

NEW YEAR (Equinoxes, Weekday 4, Intercalation)

by Bill and Karen Bishop

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The calendar of the scrolls has a pronounced and predominant feature. It is the sacred flow of sevens, which is evidenced repeatedly in The Book of Jubilees. The consistent flow of sevens in this calendar is because the week (based on the week of creation) is a sacred block of time. We could think of it as a brick in our space-time continuum which is NEVER to be divided on Yah's sacred calendar. Any given year of this calendar must **always** contain complete weeks, with no remaining days left over when moving from one year to the next.

Another essential feature of this calendar is that the year must ALWAYS begin on a weekday 4. The Book of Jubilees is quite clear about this. Likewise, the Dead Sea Scrolls (henceforth DSS) show this in Scroll 4Q400:

The Deads Sea Scrolls, A New Translation by Michael Wise, Martin Abegg, Jr., & Edward Cook – 4Q400 – Fragment 1, Column 1 - p 366:

[A text belonging to the Instructor. The song accompanying the sacrifice on the] **first [Sabbath,]** sung on **the fourth of the first month.**

The calendar of the scrolls is the same each year, so the dates for events are always consistent. The 4<sup>th</sup> day of the 1<sup>st</sup> month will ALWAYS be on a weekday 7 (the weekly Sabbath). Counting back three days then makes it obvious that the first day will always be on a weekday 4 (Wednesday).

Some wonder why weekday four is so special. Very simply, time could not be tracked at all until the heavenly markers were put in place. We view the calendar of the scrolls as being THE creation calendar, as it syncs with the week of creation so beautifully. The Bible says this was on the 4<sup>th</sup> day (Genesis 1:14-19), so observable time tracking became possible for the first time on that day. We can be relatively certain that Yah started His time in the earthly realm with a stopwatch of sorts when he put the heavenly bodies in place and started each of them into their own precise and specific motion. Thus, time that would relate to human reckoning would have begun on weekday 4 of creation. Likewise our calendars must follow this precedent by being sure our calendar year ALWAYS begins on a weekday 4, which commemorates the anniversary of Yah's "celestial stopwatch" beginning on weekday 4 during the week of creation.

It is likewise duly noted by DSS scholars in academia, that starting each year on

a weekday 4 (Wednesday) is a fixture on the 364-day calendar.

[https://repozytorium.kul.pl/bitstream/20.500.12153/2573/6/Klukowski\\_Michal\\_The\\_Tradition\\_of\\_the\\_364-day\\_Calendar\\_versus\\_the\\_Calendar\\_Polemic\\_in\\_Second\\_Temple\\_Judaism.pdf](https://repozytorium.kul.pl/bitstream/20.500.12153/2573/6/Klukowski_Michal_The_Tradition_of_the_364-day_Calendar_versus_the_Calendar_Polemic_in_Second_Temple_Judaism.pdf) - The Tradition of the 364-Day Calendar versus the Calendar Polemic in Second Temple Judaism

*After the publication of all the available manuscripts from Qumran it became evident that the 364-day year was the basis for almost all the calendrical texts ... **and the 364-day year begins on a Wednesday since on the fourth day God created the celestial bodies (Gen 1:14-19), which allow us to create a system of reckoning time.***

<https://brill.com/display/book/9789004332874/BP000006.xml> - The Perpetual Calendar of the Dead Sea Scrolls by Roger T. Beckwith – p 94

*The texts from Qumran have since confirmed that, surprising as it may seem, **the Essene year did indeed begin on Wednesday:***

Directly from the scrolls, we find:

The Dead Sea Scrolls, A New Translation by Michael Wise, Martin Abegg, Jr., & Edward Cook – 4Q400 – Fragment 1, Column 1 - p 366:

*[A text belonging to the Instructor. The song accompanying the sacrifice on the] **first [Sabbath,] sung on the fourth of the first month.***

The dates of the scroll calendar fall on the same weekdays each year. So - if the first Sabbath of the new year is on day four of month one, then day one of month one (the first day of the new year) must always be on Wednesday.

Beginning each year on a weekday 4 is actually the very hallmark that keeps this calendar in sync with Yah's perfect patterning. It insures that no annual Holy Day will ever fall on a weekly Sabbath. The weekly Sabbaths are to be deemed as holy in their own right, and an annual Holy Day should never be observed on a weekly Sabbath, which would detract from its own glory. Yet this happens routinely when using luni-solar calendars. Likewise, when the annual and weekly Sabbaths overlie one another, it serves to shorten the number of sanctioned appointed times Yah wants to meet with us. Even Leviticus views the weekly Sabbath as being one of the feasts.

Leviticus 23:2-3

(2) Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, Concerning the feasts

of the LORD, 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 the LORD in all your dwellings.

When Yom Kippur falls on the weekly Sabbath, it is particularly troubling. It falls on the weekly Sabbath periodically with the luni-solar model, even as it did again this year (2024) on the Hillel calendar. Yom Kippur is a solemn day of introspection and fasting. How can one be somber and introspective, much less afflict one's soul, on the weekly Sabbath which is supposed to be celebratory? You must cheat either one or the other. They are in no way compatible! Contradictions abound when we turn away from the simplicity of the calendar of the scrolls! On this divinely orchestrated calendar the Holy Days will always occur the same days of the week each year – year after year throughout time to allow easy planning for the observance of Yah's feasts with Him.

A third criterion for the masterful structure of beginning a year on Yah's calendar is to understand the significance of the equinox. To see why this is important, let's look at the actual encyclopedic definition of an equinox. It is:

Britanica - <https://www.britannica.com/science/vernal-equinox>

*... two moments in the year when **the Sun is exactly above the Equator and day and night are of equal length**; also, either of the two points in the sky where the ecliptic (the Sun's annual pathway) and the celestial equator intersect. In the Northern Hemisphere the **vernal** equinox falls about March 20 or 21, as the Sun crosses the celestial equator going north.*

The portions of daylight from the sun and darkness being equal at the equinox is a critical component. It is a feature of the heavenly time clock that alerts nature to the seasonal timing of agricultural cycles. We must realize that the stars and moon have little or no bearing on this whatsoever.

That is why in our book The Biblical Calendar Then and Now, we clarified that proper rendering of Genesis 1:14-16 did not indicate that the moon and stars were set in place to have any actual bearing on the calendar. They have purposes, but this isn't one of them. The sun alone bears the responsibility for this timing to perfectly align the festivals to their seasons on the liturgical calendar and assure the ideal crop maturity for the best possible presentation at the festivals – neither under-ripe or over-ripe. The way the sun fulfills this role is to provide a signal that the old year has ended so the new year can begin. This signal is the equinox. We find it metaphorically patterned in Psalm 19. This passage is somewhat cryptic, and we had often tried to understand its meaning.

Once this calendar emerged though, we were able to see the picture vividly and realize that it provides the Scriptural protocol for the yearly transition.

Psalms 19:1-7

(1) To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David. The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.

(2) Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.

(3) There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.

(4) **Their line is gone out through all the earth**, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set **a tabernacle for the sun**,

(5) Which is **as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber**, and rejoiceth **as a strong man to run a race**.

(6) His **going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it**: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.

Using a metaphor for voice, and speech, the Psalmist indicates that the "line" of verse 4 transcends the language barrier. This "line" of verse 4 indicates the vernal equinox which can be witnessed world-wide without need of translation. It is the signal (the gun being fired) to show that the race of the previous year has ended and the race of verse 5 for the new year **can** begin. The sun is symbolic of the bridegroom which will run the race. This race is the sun moving through the celestial realm throughout the year that is about to begin. The years are not to overlap, so – we cannot start the new year until the equinox occurs to verify that the old year is ended.

The Book of Jubilees recognizes the role of the sun in this crop maturity as well. It specifies:

Jubilees – The Hermeneia Translation by James C. VanderKam – p 13

The Book of Jubilees 2:9-10

9) The Lord appointed **the sun as a great sign above the earth for days, Sabbaths, months, years, Sabbaths of years, jubilees, and all cycles of the years**.

10) It separates between light and darkness and (serves) for well-being so that everything that sprouts and grows on the earth may prosper. ...

We can see here in verse 9 of this Jubilees passage that it is the sun that determines all the timing relative to the liturgical calendar, and the reason is stated in verse 10 as relating to agricultural pursuits. By providing the equinox, it allows everything to proceed in perfect timing.

We believe that the celestial realm was in sync to a 364-day year from the beginning of time. However, somewhere between the days of creation and now,

the sun, moon, and stars fell out of sync. Our solar year is now 365.24667 days, yet the calendar of the scrolls is ideally 364 days. We say ideally, because the ordained flow of this calendar is due to its schematic structuring. There is now a differential of 1.24667 days per between the typical year of this calendar and the actual solar year. This means that some periodic calibration will be needed in order to realign the scroll calendar to the actual solar year and keep its seasons in their proper places. This is termed intercalation.

Because the length of the solar year is not exact days, all calendars (including the Gregorian calendar used in America) must be intercalated. The Gregorian calendar year is typically 365 days, but the actual solar year is almost  $\frac{1}{4}$  day longer, which means that we must include an extra day (February 29) once every 4 years for this calendar to align to the reality of the solar year. Calendars based on lunar months must adjust by a whole month every 2 or 3 years.

Interestingly, no instructions were given in the scrolls for such an intercalation for the calendar they present. We believe this is because no instructions are needed. Simply following the protocol of the calendar itself provides for its intercalation every six years or so. In a sense, this pure and simplistic calendar is basically **self-correcting**, with no need for external intercalation methods. When you follow the simple rule of going to the first weekday 4 after the vernal equinox to start the new year, you are ALWAYS in close alignment to the actual solar year. If the 52<sup>nd</sup> week of this calendar year ends before the equinox, we simply wait a day or so for the equinox to arrive, and begin the new year on the weekday 4 (Wednesday) after the equinox arrives. This calibrates the schematic nature of the calendar to the reality of the solar year, making no further adjustment necessary.

By waiting for a complete week when necessary, we also insure that the calendar will always be composed of complete weeks, maintaining the flow of sacred sevens – which in turn maintains Yah's amazing schematic flow to keep the Holy Days in their proper positions. The calendar will always end on a weekday 3 (Tuesday), and begin on a weekday 4 (Wednesday), with the start of the new year being less than a week from the equinox.

We may sound overly adamant, or it may seem that we are too quick to reject the alterations suggested by others. That is not because we want to be inflexible, but because we must profess what we have been shown, and it is important to us to abide by our commitment to the body of Messiah.

It is our commitment to strive to present the pure and unadulterated calendar of the scrolls – just as it is found there. That is because we have found it to be the historically documented authentic calendar of antiquity used by Yah's people. We have noted that regardless of how pleasing any other calendar version may seem,

and how much they might seem to be right in the eyes of man, there is no other calendar which has the historically documented verification that this calendar has. We find evidence that it was used by Noah, used during the wilderness days of the exodus from Egypt, used in the days of David and Solomon, used in the 7<sup>th</sup> century BCE, and we know it was used by the ordained high priesthood of Zadok and his descendants until Qumran came under siege. Likewise, there is evidence that Y'shua and his disciples, as well as Paul used this calendar in the early days of Christendom - in spite of coercion by rabbinic Judaism to keep the adulterated oral law version brought forward from Babylon by Hillel. We understand that it may not be to everyone's liking, and it may not be the calendar some people would choose in this "natural human state". However, this calendar of the scrolls just is what it is, being clearly presented in the Dead Sea Scroll manuscripts. Unfortunately, there have been many attempts to tweak a little here, and adjust a little there to make "so called improvements" to this calendar - ways that seem right to man. We realize that such attempts by man to improve that which has been shown to be divinely orchestrated by Yah can put one on very dangerous ground (Prov 14:12). Therefore, we do not condone any deviation whatsoever from the actual calendar (and the function of it) as presented in the scrolls. We adamantly believe that the calendar of the scrolls MUST remain in its pure form, and that is what we endeavor to present to the body of Messiah today.

So – await the equinox and start the year on the next weekday 4 (Wednesday) each and every year. It is really that simple. This simplicity makes a great deal of sense, since our Yah is not an Elohim of confusion (1 Corinthians 14:33). This form of intercalation allows all Yah's people to be able to create their own calendar without any complex configurations or calculations. Checking a sundial once a year and counting days is really all we need to do to keep this calendar. The schematic structure of this creation-based Sabbath calendar which Yah provided for his people is profound beyond measure, yet it is so simple a child could follow it, which may have been His intent all along!