

Week 2 - Time

Last week when I talked about time I spoke mainly about endings and beginnings. Today I'm going to talk about another ending and beginning. I'm going to talk about the ending of a time as the people of Israel knew it and the beginning of the Sacred Calendar, God's calendar of the Bible.

In Exodus 12:1-2 it reads:

1. Now the LORD said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt
2. "This month shall be the beginning of months for you; it is to be first month of the year to you."

Now, what is happening here. God is telling Moses and Aaron that time as they had previously measured time was going to change. The old methods of keeping time was coming to an end and there was a new method of keeping time, God's method.

The month in question was the first month of Abib. The month of Abib is mentioned in Exodus 13:4, 23:15, 34:18 and Deuteronomy 16:1. Abib was the first month of the Chaldean calendar. Moses would have known and understood this since Abraham was from Ur in the Chaldees region. Abib was the first month of the year. It is the month that Passover is celebrated. It is remembered as the time God delivered Israel from Egyptian bondage. It is also the time of Christ's crucifixion as the Passover Lamb of God. Today, the first month of the Hebrew or Sacred Calendar is Nissan and it is mentioned in Nehemiah 2:1 and Esther 3:7. Nissan is from the Babylonian/Assyrian "Nissanu" which means "beginning". Why is the first month a Babylonian name? It is first mentioned in a time that Israel was in exile or just coming out of exile. It would seem natural that they picked up on the language and Abib became Nissan.

Another month mentioned in the early Biblical text and it is only mentioned once in 1st Kings 6:38 is the month of Bul (Bool) which was the eighth month. Today, the eighth month is Cheshvan (Heswan).

Another month mentioned in the early Bible text is the month of Ziv which was the second month and it is found in 1st Kings 6:1;37. Today the Second month is Iyar.

A fourth month mentioned in the pre-exilic period was Ethanim and it was the 7th month. It is found in 1st Kings 8:2. Today the 7th month is Tishrei (Tisri) and is month of Rosh Hoshana (Yom Teruah: The Day of the Great shout), The Feast of Trumpets, Yom Kippur, the Feast of Tabernacles or Booths, and Shimini Atzeret. As noted in 1st Kings 8:2 these months were the names of months in the day of King David and Solomon.

Now the months of the Sacred Calendar as they are today are:

1. Nissan – Passover/Feast of Unleavened Bread (14th)
2. Iyar
3. Sivan (Siwan) – Shavuot/Pentecost/Feast of Weeks (6th)
4. Tammuz
5. Av (Ab)
6. Elul - Teshuva

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7. Tishrei (Tisri) Rosh Hoshana (Yom Teruah), Feast of Trumpets, Yom Kippur, Feast of Tabernacles, Shimini Atzeret. THE HIGH HOLY DAYS
8. Chesvan (Heswan)
9. Kislev (Kislew)
10. Tevet (Tebet)
11. Shevat (Sebat)
12. Adar

Now, the thing is that each of these months start with the appearance of the New moon. However, the New moon lasts 3 days and depending upon the month, the time of year, and which year is in question determines which day of the new moon the month starts on. Confused? The mathematical computations are too problematic for someone like me to calculate.

The Sacred calendar is a lunar calendar and is determined by the moons orbiting the earth. However, this means that there are 360 days in a year. It requires some adjusting to keep the Feasts and seasons in line with when they are supposed to be. The calendar operates on a nineteen year cycle. There is a leap year every two to three years when there is an additional month added (Adar II). There are leap months as well. The months of Nissan, Heswan, and Tisri will always have the same number of days and the adjustments are made to other months. Passover always falls in the spring when planting is done on the 14th day of Nissan. Shavuot/Pentecost always come about on the 6th day of Heswan. Rosh Hoshana (Yom Teruah) always falls of the 1st day of Tisri. Yom Kippur is always on the 10th day of Tisri.

This is the Sacred Calendar. I'll discuss the months more next week and where you can find some of the current months in the biblical text.