



Calendars

by
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If you look above, to the right, you'll see a date of February 2015, but how do we really know that? ... Because the calendar says so! "What calendar?" ...What do you mean what calendar? *The* calendar! "There are lots of calendars—Right now, it's 1436 on the Moslem calendar, 4712 on the Chinese calendar, and 5775 on the Hebrew calendar."

No, no! *Our* calendar! "Oh, you mean the *Gregorian* calendar...You know of course, even *that one* wasn't always our calendar. The Western world didn't start using the Gregorian calendar until 1582. Before that, the West had used the Julian calendar for some 1,600 years, and that was based on the earlier Roman calendar.

That earlier Roman calendar had long months and short months, and March was the first month of the year. The Julian calendar, introduced by Julius Caesar in 46 BC, made some significant changes, notably making the length of the months more even, and making January the first month of the year. Within a few years, the seventh month had been renamed after Julius Caesar, and the eighth month had been renamed after Augustus.

The Gregorian calendar, introduced by Pope Gregory in 1582, was instigated to bring the date for the celebration of Easter to the time of the year in which the First Council of Nicaea had originally agreed upon in 325. It made a .0002% correction to the length of the year. There was also, of course, the realization that Christian Europe was still using a *pagan* calendar, and it was time for a *Christian* calendar!

Everyone didn't agree to make the switch at the same time, of course, and for many years both the Julian and Gregorian calendars were used at the same time. Greece, for example, didn't adopt the Gregorian calendar until 1923. Turkey, in 1927, was the last country to officially make the switch. Other cultures haven't abandoned their own traditional calendars, but, for convenience, most of the world now uses the Gregorian calendar.

So, done! Finished! The world is happy and satisfied! Well, except for one small point...All the years on the Gregorian calendar are wrong! ...Meaning your birthday is wrong, the date on today's newspaper is wrong, all copyright dates are wrong...Every date! They're all *wrong!*

Pope Gregory's scholars used Dionysius's earlier (525 A.D.) calculation of Jesus' birth year, which, on the new Gregorian calendar, was now year 1. However, thanks to discoveries in archaeology, astronomy, etc., we now know that Jesus was actually born between 6-4 B.C., thereby throwing off all the calendar years we now refer to as A.D.

Well, now you know where we get all of our dates, and why!...Which is nice, but what's all that got to do with what's *really* important?...Like collecting matchcovers! ...A lot!

Of course, all the dates on Dated covers come from the Gregorian calendar, but we can get an even closer association. As a matter of fact, we can see parts of the calendar *on* a number of covers, as shown here.

