several weeks long. Thus, it is quite possible that the barley was actually destroyed over a week earlier than the date we offered in the above calendar. The above calendar offers a "best case" scenario for those who believe Passover should fall on or after the equinox. However, if the hail fell only a few days earlier, it would have fallen, not in the month of Adar (the twelfth month), but in the ***eleventh month***.

Eleventh Month

	Jan. 12 1	Jan. 13 2	Jan. 14 3	Jan. 15 4	Jan. 16 5	Jan. 17 6
Jan. 18 7	Jan. 19 8	Jan. 20 9	Jan. 21 10	Jan. 22 11	Jan. 23 12	Jan. 24 13
Jan. 25 14	Jan. 26 15	Jan. 27 16	Jan. 28 17	Jan. 29 18	Jan. 30 19	Jan. 31 20
Feb. 1 21	Feb. 2 22	Feb. 3 23	Feb. 4 24	Feb. 5 **25** Hail	Feb. 6 26	Feb. 7 27
Feb. 8 28	Feb. 9 29					

Twelfth Month – Adar

		Feb. 10 1	Feb. 11 2	Feb. 12 3	Feb. 13 4	Feb. 14 5
Feb. 15 6	Feb. 16 7	Feb. 17 8	Feb. 18 9	Feb. 19 10	Feb. 20 11	Feb. 21 12
Feb. 22 13	Feb. 23 14	Feb. 24 15	Feb. 25 16	Feb. 26 17	Feb. 27 18	Feb. 28 19
Mar. 1 20	Mar. 2 21	Mar. 3 22	Mar. 4 23	Mar. 5 24	Mar. 6 25	Mar. 7 26
Mar. 8 27	Mar. 9 28	Mar. 10 29	Mar. 11 30			

As the above calendar reveals, it is quite possible that the Egyptian barley was "smitten" during the eleventh month of the year. At first glance, it doesn't seem possible that barley could be "in the ear" in the eleventh month of the year. However, we must understand that the barley harvest in Egypt generally precedes the barley harvest in Israel by one month. We have already cited Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*, where they point out that, according to 1st century CE author Pliny, "The barley is ripe about the end of February or beginning of March." They also place the hail plague in either late January or early February. Thus, any Egyptian barley struck by hail during the second half of the 11th month would very likely be ruined.

We can also deduce from the above calendar that if we were to have found the green ears of barley at the time of the hail plague, and then declared the following month to have been "Abib," the Passover would definitely have fallen well before the equinox. In fact, it would have fallen on February 23rd! It is because of these factors that we must focus our understanding on the fact that there is typically one month difference between the time of the barley harvest in Egypt versus the time of the barley harvest in Israel. If it was "Abib" barley in early February in Egypt, then why are we looking for "Abib" barley up north in Israel, where the season is a month *behind* Egypt?

Although the barley affected by the plague in Egypt was Egyptian barley, our concern today should not be not over whether or not the barley in ***Egypt*** is ripe in time for Passover. Our concern should be whether or not the barley in ***Israel*** is ripe in time for the wave sheaf offering.

According to an online article titled "Harvest Seasons of Ancient Israel" by Michael Morrison[19], the barley in Israel is typically harvested from April to May:

> Wheat ripens later than barley and, according to the Gezer Manual, was harvested during the sixth agricultural season, *yrh qsr wkl* (end of April to end of May)" (page 88; also see the chart on page 37 of Borowski's book, reproduced below).[20]

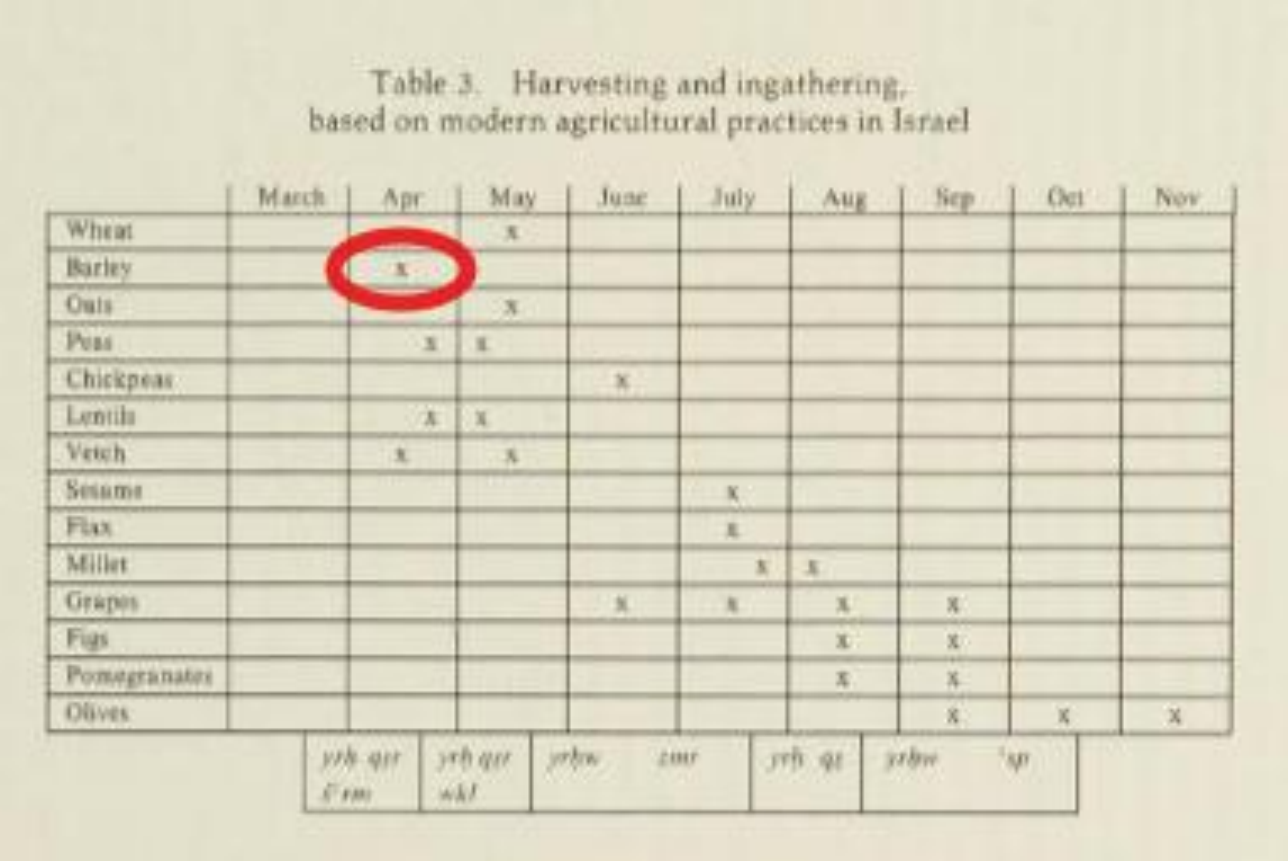


Table 3. Harvesting and ingathering, based on modern agricultural practices in Israel

	March	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
Wheat			x						
Barley		x							
Oats			x						
Peas		x	x						
Chickpeas				x					
Lentils		x	x						
Vetch		x	x						
Sesame					x				
Flax					x				
Millet					x	x			
Grapes				x	x	x	x		
Figs						x	x		
Pomegranates						x	x		
Olives							x	x	x

yrh qsr *Grm*	*yrh qsr* *wkl*	*yrḥw* *zmr*	*yrh qṣ*	*yrḥw* *'sp*

Again, as the above chart reveals, the barley harvest in Israel typically occurs in April.

[19] Morrison's complete article, titled "Old Testament Laws: Harvest Seasons of Ancient Israel," can be accessed here.
[20] From *Agriculture in Iron Age Israel* by Oded Borowski, 1987, page 37.

The best Scriptural calendar researcher I have ever met in person is a man named Herb Solinsky. In his study "The Hail Plague and the First Biblical Month," Mr. Solinsky offers corroborating evidence that the above chart was certainly accurate in 1926, as he provided a translation from a book authored in 1928 by a man named Gustaf H. Dalman. The following is from a study that Herb composed in 2002 titled "The Hail Plague and the First Biblical Month":

> My translation from page 415 of Dalman[21] is, "The harvest that I first observed at Jerusalem on May 8, 1925 was during barley and wheat blossoming, and in the middle of the same month the barley harvest began, in which, on May 24, I used the ripping sickle. On May 19, 1926 the farmers in Jerusalem saw the barley harvest nearly completed, the wheat harvest still remaining. In Jericho the barley harvest is first permitted to begin about the middle or end of April, for on the 18th of April 1909 I saw it nearly mature there. For the coastal plains April can be predicted as the time of the barley harvest, May as the time of the wheat harvest."[22]

In Appendix A of his study, Mr. Solinsky also offered the English translation from Arabic of a portion of a 19th century letter sent to Dr. Grant-Bey from a farmer in the district of Kalyub, a little north of Cairo. Solinsky cited an essay entitled "Note on Exodus IX. 31, 32," which was authored by W. Robertson Smith and published in volume 12 of *The Journal of Philology*, pp. 299-300, in 1883. In that essay, Smith affirmed that the **Egyptian** barley is in the ear by early January and that the flax blooms by mid-January. Here is an excerpt from that essay:

> 4. I have before me an Arabic letter to Dr Grant-Bey from a farmer in the district of Kalyub, a little north of Cairo. The following is a transcript of part of it.
>
> [Arabic text appears here]
>
> > "The barley is in ear in the beginning of January, and the flax blooms in the middle of January, and the seed is found in it in the beginning of April. When the barley is in ear the wheat is green herbage; but the seasons vary as I told you."
>
> As the date when the flax blooms is almost the same in this statement as in Mr Harvey's it is plain that Mr. Harvey is thinking of an earlier stage of the seed capsule, when he speaks of February 15th, than the native writer has in view when he says that the *bizr* or seed-grains are found in the beginning of April. On the other hand it is pretty plain that Mr Harvey's statement about the barley refers to the full ear, when harvest is about to begin. The letter of the native farmer gives what we want, for he speaks of the state of the barley when its ear is formed, but not that of the wheat. And at that time the flax is in flower, which appears to determine the sense of *gevol*.[23]

In his *Journal of Philology* essay, Robertson adds the following additional details:

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[21] Reference is made to German scholar Gustaf H. Dalman's seven-volume work titled *Arbeit und Sitte in Palästina* ("Work and Customs in Palestine"), first published in 1937. Dalman resided in Palestine from 1899 until the outbreak of World War I in 1917.

[22] From "The Hail Plague and the First Biblical Month," Section #8, by Herb Solinsky, August 16, 2002.

[23] Ibid, Section 37, Appendix A. Note: *gevol* is a Hebrew word referring to the "stem" or "stalk" of a plant.

> 1. All over Egypt it is common to raise at least two crops of barley—*shitawi*[24] and *seifi*. See Lane, Modern Egyptians, ch. xiv., from which it will be seen that the *seifi* or summer crop is sown about the vernal equinox or later, and so has no bearing on the text before us. Dr Grant-Bey of Cairo, who has kindly made a series of enquiries for me among natives and Europeans who know the country parts of Egypt, says however that in the *Sharkiya* district there are sometimes three crops of barley, and about Mansura and in the Gharbiya even four. What follows refers to the winter crop (shitawi).
>
> 2. The date of the harvest varies greatly in different parts of Egypt. From the Rev. Mr Harvey of the American mission Dr. Grant got the following dates, applicable to the country south of Cairo:
>
> (a) The barley is in ear from the latter part of February to 15th March.
>
> (b) The flax is in flower from January 10th and in seed from February 15th.
>
> (c) When the barley is in ear the ears of wheat begin - to form, but the grains are in a milky state.
>
> The difference between upper and lower Egypt is about 35 days.
>
> 3. Rev. Dr Lansing of Cairo visited the region of Zoan in the first part of May, 1880, and found the farmers reaping barley while the wheat was nearly ripe. But he was told that the crops were at least a fortnight later than usual.[25]

So the barley harvest in Egypt is generally "in ear" in late February to late March. As a reminder, the barley in Egypt is generally a month ahead of the barley in Israel. Scripture does not tell us how much time elapsed between the hail plague and the plague of locusts. An early March hail storm would have destroyed the barley crop, while preserving the wheat. It is quite possible the plague of locusts occurred anywhere from two to three weeks after the hail plague.

Finally, Mr. Solinsky demonstrated that the word *Abib*, in its original form, may not only be used to describe a green, unripe ear of barley, but ***also*** a ripe ear of barley. According to the *Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*, one of the ancient understandings of the meaning of *Abib* is "new bread (made of) ears of various cereals." Of course, this *abib* must have been fully ripe grains, since we don't make flour from unripe grains. Here's what he wrote:

> Unfortunately, many biblical Hebrew lexicons such as those by Gesenius and by Brown, Driver, and Briggs are influenced in some of their definitions by the Talmud, the first part of which was published about 200 CE. Biblical scholars today (along with some in the nineteenth century) have come to mistrust meanings given to Hebrew words based on the Talmud. DCH [*Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*] uses all sources of ancient Hebrew texts that were composed before the Talmud in order to arrive at its meanings. On page 103 of DCH the meaning of ABIB is "ear (of cereal)", and one context it cites for the use of ABIB is from "The Temple Scroll" (abbreviated 11QT)

[24] *Shitawi* barley is a Hebrew term referring to a variety that is typically sown in the autumn, after the rainy season begins, and is harvested in the spring, around the time of Passover (March/April), making it the first grain harvest of the year. On the other hand, *seifi* barley is sown at or around the vernal equinox.
[25] Ibid, Section #37, Appendix A.

> 19:7 where it gives the translation "new bread (made of) ears of various cereals". Here the plural of ABIB is translated ears and implies that the ears were ground into flour in order to make bread. This further shows that the range of the meaning of ABIB extends to being fully ripe so as to be able to make flour. This shows that ABIB includes all stages of the ears, from newly formed to fully ripe. "The Temple Scroll" is found among the Dead Sea Scrolls and most estimates date it to roughly 150 BCE.

Since the bread was made from the "abib of cereals," it is clear the *abib* was understood as inclusive of fully ripe grains. Thus, the stages of *abib* may range from a tender green ear all the way to ripe grains used in making bread.

This information is substantiated by the *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, where we read the following under the heading of "Abb" (*abib*):

> This noun refers to barley that is already ripe, but still soft, the grains of which are eaten either rubbed or roasted (Koehler & Baumgartner). The ASV and RSV agree (but see Lev. 2:14). The seventh plague brought ruinous hail upon Egypt's barley crop at least two weeks before it was fully ripened and ready for harvest (Ex. 9:31). Abib was also the name of the first month of the Jewish Calendar (the month of Passover). In that month the barley came to ear, but the usual time of harvest was the second month (Iyyar). According to Lev. 2:14 the grain harvest was to consist of firstfruits of abib.[26]

It is thus a mistake to so narrowly define *abib* as only meaning "green ear." What kind of firstfruits are *green, unripened firstfruits*?

[26] From *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, R. Laird Harris, Editor, Mood Press, Chicago, IL, Vol. 1, page 3.

8. The Month of Abib

One of the strongest arguments I have heard in support of Abib occurring after the equinox lies with the fact that the name ***Abib*** is so often used interchangeably with the name "***Nisan***." What does this mean to us today?

Nisan is simply another name for the Hebrew month ***Abib***. It was borrowed by the Jews during their Babylonian exile. ***Nisan***, then, is originally a Babylonian term, a universally recognized fact.[27]

Of course, this begs the question as to when and how ancient Babylon determined the start of the year. The answer: The first visible new moon crescent following the vernal equinox, as attested to by *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*:

> 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. Until the Persian era astronomical observation was the primary means of determining calendrical periods, but thereafter mathematical calculation became a sufficiently dependable method of determination.[28]

As shown by the above reference, the Babylonians began the month *Nisan* on or after the vernal equinox, and until the Persian era, they began each new month based upon visual observation (i.e., the sighting of the crescent new moon).

The historian Flavius Josephus, in describing to his Roman audience the timing for the Passover, frequently mentioned the name for this month that Judaism borrowed from Babylon. One such instance can be found in his work entitled *Antiquities of the Jews*:

> This calamity [the Great Flood] happened in the six hundredth year of Noah's government [age], in the second month, called by the Macedonians *Dius*, but by the Hebrews, *Marchesuan*; for so did they order their year in Egypt; but Moses appointed that *Nisan*, which is the same with *Xanthicus*, should be the first month for their festivals, because he brought them out of Egypt in that month; so that this month began the year as to all the solemnities they observed to the honor of the Almighty,

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[27] This is recognized by Judaism, as attested by the following quote taken from *The Chumash*, The Stone Edition, published by Mesorah Publications, Ltd., Brooklyn, NY, 1997, p. 349: "The currently used names of the months are of Babylonian origin, and came into use among Jews only after the destruction of the First Temple. Those names were retained as a reminder of the redemption from Babylon, which resulted in the building of the Second Temple (*Ramban*)." This is corroborated by *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew-English Lexicon*, where we read that this word (#5212) is a loan word from the Babylonian *Nisannu*.

[28] *Cf., The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. 1, "Calendar," Abingdon Press, 1962, p. 484.

> although he preserved the original order of the months as to selling and buying, and other ordinary affairs.[29]

Of great importance here is the fact that Josephus not only recognized *Abib* as being equivalent to the Babylonian *Nisan*, but he also equated it with the Macedonian month *Xanthicus*. We already know that the month *Nisan* began after the equinox. What about the month *Xanthicus*? Is there any information leading us to the knowledge of when that particular month began? Yes, there is.

The following is an excerpt from the book *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, VOL. I, "The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus," by Philip Schaff, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, first published in 1886, reprinted in 2001. Included in Schaff's book is a 2nd century letter attributed to Marcion of Smyrna, which he wrote to the Assembly at Philomelium. Here is the introduction that Schaff gives to this letter:

> The following letter purports to have been written by the Church at Smyrna to the Church at Philomelium, and through that Church to the whole Christian world, in order to give a succinct account of the circumstances attending the martyrdom of Polycarp. It is the earliest of all the Martyria, and has generally been accounted both the most interesting and authentic.[30]

What follows is Schaff's translation of chapter 21 of Marcion's letter (*The Encyclical Epistle Of The Church At Smyrna Concerning The Martyrdom Of The Holy Polycarp*), in which he references the month *Xanthicus*. Special attention is given to Schaff's footnote #477:

Chapter XXI.—The date of the martyrdom.

> Now, the blessed Polycarp suffered martyrdom on the second day of the month Xanthicus just begun,[476] the seventh day before the Kalends of May, on the great Sabbath, at the eighth hour.[477] He was taken by Herod, Philip the Trallian being high priest,[478] Statius Quadratus being proconsul, but Jesus Christ being King for ever, to whom be glory, honour, majesty, and an everlasting throne, from generation to generation. Amen.[31]

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[476] The translation is here very doubtful. Wake renders the words μηνος ισταμενου, "of the present month."

[477] Great obscurity hangs over the chronology here indicated. According to Usher,[32] the Smyrnæans began the month Xanthicus on the 25th of March. But the seventh day before the Kalends of May is the 25th of April. Some, therefore, read Απριλλιων instead of Μαιων. The great Sabbath is that before the passover. The "eighth hour" may correspond either to our 8 A.M. or 2 P.M.

[478] Called before (chap. xii.) *Asiarch*.

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[29] From *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book I, ch. iii., sec. 3.

[30] This introduction may be accessed online at the Christian Classics Ethereal Library website.

[31] Chapter XXI of Marcion's *The Encyclical Epistle Of The Church At Smyrna Concerning The Martyrdom Of The Holy Polycarp* may, as of 2026, be accessed online at the Christian Classics Ethereal Library website.

[32] Usher, more commonly *Ussher*. James Ussher (1581–1656) is best known for his calculation of the age of earth since creation. He determined the first day of biblical creation was October 23, 4004 BCE.

Of particular interest in the above quotation is the footnote regarding the month *Xanthicus*. We are told that, according to chronologist James Ussher, the Smyrnæans began the month of Xanthicus on the 25th of March, which is a date following the vernal equinox. Ussher was a renowned 17th century Old Testament chronologist who is "noted for being the most accurate chronologist of the Bible and world events from creation to A.D. 70."[33]

We thus see that, according to historical understanding, the month *Xanthicus* corresponds to the Hebrew *Abib* and the Babylonian *Nisan*, in that all three months' names began on or after the vernal equinox. The month of *Xanthicus*, in addition to being the name of a month on the Smyrnæans' calendar, is also the name of the same month on the Macedonians' calendar, and Josephus understood the fourteenth day of *Nisan* (Passover) to be the equivalent of the fourteenth day of *Xanthicus*:

> But when the Almighty had signified, that with one more plague he would compel the Egyptians to let the Hebrews go, he commanded Moses to tell the people that they should have a sacrifice ready, and that they should prepare themselves on the tenth day of the month Xanthicus, against the fourteenth (which month is called by the Egyptians Pharmuth, and Nisan by the Hebrews; but the Macedonians call it Xanthicus) and that he should carry away the Hebrews ready for their departure, and having sorted the people into tribes, he kept them together in one place; but when the fourteenth day was come, and all were ready to depart, they offered the sacrifice, and purified their houses with the blood, using bunches of hyssop for that purpose; and when they had supped, they burnt the remainder of the flesh, as just ready to depart.[34]

As Josephus testifies, the Hebrew calendar, which had by that time adopted the Babylonian name *Nisan* instead of *Abib*, could be overlaid onto the calendar of the Macedonians, whose name for that month is *Xanthicus.* Of additional interest here is the fact that Josephus also notes that *Nisan* also paralleled the ***Egyptian calendar***, which used the name *Pharmuth* for that particular month.

You may wonder how the Egyptian calendar could possibly align with the Babylonian calendar, especially since we have already demonstrated that the ancient Egyptian calendar consisted of three weeks containing ten days per week. The reason for this is simple: By the time of Josephus, all the calendars of the Near East, including Egypt, had been assimilated into one calendar, each with its own name. This is a point that is brought out by the book *Jews in the Hellenistic and Roman Cities*:

> The Macedonian calendar of the early Hellenistic rulers happened also to be lunar, and thus was soon assimilated with the Babylonian, although, as Greek speakers, Seleucid rulers continued using Macedonian names of months. The Babylonian calendar was thus maintained in the Near East, and eventually outlived the disintegration of the Seleucid empire. It became the official calendar of the Parthian empire, of Nabataea, and of other kingdoms of the former Seleucid empire. In Judaea, likewise,

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[33] This is a direct quotation from a review of Ussher's book *The Annals of the World*, published in 1658 (two years after Ussher's death). This particular book review may be accessed at the following URL: http://www.swrc.com/newbookstore/books/history4.htm. **NOTE:** As of 2026, the referenced book review is no longer available online; however, numerous references point to Ussher's renown. According to *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Vol. 1, "Chronology," Doubleday, 1992, p. 1,003, "In the English-speaking world, the chronological calculations of Bishop James Ussher (published 1650-54) were for centuries the best known biblical dates, due to their publication in the margin of some editions of the KJV of the Bible."

[34] *Cf.*, *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book II, ch. xiv., sec. 6.

> it was adopted by the Hasmonaean dynasty (hence the Babylonian datings in the books of Maccabees, again equated with numbered biblical months).[35]

As vividly expressed by the above author, by the time of the Maccabees and continuing on through the days of Josephus, the calendars of the Near East, including that of the Jews, were essentially the same. Their calendar years began on or after the vernal equinox. That's just the way it was.

[35] From *Jews in the Hellenistic and Roman Cities*, edited by John R. Bartlett, Routledge publishing, London and New York, 2002, p. 108.

9. Could the Original Passover Have Occurred in a Month That Began On or After the Vernal Equinox?

I have already shown a couple of examples illustrating that the original Passover could have occurred in a month that began ***before*** the vernal equinox, as the barley in Egypt certainly ripens a month or so earlier than the barley in Israel. If the barley in Israel doesn't ripen until mid-April, *and* if the vernal equinox occurs around the 21st of March, *and* if the barley in Egypt ripens well before the middle of March, then it is indeed possible that the original Passover occurred during a month that began before the equinox.

What Scripture doesn't tell us is the time frame that passed between the massive hail storm (Ex. 9:31-32) and the time of when Yahweh instructed Moses and Aaron that "This month shall be unto you the beginning of months" (Ex. 12:2). Was it a week? Or could it have been a *month*? We aren't told. All we know is, there was a plague of locusts and a plague of darkness prior to the grand finale, the plague of the firstborn.

I agree with Herb Solinsky's commentary:

> Does it make sense to think that when Moses heard the words of Ex. 12:2 he thought of the barley in Israel?[36] The context of Egypt and the context of Israel are very different for barley. Now consider the time difference from Ex 9:31-32 to Ex 12:2. After the plague of hail there was a plague of locusts and then a plague of darkness. Then came Ex. 12:2. From the context nothing prevents a separation of about two months or more. Ex 9:31-32 is just not in the context of Ex 12:2, and with the difference in the time of barley harvest between Egypt and Israel, Ex 9:31-32 should not be associated with the barley harvest in Israel. There is no reason for Moses to think about the barley harvest at Ex 12:2 because the word ABIB is not even there. One may not arbitrarily grab the word ABIB from EX 13:4 and shove it into Ex 12:2. If barley in itself was to define the timing of the first month, then it would be of the greatest importance for it or ABIB to appear in Ex 12:2, but it is not there![37]

Those who conduct annual barley searches in Israel don't seem to reconcile the fact that the originally-smitten barley was in *Egypt*—not Israel. As Mr. Solinsky impresses upon us here, since we are not supplied with a time reference from the hail plague up to the plague of darkness, combined with the fact that there is typically a month's difference between the barley harvest in Egypt and the barley harvest in Israel, we need to be careful about arbitrarily allowing the barley harvest itself to be the deciding factor in determining when the month of Abib occurs. With this in mind, we need to ask ourselves, "Is the following calendar scenario possible?"

[36] Moses and Aaron were in Egypt at that time.
[37] From "Exodus 9:31-32 and ABIB," by Herb Solinsky, March 16, 2002.

Eleventh Month

Jan. 11 1	Jan. 12 2	Jan. 13 3	Jan. 14 4	Jan. 15 5	Jan. 16 6	Jan. 17 7
Jan. 18 8	Jan. 19 9	Jan. 20 10	Jan. 21 11	Jan. 22 12	Jan. 23 13	Jan. 24 14
Jan. 25 15	Jan. 26 16	Jan. 27 17	Jan. 28 18	Jan. 29 19	Jan. 30 20	Jan. 31 21
Feb. 1 22	Feb. 2 23	Feb. 3 24	Feb. 4 25	Feb. 5 **26** Hail	Feb. 6 27	Feb. 7 28
Feb. 8 29						

Twelfth Month – Adar I

	Feb. 9 1	Feb. 10 2	Feb. 11 3	Feb. 12 4	Feb. 13 5	Feb. 14 6
Feb. 15 7	Feb. 16 8	Feb. 17 9	Feb. 18 10	Feb. 19 11	Feb. 20 12	Feb. 21 13
Feb. 22 14	Feb. 23 15	Feb. 24 16	Feb. 25 17	Feb. 26 **18** Locusts	Feb. 27 19	Feb. 28 20
Mar. 1 21	Mar. 2 22	Mar. 3 23	Mar. 4 24	Mar. 5 25	Mar. 6 26	Mar. 7 27
Mar. 8 28	Mar. 9 29	Mar. 10 30				

Thirteenth Month – ADAR II

			Mar. 11 1	Mar. 12 2	Mar. 13 3	Mar. 14 4
Mar. 15 5	Mar. 16 6	Mar. 17 7	Mar. 18 8	Mar. 19 9	Mar. 20 10 Darkness	Mar. 21 11 Darkness
Mar. 22 12 Darkness	Mar. 23 13	Mar. 24 14	Mar. 25 15	Mar. 26 16	Mar. 27 17	Mar. 28 18
Mar. 29 19	Mar. 30 20	Mar. 31 21	April 1 22	April 2 23	April 3 24	April 4 25
April 5 26	April 6 27	April 7 28	April 8 29			

First Month – ABIB

				April 9 1	April 10 2	April 11 3
April 12 4	April 13 5	April 14 6	April 15 7	April 16 8	April 17 9	April 18 10
April 19 11	April 20 12	April 21 13	April 22 14 Passover	April 23 15	April 24 16	April 25 17
April 26 18	April 27 19	April 28 20	April 29 21	April 30 22	May 1 23	May 2 24
May 3 25	May 4 26	May 5 27	May 6 28	May 7 29	May 8 30	

The above calendar fits perfectly with Scripture in that the month of Abib falls in line with the barley harvest in Israel, which, as we have seen begins in mid-April, thus allowing for ripe barley to be offered for the wave-sheaf offering. In addition, it squares with the historical understanding of the month of *Nisan*, the Babylonian month considered as the equivalent to *Abib*, as well as the month *Xanthicus*. As we have already noted, both *Nisan* and *Xanthicus* began after the vernal equinox, just as the *Abib* of the above calendar does.

As we will see shortly, it has *historically* been a Jewish understanding that the first month of the year begins on or after the vernal equinox.

10. The Evil Vernal Equinox

Most of the opposition's arguments we have read to reckoning the first month of the year from the vernal equinox addresses a heathen connection and the pagan festivities associated with this particular time of year. I am reminded of a presentation I attended in which the speaker attempted to vilify the practice of watching for the new moon crescent because of a statue he had seen in Rome of a goddess standing atop a crescent-shaped moon. He insists this proves the ancients could only have begun each Scriptural month with the moon's conjunction. This begs the question of whether the heathen fascination with marking new months with the sighting of the crescent new moon began with corrupt worship *or* if it was a carry-over from pure worship that ***later*** became corrupted. He assumes the former; I'm persuaded it's the latter.[38]

What follows is one of the more serious attempts that we have read in which the author's intent is that of discrediting the use of the vernal equinox as a factor in beginning a new year. He attempts to disparage the vernal equinox method due to a "heathen connection." The author of the following editorial emphasizes that we should base our reckoning solely on the new moon occurring after the green ears of barley have been found, and he portrays the vernal equinox as something that was only used by pagans:

> **Why Not Use the Vernal Equinox?**
>
> Some ignore barley altogether and set Abib 1 according to the vernal equinox. The vernal equinox is that instant when the sun is directly above the earth's equator while going from the south to the north (for inhabitants of the northern hemisphere). It is the time that most people take as the definition of the beginning of spring."
>
> Those who employ the vernal equinox point to Genesis 1:14, claiming that the sun, moon, and stars set the Feasts. It is true that the sun divides day from night and establishes the seasons, while the new moon sets the beginning of months. Yet, nowhere in the entire Bible can one find where the vernal equinox establishes Abib. We can go even further and say unequivocally that nowhere in the Bible is there even any mention of the vernal equinox. To say that Genesis 1:14 refers to the vernal equinox is reading into Scripture what isn't there.
>
> Passover is related to spring through the growing cycle of crops. First and foremost, it must occur in the month of Abib. And Abib is a condition of grain as much as it is a time of the year. The King James Version has led some astray in the way it translates *moed* in Exodus 13:10, Num. 9:2, 3, 7, and 13. The KJV uses "season" in these verses, causing some to believe that the command is specifically for springtime, and therefore must involve the vernal equinox. In reality, the Hebrew *moed* simply means "set time" or "appointed time." Yahweh has set Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread by the criteria of the crops, not by a purely astronomical reckoning known as the vernal equinox.
>
> The vast majority of Jews gradually got away from actually looking for the green ears of barley, going instead by a calculated calendar that involved the vernal equinox. This was done for the sake of convenience. But Yahweh tells us that His growing cycle reveals the proper month for His Feasts.[39]

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[38] I offer a detailed explanation of why I'm persuaded the Scriptural new month began with the sighting of the first visible crescent following the conjunction in chapter 4 of my follow-up study, "Balancing the Calendar, II."

[39] From the online article entitled "The Calendar – Equinox or Barley?" Copyright © 1999-2000 | Yahweh's Restoration Ministry, anonymous author. All rights reserved. As of 2026, the article can be accessed at the following URL: https://yrm.org/calendar-equinox-barley/.

The author of the above article goes on to effectively attempt to "demonize" the vernal equinox by associating it with heathen rites and practices. He writes the following:

> **Vernal Equinox and Historic Paganism**
>
> When the Roman church deliberately acted to separate Easter from Passover, it ruled in 325 CE in the Council of Nicaea that Easter would fall on the first Sunday after the first full moon following the vernal equinox. This setting of an observance was entirely man-made, and appropriately applied to a man-made holiday called Easter. The Roman church on its own volition, therefore, bestowed a legitimacy on the vernal equinox as a calendar marker where it had none before — at least not in any kind of Biblical context.
> That does not mean, however, that the vernal equinox had no significance among historic pagans and their calendars. Note the following:
>
> • "Easter, too, celebrates the victory of a god of light (J-sus) over darkness (death), so it makes sense to place it at this season. Ironically, the name 'Easter' was taken from the name of a Teutonic lunar Goddess, Eostre (from whence we also get the name of the female hormone, estrogen). Her chief symbols were the bunny (both for fertility and because her worshipers saw a hare in the full moon) and the egg (symbolic of the cosmic egg of creation), images which Christians have been hard pressed to explain. Her holiday, the Eostara, was held on the Vernal Equinox Full Moon. Needless to say, the old and accepted folk name for the Vernal Equinox is 'Lady Day.' Christians sometimes insist that the title is in honor of Mary and her Annunciation, but Pagans will smile knowingly." -- **Lady Day: The Vernal Equinox**, by Mike Nichols.[40]

I understand the approach of associating the vernal equinox with pagan Easter celebrations. By using the above "guilt by association" approach, we are expected to agree with the author that, since heathens used the vernal equinox as a part of their rituals, then ***surely*** no true believer could ever have allowed such an event as this to determine the first month of the year! While on the surface, this may sound reasonable, we need to also consider the possibility that, in the beginning, when there was no corrupt worship, when no corrupt calendar methods existed, ***everyone*** from the beginning, may have allowed the vernal equinox to determine when the new year would begin. If this is true, then might it be possible that, as man corrupted the pure worship of Yahweh, he nevertheless retained the knowledge of when the new year began? Yes, of course it's possible. We certainly need to consider all contingencies. Mankind's departure from the true faith should not be so construed as having occurred all at once. Are we supposed to believe that, all of a sudden, mankind reverted to the belief that the new year begins in the middle of winter?

As we consider and weigh out each potential scenario, we need to reflect on a few truths. First of all, if we are to allow heathen connections to determine our belief systems, then we would have to reject the resurrection of our Savior Yeshua[41] as an incredulous *myth*, for heathen myths involving various deities who died and were then resurrected back to life are well-attested. In fact, we will now call to mind some of these resurrection myths—myths that we believe may well have been associated with one of the ten plagues of Egypt.

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[40] Ibid.

[41] I am aware that many within the Sacred Name Movement are of the opinion that "Yeshua" is a false rendering of the Messiah's name. I can only recommend reading the study I composed on this topic titled "Name of the Messiah: ישׁוע? יהושׁע?"

11. The Resurrection of the Sun Deity and the Vernal Equinox

You may wonder why I would take the time to incorporate into this presentation the fact that heathens worshipped idols that they believed were resurrected at the time of the vernal equinox. What could this ***possibly*** have to do with Yahweh's calendar? I am persuaded the resurrection myths associated with the vernal equinox actually offer *additional evidence* that Yahweh's year begins on or after the vernal equinox. I know there are many sources from which I could quote to verify the fact that heathens worshipped idols who died and were resurrected at the time of the vernal equinox, but I will only offer a few here. The following comes from a website known as *AstrologyCom.com* (formerly *Astrology on the Web*), from their article titled "Easter: Sacrifice and Resurrection":

> At around the time of the spring equinox in March, marking the rebirth of the year, the death and resurrection of a number of divine or quasi-divine figures was celebrated. The beautiful god Adonis (cognate with *Adonai*, which means "Lord" in the Hebrew scriptures) was worshipped throughout the Middle East with his partner Aphrodite (Venus). Adonis was slain and resurrected and this was celebrated at this time, as was the death and resurrection of Tammuz, the lover of Ishtar, at the beginning of the new year as marked by the equinox. J. G. Frazer, author of *The Golden Bough*, is of the view that the church has skilfully grafted the festival of the dead god Adonis onto the Easter festival of Christianity. The dead and risen Adonis thus became the dead and risen Christ. Greek depictions of the sorrowful goddess with her dying lover Adonis in her arms resemble and seem to have been the model for the Pieta of the Virgin with the dead body of her son in her lap. The most celebrated example is Michelangelo's Pieta in St Peter's Basilica in Rome. These and other dying and resurrected god figures are symbols of new life after the sleeping death of winter. The metaphysical aspect of awakening to a new life in the Spirit is a key element of initiation into the Mysteries.[42]

The following excerpt is from an article entitled "The Vernal Equinox," by Ruth Reichmann:

> The Spring or Vernal Equinox is a celebration of the rebirth of nature and brings with it the symbols of birth/rebirth. It is replete with traditional symbols and superstitions. As part of the vernal equinox ritual, eggs play an important role in the festivities throughout the world. According to folklore, the vernal equinox is the one time of the year that eggs can be stood on end. Earth and nature are said to be in harmony if an

[42] *Cf.*, "Easter: Sacrifice and Resurrection," by Rob Tillett, AstrologyCom.com, 2006. As of 2026, his article may be read in its entirety by accessing the following URL: http://astrologycom.com/easter.html.

> egg can be balanced on its end during the equinox, at the very point in time, when day and night are also in balance.
>
> The Vernal Equinox, the first official day of Spring, is on or about March 20. It is the point at which the sun crosses the celestial equator from south to north. This signals the beginning of Spring in the Northern Hemisphere. The vernal equinox has long been a significant event in the lives of agricultural peoples as it symbolizes nature's regeneration, fertility, growth and bounty. The word equinox comes from Latin and means "equal night" (Tag- und Nachtgleiche). On this day, night and day each last twelve hours. The Vernal Equinox used to be considered the beginning of the Pagan New Year. It was a time of joy called forth by the resurrection of the "Light of the World" (sun god) from the underworld of the winter, from where he arose to join his goddess Eostre.[43]

Finally, I will cite yet another article validating the fact that heathens celebrated the resurrection of their idols at the time of the vernal equinox. The following excerpt is taken from the article "Do Muslims Celebrate Easter and Christmas?" by Dr. E. Ahmed Tori:

> The Church adopted spring equinox celebrations as Easter. As this time had already been one of celebrating the sun's resurrection and return to prominence, celebrating the resurrection of the son of God required no great change in understanding. In fact, the Easter celebrations were so similar to earlier celebrations - particularly those which recognized the resurrection of the Babylonian Adonis, the Greek Apollo, and the Roman Attis - that a bitter controversy arose with pagans claiming that the Christian Easter celebration was a spurious imitation of the ancient traditions. Vernal equinox bonfires, originally prohibited by the Church, found their way as Easter fires into the official liturgy of Rome by the ninth century. Fertility symbols associated with spring, such as the egg and the incredibly prolific rabbit, survived as well. (Ellerbe p.148).[44]

I know, I know—at this point we're supposed to gasp, cover our eyes and exclaim vociferously that the information I have thus far supplied only proves that we should have absolutely *nothing* to do with anything associated with the vernal equinox. What in the world do resurrection myths have to do with establishing Yahweh's calendar? Well, please bear with me as I explain.

I'm persuaded we need to keep in mind the fact that when Yahweh unleashed His plagues upon Egypt, He did more than just make the Egyptians suffer for their stubbornness: He *also* made a mockery out of the idols they worshipped. Many scholars regard the plagues of Egypt as a deliberate attack on their idols. For example, Egyptologist John D. Currid, in his book *Ancient Egypt and the Old Testament*, wrote, "Some scholars have suggested that the ten plagues were directed by the God of the Hebrews against particular Egyptian deities. There should be no question that the biblical authors understood the plagues in that manner."[45] Currid delves into this fact with specific examples of each deity, including how the Nile river, held as sacred by the Egyptians, was negatively affected by the plague of blood.[46] The frog is well-known as having been considered sacred by the Egyptians.[47] Many

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[43] From "The Vernal Equinox" by Ruth Reichmann, Max Kade German-American Center, Indiana Univ.- Purdue Univ. Indianapolis.
[44] From the article "Do Muslims Celebrate Easter and Christmas?" by Dr. E. Ahmed Tori.
[45] *Cf.*, *Ancient Egypt and the Old Testament*, by John D. Currid, Chapter 6, "An Exegetical and Historical Consideration of the Ten Plagues of Egypt," Baker Books, Grand Rapids, MI, 1999, p. 108.
[46] *Cf.*, for example, history.com, "Why the Nile River was So Important to Ancient Egypt," July 12, 2021, by Patrick J. Kiger.

believe the plague of flies to either be a mockery of their worship of *baalzebub* ("lord of the flies") or else a mockery of their worship of the sacred beetle.[48] The plague of hail was likely aimed at the Egyptian idol named *Set*, who was the deity who controlled the weather and who protected their crops.[49]

This brings us to the plague of darkness. What Egyptian deity might the plague of darkness have been aimed at? Might it have been Osiris, the Egyptian sun deity known as the "Lord of life after death"—whose resurrection came at the time of the vernal equinox? The following information is taken from an online article titled "Spring Equinox, Reincarnation, and The Great Cosmic Year," by Curtis Lang:

> For millennia the Spring Equinox has been celebrated around the world as a festival of Resurrection, and it marks the start of the astrological New Year.
>
> For the temple priests of the Egyptian dynasties, Osiris, the dying and reborn god connected with the morning star Venus, was known as "the heart of the renewed sun." Lord of the Underworld and King of the Dead, in his role as the resurrected God, Osiris represented light, life and consciousness, the ever-renewing power of the Solar Disc.
>
> Osiris was also the god of vegetation, often depicted with green skin. Egyptians created wood-framed barley seedbeds in the shape of the god, known as "Osiris gardens." These sacred seedbeds have been found in tombs. Clearly, the plants which sprouted from these beds symbolized the resurrection of life after death.
>
> The soul of Osiris was said to rest in his sarcophagus during the winter season, and the spring equinox marked his resurrection.[50]

From a logical perspective, I cannot think of a better time frame in which to make a mockery out of the equinoctial resurrection of the sun deity than to snuff out the sun's light during that time period. And why have darkness for ***three days***? Well, it was a widely-held notion, both among the Jews, as well as other cultures, that a person is not officially "dead" until after two days:

> There are several reasons it is significant Jesus was dead for three days before His resurrection. First, resurrection after three days of death proved to Jesus' opponents that He truly rose from the dead. Why? According to Jewish tradition, a person's soul/spirit remained with his/her dead body for three days. After three days, the soul/spirit departed. If Jesus' resurrection had occurred on the same day or even the next day, it would have been easier for His enemies to argue He had never truly died. Significantly, Jesus waited several days after Lazarus had died before He came to resurrect Lazarus so that no one could deny the miracle (John 11:38–44).[51]

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[47] The Egyptian female deity Heqet (Hekhet) was depicted as a woman with the body of a frog. *Cf.*, "Heqet," The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica.

[48] *Cf.*, "The Symbolism of the Fly in Ancient Egypt," by Taylor Bryanne Woodcock, Nile Scribes, 2021.

[49] *Cf.*, "Set (Seth)," by Joshua J. Mark, World History Encyclopedia, 2016.

[50] From an online article titled "Spring Equinox, Reincarnation, and The Great Cosmic Year," by Curtis Lang, March 18, 2005. The entire article was originally available at the following URL: http://www.satyacenter.com/library-curtis_lang_archive-spring-equinox-newsletter. **NOTE:** As of 2026, the article is no longer available at that website, but a separate article titled "Spring Equinox Mysteries and History" is currently available, composed by the same author.

[51] *Cf.*, "What was the significance of Jesus being dead for three days?" © Copyright 2002-2026 Got Questions Ministries.

Indeed, it was a general superstition among many classes of people that three full days were required before a person could be "officially dead," and it was on that third day that the embalming or the anointing with spices would take place. The 5th century BCE historian Herodotus (c. 484-425 BCE) wrote that embalming did not take place until after the lapse of three or four days.[52]

In the same way that a person wasn't deemed to be "officially dead" until the third day, the Egyptian solar deity was at length considered "officially dead" when he failed to show up on that fatal third day. When he failed to be resurrected after two days, he was considered "officially dead" on day number three.

With the plague of darkness, Yahweh hammered the final nail in the coffin of the Egyptian sun deity. And what better time to lay the deity to rest than at the time that he was supposed to be "resurrected" – at the vernal equinox?

If this is what happened, then the plague of darkness occurred just prior to the month that Yahweh declared to Moses and Aaron as "the beginning of months." Thus, instead of approaching the vernal equinox's heathen connection as rationale for ***disproving*** its association with Yahweh's year, I am persuaded we can use that connection to prove that the vernal equinox occurred at the time of the plague of darkness … and ***before*** the plague of the firstborn.

[52] *Cf.*, Herodotus, *The Histories*, Book Two, 86-89.

12. Historical Relevance of the Vernal Equinox

As I mentioned earlier, it has been a historically Jewish understanding that the first month of the year begins on or after the vernal equinox. It is reasonable to believe Moses understood this as a fact. Moses was learned in all the ways of the Egyptians (Acts 7:22). Since the pyramids were used to indicate solstices and equinoxes,[53] there is no reason to doubt that Moses knew how to determine when the vernal equinox occurred. Furthermore, anyone can determine when the equinox occurs by the use of a sun dial, such as the one used by King Hezekiah in II Kings 20:8-11.

Certainly, a first-century Jew known as Philo of Alexandria (c. 20 BCE – 50 CE) knew how to determine when the vernal equinox occurred. On at least three separate occasions, he matter-of-factly wrote that this is when the new year begins. The following comes from his work entitled "On the Life of Moses, II":

> Moses puts down the beginning of the vernal equinox as the first month of the year, attributing the chief honour, not as some persons do to the periodical revolutions of the year in regard of time, but rather to the graces and beauties of nature which it has caused to shine upon men; for it is through the bounty of nature that the seeds which are sown to produce the necessary food of mankind are brought to perfection.[54]

Philo offers the same explanation in his work titled "The Special Laws, I":

> In the first season—he calls springtime and its equinox the first season—he ordered that a feast which is called 'the feast of unleavened bread' be celebrated for seven days and declared that every day was equal in honor in religious services.[55]

Finally, in another work entitled "Questions and Answers on Exodus," Philo wrote the following:

> (Scripture) thinks it proper to reckon the cycle of months from the vernal equinox.[56] Moreover, (this month) is said to be the 'first' and the 'beginning' by synonymy, since these (terms) are explained by each other, for it is said to be the first both in order and in power; similarly that time which proceeds from the vernal equinox also appears (as) the beginning both in order and in power, in the same way as the head (is the beginning) of a living creature. And thus those who are learned in astronomy have given this name to the before-mentioned time. For they call the Ram the head of the zodiac since in it the sun appears to produce the vernal equinox.[57]

It was clearly Philo's understanding that the first month of the year was reckoned from the vernal equinox. I have experienced the reactions of those who don't agree with what Philo wrote. A common reaction is to attempt to discredit him and his writings. Some have argued that Philo was a confused

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[53] For example, see the article "Symbolism and Coincidences of the Great Pyramid," by Tim G. Hunkler. NOTE: Hunkler's article is no longer available for reading online; however, the internet is saturated with articles validating ancient Egyptians' use of the pyramids in determining equinoxes, such as History.com's "These Ancient Sites Align With the Spring Equinox," by Elizabeth Yuko, © 2026, A&E Television Networks, LLC. All Rights Reserved.

[54] From *The Works of Philo*, "On the Life of Moses, II," chap. XLI, 222, translated by C.D. Yonge, Hendrickson Publishers, 1993, pp. 510-511.

[55] Ibid, "The Special Laws, I," chap. XXXV, sec. 181, p. 551.

[56] In his Greek text translated "from the vernal equinox," Philo uses the Greek phrase απο της έαρινης ίσημερίας (*ato tes earinís isimerías*).

[57] From *Philo*, Supplement II, "Questions and Answers on Exodus," Book I, § 1, translated by Ralph Marcus, Ph.D., Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA:, 1953, pp. 2-3.

man who dabbled a little too much into Greek philosophy, and that he even consented to the worship of idols.[58] Philo's writings are valuable because his beliefs were highly regarded by Judaism of his day, including the Jewish historian Josephus.[59] Philo was more than just a Jew living in Alexandria, Egypt. He was ***the most prominent Jew*** living in Alexandria, Egypt. His fellow Jews chose him over all other Jews to represent their people in protesting an officially instigated massacre of Jews in Alexandria. This was a very serious issue—a matter of life and death for the Jews of Alexandria. In order to plead their cause before the Roman emperor, they had to select the man who could best represent them. The question arises, "Would the Jews of Alexandria have chosen Philo had he not properly represented normative Jewish practice and belief?"

Indeed, they would only have chosen a man whose beliefs reflected their own, whether that be Sabbath observance, new moon observance, and yes, when to begin the Scriptural year. This is indeed a significant fact, as echoed by *The Cambridge History of Judaism*:

> It is significant that his co-religionists chose him as ambassador to Caligula in 39-40. In such circumstances only a man who was important in the city would be appointed.[60]

For those who question the credibility and reliability of Philo, we are providing the following excerpt from *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*:

> Philo was a prominent member of the Jewish community of Alexandria[61], the largest Jewish settlement outside Palestine. The only certain date known from his life comes from his account of the great pogrom[62] in Alexandria which started in A.D. 38 under the prefect Flaccus, during the reign of the Roman emperor Gaius Caligula. Philo was then chosen to head a delegation (Gaium 370) sent in A.D. 39/40 by the Jewish community to Gaius Caligula in Rome.[63]

Philo clearly had the trust of his fellow Jews in Alexandria, but did his practice and belief reflect all of normative Judaism? Again, let us turn to *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* for that answer:

> Was Philo then fundamentally Greek or Jewish? His loyalty to the Jewish institutions, the laws of Moses, the role of Israel as the priesthood of the world, and his harshness against renegades (even to the point of advocating lynching) shows that he was fundamentally a Jew.[64]

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[58] This accusation is refuted by Philo himself in his work The Decalogue (ch. XIV (64-65)), where he wrote, "Let us, then, engrave deep in our hearts this as the first and most sacred of commandments, to acknowledge and honour one Mighty One (Gk. *Theon*) Who is above all, and let the idea that idols are many never even reach the ears of the man whose rule of life is to seek for truth in purity and guilelessness."

[59] In Flavius Josephus' *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book XVIII, chapter 8, § 1, he describes Philo's defense of Judaism as follows: "But Philo, the principal of the Jewish embassage, a man eminent on all accounts, brother to Alexander the alabarch, and one not unskillful in philosophy, was ready to betake himself to make his defense against those accusations;"

[60] From *The Cambridge History of Judaism*, Vol. 3, by William Horbury, W.D. Davies and John Sturdy, Cambridge University Press, 1999, p. 879.

[61] According to this same reference, article "Alexandria," p. 153, we learn, "By the 1st century C.E. the Jewish population in Alexandria numbered in the hundreds of thousands." The majority of these Jews were descendants of prisoners of war who were forcibly settled there by Alexander the Great when the city was founded.

[62] "Pogrom" is defined as "An organized and often officially instigated local massacre, especially one directed against the Jews. [<Russian, destruction]" — From *The Reader's Digest Great Encyclopedic Dictionary*.

[63] From *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Vol. 5, David Noel Freedman, Editor-in-Chief, article "Philo of Alexandria," by Peder Borgen, Doubleday, 1992, p. 333.

[64] Ibid, p. 341.

Philo represented the beliefs of normative Judaism, and Philo reckoned the beginning of the new year with the new moon following the vernal equinox.

Eusebius (260 – 339 CE) is popularly known as "The Father of Church History." He carried forward the same understanding expressed by Philo, namely, that the equinox determined the first month of the new year. The following is taken from his work entitled *Ecclesiastical History*:

> (14) You have, therefore, in the first year, the new moon of the first month, which is the beginning of every cycle of nineteen years, on the twenty-sixth of the Egyptian month Phamenoth. But according to the months of the Macedonians the twenty-second of Dystrus. But as the Romans would say, before the eleventh of the calends of April. (15) But the sun is found on the said twenty-sixth of the month Phamenoth, not only as entering the first segment (of the zodiac), but on the fourth day is already found passing through it. But this segment they generally call the first dodecatemorium, and the equinox, and the beginning of the months, and the head of the cycle, and the head of the planetary course. But that (segment) before this, they call the last of the months, the twelfth segment, and the last dodecatemorium, and the end of the planetary revolution. Hence, also, those that place the first month in it [the twelfth segment], and that fix the fourteenth of the month by it, commit, as we think, no little and no common blunder. (16) But neither is this our opinion only, but it was also known to the Jews anciently, and before Christ, and was chiefly observed by them, as we may learn from Philo, Josephus, and Musaeus; and not only from these, but also from those still more ancient, i.e., the two Agathobuli, commonly called the masters, and of Aristobulus, that most distinguished scholar, who was one of the seventy that translated the holy Scriptures from the Hebrew for Ptolemy Philadephus, and his father, and dedicated his exposition of the law of Moses to the same kings. These, when they resolve inquiries on Exodus, say that all ought to sacrifice the Passover alike after the vernal equinox, in the middle of the first month. But this is found to be when the sun passes through the first segment of the solar, or, as some call it, the zodiacal circle. But this Aristobulus also adds, it was requisite that not only the sun should have passed the equinoctial segment for the feast of the Passover, but the moon also.[65]

Clearly, Eusebius carried forward the same understanding conveyed by Philo some three hundred years earlier. That understanding is that the vernal equinox determines when the new year is about to begin.

Please notice that Eusebius wrote that it was the Jewish understanding for the vernal equinox to precede the Passover sacrifice. This raises a significant question: If we were in Israel and we found very mature fields of barley prior to the new moon—***and*** we knew that the new moon occurred before the vernal equinox—could we declare that new moon to be *Abib*, the first month of the year? According to what Eusebius wrote, the Jewish sages agreed that the criterion was for the Passover sacrifice (***not the new moon***) to occur after the vernal equinox. However, Eusebius ***also*** wrote that Aristobulus, one of the translators of the Septuagint, believed that the vernal equinox should precede the ***new moon***. Notice again what Eusebius wrote:

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[65] From *Eusebius' Ecclesiastical History*, Book 7, chapter 32, translated by C. F. Cruse, Hendrickson Publishers, 2000, pp. 273-274.

> But this Aristobulus also adds, it was requisite that not only the sun should have passed the equinoctial segment for the feast of the Passover, but the moon also.

Thus, it appears that there was some disagreement among the Jews even during Aristobulus' day (3rd century BCE) as to when precisely the new year should be declared. Must the vernal equinox precede the new moon of Abib, or must it only precede the Passover sacrifice that occurred later on in that month?

We see that there was apparently some confusion among the Jews as to when the new year should begin. We have already read the clear statements from Philo in which he expressed that the "cycle of months is reckoned ***from the vernal equinox***." In other words, the vernal equinox comes first, then comes the new month. However, it is apparent that not all of Judaism embraced this method of reckoning. In fact, as we are about to see, other Jews openly expressed the view that the "bottom line" was for there to be ripe barley in time for Passover. In other words, if we were in the month *Adar* and very mature fields of barley covered the landscape, and it was clear that the fields would be ripe within two weeks of the next new moon sighting, that upcoming new moon would be declared the first new moon of the year, even if the equinox hadn't occurred yet. This is the view held by Karaite Jews. I address their understanding in my next chapter.

13. A Karaite's View

In a newsletter article dated March 20, 2005, a prominent Karaite known as Nehemia Gordon depicted those who believe the month of *Abib* should come after the vernal equinox as not understanding the sources that they quote. In other words, when Philo wrote that the cycle of months is reckoned ***from the vernal equinox***, we are supposed to understand that he actually intended for us to understand that the Passover is to be reckoned from the vernal equinox, not the "cycle of months." Here is what Mr. Gordon wrote:

> As discussed in the above articles, the modern equinox-keepers begin their yearly cycle at the first new moon after the vernal equinox. Ironically they base themselves on ancient Pharisee sources (Talmud, Josephus) which mention the equinox, without actually understanding the meaning of these ancient sources.
>
> The ancient Pharisees had two systems of setting the beginning of the year, only one of which took the equinox into account whereas both systems looked at the Aviv as a central factor (see Abib Faq). The modern equinox followers also fail to understand how the ancient sources used the equinox. Simply put, the ancient Pharisee system (Talmud and Josephus) was NOT based on the first NEW MOON after the vernal equinox! Instead, the ancient Pharisee equinox system was based on the 16th day of the month that fell out after the Vernal Equinox. It was completely acceptable in the ancient Pharisee system for the New Moon of the First Month to fall out before the vernal equinox, as long as the 16th day of that month fell out after the equinox.[66]

Again, Nehemia Gordon establishes his view that the ancient Jewish system allowed the new moon of Abib to "fall out" before the vernal equinox. This understanding, however, contradicts not only what Philo wrote, but also the understanding of Aristobulus, who preceded Philo by over 250 years. In response to Gordon's comment that ancient Jews such as Josephus and the Pharisees didn't understand the meaning of "equinox," I have already pointed out in my previous chapter that, contrary to his assumption, Philo most certainly knew when the equinox occurred, and he wrote, "(Scripture) thinks it proper to reckon the cycle of months from the vernal equinox." He knew!

I will not deny that some within Judaism have expressed the view that the vernal equinox should precede the ***Passover***, and not necessarily the new moon of Abib. One not-so-ancient Jew was a sage known as Maimonides. I will address his commentary on the topic in my next chapter.

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[66] From Karaite Korner Newsletter #202, titled "Aviv vs. the Equinox," dated Sunday, March 20, 2005. The newsletter commentary was originally available for reading online, but as of this 2026 update, it has been removed. A more detailed excerpt may still be read at a website named Everlasting Kingdom.

14. The View of Maimonides

Centuries after Eusebius, we read from the writings of a famous Jew known as Maimonides (1135 – 1204 CE) that the new year was begun on or after the vernal equinox. However, as Maimonides explains, the barley harvest did indeed play a significant role, as the year could indeed begin ***before*** the equinox if it could be determined that there would be ripe barley in time for the wave sheaf offering:

> 1. An embolismic year is a year to which a (13th) month has been added. Such an extra month is never any other month but an added Adar. Hence the embolismic year has two months of Adar, a First Adar and a Second Adar. And why is just this month added? Because of the season of the barley harvest—that is, in order that Passover be celebrated in that season. For it is said: *Heed the month of the ripening ears* (Deut. 16:1), which means, give heed that this month (of Nisan) fall in the season of the ripening ears. Without the addition of this month (of Adar), however, Passover would fall sometimes in the summer and sometimes in the winter.
>
> 2. Intercalation of the year depended upon the following three criteria: the *tekufah* [the equinox], the barley harvest, and the blooming of the tree fruits. Namely, if the court had ascertained by calculation that the tekufah of Nisan would fall on the 16th day of Nisan, or later, it intercalated the year and declared the Nisan of this year to be a Second Adar, so that Passover might fall in the season of the barley harvest. This criterion alone was sufficient to rely upon for the intercalation of the year, and no attention was paid to any other criterion.
>
> 3. Similarly, if the court found that the barley crop was not yet ripe, being retarded, and that such tree fruits as usually sprout during the Passover season had not yet produced buds, it took these two conditions as a criterion and proceeded to intercalate the year—even if the tekufah was to take place prior to the 16th day of Nisan—in order that the barley crop might be available for the offering of the Sheaf of Waving on the 16th day of Nisan, and in order that the fruits might sprout as usual during the season of the barley harvest.
>
> 4. With regard to the barley harvest the court took into consideration the following three regions: Judea, Transjordan, and Galilee. If the barley crop was ripe in two of these regions but not in the third, the year was not intercalated; if, however, the barley crop was ripe in one of them but not in the other two, and if the fruit of the trees had not yet sprouted, the year was intercalated. These were the three main grounds for intercalation—in order that the years (of months) coincide with the solar years.[67]

It is plain to see that Maimonides' chief concern was not so much the *tekufah* (equinox) as it was whether or not there would be ripe barley in time for Passover if the upcoming new moon was declared to be *Abib*. The main criterion, however, was for the vernal equinox to occur before the 16th day of Nisan, i.e., the day of the wave sheaf offering. Maimonides did not express the view that the vernal equinox should precede the new moon itself.

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[67] From *The Code of Maimonides*, Vol. XI, Book Three, Treatise Eight, "Sanctification of the New Moon," translated from the Hebrew by Solomon Gandz, Yale University Press, New Haven, CT, pp. 16-17, 1956.

One may wonder where Maimonides gleaned the information regarding when to begin the new year. From all appearances, he borrowed it from the Talmud. When the topic of discussion turns to the Talmud, people tend to raise their eyebrows with doubting suspicion, for the Talmud certainly contains a lot of unsound teachings that do not line up with Scripture. However, this should not be taken to mean that everything found in the Talmud is corrupt. For the purpose of examining the historical calendar, the Talmud is valuable as a source of historical information. The following excerpt is purported to date to approximately the year 50 CE, as it involves the rabbi Gamaliel, who was an instructor under whom the Apostle Paul sat:

> It once happened that Rabban Gamliel [the Apostle Shaul's teacher] was sitting on a step on the Temple Mount, and the well-known scribe Yochanan was standing before him with three cut sheets [of parchment] lying before him. He (Gamliel) said to him (Yochanan), …(and) take the third [sheet] and write to our brethren, the Exiles of Babylon and to those in Media, and to all the other exiled [sons] of Israel, saying: 'May your peace be great forever! We beg to inform that the doves are still tender, and the lambs are still young, and the Abib is not yet ripe. It seems advisable to me and to my colleagues to add thirty days to this year.[68]

Based upon this quotation, the ripeness of the barley was an important factor in deciding whether or not to intercalate a "Second Adar," just as Maimonides noted. Note also that Gamaliel mentioned that the *Abib* was not yet ripe. This implies that the *Abib* is something that can be ripe—contrary to the teaching of some that *Abib* can only refer to green ears. This understanding of the meaning of *Abib* also supports the reference we read earlier from *The Temple Scroll*.

Here is an additional reference from the Talmud that is worthy of our consideration:

> Our rabbis taught: "Based on three things is the year intercalated: on the Abib (barley), on the fruit of the trees, and on the (Solar) Equinox. Based upon two of them the year is intercalated, but based on one of them alone the year is not intercalated; but when the Abib is one of them, everyone is pleased."[69]

According to this historical record, both the "barley crowd" and the "equinox crowd" are correct … but it takes ***both*** factors, not just one. Based upon this information, I believe we can make a few rational inferences. First of all, I believe it is clear that there will ***always*** be ripe barley in time for the Passover if we allow the vernal equinox to determine when the new year will begin. Secondly, I believe it is ***also*** clear that a year may arise during which the barley, as well as the fruit of the trees, are noticeably mature enough that an experienced farmer would know whether or not there would be ripe barley in time for an "early Passover"—a Passover whose month begins *before* the vernal equinox.

Although I do not support using the Talmud as a source for instruction, I nevertheless believe it is a mistake to ignore the fact that it is a source for historical evidence pointing to Jewish practice and belief during the first few centuries following Yeshua's resurrection. Clearly, it does not align with the understanding expressed by Philo, yet I don't believe any of us can argue that the item of primary importance was that of having ripe barley in time for the wave sheaf offering.

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[68] From *The Babylonian Talmud*, Tractate Sanhedrin 11b.
[69] Ibid.

15. Additional Historical Information from the Elephantine Letters

Thus far I have supplied evidence from the writings of Eusebius, Maimonides, and the Talmud to establish the fact that a line can be drawn from the days of Yeshua's ministry to at least the tenth century CE, documenting that some within Judaism understood that ***Passover*** must occur after the vernal equinox. Other Jews, such as Philo and Aristobulus, insisted that the ***new moon*** must occur after the vernal equinox, but all agreed that the barley had to be ripe in time for the wave sheaf offering.

I have also demonstrated that the Hebrew month *Abib* overlays the Babylonian month *Nisan*, and that the scholarly consensus is that *Nisan* always began ***after*** the vernal equinox. Moreover, I have also offered compelling evidence that, during the year of the Exodus, the first month of the year began *after* the vernal equinox.

Recently, evidence has surfaced demonstrating that an ancient Jewish garrison that was stationed on Elephantine Island *also* reckoned the first month of the new year as beginning on or after the day of the vernal equinox. Members of the Jewish community living on Elephantine Island in Egypt sent letters to high-ranking Persian officials in Judah requesting, among other things, assistance with rebuilding their temple which had been destroyed. The following information about this garrison is taken from the book *New Testament Chronology*:

> Elephantine Island is in the Nile near Aswan in upper Egypt. During the fifth century BCE there was a colony of Jewish soldiers there. They were part of a military garrison protecting the southern limits of the Persian Empire. Almost a hundred Aramaic documents have been recovered from there. Outside the Bible these provide the earliest documentation of the political, economic, social, and religious life of a Jewish community from the southern Diaspora. Many of these are double-dated legal documents that give some insight into calendar reckoning of the period. The papyri from Elephantine demonstrate that the post-exile Jews used a calendar similar to the Babylonian calendar.
>
> Many of these legal documents include the required Egyptian civil year date and the regnal year of the current Persian king according to non-accession reckoning based on the Egyptian calendar. The two earliest papyri dated in 494 and 483 BCE contain only the Egyptian date, which suggests that the Jewish dating was not used that early. Soon thereafter a date using the new Jewish month names is also given according to the Babylonian calendar, the calendar used by their Persian overlords. Double-dated documents cover the period 471 to 402 BCE. From these it can be established that the Jews at Elephantine used reckoning similar to the Babylonian calendar. This included evening to evening days, a new year beginning in Nisan only after the Vernal Equinox, and the use of an intercalated sixth month. There was little, if any, difference between the Jewish and Persian reckoning.
>
> The Jewish dating is given in the same sequence as contemporary portions of the Bible and Jewish documents of the second commonwealth: day-month-year. This was unlike the contemporary Egyptian and Neo-Babylonian documents. It was also unlike the earlier Monarchy, year-month-day, indicating that this was not a continuation of the Exodus calendar.

> The dating of most of the double-dated papyri is straightforward, although a few documents may contain scribal errors. The Jewish date can only be reconciled to the known Egyptian date by consistently using sunset reckoning. The reign of the Persian king is given according to Egyptian reckoning. The regnal year is one year higher than Persian reckoning when it falls between the Egyptian new year on Thoth 1 (December during the period) and the Persian new year on Nisanu 1 (March/April). If the Jews had reckoned from Tishri then the Egyptian regnal year also would have been one year higher between Nisan and Tishri, or vise versa; this situation did not exist. Thus, the Jews reckoned the reigns of the Persian kings as from Nisan. This would be expected for a Persian military garrison.[70]

In 2002, I received a study on the Elephantine letters that I found to be very intriguing. The author, Wayne L. Atchison,[71] investigated these "double dated letters," offering specific examples of instances in which the individuals who wrote them began the new year on or after the vernal equinox, even though the previous new moon occurred only a few days prior to the equinox. Here are some excerpts from his study:[72]

> Modern scholars have failed to reconcile all of the Elephantine letters. This is because they are using the wrong rules to compute the observed calendar dates. Thus they fail to match the Egyptian date that is also specified in each document.
>
> This is significant. By matching all letters, firm evidence is established that the ancient observed calendar was based upon a defined and unwavering set of simple rules, and that the same observed calendar was used by the governing officials of Persia, including Jerusalem's Temple priests, throughout the entire Asia Minor region.
>
> Some may not be aware that Elephantine is historically extremely significant. The significance of the Elephantine Island in the Nile river is that Israel had a huge and fully functioning Temple of YHWH built on this island. In this Temple they kept the Mowadahs[73] of YHWH and the sacrificial ceremonies for hundreds of years. In this Temple the Levitical priests of Israel proclaimed and presided over the Mowadahs during the time when Solomon's Temple was destroyed, and later they held the Mowadahs in parallel with the Second Temple, until the time Elephantine was destroyed. As a matter of historical record, **the demonstration herein that both Temples of YHWH used the exact same calendar is monumental in its significance**.[71]

The main takeaway from all this is the fact that the calendar used by fifth century BCE Jews on Elephantine Island aligned with the Babylonian calendar. Certainly many individuals would express disagreement with the method employed by the priests on Elephantine Island in reckoning the new year, and I'm certain many "Scriptural calendars" can be, and *are* produced to illustrate opposing views. Nevertheless, this is how they did it, and it's a method that parallels that which was promoted

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[70] From *New Testament Chronology*, by Kenneth F. Doig, (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1990, chapter 2. This excerpt may be read online by accessing the following link: http://www.doig.net/NTC02.htm.

[71] Unfortunately, Wayne L. Atchison passed away on August 7, 2021.

[72] From Christian Technical Notes, "The Elephantine Letters" by Wayne L. Atchison, originally authored 03/14/94, edited 05/14/2002. Used by permission.

[73] I'm not sure why Mr. Atchison refers to *moedim* (appointed times) as "Mowadahs."

by Philo, which in turn parallels that which was promoted by Aristobulus. This same method was also practiced by the Babylonians, who are universally recognized as beginning the month *Nisanu* on or after the vernal equinox.

The fact that Judaism was able to overlay the dates of Abib with the dates of Nisan demonstrates that the two calendars were identical. We are unable to do this with the Gregorian calendar currently used by the nations of the world. For example, no one in his or her right mind would teach that April 14th is the date for Passover because April and Abib do not *usually* correspond.[74]

POST-UNITY CONFERENCE NOTE: During the question/answer session that followed my presentation, one gentleman openly expressed distrust for the priests at Elephantine Island, pointing out that the Jews were at that time dispersed because of their rebellion against Yahweh, which might cause one to interpret their use of the vernal equinox as a sign of adopting the heathen practices of the nations around them. I do not believe the answer I gave this man was sufficient, so I would like to here explain that regardless of how rebellious the Jews had been, this does nothing to negate the fact that the month *Abib* is identical to the month *Nisan*. Historically, this is fact, unless someone is able to produce evidence otherwise. If nothing else, this demonstrates that, as early as the fifth century BCE and continuing all the way down to Josephus (and beyond), *Nisan* was considered as another name for the month *Abib*. The two were simply identical, except for the name, and continued to be recognized as such all the way down from the fifth century BCE until *at least* the days of Josephus—a time span encompassing the days of Yeshua the Messiah. Certainly, Yeshua never spoke against the timing of the month of *Nisan*, a Babylonian name that is mentioned twice in Scripture (Neh. 2:1 and Esther 3:7). I'm persuaded the *Nisan* recognized by the priests of Elephantine Island and the *Nisan* of the Bible were one and the same month—a month considered the equivalent of *Abib*, even during the days of Nehemiah. The attempt to discredit the calendar of the Elephantine Island Jews because of their rebelliousness just doesn't add up in view of the historical record.

[74] The last time it happened was April 14, 2014.

16. First-Century Calendar Controversy

This is possibly the shortest chapter of any study I have ever written because the fact is, there is *no record* of a first-century calendar controversy, at least none that are recorded in what is known as the New Testament. Consider this: Philo understood the year is reckoned from the time of the vernal equinox. Philo was highly respected among his peers, having been selected out of hundreds of thousands of Jews to head the delegation to Rome. Around fifty years later, Jewish historian Josephus composed his *Antiquities of the Jews*, in which he offered accolades for Philo. If Josephus had been a "barley man," and as adamant about the calendar as the "barley folks" are, I'm certain he would have pointed that out somewhere in his writings. But he did not.

The absence of any calendar controversy in what's known as the New Testament validates believing that there wasn't one. If there had been a calendar controversy half as volatile as the one currently raging, with one party calling the other party "ignorant," among other uncomplimentary belittling remarks, we would have certainly read about it. The silence speaks volumes. The question has been asked, "Did Yeshua use the vernal equinox in determining the beginning of the new year?" Well, we aren't told. Did He join barley searches in a quest to determine the beginning of the new year? Again, we aren't told. According to the historical narrative, it was the general Jewish custom to go with the vernal equinox. Were there exceptions? I would say it's possible. If, prior to the vernal equinox, it could be determined and agreed there would be ripe barley in the Jerusalem area in time for Passover, I would have no problem with declaring the new month the month of Abib. The current trend, I'm afraid, is for barley hunters to rush the onset of the new year by trying to find the earliest signs of "green ears of barley." It smacks of modern-day Easter egg hunts.

17. The Importance of Balancing Scripture With Historical Information

I have often been criticized for putting emphasis on historical information. Of course, these critics are the ones who respect historical data the least, such as the lunar sabbatarians, who have on more than one occasion accused me of putting historical data ***above*** Scripture. Quite frankly, if we choose to minimize the record of history, as many folks do today, we are inviting more and more esoteric doctrines, as well as the folks who promote them. When scrutinize the record of history and see how well it ***complements*** Scripture, we simultaneously recognize that this is not a matter of putting the historical record above Scripture. Instead, it becomes a matter of enjoying the view as we see how well history and Scripture work ***together***.

I believe sometimes we take historical information for granted. For example, how many of us know how long a cubit is? The cubit is a unit of measure mentioned in Scripture, yet Scripture doesn't tell us how long it is. If we go to the historical record, though, we find that a cubit is the basic equivalent of 18 inches. We can do the same thing with a *hin*. If we cannot trust the historical record, then we cannot trust the accounts telling of such things as how the Roman emperor Hadrian changed the name of Jerusalem to Aelia Capitolina during the second century CE. In fact, if we cannot trust history, how do we know that the current city of Jerusalem is the same city as that mentioned in the Bible? How do we know that any of the maps we have of ancient cities are even accurate?

Many are unaware that the historical record also confirms the understanding that the early believers obeyed the Torah. Irenaeus (130-202 CE), in his treatise entitled *Against Heresies*, wrote the following:

> Thus did the apostles, whom the Lord made witnesses of every action and of every doctrine -- for upon all occasions do we find Peter, and James, and John present with Him -- scrupulously act according to the dispensation of the Mosaic law, showing that it was from one and the same God; which they certainly never would have done, as I have already said, if they had learned from the Lord [that there existed] another Father besides Him who appointed the dispensation of the law.[75]

It is through reading historical documents such as this that we can piece together the truth that the early believers in no way taught that the law was "done away," but rather that they believed Yahweh's Torah and they put it into practice, just as we should all do.

When we put our trust in Yahweh's Word while simultaneously respecting the historical record, everything fits. *Balance* is achieved. When we reject it, we begin questioning and second-guessing the historical record to the point that everything in Scripture is reinterpreted so as to conform to our religious views instead of conforming to the truth. As truth seekers, it is our responsibility to prove all things and examine everything from ***all*** angles, not just a singular interpretation of Scripture. As much as all of us would love for Scripture to provide us complete instructions on when to begin a new year, it does not. However, the historical record in no way conflicts with Scripture; in fact, it offers us a clear picture of how the early believers understood Yahweh's instructions. It is by balancing the calendar with Yahweh's Word ***and*** the historical record that we can better understand Yahweh's intentions for His children.

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[75] From *Against Heresies* by Irenaeus, Book III, ch. 12:15.

18. Conclusion

Even as I put the finishing touches on this, my 2026 update, I continue to receive emails challenging the readers to read their articles proving that the Scriptural year cannot begin until we receive official word that green ears of barley have been found in the land of Israel. On the very day I completed this study, I received an email with the following as the subject line: "The Equinox Question: Did Yehshua ever use the Equinox to determine the Holy Days? Did any of the Apostles? No in both cases. Let's Look at the Facts."

I read his study. Sadly, it proves nothing. In addressing the historical narrative, he dismisses Josephus as a Pharisee who would have gone along with the rabbinical method of determining when the Scriptural year began. At the same time, he claims the Hebrew word *tekufah* didn't mean "equinox" back then, which begs the question of how the Pharisees knew when to begin the year if it couldn't have been at the equinox. What little historical information he mentions, he dismisses. He ignores Philo's commentary, as well as the tremendous influence he had on his fellow Jews. Also not addressed is the fact that if there was a difference of opinion between Yeshua and the Pharisees over when the Scriptural year begins, we can be assured we would have read about the controversy in the New Testament. The silence over any such controversy validates believing there wasn't one.

Insofar as Scriptural references are concerned, he does not take into account the potential time interval between the hail plague and the plague of the firstborn, as though it was a "bang-bang" series of locust plague and plague of darkness immediately following the hail plague. Realistically, the Egyptians had weeks to recoup from each plague, only for Pharaoh to reconsider his promises to let the people go. Moreover, despite credible reports dating back over 100 years of how the barley in Egypt ripens a full month before the barley in the Jordan Valley, the author claims to own a field of barley 100 yards from the Egypt border, and that his barley matures at the same rate as Israel barley. Here's what he wrote:

> Some, in their ignorance, claim the barley in Egypt is different than that of Israel. I have a vineyard on the Egyptian border. 100 Yards from the border. It is in the same area that Jacob, Isaac and Abraham lived. It is just over a few hours drive to Jerusalem going directly east and a little north east. The barley in Egypt would have grown at almost the exact same time as the barley around Jerusalem. It would be the same as comparing crops in Eastern Ontario that are growing about the same time as those in Western Ontario. This argument about how they could tell when they are in Egypt is so telling of the lack of understanding some have.[76]

The above is simply an over-zealous and misleading attempt to persuade otherwise ignorant readers that the barley in Egypt matures at the same rate as the barley in the Jerusalem area. Although I have never set foot in either Egypt or Israel, I know he is mistaken. It's common knowledge that Israel barley in the Negev region matures sooner than the barley in the vicinity of Jerusalem. In my follow-up study, "Balancing the Calendar II," chapter 6, I include an actual recording from an annual barley searcher who, in 2018, found plenty of "aviv barley" in the Negev region, but when asked how mature the barley was in Jerusalem, he conceded, "Actually, the barley up there is pretty young. I took two

[76] Joseph Dumond, sightedmoon newsletter, article "Tekufah-Equinox," February 2026.

respective pictures and posted them. But it is ... it is young. And it just—even on the sides of the slopes in the stonier ground it's still young, so—very young."[77]

As I've already established, the Scriptures currently available to us do not come out and supply the formula for determining "when" the year begins, which is why there is a plethora of interpretations, ranging from the Zadok calendar to months that begin with the full moon. And yes, that includes years that begin with finding green ears of barley in Israel and years that begin with the vernal equinox. Other than Scripture's clear, but general, reference to springtime, we are not told. The barley in Egypt certainly does mature sooner than the barley in the Jerusalem area, plus we are not told the amount of time that elapsed between the plague of locusts and the plague of the firstborn. It could easily have been *weeks*. When we examine the historical record, the ancients fill in the blanks for us. They began the year after the vernal equinox. By combining the subtle hints offered within Scripture with the understanding conveyed by influential first-century scholars, we achieve the balance we need to arrive at the truth.

[77] Quote from Israel barley searcher Brian Convery, from the video titled "Sabbath 3-17-2018 from Israel," 03/17/2018.