

HELP ME UNDERSTAND CHODESH AND TEKUFAH – PLEASE!!!

Trying to explain chodesh and tekufah is like building a sculpture from a loose mound of dry rice, but it will be easier to see if we can make it relative to us.

To begin the venture, we should consider that this calendar is all about our Father's creation. It is based on the Sabbath, the seventh day of the week. He hallowed this day because He was showing us that all things here are intended to move in the direction of purity and restoration. When man disobeyed, he fell into a defiled state, which prevented him from being united with his Heavenly Father in the way he had been prior to the fall. He was exiled to another realm where correction could take place. He was not being punished, but isolated so the impurity can be resolved and mankind can be brought back into the close presence of the Father again.

The entire purpose of the exile from the garden was to surgically remove the impure and return man to a pure state that would allow him back into the Father's presence again. Every moment in this place is spent with that in mind. We are to be continually progressing from the state of sin to a state of righteousness. The old state of sin is to be left behind and consumed, while we are to advance to a new state of life through Y'shua. If we begin to look at the old state of sin as the past, and the new life in Y'shua as the future, things will begin to come into focus. We are not yet perfected, and will address the present momentarily. For now though, we just want to focus on the past and the future.

Let us now consider chodesh. The letter structure of chodesh is: chet, dalet, shin.

The letter "chet" means: *the new beginning of transcendent life, chamber, private, separate, outside, divide, half.*

The letter "dalet" means: *the way of the open door, move, hang, enter.*

The letter "shin" means: *divine providence, full cycle, consume, destroy, fire, sharp, press, eat, two.*

What do we have here? We see a process of division with two distinct halves, being separated from one another. We see a full cycle involving the consuming and destruction of the old, and a door which takes us to the new – the beginning of transcendent life. This is a gorgeous picture of the very purpose of creation here, and the reason we were sent to this place. The old sin nature is to be consumed and destroyed and put in the past. Then we are to advance through the open door to the new beginning of transcendent life. As it relates to Father's calendar, this picture is driven home as we see the progression through a door from the end of a cycle to the beginning of a new cycle. This revolving door will repeat at the conclusion of each cycle to bring renewal.

The Hebrew word chodesh stems from the root word Strong's H2318 (chadash) - *to be new, renew, repair; to renew, make anew*. This too shows the process of the cycle, with the renewal of the process on a regular basis. Another related Hebrew word is Strong's H2319 (chadash) - *new, new thing, fresh*. It has the same transliterated spelling as H2318. All three words are tightly related.

Please do not be confused by the way our Bibles translate the Hebrew word chodesh as "new moon" or "month". (Our book *The Biblical Calendar Then and Now* explains why that is enormously problematic.) The etymology for chodesh simply indicates the transition in a cycle from old to renewed, with emphasis on the renewal. Due to this emphasis on the new, the day that is typically considered to be the day of chodesh is the first day of the new beginning. According to its raw definition, the word chodesh can apply to any cycle in time that closes and begins anew, but there seem to be three primary types of chodesh noted in the scrolls. Going from minor to major, these three are the times of transition for: the 30-day monthly cycles, the 91-day seasonal cycles, and the 12-month yearly cycles.

On our rendition of the Zadokite calendar, we therefore include monthly chodeshim (plural for chodesh), each being on the first day of the new month. This makes a total of 12 monthly chodeshim. The chodeshim for the first, fourth, seventh, and tenth months will also be seasonal chodeshim, as the new season will begin on the first day of those months. Likewise the yearly chodesh will be on the first day of the first month, still keeping the total number at 12.

The seasonal chodeshim are called "days of remembrance" in the Dead Sea Scrolls. It is during these seasonal transitions that tekufah enters the picture. The transition of each season includes an extra day as it moves from old to new. Each season has three equal months of 30 days each, followed by an extra day called tekufah. Instead of a two-day chodesh transition, there is a three-day transition when the seasons change. The day that follows the tekufah each season is the first day of the new month and the new season – the chodesh. Some folks celebrate the entire three day cyclical transition each season, seeing out the old, observing tekufah, then bringing in the new with chodesh. Others just observe the tekufah and the day of chodesh to start the new season. Still others celebrate only the chodesh day. There are implications of extended celebrations in the scrolls, as well as in 1 Samuel 20. The scroll information we currently have though lists only one actual mandate to abstain from work that is not found in our Bible. The Temple Scroll indicates that we should abstain from work on the first day of the first month of the new year. This is always in the spring, and is the TRUE Rosh HaShanah (head of the year) per Exodus 12. It is the most major of the "chodesh" days, encompassing a new month, a new season, and a new year – all at the same time. It is a most sacred aspect of the picture of transitioning into the new transcendent life.

The number seven is crucial to this calendar. The counting of seven day weeks must be continued without interruption. While the monthly flows are important as well, this is a Sabbath calendar, and it is the flow of sevens that must be maintained. There are 52 complete weeks in the typical year, and 13 complete weeks in each season. A tekufah day must be added at the end of each season in order to keep the number of days in each season and in the year divisible by seven. When the occasional intercalation is required to bring the year back into sync with actual solar reality, a full week of tekufah days is added to maintain the counts of seven and make that particular year 53 weeks long. While the term "day out of time" seems strange to our way of thinking, many cultural calendars have used this concept for a very long time. The four seasonal tekufah days and the occasional tekufah intercalary week of days fall into that category. According to the Dead Sea Scrolls, these tekufah days are not counted in the monthly or yearly rendering, as the tekufah days at season's end and the occasional week of days periodically added to the year stand alone. Not being counted as a part of the month or year, they are considered to be "out of time". Tekufah days are often designated as the 31st days of the month simply to prevent the addition of an extra calendar page to accommodate a single day, so even though there is an extra day tacked onto the end of every third month for the sake of convenience, those months are still considered to be 30 days long. In a similar manner, we personally designed our rendition of the Zadakite calendar to disregard the tekufah days at the end of each season by consistently reflecting the 30th day of each month as chodesh eve, even when it is followed by an intervening tekufah day before the chodesh of the next month.

Maybe now we can take a look at the past, the future AND the present. We have seen how the transition of time is designed to leave behind and consume the past as it goes through the door to renew itself in the new cycle. We have also seen how that relates to us, as we are to leave the desire for sin behind and go through the door to transcendent life. In this process, tekufah represents the door. Even as the four seasons represent the stages of our lives, at each juncture of our life here, we are again confronted with a door of decision. Will we leave behind the old and allow it to be consumed as we walk into the future as a new being in our Savior, or will we continue to hold onto that which should be destroyed in our lives? While we can make spiritual adjustments now, we are still trapped in a physical body. Tekufah represents the door, and the door is the present in the past, present, and future scenario. It is in the present moment that decisions are made. In the blink of an eye, what was present becomes past. We cannot get to the future without going through the door of the present. Neither can we live in the past or in the future while we are yet here in these mortal bodies; but only in the present, where we are always confronted with decisions, and iniquity continues to be severed and dealt with. From this perspective, our physical bodies trap us in the present – the state of tekufah, the door of our transition - the purpose of our exile. The future when all things become new is yet on the other side of the door, and we will realize it all in good time – in our Father's time – as is so beautifully laid out for us in this calendar!

We have two days in the transitional period between most months (representing past and future), but there are three transitional days when the seasons change (bringing into focus our present state as well). Just as the tekufah days are not counted, neither is our present state counted in Heavenly reckoning. Decisions we make continually while in the present tell whether we are desiring to live in the past with our sinful nature, or relegate it to the consuming fire and aspire to step into the future washed clean. The result of those decisions will be what is considered before the throne. Did we choose to walk in the Spirit where there is no condemnation, or to quench the Spirit and walk in the carnality of our own fleshly will? (Romans 8:1) Maybe Yah's calendar was not intended to be merely a way to mark off time; but a picture of how to use the time we are given.

The fact that this calendar shows that two OR three days are needed to accomplish the transition should remind us of the two or three witnesses needed to determine a matter that we find in both the Old Testament and the New:

Deuteronomy 19:15

(15) One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established.

Matthew 18:16

(16) But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.

Father's calendar was designed to show us that by His own rendering, HE HAS determined the matter with both two and three precisely defined transitional period witnesses – no human reckoning is needed! His calendar is complete and amazingly easy to employ once the groundwork is understood. Even His use of the rather mysterious chodesh and tekufah have a pronounced place in the fabric of time that He presents for us in this fabulous calendar.

Hopefully this will provide some glue for our rice statue. We pray you will be able to use this information to get a better grip on chodesh and tekufah applications. Please do bear in mind though, that new revelations from the scrolls continue to surface, and we may be proven wrong in some specifics of these applications. If so, we will lick our wounds and make corrections as needed. We are not seeking to be "right" but to understand more fully the Father's calendar Truth as it continues to be revealed. Any corrections to this information or other aspects of our calendar work will be noted on our website, returningtothegarden.com. We hope you will check it routinely for new information. ~~~ Bill and Karen Bishop

Psalms 90:12

(12) So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.