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## God's Original Calendar

*When a doctrine is presented that does not meet our minds, we should go to the word of God, seek the Lord in prayer, and give no place for the enemy to come in with suspicion and prejudice. We should never permit the spirit to be manifested that arraigned the priests and rulers against the Redeemer of the world. They complained that He disturbed the people, and they wished He would let them alone; for He caused perplexity and dissension. The Lord sends light to us to prove what manner of spirit we are of. We are not to deceive ourselves. GW 301*

In the beginning, God created everything from nothing. Matter existed at the sound of His voice. Life entered man with the breath of God flowing into his lungs. Everything from nothing. All provisions for the happiness of man were provided by a loving God. And then, God gave man the Sabbath: a blessed and holy time in which to give back love and worship to his Creator. All people need to worship; it is how man's brain is made.

But, lest after generations become confused and lose track of the days, God provided at Creation a built-in, ever present, always accurate clock/calendar to measure time and clearly designate the work days from the worship days. In order to worship God on the day He appointed, people must be able to understand how God's clock/calendar works to know which day is number one, the starting point for counting the six days to work, with worship on the seventh.

The calendar God established at Creation was kept by the Jews until well into the 4<sup>th</sup> century A.D. It was a luni-solar calendar with months lasting either 29 or 30 days. Each new month started with the first appearance of the crescent moon. The years did not have a continuous cycle of weeks but instead the weekly cycle started over with each new moon. New Moon day was a worship day followed by six working days, with the seventh-day Sabbath on the eighth of the month. Three more successive weeks completed the month.

Most people find this concept so different it leaves their brain reeling. At the very least, it is tempting to denounce it as wrong simply because it is so foreign to everything Seventh-day Adventists have ever heard, believed, or preached. However, there is scriptural, historical, astronomical and prophetic proof that this description of the original calendar is true. Later chapters in this book will cover the astronomical and prophetic proof. This chapter will consider the scriptural and historical proof of the original calendar.

First, a definition in terms. There are only three kinds of calendars in use: the solar, the lunar and the luni-solar.

**Solar calendars** are based upon how long it takes the earth to revolve around the sun. The Gregorian calendar is a solar calendar with each new year arbitrarily beginning in the middle of winter on January 1. The solar year is 365.2422 days long. The left over time (approximately  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a twenty-four hour period) accumulates over a four year period and is resolved by adding a leap day, currently February 29, every four years. Because the remaining time isn't precisely  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a twenty-four hour period, adding one day every four years actually adds too much time. The extra time is removed from the calendar by, on a rare occasion, having eight years between leap years, rather than just four.

Centurial years that are equally divisible by 400 are leap years; centurial years that are not equally divisible by 400 are not leap years. This is why A.D. 2000 *was* a leap year, but 1900, 1800 and 1700 were not, while 1600 was a leap year.

**Lunar calendars** are based strictly on the cycles of the moon. A lunar calendar is only 354 days long, or 11 days shorter than a solar year. As a result, the dates of the lunar calendar float through the solar year. An example of a lunar calendar is Islam's religious calendar. This is why Ramadan is at differing times of the year on a Gregorian calendar. Sometimes Ramadan is in spring; other times, it comes in November or January, etc.

**Luni-solar calendars** are a combination of the two. The days are marked off by the rising of the sun while the months are tied to the cycles of the moon. A luni-solar calendar, because it uses both the sun and the moon, does not shift as much as a strictly lunar calendar, so spring feasts remain in the spring, while fall feasts remain in the fall.

Because God established His clock/calendar at Creation, it would be reasonable to expect some reference to that in the Creation account given in Genesis. It is found right where one would expect to find it – in the record of the fourth day of Creation. “And God 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, and for days, and for years” (Gen. 1:14).

The word here translated “seasons” is *mo'ed* (#4150).<sup>1</sup> It means:

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<sup>1</sup> “The following Lexical Aids provide more extended definitions of key words than James Strong's *A Concise Dictionary of the Words in the Hebrew Bible*, found at the back of this Bible. Hence, the reader has in the same volume with the text of the Bible, information that is normally found only in Hebrew

Congregation, festive gathering; appointment, signal. . . . *Mo'ed* often designates a determined time or place without any regard for the purpose. Since the Jewish festivals occurred at regular intervals, this word becomes closely identified with them . . . . *Mo'ed* is used in a broad sense *for all religious assemblies*. It was closely associated with the tabernacle itself . . . . God met Israel there at specific times for the purpose of revealing His will. *It is a common term for the worshipping assembly of God's people.*<sup>2</sup>

Genesis 1:14 reveals that God created the “lights in the firmament” to be the means by which His people may know when His *mo'ed's* occur. This is supported by Psalm 104:19: “He appointed the moon for seasons.” Again, the word here translated “seasons” is *mo'ed*.

All of God's worship days in the Bible are called *mo'eds*. Leviticus 23 lists all of them. The very first one listed is the seventh-day Sabbath:

And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, Concerning the feasts (*mo'ed*) of the LORD, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, even these are my feasts (*mo'ed*). Six days shall work be done: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of rest, a holy convocation; ye shall do no work therein: it is the Sabbath of the LORD in all your dwellings.<sup>3</sup>

From there, God goes on to list the rest of His *mo'eds* – Passover, Feast of Unleavened Bread, First Fruits, Pentecost, Feast of Trumpets, Day of Atonement, and Feast of Tabernacles. They are all called *mo'eds*. People who keep the feasts, figure them by the moon, but the very *first* “feast” listed is the weekly feast (*mo'ed*) of the seventh-day Sabbath.

Anciently, the Jews waited to observe the first crescent of the moon and then the day following that sighting was New Moon day.

The Hebrew month was lunar,<sup>4</sup> beginning with the evening on which the crescent moon appeared. The 1<sup>st</sup> day of the month was called the new moon (1 Samuel 20:24-27) . . . . At first, visual observation was used to determine the appearance of the crescent. If the crescent was seen on the evening following the 29<sup>th</sup> day of the

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lexicons, word studies, and commentaries,” *Hebrew-Greek Key Word Study Bible, King James Version*, 1594.

<sup>2</sup> *Hebrew-Greek Key Word Study Bible, King James Version*: “Lexical Aids to the Old Testament”, 1626.

<sup>3</sup> Lev. 23:1-3

<sup>4</sup> Technically, it was actually luni-solar as can be proven by the fact that Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread were *always* in the spring when the barley harvest was ripe. This allowed them to offer the wave sheaf of first fruits before the Lord on the second day of Feast of Unleavened Bread. Had the Hebrew calendar been strictly lunar without any reconciliation to the longer solar year, the spring feasts would have drifted through the solar year and not remained in the spring.

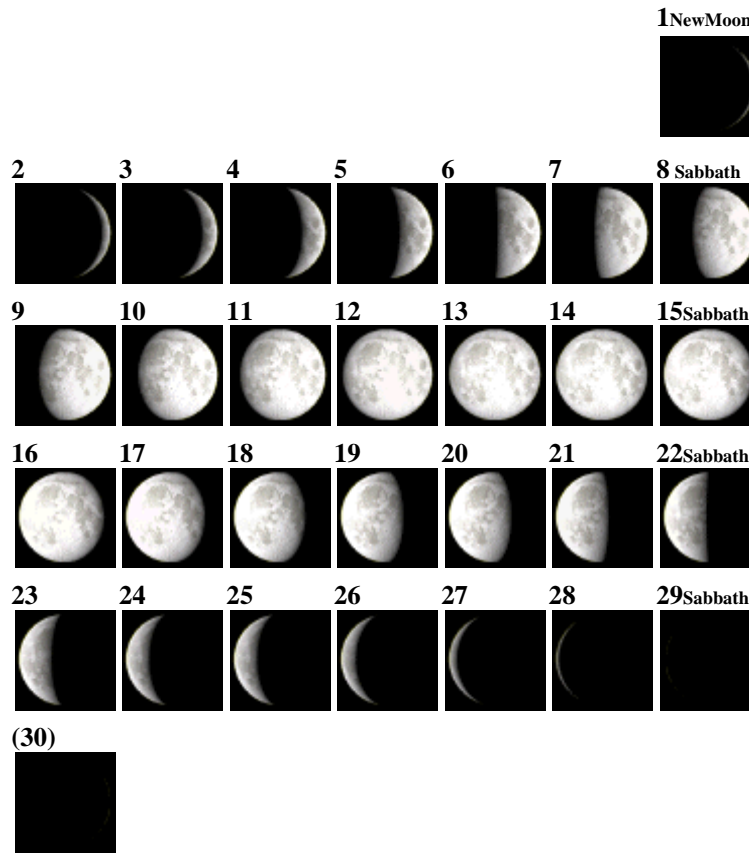
The Great Calendar Controversy

God's Original Calendar

month, a new month had begun; if not, another day was added so that that particular month had 30 days (a month never had more than 30 days).<sup>5</sup>

The biggest difference between God's calendar and the calendars in use today is how the weeks cycle through the year. The Gregorian calendar, like the Julian calendar before it, has a continuous cycle of unending weeks, one after the other. God's calendar does not. The weekly cycle started over with the appearance of each new moon.

This is how each month's calendar looked for the night preceding the day:



Again, the first visible crescent not only began each new month, it also restarted the weekly cycle. As a result, the seventh-day Sabbath always fell on the 8<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>, and 29<sup>th</sup> of the month.

To those who have never known anything different than a continuous, unending cycle of unbroken weeks, the idea of starting the weekly cycle over again each month strains credulity. However, be assured that the work week was never longer than the prescribed six days. Once a month they would have what today would be called “a long weekend”, and in a 29-day month

<sup>5</sup> *SDA Bible Dictionary*, revised edition, Review & Herald Publishing Association, 1979, Commentary Series, Vol. 8, 757-758.

the seventh-day Sabbath was immediately followed by a New Moon sabbath, but the days for work never exceeded 6 days.

Since the world has been on an unending weekly cycle for over 1,000 years, people today are unacquainted with a weekly cycle that is not continuous. Seventh-day Adventists, therefore, have misunderstood the following quote:

Like the Sabbath, the week originated at creation, and it has been preserved and brought down to us through Bible history. God himself measured off the first week as a sample for successive weeks to the close of time. Like every other, it consisted of seven literal days. Six days were employed in the work of creation; upon the seventh, God rested, and he then blessed this day, and set it apart as a day of rest for man.<sup>6</sup>

It has been assumed that this referred to a continuous weekly cycle. But all this quote is saying is that the week as a unit of time is still the original length of seven days. Studying the units of time measurement in the Hebrew economy is very revealing. Notice in particular the definitions of the various words.

#### **Calendar Units (in the Hebrew economy)**

**The day**—In calendar terms, the day is the smallest and most consistent unit of time. In the ancient world, the term day was used in two senses. It described a 24-hour period, as well as daylight in contrast to the night (Gen. 1:5) . . . .

**The week**—The week was a seven-day unit begun at the time of creation (Gen 1:31-2:2). The word week means “seven” (Gen 29:27; Luke 18:12). In the Bible the days of the week were called the “first day,” “third day,” and so forth (Gen 1:8-31; Matt 28:1), although the seventh day was known as “sabbath” (Ex 16:23; Matt 12:1). The day before the Sabbath was called “the Preparation Day” (Mark 15:42) . . . .

**The month**—The month was a unit of time closely tied to the moon. The Hebrew word for “month” also meant “moon” (Deut 33:14, NIV, NASB). The reason for the connection between the month and the moon is that the beginning of a month was marked by a new moon. The moon was carefully observed by the people of Bible times. When it appeared as a thin crescent, it marked the beginning of a new month.

The lunar month was about 29 days long. Therefore, the first crescent of the new moon would appear 29 or 30 days after the previous new moon. At times the crescent was not visible because of clouds. But this was allowed for with a rule

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<sup>6</sup> CE 190

that the new moon would never be reckoned as more than 30 days after the last new moon. This prevented too much variation in the calendar.<sup>7</sup>

What has been preserved since creation is a seven-day week. At different times through history, various cultures experimented with weeks of differing lengths. Some weeks were eight days long, while others were ten days long, depending upon how far apart were their market days. However, saying that the week as a unit of time has been preserved since Creation is different from assuming that the cycle of the weeks has been unbroken since Creation.

Seventh-day Adventists have long used Isaiah 66:23 to prove that the seventh-day Sabbath will be the day of worship throughout eternity. Unfortunately, it has not been realized that this very same text also reveals the calendar by which God's Sabbaths are calculated: "And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the LORD."

The first day of the lunar month was observed as a holy day. In addition to the daily sacrifice there were offered two young bullocks, a ram and seven lambs of the first year as a burnt offering, with the proper meat offerings and drink offerings, and a kid as a sin offering. Num 28:11-15. As on the Sabbath, trade and handicraft work were stopped, Amos 8:5, and the temple was opened for public worship. Isa 66:23; Ezek 46:3. The trumpets were blown at the offering of the special sacrifices for the day, as on the solemn festivals. Num 10:10; Ps 81:3. It was an occasion for state banquets. 1 Sam 20:5-24. In later, if not in earlier times, fasting was intermitted at the new moons. *The new moons are generally mentioned so as to show that they were regarded as a peculiar class of holy days, distinguished from the solemn feasts and the Sabbaths. . . . The religious observance of the day of the new moon may plainly be regarded as the consecration of a natural division of time.*<sup>8</sup>

An indication that the New Moon sabbaths were actually considered to be higher than the seventh-day Sabbath is the additional sacrifices offered that day.

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One of the clearest passages in the Bible that show that the Jews kept the luni-solar calendar is found in Exodus 16. Ironically, it is one of the chapters Seventh-day Adventists have used to "prove" that Saturday is the Biblical Sabbath. It is the account of the Children of Israel first receiving manna.

Exodus 16:1 & 2 states:

And they took their journey from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came unto the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the

<sup>7</sup> Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary, Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1986.

<sup>8</sup> Smith's Bible Dictionary, PC Study Bible formatted, emphasis supplied.

fifteenth day of the second month after their departing out of the land of Egypt. And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness.

It may not be immediately clear how this proves a luni-solar calendar. This is because of a change in punctuation when the Bible was translated into English. Technically speaking, the ancient Hebrew did not have punctuation marks as exist today. However, they did have little marks, or breaks, that let the reader know where the end of the thought was or, in effect, “where the period is supposed to go.” This is called an *atnach* and is found after the location given in verse one. A correct rendering of these verses, than, is this:

And they took their journey from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came unto the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai. (*Atnach*)

And on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departing out of the land of Egypt, the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness.

On the fifteenth day of the second month which, by luni-solar reckoning is always a seventh-day Sabbath, the Israelites griped to Moses and Aaron because their food had run out. The Lord's response is found in verse four:

Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no. And it shall come to pass, that on the sixth day they shall prepare that which they bring in; and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily.

So, here He is telling them, “I'm going to give you some manna; and the way I'll know whether or not you obey Me will be if you try and work to collect it on the seventh day. I'm spelling it out for you now to prepare twice as much on the sixth day. We'll see if you obey Me.”

The story continues in verse six. Moses and Aaron went and announced to the people that at “even” they would have meat and in the morning they would see the glory of the Lord.

And it came to pass, that at even the quails came up, and covered the camp; and in the morning the dew lay round about the host. And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoarfrost on the ground.<sup>9</sup>

The meat “came up” at “even” – the “even” after they complained, and the next morning they found manna.

Moses then explained that the manna was bread from God and they were to gather it for six days without leaving any left-overs for the next day. On the sixth day, he said, they were to gather

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<sup>9</sup> Exodus 16:13, 14



twice as much as there would be none on the seventh day (verses 15-22). When the sixth day arrived, Moses gave them some additional instructions:

This is that which the LORD hath said, Tomorrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the LORD; bake that which ye will bake today, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning.

They gathered the manna for six days. Six days starting when? Starting the 16<sup>th</sup> of the month, the day on which the manna first fell after their complaining on the 15<sup>th</sup>. The next day, Moses said, was “the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord.” It’s a simple math problem: 15 + 7 = 22. Again, when the first of the month is a New Moon Sabbath, the 8<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>, and 29<sup>th</sup> are also *always* seventh-day Sabbaths.

The next day, which would have been the 22<sup>nd</sup>, the Sabbath, “there went out some of the people on the seventh day for to gather, and they found none.”<sup>10</sup>

This was the test the Lord referred to earlier – would they obey Him and keep the Sabbath by resting on it or not?

And the LORD said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws? See, for that the LORD hath given you the sabbath, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days; abide ye every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day. So the people rested on the seventh day.<sup>11</sup>

The seventh day from when? From the first day they received the manna which would have been the 16<sup>th</sup> of the month, a first day.

Seventh-day Adventists have always said that the Sabbath was established by the fact that for 40 years God provided proof as to which day was the Sabbath by two miracles:

1. Giving manna on the six working days;
2. Withholding manna on the seventh day.

It has not been seen that this same passage provides an insight into the construction of the luni-solar months. Other passages in the Bible also support such configuring of the luni-solar month, but it is not within the scope of this work to go into all of them.

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Since the lunar year is 11 days shorter than the solar year, God provided a reliable way of anchoring the new year to the spring. He did this by connecting the first lunation of the year to the barley harvest. Most years had 12 lunations or months. These were referred to as “perfect”

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<sup>10</sup> Exodus 16:27

<sup>11</sup> Exodus 16:28-30



or common years. Embolismic years, or “leap” years, had 13 lunations as an entire additional month was required to reconcile the wandering lunar year to the solar. Embolismic years were considered “defective.”

The barley-harvest law, when applied to a continuous series of years, is the same in its performance as the law of the 19-year cycle . . . The extra moons are interpolated that bring the lunar year into harmony with the solar . . . The embolismic years follow the same cycle number indefinitely, and the cycle can be numbered from any year in the series.<sup>12</sup>

The order runs as follows:

Embolismic year (13 lunations) - \*                      common year (12 lunations) - c

\*CC\*CC\*CC\*c\*CC\*CC\*c

During the years of Israel’s obedience, God faithfully sent the early (fall) and latter (spring) rains. The priests planted a field of barley in the Kidron Valley. Throughout the Julian/Gregorian March and into the first week of April the latter rains fell, bringing the grain to full maturity. It was the grain from this field that was offered as the wave sheaf on the second day of Feast of Unleavened Bread (or Nisan 16 – the day Jesus was resurrected.) Anytime before the first week of April, the barley would not have been ready. Therefore, by tying the start of their year to the month of the barley harvest, God reconciled the lunar cycle to the solar cycle. This simple harvest rule kept the people from fixing the year to the spring equinox as did the pagans.

The idea that the Jews have never lost track of the true Sabbath is as erroneous as the idea that the weekly cycle in use today is the same one since Creation. The Jews themselves did away with their God-ordained calendar. After the destruction of Jerusalem and the dispersion of the Jewish people from their homeland, it became increasingly difficult, with the addition of their rabbinical regulations, to calculate a calendar tied to the barley harvest. Under intense persecution in the fourth century, the Jews themselves abandoned their barley-harvest regulation at which time a fixed, counterfeit 19-year cycle tied to the vernal equinox was established.

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An additional difference in the Biblical calculation of time is when the day begins. Ever since Mrs. Rachel Oakes brought the light of the seventh-day Sabbath to Adventists, it has been assumed that the Sabbath began on Friday. Initially, for a number of years, Adventists kept the Sabbath from 6 p.m. Friday evening until 6 p.m. Saturday night. Later, a text was found that led them to believe the Sabbath should start instead at “even”.

<sup>12</sup> Grace Amadon, “Ancient Jewish Calendation”, 8-9, Box 1, Folder 9, Grace Amadon Collection.

This was startling to Ellen White. “I inquired (of the angel) why it had been thus, that at this late day we must change the time of commencing the Sabbath.”<sup>13</sup>

The angel’s response is very intriguing. He replied, “Ye will understand, but not yet, not yet.”

The text, from which they extrapolated the idea that the Sabbath was to start at sunset, is found in Leviticus 23:32: “. . . from even unto even, shall ye celebrate your sabbath.” Rather than investigating further, Seventh-day Adventists have always just assumed that text applied to the seventh-day Sabbath.

However, earlier in the vision, the angel instructed Ellen White: “Take the word of God, read it, understand, and ye cannot err. Read carefully, and ye shall there find *what* even is, and *when* it is.”<sup>14</sup>

Had they been correct in believing that the Sabbath began at “even”, the angel would certainly have confirmed that. He did not. Instead, he redirected them to the Word of God, because a careful study of the Word will reveal that “*what* even is, and *when* it is”, is not what has been *assumed*.

In English, the word “even” is synonymous with “evening.” The same does not hold true in the Hebrew. To the Jews, “even” was anytime from noon until sunset, just as “morning” was anytime from dawn until noon. This is why Jesus, as the anti-typical lamb could die at the 3 o’clock in the afternoon and it still be the time of the *evening* sacrifice.

When Leviticus 23:32, the main “proof text” for sunset to sunset Sabbath keeping, is read in context, a startling contradiction comes to light. In this passage, it is speaking of the manner in which the Day of Atonement is to be kept. The Jews always fasted on the Day of Atonement and they based that practice on this text.

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 ye shall do no work in that same day: for it is a day of atonement . . . Ye shall do no manner of work: it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings. 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.<sup>15</sup>

Did you catch it? It is spelled out right there in the very last sentence. “In the ninth day of the month at even, from even unto even, shall ye celebrate your sabbath.” First of all, in this context, it is speaking strictly of the Day of Atonement. Furthermore, if they were to afflict their souls (fast) starting the evening of the ninth and going until the evening of the tenth, they would be fasting on the *ninth* and *not* the tenth! If the day begins at sunset (or even) as has always been

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<sup>13</sup> 1T 116

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, emphasis original.

<sup>15</sup> Lev. 23:27, 28, 31 & 32

assumed, then the “ninth day of the month at even” would be the sunset following the *day* of the *eighth*.

In other words, were the day to start at even, than the entire 24-hour day *begins* at the evening of the day before. God's people cannot afford to be inconsistent. If “even-to-even” is correct, as has been assumed, the text would be saying that they were to begin “afflicting” their souls on the evening that begins the day of the ninth. The fast would then end on the evening that *begins* the tenth with no fasting whatsoever on the actual Day of Atonement.

This text needs to be interpreted in the way intended: the day begins in the morning with the dawning of a new day. Therefore, the fast would begin on the ninth of the month at evening, the evening before the Day of Atonement, and end when evening came, the night of the tenth.

Another inconsistency brought to light in the even to even theory is found in the story of the Passover. Jesus, the great anti-typical Lamb, was slain at the time of the evening sacrifice – the time when the Passover lambs had been slain for centuries:

When the loud cry, “It is finished,” came from the lips of Christ, the priests were officiating in the temple. It was the hour of the evening sacrifice. The lamb representing Christ had been brought to be slain . . . With a rending noise the inner veil of the temple is torn from top to bottom by an unseen hand . . . All is terror and confusion. The priest is about to slay the victim; but the knife drops from his nerveless hand, and the lamb escapes. Type has met antitype in the death of God's son. The great sacrifice has been made.<sup>16</sup>

“The Passover was observed as it had been for centuries, while He to whom it pointed had been slain by wicked hands, and lay in Joseph's tomb.”<sup>17</sup>

Christ perfectly fit all of the types of the sanctuary service, even to dying at the precise time the Passover lamb was slain at the time of the evening sacrifice. Now there is a problem. Back in Egypt at the first Passover, the angel of death went forth at midnight. If Jesus died at 3 p.m. on the sixth day of the week, the preparation day, when the Passover lamb had been slain for centuries, then that means that the angel of death did not “pass over” the houses of the Israelites on “Passover” at all. If evening starts the new day, then the angel of death passed over the Israelites at midnight on the 15<sup>th</sup> of Nisan, not truly on Nisan 14, the Passover. Only if the day starts at dawn would this make sense. The angel of death did not pass over on the 15<sup>th</sup>, but rather on the 14<sup>th</sup>, the Pass-over. He went through Egypt at midnight, following the daylight hours of the 14<sup>th</sup>.

Dawn was when a new day started, not sunset. Other texts confirm this, too. Matthew 28:1 states: “In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulcher.” The Sabbath ended and the new day, the first day of the week, began at dawn.

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<sup>16</sup> DA 756 & 757

<sup>17</sup> DA 774

Seventh-day Adventists have always believed that the reason the Jews were so anxious to get Jesus and the thieves off the cross was because Sabbath was coming at evening. But this is not consistent with the Biblical account. If the Sabbath actually began at evening, rather than the morning, they were already breaking it by waiting until evening to begin the work of getting them down.

Matthew 27:57-60 tells us:

When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathaea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple: He went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered. And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own new tomb . . . .”

All of this takes time, especially when he first had to go to Pilate to receive permission, then wait while Pilate sent a messenger to Golgotha to see if Jesus was really dead. If the point was to “keep the Sabbath”, the Sabbath was already being broken by the fact that they did not even begin until “even was come.”

The account in Luke gives even more detail of the lengthy process involved and reveals clearly just when the Sabbath began:

And, behold there was a man named Joseph, a counselor; and he was a good man, and a just . . . This man went unto Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. And he took it down, and wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a sepulcher that was hewn in stone, wherein never man before was laid. And *that day* was the preparation, and *the sabbath drew on.*<sup>18</sup>

The account in Matthew reveals that this process did not even start until “even was come”, while Luke’s account clarifies that the hours in which this was accomplished fell on the preparation – still the sixth day of the week.

The phrase translated “drew on” in this text, is the Greek word, ἐπιφώσκω (*epiphosko*). The definition is startling: “to begin to grow light: – begin to dawn.”<sup>19</sup> It is a form of #2017, ἐπιφάω (*epiphauo*), which means “to illuminate . . . give light.”<sup>20</sup> Because they waited until evening to even begin the process of seeking permission to take the body, taking it down, cleaning and wrapping it, etc., it took them the night hours to do their work. They did not finish until the Sabbath began as it started to grow light.

Did Ellen White believe the Sabbath was to be kept from sunset Friday to sunset Saturday?

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<sup>18</sup> Luke 23:50, 52-54, emphasis supplied.

<sup>19</sup> James Strong, #2020, “Dictionary of the Greek Testament”, *The New Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1990, 32.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

Yes.

Does that in any way affect her standing as a prophet of the Lord?

Absolutely not. Ellen White must not be held to an unfair standard. Daniel has never been denounced as a false prophet simply because he did not understand everything. To caution against extreme reactions when new light is brought forth, Ellen White wrote:

We have many lessons to learn, and many, many to unlearn. God and Heaven alone are infallible. Those who think that they will never have to give up a cherished view, never have occasion to change an opinion, will be disappointed. As long as we hold to our own ideas and opinions with determined persistency, we cannot have the unity for which Christ prayed.<sup>21</sup>

Just what have we, as a church, actually unlearned since this statement was made? God's people must not stumble over something just because it is new. Rather, study with an open mind, determining to obey if it is true.

We must not think, "Well, we have all the truth, we understand the main pillars of our faith, and we may rest on this knowledge." The truth is an advancing truth, and we must walk in the increasing light.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> CET 203

<sup>22</sup> CW 33

## **Hebrew Calendation Principles**

Each day started at sunrise and continued until the next sunrise.

Evening was from noon until sunset.

Sunset until sunrise was night and was counted as part of the previous day.

There were four watches during the night: sunset to 9:00; 9:00 to midnight; midnight to 3:00; 3:00 to sunrise.

Months started with the day following the observation of the crescent moon in the western sky after sunset.

Months, lunations, had either 29 or 30 days.

If no crescent was seen, the month automatically started on the day following the 30<sup>th</sup>.

The 30<sup>th</sup> was a work day, not a worship time.

The beginning day of the month was a worship day and was called New Moon.

Six working days followed the New Moon day.

The Sabbath always fell on the 8<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>, and 29<sup>th</sup> of each month.

The year had either 12 months (common) or 13 months (embolismic).

The year had six 29 day months and six 30 day months – 11 days short of the solar year.

The year began with the one crescent moon after the spring equinox which provided a Paschal full moon between the Julian/Gregorian dates of April 8 and May 6.

Allowing the barley harvest to reconcile the lunar year to the solar year, the years fell naturally into a 19-year cycle of common and embolismic years.

There were never more than two common years in a row before an embolismic year.

There were never two embolismic years in a row.

## *The Great Calendar Controversy*

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### God's Original Calendar

A cycle of 19 years gave a nearly perfect alignment with the solar year.

In the nineteen year cycle, there were seven embolismic years.

The 19-year cycles can be calculated on a perpetual calendar both forward and backward for thousands of years.