

8. Did King Josiah Observe a Fall-to-Fall Calendar?

In his drive to produce *anything* that might seem to offer evidence of the ancient Jews observing a fall-to-fall calendar, Glenn turned to the book of II Kings, specifically chapters 22-23, where we read about the reign of King Josiah. We could make our response ultra brief by simply remarking that King Josiah is recorded as observing the Passover in the spring, during the first month of the year, not the seventh month, as Glenn would like you to believe. Nevertheless, for the sake of preserving Glenn's original commentary, here is his argument:

Another piece of chronological evidence *proving* the use of a fall-to-fall calendar by the Hebrews is found in 2 Kings 22-23:

Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned thirty and one years in Jerusalem. And his mother' name was Jedidah, the daughter of Adaiah of Boscath And he did that which was right in the sight of Yahweh, and walked in all the way of David his father, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left. And it came to pass in the eighteenth year of king Josiah, that the king sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, the son of Meshullam, the scribe, to the house of Yahweh, saying, Go up to Hilkiyah the high priest, that he may sum the silver which is brought into the house of Yahweh, which the keepers of the door have gathered of, the people: And let them deliver it into the hand of the doers of the work, that have the oversight of the house of Yahweh: and let them give it to the doers of the work which is in the house of Yahweh, to repair the breaches of the house. . . (2 Kings 22:1-5)

Josiah is said to be in his 18th year in which he decides to make repairs to the temple. He orders that the temple should be repaired, and money be provided to pay for the services of the builders. And then something happens that changes everything. In the temple the Torah scroll is found, upon which is written the instructions of Moses regarding the laws of Yahweh.

And Hilkiyah the high priest said unto Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of Yahweh. And Hilkiyah gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it. And Shaphan the scribe came to the king and brought the king word again and said, Thy servants have gathered the money that was found in the house, and have delivered it into the hand of them that do the work, that have the oversight of the house of Yahweh. And Shaphan the scribe showed the king, saying, Hilkiyah the priest hath delivered me a book. And Shaphan read it before the king. (2 Kings 22:8-10)

Imagine that for many centuries the Scriptures were hidden away and not seen by others, and then finally brought to light and read before you for the first time. It could be quite a shock. Remember, they didn't have our advanced technology so as to reproduce such a work--so we can be sure that they had very few copies available. Now let us consider the response of king Josiah:

And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the book of the law, that he rent his clothes. And the king commanded Hilkiah the priest, and Ahikam the son of Shaphan, and Achbor the son of Michaiah, and Shaphan the scribe, and Asahiah a servant of the king's, saying, Go ye, inquire of Yahweh for me, and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that is found: for great is the wrath of Yahweh that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this book, to do according unto all that which is written concerning us. So Hilkiah the priest, and Ahikam, and Achbor, and Shaphan, and Asahiah, went unto Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tikvah, the son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe; (now she dwelt in Jerusalem in the college;) and they communed with her. And she said unto them, Thus saith Yahweh Elohim of Israel, Tell the man that sent you to me, Thus saith Yahweh, Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, even all the words of the book which the king of Judah hath read: Because they have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the works of their hands; therefore my wrath shall be kindled against this place, and shall not be quenched. But to the king of Judah which sent you to inquire of Yahweh, thus shall ye say to him, Thus saith Yahweh Elohim of Israel, As touching the words which thou hast heard; Because thine heart was tender, and thou hast humbled thyself before Yahweh, when thou heardest what I spoke against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, that they should become a desolation and a curse, and hast rent thy clothes, and wept before me; I also have heard thee, saith Yahweh. Behold therefore, I will gather thee unto thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered into thy grave in peace; and thine eyes shall not see all the evil which I will bring upon this place. And they brought the king word again. (2 Kings 22:11-20)

Let us consider the timeline of events here. First, it is announced from the start that these events take place in the 18th year of Josiah. Next, the king orders repairs to be made to the temple, and money be provided to pay the laborers. Then the Torah scroll is found and given to the king's assistant to read before him. Upon hearing the whole scroll read to him, he humbles himself and tears his clothing. He then seeks an oracle from a local prophetess, so that he may know what to do about the problem (the sins of Israel, as described in the Torah). The prophetess tells him that judgment is coming soon to his city and his people, and that there is nothing that can be done to stop it, but because he humbled himself before Yahweh He will not bring the curses to him personally, but would allow Josiah to die in peace before that time came.

Now here is what the king commands to be done next:

And the king sent, and they gathered unto him all the elders of Judah and of Jerusalem. And the king went up into the house of Yahweh, and all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with him, and the priests, and the prophets, and all the people, both small, and great: and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant which was found in the house of Yahweh. (2 Kings 23:1-2)

It would have taken a long time for king Josiah to gather together "all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem" and bring them to his royal courts. This action alone probably took an entire month to bring it about. But then we should continue with the story to see what came later, after he made a covenant to do all that Yahweh had commanded in the Torah:

And the king commanded Hilkiah the high priest, and the priests of the second order, and the keepers of the door, to bring forth out of the temple of Yahweh all the vessels that were made for Baal, and for the grove, and for all the host of heaven: and he burned them without, Jerusalem in the fields of Kidron, and carried the ashes of them unto Bethel. And he put down the idolatrous priests, whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense in the high places in the cities of Judah, and in the places round about Jerusalem; them also that burned incense unto Baal, to the sun, and to the moon, and to the planets, and to all the host of heaven. And he brought out the grove from the house of Yahweh, without Jerusalem, unto the brook Kidron, and burned it at the brook Kidron, and stamped it small to powder, and cast the powder thereof upon the graves of the children of the people. And he broke down the houses of the sodomites, that were by the house of Yahweh, where, the women wove hangings for the grove. (2 Kings 23:4-7)

Looking through this list of things for king Josiah to perform, it would seem a daunting task. He orders all of the vessels made for Baal to be taken out of the temple and burned in the fields of Kidron, and the ashes to be carried to Bethel. He then "puts down" (i.e., destroys) the idolatrous priests of Baal. Then he pulls up the grove from out of the temple, to have it burned outside the city and the ashes to be cast into the brook Kidron. He also breaks down the houses of the male cultic prostitutes ("sodomites"), that were just outside of the temple grounds.

For all of these things to be accomplished would have taken at least a couple of months, not including the month it probably took to bring all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem to hear the reading of the Torah. But this is not all of the story. In addition to taking this extreme action in Jerusalem and his own nation of Judah, he also commands that these idolatrous practices should be taken away in the other provinces (from Geba to Beersheba), and that this reform should be carried out in nearby Samaria, that the Asheroth pole should be taken out and burned, that the bones of those buried on the mount of Bethel should be burnt on the idolatrous alter so as to defile it (except for the bones of the two righteous

prophets), and finally he had all the priests of the high places of Samaria killed. There is really no question about it, this would have taken at least another couple of months to do all of these things.

So now let's recap the chronological timeline of events here. Josiah orders repairs to be made to the temple, then is told they found the Torah, and it is read to him. It probably took a couple of weeks just to do this. Josiah then calls upon a local prophetess to enquire as to what he should do. After this, he calls all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem to come and hear the Torah, all of which would have taken roughly a month. He then commands that the priests of Baal should be killed and he then pulls up the grove from out of the temple, to have it burned outside the city. This would have taken another couple of months. Finally he commands that all these same things should be done in Samaria, just as it was done in Jerusalem and his own province. Again, this would have required another two months. Altogether we have 2 months plus 2 months plus 1 month plus a couple of weeks, for a total of about 5 1/2 months. Now consider what happens next:

And the king commanded all the people, saying, Keep the Passover unto Yahweh your Elohim, as it is written in the book of this covenant. Surely there was not holden such a Passover from the days of the judges that judged Israel, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel, nor of the kings of Judah; But, in the eighteenth year of king Josiah, wherein this Passover was holden to Yahweh in Jerusalem. (2 Kings 23:21-23)

If Judah was following a spring-to-spring calendar only a few years before the Babylonian captivity, and such a calendar year starts only two weeks before Passover, then Josiah has only two weeks to fulfill all of the things listed in 2 Kings 22-23--for it was his 18th year when all of these events *began* and it was still his 18th year when they began to keep that Passover in Jerusalem. Of course, doing all of those things in only two weeks is really an impossibility. Several months would have been required to accomplish all of this. If they were using a *Nisan* New Year, then the year they kept the Passover (about 5 1/2 months later) would have to be the 19th year of Josiah, not the 18th year!! But 2 Kings 23:23 plainly says it was still the 18th year!!! Therefore, the 18th year of Josiah, king of Judah, *could not* have been calculated based upon a *Nisan* New Year, but instead by a *Tishri* New Year (starting the 18th year in the fall, six months before that Passover).¹

As I mentioned at the beginning of this section, I could make our response to Glenn's above commentary very brief by simply pointing out that it is plainly recorded that King Josiah observed the Passover in the FIRST MONTH of the year, which is known as Abib. Anyone who has a rudimentary knowledge of Scripture knows that this "first month" occurred in the *spring*, not the fall:

¹Moreover Josiah kept a passover unto Yahweh in Jerusalem: and they killed the passover on the fourteenth *day* of the **first month**. (2 Chronicles 35:2)

¹ Taken from Glenn's study entitled "Do Sabbatical Years Start in the Spring (Abib) or the Fall (Tishri)?," which may be read in its entirety by accessing the following URL: http://www.itsaboutthattime.net/year_begins_fall.htm.

Please observe that it **isn't** recorded that the Passover was observed in the *seventh month*, as Glenn would certainly prefer that the text say. Rather, it was observed in the very same chronological sequence that Yahweh ordained in Exodus 12:2. The month of Abib, during which the Passover is observed, occurs in the spring of the year and is the *first month of the year*, period.

What, then, about the “18th year of Josiah” that is so important to Glenn’s case? The “18th year of Josiah” was simply that: The 18th year of Josiah. As we have already covered so many times in this section of our study, the year of the king’s reign, like the term of a U.S. President, didn’t necessarily begin on Abib 1. The U.S. President’s term begins on January 20th. Thus, even though the official “New Year” for the United States begins on January 1st, no one is going to say that such-and-such an event occurred during President Obama’s second year *until January 20th*! Years from now, will some zealous chronologist who lacks understanding of how these things work proclaim that the United States began their “New Year” on January 20th? Yes, this will happen if individuals come along who employ the same absurd reasoning presented by Glenn Moore. However, those who know better will respond to such reasoning by pointing out that the U.S. Presidents’ terms of office and the calendar date on which the United States’ New Year began were *not* “one and the same.”

Glenn Moore had *every opportunity* to present the truth to his readers that Josiah’s Passover occurred during the *first month* of the year ... a month that began in the *spring*. However, he withheld that information from his readers, choosing to instead emphasize the year of Josiah’s reign. Here, again, is what Glenn wrote:

Therefore, the 18th year of Josiah, king of Judah, *could not have been calculated based upon a Nisan New Year, but instead by a Tishri New Year* (starting the 18th year in the fall, six months before that Passover). – Glenn Moore

Please reread the above commentary, but compare it with 2 Chronicles 30:1 and **then** make your decision as to whether King Josiah observed a spring-to-spring calendar or a fall-to-fall calendar:

¹Moreover Josiah kept a passover unto Yahweh in Jerusalem: and they killed the passover on the fourteenth *day* of the **first month**. (2 Chronicles 35:2)

I searched through Glenn’s presentation on Josiah’s Passover to see if he shared with his readers which month of the year, according to Scripture, that Josiah’s Passover was held. He did not. Did he willfully withhold that information from his readers or was he just not careful with his research? Regardless of Glenn’s motives, I am hopeful that we all know that Passover is observed in the spring, so since Glenn wants us all to believe that Josiah’s “New Year” began in the fall, then we should expect to read that the Passover was celebrated during the *seventh month* of the year, not the first. However, we read instead that it was observed during the *first month* of the year, a month that fell in the spring.

Glenn may argue that there were “two calendars” in use. That’s fine if he does. I could argue that the United States *also* uses more than one calendar simply by reminding him when the U.S. President’s term of office begins. Moreover, I haven’t even mentioned the *school year*, which typically begins in either late August or early September. Based on the *school year calendar*, someone might easily attempt to argue that the United States goes by a “fall-to-fall” calendar or, more accurately, a “summer-to-summer” calendar. Nevertheless, regardless of when the school year begins, no one with a proper education is going to refer to September as the first month of the year!

Glenn continues to add more “evidence” to his study, including an ancient agricultural calendar that starts with the olive harvest. Since we have already addressed the fact that the agricultural “year” starts in the fall (during the *seventh month* of the Scriptural calendar), no further commentary is needed to address this aspect of Glenn’s study. Suffice it to say that we believe Glenn goes to great lengths to distort the clear teaching of Scripture, all for the express purpose of making his Jubilee calendar fit his interpretation of Scripture.