



The TRUTH About New Year's Day

Every January first, many people cheerfully admonish one another, "Happy New Year!" It is seen as a day of new beginnings. A page is turned, resolutions are made. Wild celebrations erupt all over the night before. And no one ever seems to wonder why. Why January first and not any other day? Why pick the dead of winter to begin the year? Let's see what we can find.

The modern calendar, which begins on January first, was given to us by Rome. It has gone through a number of corrections throughout history. Pope Gregory XIII, and before him, Augustus Caesar, and before him, Julius Caesar, and before him, King Numa, all made corrections to the calendar over the course of time. One change made was that the New Year would be recognized, as it is today, in January instead of in March as it originally was.

"The Roman year began in March... In 153 [B.C.E.], Roman consuls began taking office on January 1, which became the beginning of the year. This practice was retained in the Julian and Gregorian calendars, although other starting dates continued to be used. England and its colonies [including America], for example, used March 25 and the Julian reckoning

until 1752" (Academic American Encyclopedia, p.88).

When we really think about it, January is a strange time to celebrate the New Year. Nothing is "new" then. It is the dead of winter in most regions. The name "April" however, comes from *Aprilis*, which is Latin for "to open." And the original recognition of the New Year "opening" up at this time is confirmed in the names of the months. As any decent dictionary will confirm the names for September, October, November, and December are all Latin for "7th month," "8th month," "9th month," and "10th month." Looking at a modern calendar, however, we can see that they are two months late in the current scheme. Ask the average person what December is and he will surely respond that it is the 12th month. (Tell him it actually means "tenth month" and watch his expression).

July was originally called Quintillus for "5th month," until Julius Caesar's name took it over (in honor of his birth). Then Sextillus was taken by Augustus Caesar who also wanted his own month, which ended up being called August. Of course, he added a day to make it even with July, not to be outdone. Nevertheless, that July and August were originally called the "5th

month” and “6th month” further confirms that January was not the New Year. This change is not without religious significance. January is named after *Janus* “an ancient Roman god of gates and doors and of beginnings and endings represented with two opposite faces” (*Webster’s Student Dictionary*). When we consider the modern-day practices perpetuated on January first, it becomes apparent that these customs commemorate Janus. The peoples’ ignorance does not change this fact.

In regions of Europe, New Year is called “hogmanay” (see *Jamieson’s Scottish Dictionary*). This is actually a specific Semitic phrase signifying the “feast.” (*Strong’s, Heb. 2282*) of “the Apportioner, i.e. *Fate* (as an idol)” (Heb. 4507). This idol is mentioned in the Scriptures (Isaiah 65:11; rendered “**that number**” in the *KJV*). Though most are unaware, the modern observance of Janus is worship of an idol.

“...it is worthy of remark that Jerome, commenting on [the verse just mentioned]...observes that it ‘was the custom so late as his time, in all cities ... to set tables, and furnish them with various luxurious articles of food, and with goblets containing a mixture of new wine, on the last day of the month and year and the people drew omens ... in respect of the fruitfulness of the year’ [(Hieronym, vol 2, p.217)]” (Alexander Hislop, *The Two Babylons*, p.94-96).

By perpetuating the January New Year, not only are the people following an arbitrary time, but it is actually reverencing an idol. That is, it attributes the infinite to the finite. This is idolatry. And January is not really a “month” anyway.

In English, as in Hebrew and Greek, the word for “month” comes from the word for “moon.” This is why all months on the common calendar are about 30 days long. It takes approximately that long for the moon to complete its synodic cycle, i.e. a “moonth.”

The common calendar is strictly solar. This is because Rome’s ancient religious customs, just like many other peoples’, was engulfed in Sun worship. (Consider the fact that Islam,

on the other hand, follows a strictly lunar calendar and its symbol is a crescent). The world’s two largest religions reflect their ancient origins on their face.

There is only one time a year in which the common calendar recognizes the moon’s significance. That is for calculating Easter. At the Council of Nicea, Constantine the (not so) Great and his buddies decided that Spring should always begin on March 21st and Easter should always be on the first Sunday following the full moon, which follows the beginning of Spring. It seems that, despite their insistence on being distinguished from the Jews, they understood the relationship between the Resurrection and the Passover. The Passover always occurs on the 14th day of the first month (**Leviticus 23:3**). And the 14th day means 14 days from the crescent new moon, which puts the Passover on the full moon. Hence, they dated Easter as the following Sunday (*The New Encyclopedia Britannica*).

According to the (pre-exilic) Scriptures, the first month is called “Abib” (**Exodus 13:4**) which means “sprouting, budding” (*Young’s Analytical Concordance*, p.3). This is the Spring, when the Most High delivered His people out from under the hand of the Egyptians and said: **This month is the beginning of months for you, it is the first month of the year for you (Exodus 12:2).**

Because Constantine ruled that Spring should always begin on March 21st, and because Julius Caesar’s corrections to the calendar were a little off, by C.E. 1582, the discrepancy had grown to ten days. Incidentally, Pope Gregory XIII ruled that October 4th (Thursday) should be followed by October 15th (Friday). Although it had no effect on the weekly cycle, this caused great confusion. “*Servants demanded their usual full monthly pay for the abridged month; employers refused. People objected to having their lives shortened by Papal decree.*” (*Daniel J. Boorstin, The Discoverers*, p. 8-9).

In America, the people protested, until 1752, when they finally made the change, which, by then, had grown to 11 days. Even

today, the common calendar is not perfect. While people celebrate the arrival of 2000 (- some odd years), even this is wrong. The BC and AD designations come to us from a monk named Dionysius Exiguus who lived in the first half of the 6th century CE. It is now generally known that Dionysius was also a little off.

“the reference point of the birth of Christ represented ‘not the actual event but an agreed upon point from which all real events could be dated’” (Denis Feeney, Caesar’s Calendar, p. 8 quoting D. J. Wilcox, The Measure of Times Past: Pre-Newtonian Chronologies and the Rhetoric of Relative Time, p. 207).

For one thing, we know that Herod the (not so) Great was still alive in Newer Testament times (**Matthew 2:1**), yet historically speaking, he died between 4 and 2 BCE. So Dionysius had to be at least 2 to 4 years off. This is why we say CE (common era [or error]) instead of AD.

So the fact is, the New Year celebrations on January first are, when we get down to it, just complete foolishness. The timing in the year is arbitrary, and commemorates an ancient idol. January is not even a “month” (moon) in the original and true sense of the word. And the count of years is off as well.

In the Scriptures we read of a “**peculiar people**” being called out of the worldly system for a special purpose (**Deuteronomy 14:2; 1 Peter 2:9**). The situation today is not unlike when the Most High took His people out of Egypt.

Though it is not commonly spoken of, the fact is, the common calendar was not invented by Rome. Julius Caesar did not create it out of nothing. The “Egyptian [solar] calendar...was adopted by Julius Caesar to make his Julian Calendar” (Daniel J. Boorstin, *The Discoverers*, p.7).

“The Reform of the calendar by Pope Gregory XIII was needed [only] because the year that Julius Caesar had borrowed from the Egyptians, and which had ruled Western

civilization since then, was not a precise enough measure of the solar cycle” (id.)

Today the common calendar is usually called “Gregorian” but really it is just the Egyptian solar calendar with a bunch of Latin designations and a Pope’s name added. It’s not much different from the calendar Israel had adopted in Egypt. That would be the same calendar Yahweh called them to abandon when He said (in spring at the Exodus), **“This month (moon) is the beginning of months (moons) for you, it is the first month (moon) of the year for you” (Exodus 12:2)**. Remember these things were written as examples, a **“pattern for us” (1 Corinthians 10:5-12)**. The people of our day and age are being held captive by falsehood. Though many do not acknowledge the spiritual nature of their actions they perpetuate them most religiously and constantly. The Master promises us, **You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free (John 8:32)**.

Let us be grateful that we have been made free!

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