

Why Celebrate Two Days Late?

Information in this document may be new to some members in churches derived from Herbert Armstrong's Worldwide Church of God, but it should not be. The data is readily available at sites such as the Astronomical Applications unit of the US Navy, aa.usno.navy.mil, and many of the Judaism sites on the Internet. See also good encyclopaedias. For new moon data, check <http://aa.usno.navy.mil/data/docs/MoonPhase.php>

Two days late!

In the Roman year 2011, followers of Herbert Armstrong will be observing a Lord's Supper on what most of them believe to be the fourteenth of the first month of what they have been told is "God's Sacred Calendar". In reality, they will be doing their devotions not on the fourteenth, but on the sixteenth of the lunar month.

Check it out for yourself. Look on the internet or an almanac for the time of the new moon. Generally this will be in Universal Time (London, UK). Add two hours to it to obtain Jerusalem time. You then have the Jerusalem time and date of the new moon. It is not hard! Don't believe the critics who try to confuse you with clever words. God has made it easy to determine when the new moon occurs, in accordance with dependable predicatable laws of motion. Unbiased sources such as the Royal Observatory and the US Navy publish this data.

Don't take anyone's word for it! Don't be an indolent foolish virgin, as warned in the parable of the Ten Virgins in Matthew 25:1-13. Check it out! If you then are happy to observe the annual Holy Days two days late in 2011 and 2012, then go ahead, but don't ignore this information and blissfully believe you are keeping the dates specified in Leviticus 23.

A new moon in 2011 is at 2:32 pm Sunday 3rd April Universal Time. Add two hours, and this new moon is at 4:32 pm Sunday 3rd April Jerusalem time. Sunset is around 5:55 pm, so the new moon occurs before sunset Sunday afternoon, making this Sunday, the first day of the lunar month (sunset Saturday to sunset Sunday). If it had occurred after sunset Sunday, then the New Moon, the first of the lunar month would be the following Monday (sunset Sunday to sunset Monday).

Hence the first of the lunar month based on a Jerusalem reference is Sunday 3rd April 2011. The fourteenth of this lunar month will therefore be Saturday 16th April (sunset Friday 15th to sunset Saturday 16th)

The followers of Herbert Armstrong will be observing as the fourteenth, Monday 18th April, two days late. Check it out for yourself now. You will have to give account to God at the judgement (Romans 14:12). Be able to justify what you do.

Later in the year, these trusting people will be holding the Feast of Trumpets on what they believe is the first of the month. A simple check with a calendar or astronomical information as provided by a reputable source such as the Royal Observatory or the US Navy will show they will be active on the third of the lunar month.

Soon after is the Day of Atonement, specified in Leviticus 23 as being on the tenth

day of the seventh month. The Armstrong followers will hold it in 2011 on the twelfth of the month. They will be two days late again for the start of the Feast of Tabernacles, commanded at the fifteenth of the same month. They will start theirs on the seventeenth of the month.

How can this be? How can people who are devout and dedicated to observing the festivals of Leviticus 23 fall down on the dates?

How the Jewish Calendar was declared Holy and Infallible

Around 1940, Herbert Armstrong had a dispute with a rival, a Brother Dodd, over which new moon was the first month of that religious year. Dodd advocated a date which was different from the Jewish calendar that Armstrong was promoting. The outcome was that Armstrong staunchly declared Dodd to be wrong and himself to be right, and that the calendar of Judaism is the reference to be followed for determining the date of Passover, and he and his followers have used its dates ever since. (See "How to Figure Passover")

Well, somewhat. ...

Well, almost not at all.

Even though he wrote, in "How to figure Passover", "After thorough study of the Bible, of the Hebrew calendar, of history, and every angle, -- after going into the matter with all the Eugene brethren, and other brethren who have made a special study of this question, we have unanimously agreed that the Hebrew calendar has been preserved correct by the Jews. ", he nevertheless rejected most parts of it. He did not observe most of the days observed by Judaism, such as Simhath Torah, Hanukkah, Fast of Tebet, New Year for Trees, Fast of Esther, Purim, Lag b'Omer, Fast of Tammuz, Fast of Ab.. He rejected the Jewish calendar date for Shabuoth / Feast of Weeks (Pentecost), and used his own method, which he later confessed he got wrong for decades and had to change many years later. He rejected the belief of the supposed custodians of "the oracles of God" that the Passover lamb was slain late on the afternoon of the fourteenth of the first month. These examples show that he did not really believe that "the Hebrew calendar has been preserved correct by the Jews." He actually believed that some, but not all, of "the Hebrew calendar has been preserved correct by the Jews." Quite possibly, he clung to it because his rival, Brother Dodd, had rejected it.

The Controversial Postponements

A controversial feature of the Judaism calendar is its use of "postponements" to facilitate the observance of customs of the elders at certain times. These postponements have been widely discussed, but not in the Armstrong literature, and are well known, but again not among the Armstrong followers.

It is because of these postponements that Judaism will be able to comply with the customs of the elders while appearing to be meeting on the correct days of Leviticus 23. This otherwise impossible phenomenon was made possible centuries ago by redefining the start of the month, so that the month does not necessarily begin on the astronomical new moon, but begins whenever the priests said it did. This Jewish religious law, set in stone by the Sanhedrin around 358 AD, cannot be changed except by an appropriate revocation or amendment by a lawful meeting of the

Sanhedrin. Since the Sanhedrin has not held any meetings since 358AD, and attempts to reinstitute it have all met with failure because no one has been able to meet the requirements of pure ancestry, ritual purifications, etc. changes are not feasible.

So, in 2011, Judaism will begin its month of Nisan on April 5, even though the new moon will be at 14:32 UTC (4:32 pm Jerusalem time) on April 3. Even though they do not keep the Judaism customs of the elders, and therefore have no reason to postpone, the followers of Armstrong will also start their year and month on the third of the lunar month. When the Jews are observing their Passover on the fourteenth of their calendar, actually the sixteenth of the lunar month, so will the followers of Herbert Armstrong.

Will your crown be taken from you because you trustingly followed a man, and did not bother to check the new moon for yourself?

The Future and Your Future

Six lunar months later, Judaism begins its month of Tishri on September 29, as will the followers of Armstrong, even though the new moon will be at 11:09 UTC (1:09 pm Jerusalem time) on September 27. All the other annual holy days of this month will also be held two days late, which suits Judaism, which can then celebrate the customs and also appear to be on the correct date, at least on their postponed calendar.

How are subsequent years? 2012 has postponements: one day for the Passover season, and two days late for the seventh month. 2013 is correct, with no postponements because the actual dates will not clash with the customs. However there will be a clash with customs in 2014, and there will be a two day postponement in the Passover season, and a one day postponement in the seventh month.

If you are a Christian, you are expected to "prove all things", to "work out your own salvation".

Remember the parable of the ten virgins in Matthew 25. Half of them had not done their work, expecting someone else to have done things for them, and that others had done for them what they should have done for themselves.

Why do people keep postponements although they do not keep the customs of the Judaism elders? Weird, but some do. You may be asked this question.

Rom 14:12 So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

What will be your reply?

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