

Why the Crucifixion of Christ Could Not Have Occurred in 31 AD

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For nearly fifty years, major branches of God's church have taught that Jesus was crucified on Wednesday, April 25, 31 AD. However, the Hebrew Calendar places Nisan 14 of 31 AD on Monday, March 26. This date is historically accurate and has never been questioned by the Jews. The true date of Jesus' crucifixion was Wednesday, April 5, 30 AD.

In the excerpt below, 31 AD is presumed to be the year of Jesus' crucifixion. Reference is made to a Wednesday Passover, but the author does not give the day or the month. Several "indicators" or "milestones" are offered that are supposed to point to a 31 AD crucifixion:

A significant amount of historical and scriptural evidence points to A.D. 31 as the year of Christ's crucifixion and resurrection. Among these indicators of an A.D. 31 crucifixion are the fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy of the coming of the Messiah (Daniel 9:24-26; Ezra 7 [Artaxerxes' decree]), and a careful consideration of three milestones: the likely date of Jesus' birth, His age when He began His ministry and the duration of His ministry.

The calculated calendar of the Jews places the Passover in A.D. 31 on Wednesday, and Jesus Christ's death on that day fulfilled His role as the true Passover Lamb of God (1 Corinthians 5:7). The next day, Thursday, was a holy (annual) Sabbath. On that Thursday, the chief priests and Pharisees went to Pilate to secure permission to seal and guard Jesus' tomb (Matthew 27:62-66). Later, on Sunday, the resurrected Jesus walked along the road to Emmaus and talked with two of His disciples, who discussed all the things that had happened, including the Thursday visit by the leaders to Pilate (Luke 24:13-14, 20). They mentioned that this day, Sunday, was the third day since all these things had happened (verse 21). *Fundamental Beliefs of the United Church of God: Three Days and Three Nights*
<http://www.ucg.ca/gn/lit/FB/threenights.asp>

(Note: The fact that Luke 24:21 records that Sunday was "the third day since these things were done" does not establish the year of these events—it simply establishes the day of the week that Jesus was crucified. The reader is referred to *A Harmony of the Gospels* by Fred R. Coulter for a complete exposition of secular and biblical indicators that points to 30 AD as the year of the crucifixion.)

The teaching that a Wednesday Passover occurred in 31 AD was introduced into the churches of God in the 1970's by Dr. Herman Hoeh. At that time, a parallelism was believed to exist between the beginning of the apostolic church in the year of the

crucifixion (presumably 31 AD) and the founding of the Radio Church of God (1931). The one hundred 19-year cycles (1900 years) from the founding of the New Testament church to the founding of the Radio Church of God suggested to the church's membership that this event was timed by God.

The doctrine of a 31 AD crucifixion was further reinforced by the writings of church scholars who unfortunately had limited sources for researching the subject. Much more historical data is available today than in the earlier years of the church, enabling us to accurately determine the date of Jesus' crucifixion. In fact, it can be demonstrated beyond all doubt that the crucifixion of Jesus did **not** take place in 31 AD.

Exposing the Erroneous Belief in a 31 AD Crucifixion

Dr. Hoeh based his belief in a 31 AD crucifixion upon the assumption that there was a change in the intercalary pattern of the Hebrew Calendar in 142 AD. Assuming that the intercalary cycle was changed in 142 AD, Dr. Hoeh introduced an intercalary cycle with leap years 2, 5, 7, 10, 13, 16 and 18 of the 19-year cycle in place of the long established cycle of 3, 6, 8, 11, 14, 17 and 19 years. From that time, holy day calculations before 142 AD were based on this cycle, which falsely classified 30 AD, the 10th year in the 19-year cycle, as a leap year of 385 days. The additional month that was added for the assumed leap year in 30 AD moved the date of Passover in 31 AD from its correct date of Monday, March 26, to Wednesday, April 25. (Note: This change in the intercalary cycle used by the churches of God did not affect the observance of the Passover and the holy days by church membership because calculations for 142 AD and later were still based on the 3, 6, 8, 11, 14, 17 and 19-year cycle.)

Dr. Hoeh's adoption of an alternate intercalary cycle for 142 AD and years previous to that was based on references in Jewish literature to rabbinical discussions in the second century AD. The rabbinic opinions that were expressed in these discussions were grossly misinterpreted by Dr. Hoeh and other early scholars in the churches of God. The debate was not over the intercalary pattern within each 19-year cycle but over which year was the year of creation—the epochal *molad* that began the first year of the first 19-year cycle.

Understanding the Rabbinic Debate Over the Epochal Molad of Creation

The statements that are viewed as evidence of a change in the Hebrew Calendar in the second century are not related to different years of intercalation but to different ways of numbering these intercalary years based on the year chosen to begin the count. The numbering of the intercalary years in the sequence of 19-year cycles depends entirely on a conclusion as to when time began.

In order to properly interpret the rabbinic debate, it is necessary to understand the intercalary pattern of the 19-year cycle. In each cycle of nineteen years there are twelve

regular years and seven leap years to which a thirteenth month is added. The adding of a thirteenth month, known as a second Adar, is called intercalation.

According to the Hebrew Calendar, the year 1996 was the last year of a 19-year cycle. Calculating by 19-year increments, 1996-1997 AD was year 19 of the 19-year cycle 1978-1996 AD, and thus a leap year. (A second Adar was added in the spring of 1997.) This determination is based on the premise that the creation took place in the year 3761 BC, and therefore that year was the first year of the first 19-year cycle. This date for creation gives us a pattern of 13-month leap years of 3, 6, 8, 11, 14, 17, and 19. However, the date 3761 BC was not always accepted by rabbinic authorities as the date of creation.

During the rebellion of Bar Kokhba from 132 to 135 AD, the established intercalary cycle was interrupted, and it was several years before Jewish calendar authorities could meet to restore the intercalary cycle due to ongoing Roman persecution. A philosophical debate over the year of creation broke out within the rabbinic community sometime afterwards. Some proposed that 3761 BC was the correct year; others favored 3760 BC. There was also support for 3759 or 3758 BC. There were, of course, other opinions among the rabbis, but these four years appear to have been most prominent in the debate. The debate did not subside until about 1000 AD when 3761 BC was finally accepted as the year of creation.

It is a mistaken interpretation of this recorded rabbinical debate over the year of creation that led to the belief that the intercalary cycle of the Hebrew Calendar was formerly 2, 5, 7, 10, 13, 16 and 18 years. In actuality, this numbering of leap years was no different from the 3, 6, 8, 11, 14, 17 and 19 year-cycle. The only difference in the two numbering systems is that the latter cycle began counting from 3761 BC, and the former began counting from 3760 BC. Thus all the leap years in the two manners of reckoning matched perfectly. The following chart illustrates the numbering system used by different rabbinical leaders depending on the date they favored as the date of creation.

3761 BC	3760 BC	3759 BC	3758 BC	Year AD Common to All
1				
2	1			
3	2	1		X 23 AD
4	3	2	1	
5	4	3	2	
6	5	4	3	X 26 AD
7	6	5	4	
8	7	6	5	X 28 AD
9	8	7	6	
10	9	8	7	
11	10	9	8	X 31 AD
12	11	10	9	
13	12	11	10	
14	13	12	11	X 34 AD
15	14	13	12	
16	15	14	13	
17	16	15	14	X 37 AD
18	17	16	15	
19	18	17	16	X 39 AD
1	19	18	17	
2	1	19	18	
3	2	1	19	X 42 AD

As illustrated in this chart, an assumed creation year of 3760 BC yields an intercalary pattern of years 2, 5, 7, 10, 13, 16 and 18; an assumed creation year of 3759 BC gives an intercalary pattern of years 1, 4, 6, 9, 12, 15 and 17; an assumed creation year of 3758 BC yields an intercalary pattern of years 3, 5, 8, 11, 14, 16 and 19. All three assumed creation years match the intercalary cycle of the year 3761 BC, which was ultimately accepted as the year of creation. **The only difference in these numbering systems was the starting date—there was no dispute over the selection of leap years.** Therefore, it is evident that the rabbinical debate over the date of creation did not affect the calculations of the Hebrew Calendar.

Although the year 3761 BC did not gain universal acceptance until the Middle Ages, it was used in the calculations of the Hebrew Calendar both before and after the second century AD. Rabbinic literature ascribes the origin of this belief to Rabbi Yose b. Halafta, who first wrote of it in the *Seder Olam Rabbah* as noted by the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*.

Seder Olam is mentioned in the Talmud (Shab. 88a; Yev. 82b; et al.) and is ascribed by the Palestinian *amora* R. Johanan (third century) to the second-century *tanna* Yose b. Halafta (Yev. 82b; Nid. 46b). The work is divided into three parts, each consisting of ten chapters. Part one

enumerates the dates of major events from the creation of the world until the death of Moses and the crossing of the Jordan by the Israelites under Joshua; part two, from the crossing of the Jordan to the murder of Zechariah, king of Israel; part three, chapters 21–27, from the murder of Zechariah to the destruction of the Temple by Nebuchadnezzar; and chapter 28, from the destruction of the Temple to the conquest of Babylon by Cyrus. Chapter 29 and the first part of chapter 30 cover the Persian period, which is stated to be only 34 years (s.v. “Seder Olam Rabbah”).

Based on his chronological studies, Rabbi Yose believed the date of creation was 3828 BC. The year 3761 BC was derived by subtracting 68 years (Rabbi Yose believed the Second Temple was destroyed in 68 AD) from 3828 BC, resulting in 3760 BC. One year was added to compensate for the fact that there is no year “0,” placing the date of creation in the year 3761 BC.

Seder Olam Rabbah was the first to establish the era “from the creation of the world” (*ab creatione mundi*, abbreviated A.M. for *anno mundi*). Utilizing the biblical chronology and reconstructing post-biblical history as well as he could, the author arrived at the conclusion that the world was created 3828 years before the destruction of the Second Temple by the Romans. According to this calculation the destruction took place in the year 68, which is in contradiction to the accepted chronology that it took place in the year 70 C.E. An attempt to harmonize the contradiction was made by E. Frank (see bibl.). It was a long time until the reckoning according to the *anno mundi* era took root in Jewish chronology. For many centuries the calculation of the *Seder Olam Rabbah* was of interest only to talmudic students who tried to satisfy their curiosity for historical reconstruction. The usual calculation accepted by Jews in talmudic and even post-talmudic times was that of the Seleucid era, beginning with the year 312 BCE., and usually referred to in Jewish literature as *minyān shetarot* (“dating of documents”). Only when the center of Jewish life moved from Babylonia to Europe and the calculation according to the Seleucid era became meaningless was it replaced by that of the *anno mundi* era of the *Seder Olam* (Ibid., s.v. “Seder Olam Rabbah”).

Rabbi Yose was among the leading rabbis who participated in the second-century debate over the year of creation. His views were held in great respect by other rabbinical leaders of that era.

YOSE BEN HALAFTA (mid-second century C.E.), *tanna*; the R. Yose mentioned in the Talmud without patronymic. Yose was one of the leaders of the generation after the persecutions which followed the Bar Kokhba War. He was born in Sepphoris, where his father was one of those who instituted *takkanot* there after the destruction of the Temple (Tosef., Ta'an. 1:14). Yose studied under his father and transmitted some of his teachings (Kelim 26:6; et al.). He also studied under Johanan b. Nuri in Galilee

(Tosef., Kelim, BK 6:4; et al.), and under Tarfon in Judea (*ibid.*, Shev. 4:4). **His main teacher, however, was Akiva** in whose name he frequently transmits *halakhot*, and it was said generally: “R. Akiva his teacher” (Pes. 18a). He is numbered among his last pupils who “reestablished the Torah” (Yev. 62b) and were ordained by Judah b. BAba (Sanh. 14a). During the persecutions he endangered his life to fulfill the precept of circumcision and fled to Asia or to Laodicea (BM 84a: TJ, Ab. Zar. 3:1). **He participated in all the conventions of scholars “at the close of the period of persecution,” in the valley of Bet Rimmon**, in Usha, and in Jabneh (TJ, Hag. 3:1; Ber. 63b)...

Yose's *bet din* in Sepphoris was reckoned among the most outstanding in Erez Israel (Sanh. 32b). It is probable that after Nathan and Meir were demoted from the leadership in the Sanhedrin, following their attempt to remove Simeon b. Gamaliel from his office as *nasi* [president] (Hor. 13b), he and Judah took their places....His influence was still felt in the council chamber during the time of Judah ha-Nasi [president], the son of Simeon, who withdrew his own view in favor of that of Yose (Shab. 51a), and spoke of him with exceptional respect (Git. 67a).

While some rabbis agreed with Yose ben Halafta's opinion, other rabbis held different views. Because they began counting from varying years of creation, they differed in the numbering of years in each 19-year cycle.

Apparent variations in the *ordo intercalationis*, i.e., ... (2, 5, 7, 10, 13, 16, 18), ... (1, 4, 6, 9, 12, 15, 17) and ... (3, 5, 8, 11, 14, 16, 19) by the side of the present order (3, 6, 8, 11, 14, 17, 19), which are met with as late as the tenth century, are but variant styles of the selfsame order. These are in part also **indicated by the epochal *molad* variously given as (...4d. 20h. 408p.), ... = 2d. 5h. 204p., ... = 6d. 14h. 0p. and ... = 3d. 22h. 876p. which artificially go back to the beginning of the Era of the Creation [first espoused by rabbi Yose] and variously place its epoch in the autumn of 3762, -61, -60, -59 and -58 BCE. respectively** (see Chronology). While it is not unreasonable to attribute to Hillel II the fixing of the regular order of intercalations, his full share in the present fixed calendar is doubtful (*Ibid.*, s.v. “Calendar”).

As the author of the above article for the *Encyclopaedia Judaica* states, these apparent variations are in reality “the selfsame order.” That is, they represent **different scholarly views of the date of creation “...3762, -61, -60, -59 and -58 BCE”—not differing views of the pattern of intercalation.**

As previously noted, assigning different dates to the creation did not affect the years of intercalation. Yet, the churches of God were led to believe that the numbers the rabbis used were referring to differing years of intercalation. The adoption of the intercalary cycle of 2, 5, 7, 10, 13, 16, and 18 years—which was based on counting from 3760 BC—

was misapplied by Dr. Hoeh and substituted for the 3, 6, 8, 11, 14, 17 and 19-year pattern, which began counting from 3761 BC.

The 3760 BC Numbering System Misapplied to the 3761 BC Cycle

3761 Cycle	3760 Cycle	Intercalary Sequence
2	1	
<u>3AD</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>X</u>
4	3	
5	4	
<u>6AD</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>X</u>
7	6	
<u>8AD</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>X</u>
9	8	
10	9	
<u>11AD</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>X</u>
12	11	
13	12	
<u>14AD</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>X</u>
15	14	
16	15	
<u>17AD</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>X</u>
18	17	
<u>19AD</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>X</u>
20	19	

Notice that the first leap year on this chart is 3 AD rather than 4 AD as the 3761 BC cycle would have it, and the last leap year is 19 AD rather than 20 AD. Year “2” of the 3760 BC cycle should correspond with year “3” of the 3761 BC cycle. Accordingly, year “18” of the 3760 BC cycle should correspond with year “20” of the 3761 BC cycle. Thus the misapplication of the 3760 BC numbering system in the churches of God resulted in erroneous calculations for the dates of the leap years during Christ’s lifetime and led to the adoption of a 31 AD crucifixion.

Were the Years of Intercalation Ever Modified?

Jesus and the apostles observed the holy days each year based on the intercalary cycle of the Hebrew Calendar. Historical records are now available which amply demonstrate that the intercalary cycle has remained unchanged from apostolic times to our day. There is no historical evidence to support a change in the intercalary cycle in 142 AD.

However, during the time that the Calendar Court held authority in Palestine there were rare occasions when unusual circumstances in the land necessitated a *temporary* adjustment. Before the time of Hillel II, when the Calendar Court was still functioning, a *one-time decision* could be made in a given year to declare a normal 12-month year to be 13 months or vice versa. This was done only in the event of famine, local disasters or conditions of hardship. Those responsible for the temporary change would restore the established cycle in the following years.

Some in the churches of God today have presumed to add or subtract months within certain years to propose a "fix" for seasonal drift or to cause holy days to fall on a certain day of the week. There is no historical evidence that the Hebrew Calendar has ever employed such methods. Hebrew Calendar scholars maintain that a change in the pattern of intercalation has never been implemented to bring about a seasonal adjustment in the declaration of the festival days. In fact, it is mathematically and astronomically inaccurate to do so. The date of Tishri 1 is fixed by astronomical laws and mathematical principles that do not change regardless of the reasonings and opinions of any leader of a religious organization.

Why the Teaching of an Intercalary Shift Was Promoted in the Churches of God

The teaching of a change in the intercalary cycle was advanced in the churches of God in the 1970's when a great controversy arose over the correct day to observe Pentecost. In 1972 Dr. Ernest Martin, who believed and preached that Pentecost should be observed on Sunday, left the Worldwide Church of God, taking many brethren with him. Dr. Charles Dorothy was assigned the task of researching the issue of the correct day for Pentecost observance. The research of his team, which also supported a Sunday Pentecost, was completed in 1974 during the Days of Unleavened Bread. Herbert W. Armstrong accepted Dr. Dorothy's conclusions and declared that based on the evidence, Pentecost should be observed on Sunday. This research was then published in booklet form to explain the change to the membership.

Before the completion of this in-depth research, which led to a better understanding and correct observance of the Feast of Pentecost, Dr. Hoeh gave a landmark presentation in defense of a Monday Pentecost. On Friday, April 20, 1973, Dr. Hoeh conducted a Bible study at Ambassador College entitled "A New Look at Pentecost in Light of the Calendar Adjustment in the Second Century," in which he used an alleged change in the intercalary cycle to support a Monday Pentecost. (Dr. Hoeh's presentation was subsequently written up in article form under the same title and published by Richard Nickels.)

In support of his belief that the intercalary cycle had been adjusted, Dr. Hoeh stated the following:

The year of the crucifixion, AD 31,³ was intercalary⁴ and Passover of that year occurred, according to the sacred calendar, on Wednesday, April 25, not a Monday, March 26, the fourteenth day of the previous month. Now jump to our day. The year 1931 is one hundred 19-year cycles from AD 31, so it, too, one might expect, would be intercalary. Yet the year 1931⁵ was not intercalary by the calendar the Jews use today. Why not? The answer is that *the sacred calendar was adjusted*.

Note 3 Spring of AD 31 was the 10th year of the 19-year cycle, which began in the fall of AD 30 and had 385 days.

Dr. Hoeh understood that an adjustment in the intercalary pattern of the Hebrew Calendar was essential to the argument for both a 31 AD crucifixion and a Monday Pentecost. He therefore presumed that such a change must have taken place. Without citing any source, Dr. Hoeh asserted that the person responsible for the adjustment was Simon III.

In the Patriarchate of Simon III, between AD 140 and 163, a great controversy arose pertaining to the intercalary years and the Holy Days. As we count it, Pentecost would have fallen for the first time in summer, June 23, 161 AD⁷.

It appears that the source of Dr. Hoeh's assertion that Simon III made the adjustment is an article written by Cyrus Adler for *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, Funk & Wagnalls, 1902, Vol. 3, Page 500. Dr. Hoeh's comments are obviously a paraphrase of the following citation from this article:

Under the patriarchate of Simon III (140-163) a great quarrel arose concerning the feast-days and the leap year, which threatened to cause a permanent schism between the Babylonian and the Palestinian communities—a result which was only averted by the exercise of much diplomacy.

Nowhere in the article in *The Jewish Encyclopedia* is it stated or even implied that Simon III adjusted the intercalary cycle. Yet Dr. Hoeh draws that conclusion and states it as fact.

In AD 161, if the calendar used at Jesus' time had not been adjusted by Simon III, a Monday Pentecost would have been observed on the beginning of summer. The Jewish Patriarch Simon III imposed a needed postponement of the intercalated year from the seventh year (AD 161) to the eighth year.⁸

Simon III determined this calendar postponement not according to the Pharisees' Sivan 6 Pentecost, but by a true Monday Pentecost. This was a

controversial decision. Simon III knew how Pentecost was originally counted.

Many years later, at the behest of Richard Nickels, Dr. Hoeh added a footnote to his first reference to Simon III with comments not made at the time of the Bible study in 1973.

In the Patriarchate of Simon III, between AD 140 and 163, a great controversy arose pertaining to the intercalary years and the Holy Days. As we count it, Pentecost would have fallen, for the first time in summer, June 23, 161 AD⁷.

Note 7 The pattern of common years and leap years in any 19-year cycle results in the Hebrew solar-lunar calendar being slightly ahead or behind sun time. This is normal variation. **In the pattern of intercalary years used in Jesus' day, years 2, 5, 7, 10, 13, 16, and 18 of a 19-year cycle were intercalary.** In a 19-year cycle with that pattern, Passover would be earliest (with respect to the spring equinox) in the fifteenth year of the cycle and the latest in the seventh. The accumulated variation in the Hebrew calendar (one day in 216 years) would be most serious in the seventh year of the 19-year cycle, when Pentecost would tend to be pushed closest towards summer. During the jurisdiction of Simon III, the spring of the seventh year of the 19-year cycle occurred in AD 142 and again in AD 161. With no change in the pattern of leap years, Pentecost was on Monday, June 19 in 142. But in 161, with Pentecost on a Monday, it would have been on June 23.

In the second reference to Simon III, Dr. Hoeh asserts that Simon adjusted the intercalary cycle in 161 AD by moving intercalation from the 7th year to the 8th year.

In AD 161, if the calendar used at Jesus' time had not been adjusted by Simon III, a Monday Pentecost would have been observed on the beginning of summer. The Jewish Patriarch Simon III imposed a needed postponement of the intercalated year from the seventh year (AD 161) to the eighth year.⁸

He footnotes this second reference to Simon III as follows:

Note 8 **The cycle during transition was 2, 5, 8, 11, 14, 17, 19 and then the cycle thereafter continued as we have today: 3, 6, 8, 11, 14, 17, 19 (except when certain festivals fell too early).** Beginning in AD 167 we have the first evidence of controversy over the earliness of the Passover in the Christian community in the writing of Melito of Sardis, titled *On the Passover*. The Jews were accused by some of observing Passover too early. Before AD 70, however, Passover was never observed at the

beginning of spring, but always after the beginning of spring; hence, the adjustment in this time period.

In referring to the writing of Melito of Sardis, Dr. Hoeh assumes that the accusation of an early Passover relates to controversy over the intercalary cycle of the Hebrew Calendar. However, historical evidence of the period points rather to a departure from the Hebrew Calendar in favor of a solar calendar that pinned the date of Passover to the spring equinox. (See Franklin, *The Calendar of Christ and the Apostles, Part II.*)

Discrepancies in the Arguments for an Intercalary Shift

Dr. Hoeh's statement in 1973 that the intercalary cycle of the Hebrew Calendar was changed in 161 AD differs from his original views. In editing John Kossey's book *The Hebrew Calendar: A Mathematical Introduction*, which was published in 1972, Dr. Hoeh concurred with a date of 142 AD. Note also that the reference in Kossey's book to Adler's article in *The Jewish Encyclopedia* is not so adamant as Dr. Hoeh's statement one year later in 1973.

There is **some evidence** that an adjustment to the Hebrew calendar **may have taken place** during the Patriarchate of Simon III (140-163). See "Cyrus Adler, "Calendar, History of," in *The Jewish Encyclopedia* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1907), Vol. 3, p. 500.

Kossey's book maintains that until 142 AD, the intercalary cycle was years 2, 5, 7, 10, 13, 16, and 18 of a 19-year cycle, and that the intercalary cycle was changed in 142 AD to years 3, 6, 8, 11, 14, 17, and 19. One year later at his landmark Bible study in 1973, Dr. Hoeh taught that the change was made in 161 AD.

Did Simon III at any time during his Patriarchate of 140 to 163 AD institute a change in the intercalary cycle of the Hebrew Calendar? What does Jewish literature record about the life and achievements of this Patriarchate of the second century?

Simon III was none other than Simeon ben Gamaliel II, who lived during the first half of the second century. In describing his role as a religious leader, *The Jewish Encyclopedia* reveals that persecution by the Roman authorities prevented him from being present at the meeting of the Calendar Court to renew the intercalary cycle after it was interrupted by the Bar Kokhba rebellion.

SIMEON BEN GAMALIEL II (of Jabneh), *nasi* [president] (first half of second century C.E.), the son of Rabban Gamaliel of Jabneh and the father of Judah ha-Nasi. Simeon was one of the few survivors after the Romans destroyed the house of the *nasi* [president] in revenge for the Bar Kokhba revolt (Sot. 49b), and he was compelled to conceal himself during the whole period of the persecutions that followed the destruction of Bethar (Ta'an. 29a. on the assumption that the reference is to Simeon b. Gamaliel and not to his father).

Even after the death of Hadrian, Simeon could not appear in public, and for this reason apparently was absent from the meeting of the scholars that took place in order to renew the intercalation of the calendar in the valley of Rimmon, after the revolt (TJ, Hag, 3:1, 78c). Similarly, he was still absent from the first session of the scholars in Usha. When the persecution abated and the danger to his life passed, he was appointed *nasi* [president] of the Sanhedrin at the second meeting of the sages in Usha, as the son of the *nasi* [president] Gamaliel and a link in the chain of the *nesi'im* descended from Hillel.

Simon III or Simeon ben Gamaliel II could not possibly have shifted the year of intercalation in 161 AD from the 7th year to the 8th year of the cycle as he did not attend the meeting that was held to renew the intercalation of the calendar. He was not present even to express his opinion or to cast a vote in this historic renewal. Furthermore, as the article in *The Encyclopaedia Judaica* records, the sages who assembled in the valley of Rimmon met “**to renew** the intercalation of the calendar.” They did not meet to modify the intercalary cycle.

Calendars Built on a Faulty Premise

Kossey’s book, which was edited by Dr. Hoeh, is the basis of two automated Hebrew Calendars published in the mid 1980’s. Robert Newman published his calendar written in Turbo Pascal in 1986. Unlike Kossey and Dr. Hoeh, Newman built into his software an intercalary adjustment date of 256 AD. Ambassador College copyrighted an automated calendar in 1988-1989 and also built in this adjustment date of 256 AD.

Why did Newman choose to program into his calendar an intercalary change in the year 256 AD? He did so in the belief that the Feast of Pentecost would otherwise have fallen on the summer solstice in 256 AD.

According to Dr. Hoeh’s assumed intercalary cycle of years 2, 5, 7, 10, 13, 16, and 18 of a 19-year cycle, 255 AD (the 7th year of the cycle) would have been an intercalary year. The intercalation of year 255 AD would have placed Wave Sheaf Sunday in 256 AD on May 4 and Pentecost on June 22—the date of the summer solstice. Postponing the intercalary year from 255 AD to 256 AD, the 8th year of the cycle, would place Wave Sheaf Sunday in 256 AD on April 15 and Pentecost on Sunday, June 3—well before the summer solstice. Based on the erroneous reasoning of Dr. Hoeh, Newman concluded that the intercalary cycle must have been changed in 256 AD to the present cycle of years 3, 6, 8, 11, 14, 17, and 19 of the cycle, and the programmers at Ambassador College built this intercalary change into their calendar software.

Dr. Hoeh Acknowledges His Error in Assuming an Intercalary Shift

Dr. Hoeh's assumption that Simon III instituted a change in the intercalary cycle of the Hebrew Calendar was motivated by a need to defend the teaching of a Monday Pentecost in the Worldwide Church of God in the 1970's. Although this teaching was recognized as inaccurate and was discarded by the church in 1974, in the ensuing years the false intercalary cycle on which it was based continued to be taught and accepted.

Interestingly, shortly before his death, Dr. Hoeh recanted his former stand on the Pentecost issue, which was the basis for his supposition that the intercalary cycle had been changed. In a personal letter to Dr. Germano, Dr. Hoeh wrote, **"The Church of God fellowship correctly reevaluated the counting of Pentecost in 1973/74....Thus there is no requirement for A.D. 142 or 161."**

Dr. Hoeh further stated that the controversy in the second century was not over intercalation but was a battle for domination among the leaders of Judaism: "The controversy among Jews after 135 was centered on where authority lay—in Tiberias, Galilee, or in Babylonia (hence the two Talmuds)."

Like Darwin and his theory of evolution, the theory of a change in the intercalary cycle of the Hebrew Calendar in the second century was recanted by its original proponent. However, so firmly do ideas become embedded in the human mind that it is difficult to uproot them even when they have been exposed as historically inaccurate. The Scriptures admonish us, "Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life" (Prov. 4:23). Let us continually exercise our senses to discern between truth and error lest we be led astray by suppositions and opinions of men.

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