

Conundrum

by Bill and Karen Bishop

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One of the elements of the 364-day calendar as outlined in the Dead Sea Scrolls is the fact that High Holy Days don't conflict with the weekly Sabbaths because they fall on the same days of the week every year. At first this simply seemed like a wonderful convenience, but not a meaningful factor of consideration to validate this calendar. Then we started realizing the weighty significance of this – not only to us, but to Yah. As time goes on, it becomes more and more apparent how this calendar fits hand in hand with the words of our Bible, and points to the creative plan of Yah in all His majesty.

Fundamental to His creative patterning is the significance (or what we might even say is the sanctity) of seven. It began with His seven-day week of creation – not five, six, eight, or ten as in some cultures, but seven. This primary number (seven) would prove to be the cornerstone of His creative work; and the very calendar that many believe He put in place to mark the time in His creation utilizes this cornerstone mightily. Since the seventh day of His week of creation is called the Sabbath, what we have come to view as His calendar is called a Sabbath calendar. It is with good reason. The seven-day weeks, and the seven-year spans to mark Shemitah in Leviticus 25, as well as the seven weeks from the waving of the sheaf to Shavuot, and the seven weeks of years to count to the Jubilee year are all integral time-keeping segments for Yah.

His weekly Sabbaths are always on the seventh day (Exodus 20:11). These are special days, and all work is to be avoided on them (just as He rested from creation on the seventh day). It is commonly understood that the weekly Sabbath is a time of celebration. Special foods are fixed, and there is a festive air. This day is "set apart" to be enjoyed in this manner – a time to be joyous before the Father at the culmination the working portion of our week. It is a commemoration of the future joy of the Millennial Kingdom that we anticipate – yet another of Yah's sevens. This period of time is the seventh "millennial" day, each of these days being 1000 years. Every marking of Yah's sevens is associated with joyous celebration.

In addition to the weekly Sabbaths, Leviticus 23 points to the annual feast days. The High Holy Days in these periods are also called Sabbaths by Yah. Just as the weekly Sabbaths, these High Holy annual Sabbath Days are so called because we are not to work at these times either. They are also

typically associated with feasting, with a single exception. Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) is the total other end of the spectrum, being a day associated with fasting and intense and somber personal introspection. It is presented in Leviticus:

Leviticus 23:26-32

(26) And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

(27) Also on the tenth day of this seventh month there shall be a day of atonement: it shall be an holy convocation unto you; and **ye shall afflict your souls**, and offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD.

(28) And ye shall do no work in that same day: for it is a day of atonement, to make an atonement for you before the LORD your God.

(29) For **whatsoever soul it be that shall not be afflicted in that same day, he shall be cut off from among his people.**

(30) And whatsoever soul it be that doeth any work in that same day, the same soul will I destroy from among his people.

(31) Ye shall do no manner of work: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.

(32) It shall be unto you a sabbath of rest, and **ye shall afflict your souls**: in the ninth day of the month at even, from even unto even, shall ye celebrate your sabbath.

Many of the Hebrew calendars in use today (including the Hillel version) are based upon lunar observation OR the calculated conjunction of the moon with potential adjustments to these calculations to begin the months and years. In either case, the average year comes out to roughly 354 days. Because this is not divisible by seven, the new year begins on different weekdays from one year to the next. Subsequently, the weekdays for the dates of annual Sabbaths also vary from year to year. Ironically, far too often the date for Yom Kippur and/or other High Holy Days falls on the weekly Sabbath and the conundrum comes into play:

When Yom Kippur falls on the weekly Sabbath, is the Believer supposed to celebrate the weekly Sabbath with all sorts of special foods and other forms of joyful activity that was intended by our Creator for each of these weekly Sabbaths, or is the Believer supposed to afflict his soul by fasting and somber reflection? Usually Yom Kippur wins out, and the fasting and somber introspection ensues. But – is this cheating Father out of the joyous interaction with Him that was intended for all weekly Sabbaths, including this one? If we don't afflict our souls on Yom Kippur, Leviticus says that we are definitely in a problematic position with our Father. It's a no win scenario!

In 1948 (the same year Israel became a nation), Yah allowed His children to

gain access to scrolls that had been hidden away in Qumran. These Dead Sea Scrolls contained manuscripts of many ancient books, including at least fragments of all of the books in our Old Testament except Esther. Along with these books were other books which many believe were studied as Scripture by the early church. One such book was The Book of Jubilees. This book is actually revered as Scripture yet today by some Christians. The means of choosing which manuscripts were carried through to our present Bible is an interesting study, and many view The Book of Jubilees as being highly authoritative, even believing that it too should have been canonized. According to this book, the quirk that presents this conundrum should never occur. This book, along with numerous other Dead Sea Scrolls, proposes a calendar for the use of Yah's children which maintains an exact number of weeks in the year. There is never a remainder of days, but always exact and complete weeks in the year. This enables the annual Sabbaths to fall on the same weekdays each year, with no exceptions, and due to Father's majestic construction, none of them will ever fall on weekday seven, the day of the weekly Sabbath:

The Book of Jubilees 6:32 - The Researchers Library of Ancient Texts Volume 1 - by R.H. Charles, Oxford – p. 288 -

*And command thou the children of Israel that they observe the years **according to this reckoning**- three hundred and sixty-four days, and (these) will constitute a complete year, and they will not **disturb** its time from its days and from its feasts; for everything will fall out in them according to their testimony, and they will not leave out any day **nor disturb any feasts.***

Using this method, an annual Sabbath should never share a date with a weekly Sabbath, each being holy and set apart in its own rite for its own purpose.

Exodus 20:11

(11) For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and **hallowed** it.

The word "hallowed" in this verse is Strong's H6942 (qadash) – *to be **set apart**, to be **apart and separate**, **devoted**, consecrated as holy.*

While holiness is a key element here, the very core of this definition is to be set apart for a purpose. What would this purpose be?

We have mentioned Yah's millennial day of rest. It is presented in Hebrews:

Hebrews 4:4-11

(4) For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works.

(5) And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest.

(6) Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief:

(7) Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

(8) For **if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day.**

(9) **There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.**

(10) For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.

We believe the "rest" Yah instituted was for a time of bonding with Him – a time for spiritual growth. Y'shua said in Mark 2:27 that the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. Yah takes that time each week to spend with us, and we are to cease from our work to spend that quality time with Him.

Our Creator is known for His patterning. The **seventh** week day is decreed as Yah's **weekly day of rest** – an intensely special time **for us and for Him**. It is set apart to foreshadow the **seventh** millennial day which is Yah's **millennial day of rest**. Each millennial day is 1000 years in length, so His seventh Millennial day of rest follows 6000 years of time in His long-range creative plan. Whereas each of the annual Sabbath days foreshadow the means by which Y'shua has or will interact with Yah's children, the seventh day weekly Sabbath foreshadows the continued manner in which Yah interacts with His children through creation and time, from the short term through the long term. It is for this specific purpose that the weekly Sabbath rest is designated as hallowed (set apart) in Exodus. It is set apart from interaction with any other High Holy Day to be observed in its own rite.

According to The Book of Jubilees, when any High Holy Day falls on a weekly Sabbath in other calendar renderings, it is considered to be problematic, but when that High Holy Day is Yom Kippur (which they call the day of testimony), it is a highly vexing occurrence.

The Book of Jubilees 6:36-37 - The Researchers Library of Ancient Texts Volume 1 -  
by R.H. Charles, Oxford – p. 289 -

*For there will be those who will assuredly make observations of the moon - how (it) disturbs the seasons and comes in from year to year ten days too*

*soon. For this reason the years will come upon them when they will disturb (the order), and **make an abominable (day) the day of testimony, and an unclean day a feast day**, and they will confound all the days, the holy with the unclean, and the unclean day with the holy; for they will go wrong as to the months and sabbaths, and feasts and jubilees.*

We would note that they consider the “common” days to be **unclean** when Yah’s High Holy Days fall on them in the other calendar renderings. Because Yah’s High Holy Days are HOLY to Him, the perversion of designating their observance with the common days of the calendar is considered to be abominable. This concept of unclean days – even being profane in nature is carried through in our Biblical canon:

Ezekiel 22:26

(26) Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things: they have put **no difference between the holy and profane**, neither have they shewed difference between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my **sabbaths**, and **I am profaned among them**.

Historical records indicate that the priests (even prior to Y’shua’s day) “hid their eyes” from the true dating of Yah’s Sabbaths in order to compromise with the governmental powers that wielded control in that time period. A part of that compromise was to abandon the calendar they had used, and adopt the soli-lunar version that has evolved into the various offshoots which are commonly observed today.

Again, it is ironic that the date of the first or the eighth day of Succoth (the most joyous days of feasting of the year) as designated on many calendars can actually occur on Yom Kippur (the most solemn day of the year) on the calendar proposed in the Dead Sea Scrolls. If the calendar of the scrolls is right, it is alarming to realize that while some of Yah’s children are joyously feasting in festive celebration of Sukkoth, they may be doing so on what is actually the day when they are to be afflicting their souls.

We feel it important to stress that these concerns aren’t merely being aired from us as speculation, they are assertions derived from what many believe were actually Scripture in the days of the early church, and are still viewed as Scripture by some Christians today.

While we are aware that our Father does grant considerable latitude while folks are coming to terms with the changes that need to be made, we also

realize that most all True Believers want very much to please our Heavenly Father. It seems to us that observation of the days He deems to be Holy at their proper times might be a big part of that picture. This writing is most certainly NOT designed to denigrate anyone who is using another calendar; but rather it is presented as a challenge to prioritize a study of this matter in order to be as holy and pleasing as possible to the One we desire to serve. If after studying the matter thoroughly, we don't see eye to eye, then we will agree to disagree, and do so with considerable love in our hearts for our brethren. We do, though, feel that it is time to bring this potentially weighty matter to the attention of our brothers and sisters in Christ. With the recovery of these Dead Sea Scrolls, our Father might be trying to enlighten us in these end days so He can commune with us on the precise days He has decreed.

In our book The Biblical Calendar Then and Now, we have carefully coordinated these invaluable scrolls with the Biblical text to show how they actually do not oppose one another. They mesh to open up a vastly rich understanding of His Sabbath calendar and His creative hand.

Exodus 31:13

(13) Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a **sign** between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the LORD that doth sanctify you.

The word for "**sign**" in this verse is Strong's H226 (owth) – promise, proof – [closely associated with] oath, commitment, **testimony**.

We would note the word "**testimony**" in the passage below:

The Book of Jubilees 6:32 - The Researchers Library of Ancient Texts Volume 1 - by R.H. Charles, Oxford – p. 288 -

... and they will not **disturb** its time from **its days** and from **its feasts**; for everything will fall out in them according to their **testimony**, and they will not leave out any day **nor disturb any feasts**.

Referring to the proper use of the proposed Dead Sea Scroll calendar, this passage indicates that by using it properly, everything on this calendar will simply "fall out" (or flow seamlessly through the year) without disturbing the sanctity of any feast due to having to share a date with another, including the weekly Sabbaths (referred to as "its days") in this passage.

Contrary to common conjecture, we believe that when our canonical Scripture is rightly divided using Hebraic lexical and etymological aids, the Bible actually supports the calendar we are seeing, rather than the ones usually observed today. One reader of our book commented that while our reasoning was sound, it was "the systematic laying out of Yah's Word" that spoke to him. Indeed, the Bible comes alive when viewed through the lens of the Dead Sea Scrolls. We too believe it documents the understanding you will need for a springboard in this study. It is available on our site or through Amazon.

This article is NOT intended to be an infomercial for the book. It is merely a challenge to study out the matter. It was composed out of a fervent desire to bring a more complete state of holiness to the body of Messiah. Obviously, we believe our book is an advisable step in that process, but if another route of study is preferable, that is fine. Before rejecting the calendar proposed in the Dead Sea Scrolls, however, consultation with our book is highly recommended to present a fuller view and valid contrast to other writings.

Regardless of how you choose to study it out, we pray you will be blessed as you do so.