

Calendar in the Heavens: Oct. 22, 1844

Description

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A Response to “First Barley” Karaites and the Traditionalist Jews

Introduction

There has been, and continues to be, a controversy regarding how the early Adventists settled on Oct. 22 as the Day of Atonement in 1844. As will be seen herein, there is only one explanation, and that being that they used the Calendar in the Heavens, according to the only Biblical method for determining the feast days.

There are many voices, from many sources, which point to the fact that the traditionalist Jewish community kept the Day of Atonement on September 23 in 1844. Some also point out that another group of Jews, known as the Karaites, though using a different method for calculating the beginning of the new years, likewise kept Sept. 23 in 1844. The reason these two seemingly authoritative communities are being mentioned is that the Adventist church gives credit to the Karaite Jews for having instructed them in the correct method for determining the time of the feast. But a problem arises from the fact that today certain Karaite Jews attempt to discredit the Adventists' use of Oct. 22 in 1844 by referring to the fact that they, as well as the traditionalist Jews, kept Sept. 23 that year.

The difference between the traditional Jews and the Karaites in determining the beginning of the new years is that the Jews use a method of calculation which is not always in harmony with the signs in the heavens – the sun and the moon; and the Karaites use the ripeness of the barley fields, also without full regard for those heavenly signposts. Thus, some years their years start one month apart. But in 1844 they were the same (at least for the major representative groups of each – the more observant among them may have disregarded the common error and kept the correct date).

Some Adventist sources state that Samuel Snow learned of that date from “Karaites” Jewish reckoning. One who has, in his mind, disproved this thinking was E.S. Ballenger. Ballenger (a critic of Ellen White – one among the Adventists who had the testimony of Jesus, the Spirit of Prophecy [Revelation 12:17; 19:10]), who went to certain Karaite sources on this matter, found out that they claim that in 1844 the Karaites kept the Day of Atonement in September (as did the traditional Jews), instead of in October. But there is more to this, in that there were other Karaites who did make full use of the Lord’s signal flags in heaven. One writer says, “According to the book *Karaites in Byzantium*, by Zvi Ankori, the Karaites in Babylon *did not use barley* to determine the first month; but *they used the vernal equinox.*”

The importance of this matter lies not in through whom the correct time became known, but, rather, what *method* was used to determine it, for such is one of the many things which are continually “for” us. That is, by inspiring the people to look for the Lord coming to His temple on the tenth day of the month of the seventh month according to Biblical reckoning, God was informing them that He intended to keep doing His work on the times of His ancient appointments, and on those only. This included, but was not limited to, the Sabbath.

“Why did they use the time pointed out in the Mosaic law if it were invalid? ...

“In like manner the types which relate to the second advent must be *fulfilled AT THE TIME POINTED OUT IN THE SYMBOLIC SERVICE* (feasts of Leviticus 23!). Under the Mosaic system the cleansing of the sanctuary, or the great day of Atonement, occurred on the tenth day of the seventh Jewish month (Leviticus 16:29-34),...So it was believed that Christ, our great High Priest, would appear to purify the earth by the destruction of sin and sinners, and to bless His waiting people with immortality. The tenth day of the seventh month, the great day of Atonement, the time of the cleansing of the sanctuary, which in the year 1844 fell upon the twenty-second of October, was regarded as the time of the Lord’s coming. This was in harmony with the proofs already presented that the 2300 days would terminate in the autumn, and the conclusion seemed **IRRESISTIBLE.**’ – *The Great Controversy*, pp, 399,400.

“Would it not seem strange for inspiration to base an ‘irresistible’ ‘conclusion’ on a time which had been nailed to the cross and lost all meaning?” *Branch Field Letter*, 2/2/78, p.3.

The question is, What was the correct *method* used to determine that Oct. 22 was the Day of Atonement in 1844, and of what importance is that knowledge to the church today? The first answer is that we would be able to answer the critics and skeptics with a sharp sword (so to speak). Another would be to bring to the church the truth which she needs to wean her off of the customs and traditions of the world and Babylon.

The simple answer is that those early Adventists relied solely on the Calendar in the Heavens. That is, they used the first new moon after the Vernal (Spring) Equinox to begin

their counting of the days and months. As we have another study which examines this method in depth, we will refer the reader to it – [Calendar in the Heavens – New Years, New Moons, Passover, and Pentecost](#).

This method of reckoning not only allows for the Day of Atonement as late as Oct. 23 but, in fact, was used with the signs in the heavens in 1844 to determine that Oct. 22 was the Day of Atonement. That is, by reckoning the beginning of the year by the observance of both the sun and the moon – the sun at the equinox, and the first new (visible) moon *at or thereafter* – the Adventists (through whomever) were brought to the correct date.

The traditionalist Jews (who use calculations only, and are frequently out of sync with the visible new moon and the Vernal Equinox), and the Karaite Jews (who go by the observation of the ripening stage of the barley in the fields in conjunction with the then present new moon), who say that Sept. 23 was the date that their groups celebrated the Day of Atonement in 1844, had to come to that conclusion by using the new moon cycle which occurred *before* the Vernal Equinox (which is about March 21) as their starting date. Consider the following math.

A lunar (moon-based) month is about 29.5 days long

There are 6 lunar months + 10 days of the 7th month to the Day of Atonement

$$29.5 \times 6 = 177$$

177 + 10 = 187 days to the Day of Atonement.

The soonest the Day of Atonement can occur by the calendar in the heavens (sun and moon) in any year having March 21 as the Equinox, and the new moon occurring that night at sundown (assuming that the Equinox occurred before sundown of that day) would be Sept. 24, one day *after* the day celebrated by the traditionalist Jews and the Karaites in 1844 – Sept. 23. In order for them to have concluded that Sept. 23 was the correct date, they would have had to have used the sundown of March 19 as the night of the visible new moon, making March 20, the first day of their new year. By adding 187 days to March 20, they arrive at Sept. 23.

Here is the math:

The number of days in the relevant months of the western calendar are:

March	31
April	30

May	31
June	30
July	31
Aug	31
Sept	30
Oct	31

The date used by the traditionalist Jews and the Karaites for the first day of the first month in 1844 was March 20 (the moon being visible the preceding night, the 19th).

March 20 + 187 days = Sept. 23

With the new moon occurring on March 20, there were 11 days left of March.

Add to these 11 days the next 5 months (April [30], May [31], June [30], July [31], and August [31] – 153 days). That comes to 164 days. Then subtract that 164 days from the 187 days needed to bring us to Atonement, and we have 23 days of September.

March	11	(the remaining days of March)
April	30	
May	31	

June	30
July	31
Aug	31
Sept	23
Total	187

But as that new moon was *before* the Vernal Equinox (which can rarely occur on March 20 instead of the 21st), it can't be used to mark the new year. Therefore, the next visible new moon after that one (29.5 days later) would be on April 18. Add 187 days to that date and we arrive at Oct. 22.

Given perfect circumstances, the latest date on which the Day of Atonement could occur is Oct. 23. Therefore, in 1844 God waited until just about the last He could to allow as many as would get ready to be ready when the time came. Merciful, Long-suffering, Patient, Kind, Faithful, and True is the God of Israel.

The date used by the Adventists for the first day of the first month in 1844 was April 18 (the moon being visible the preceding night, the 17th).

April 18 + 187 days = Oct. 22

With the new moon occurring on April 18, there were 12 days left of April.

Add to these 12 days the next 5 months (May [31], June [30], July [31], August [31], and September [30] – 153 days). That comes to 165 days. Then subtract that 165 days from the 187 days needed to bring us to Atonement, and we have 22 days of October.

April	12	(the remaining days of April)
May	31	
June	30	
July	31	
Aug	31	
Sept	30	
Oct	22	
Total	187	

There are Karaite sources which say that some other of their people used the vernal equinox. So the early Adventists may have learned the matter from these, rather than from the *first barley* Karaites. Whatever the case may be, we know that they were so intent on getting things right that they would not have overlooked anything brought to their attention on the matter. By following the Lord's leading as it was unfolded to them, they became privileged to partake in the unrolling of the scroll and amend their thinking and teaching. Such is the lesson for the church today.

“Times and laws” are important to God. Were they not, the devil would not spend such effort to think to change them (Dan. 7:25). Many decry the attempted change in the Sabbath. Fewer yet, the changes in the Feast days. Even fewer than that decry the incorrect marking of the year which determines the keeping of the Feasts. The Seventh Day Adventist leadership (as a general body) does not teach their people about the changes in the feast days, nor of the Biblical calendar which stands as a foundation for the most prominent day in our history. We, almost above any people on earth, should be at the forefront in proclaiming the Calendar in the Heavens, as such truth is at the foundation of our teachings.

There are other reasons why we should “be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.” There are many winds of doctrine blowing around regarding God's “times and laws,” and our relation to them. The most common is that they are for another people, and another time – that

whatever significance they may have had in regards to the timing of events in the unfolding of the plan of salvation was fulfilled at the time of Christ's first coming, and, therefore, there is no need to expect, nor look for, any other events at the times of God's ancient appointments.

Yet, when speaking of how Christ fulfilled the type of the Passover lamb, and also as the wave sheaf of the firstfruits, Ellen White says,

“These types were fulfilled, not only as to the event, but *as to the time*. . .

“In like manner, the types which relate to the second advent *must be fulfilled at the time pointed out in the symbolic service.*” *The Great Controversy*, p. 399.

Whatever times are pointed out in the “symbolic service” have as their beginning the correct new year's day. All other times are reckoned off of this. If this date is wrong, then whatever is based on that incorrect date is, likewise, wrong.

“Further, if the ceremonial law were nailed to the cross, what law was Jesus following when He presented the wave-sheaf in heaven before the Father on the morrow after the Sabbath? ‘Christ was the first fruits of them that slept. It was to the glory of God that the Prince of life should be the first fruits, the antitype of the wave sheafThis very scene,the resurrection of Christ from the dead, had been celebrated in type by the JewsSo those who had been raised were to be presented to the universe as a pledge of the resurrection of all who believe in Christ...’ *Selected Messages*, Book 1, p. 305.

“‘Christ arose from the dead as the first fruits of those that slept. HE WAS THE ANTITYPE OF THE WAVE SHEAF, and His resurrection took place ON THE VERY DAY the wave sheaf was to be presented before the Lord. For more than a thousand years this symbolic ceremony had been performedSO CHRIST THE FIRST FRUITS represented the great spiritual harvest to be gathered for the kingdom of God As Christ arose, He brought from the grave a multitude of captives. They ascended with Him as trophies of His victory over death and the grave.’ *Desire of Ages*, p. 785, 786.

“Why did Christ arise on the very day of the offering of the wave sheaf, and why did He offer not only Himself but His trophies on that very day, if the ceremonial law were nailed to the cross?

“The simple answer is found in Jesus’ statement, “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to FULFIL.” Matt. 5:17.

“Fulfil, of course, does not mean to cease, but to carry out, to put in force!

...

“The message of Revelation 18 added to the Third Angel’s Message, in the Loud Cry to the world will appeal to all people, especially the Jews. In Israel some of the Orthodox Rabbis have said that this message of The Branch is the greatest threat to orthodox Judaism that has come in our day. Of this we are well aware since it deals in a positive way with their land and their law. A message that does not equate explicitly to the law of Moses, in antitype, in connection with the promised land, will never have much effect upon the Jewish people. In the time of the message of the Investigative Judgment for the Dead, in the Sanctuary above, under the Third Angel since 1844, and with the ten commandment law, we have the promise, if faithful, of eternal life in the first resurrection (John 6:40,44,54). In the additional Angel’s message, that of the Ceremonial Law of the Lamb of God, we have the promise of living forever, bypassing the grave. See John 6:47.51. With this supplementary light on the Word of God, and the plan of salvation, we are well aware why Sister White stated that this Angel (Rev. 18:1) is glorious as He descends. Read *Early Writings*, p. 277.

“We must remember that there is no salvation in the ten commandments for all have sinned. The promise of redemption is found only in the ceremonial law for ‘without the shedding of blood there is no remission.’ Heb. 9:22. In the light of these glorious facts God’s saints need to hastily begin teaching Christ in the law; not only in the law of the Creator (the ten commandments), but also to put our Saviour and Redeemer in the law of the Re-Creator, the ceremonial law, and live forever (John 6:58).” *Branch Field Letter*, February 2, 1978, p.4, 5.

Yours to do the right thing,

At the right time,

[Doug Mitchell](#)