

Printed in Theological Research Report, Vol. 2, Issue 5, March, 2009

NOAH'S FLOOD AND GOD'S CALENDAR

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August 26, 2008

In light of the recent unprecedented floods in the Midwestern United States, I decided to review the account of Noah's flood in Genesis 7 and 8. This study resulted in bringing to my attention the very detailed recording of the passage of time as the events of the Flood took place. These events are given to us as inspired by Christ, the Word, in a chronology of days and months through which God reveals a system for measuring time that parallels the present calculations of the Hebrew Calendar.

A number of assumptions have been made about how time was measured when the events in the book of Genesis took place, the most prominent being that a year was comprised of twelve 30-day months. According to this view, the forty-two months and the 1260 days that is prophesied in Revelation 11:2-3 are identical. It should be noted, however, that the 42 months of the prophecy in Revelation 11 represent the period of time of the treading down of the Holy City while the 1260 days represent the period of time that the two witnesses prophesy. Neither the assumption that there were originally only 30-day months nor the premise that the moon's orbit originally matched the yearly cycle of the sun is verifiable by this scripture. Many believe that both of these conditions existed at the creation of the world but that through the passage of time and events the relationship of the sun and moon to the earth was altered, giving us the average lunar month of 29 days, 12 hours, 44 minutes, and 3 $\frac{1}{3}$ seconds. However, a study of the scriptural account of the Noachian Flood will demonstrate that the moon's orbit has never changed. The irregularity of its orbit does not allow a calendar with the same number of days in each year.

The rather wobbly orbit of the moon periodically requires the addition of one or two days to the year to keep the months aligned with the phases of the moon, and the length of the moon's orbit periodically requires the addition of a thirteenth month to the year to align the calendar with the solar seasons in order to keep the holy days of God at their appointed times. This intercalary month is necessitated by the yearly cycle of the sun, which is longer than the lunar cycle. All moon-based calendars, including those based

on moon sighting, require some type of intercalation in order to prevent seasonal shifting.

In the Hebrew Calendar, the length of the year is regulated by an established intercalary cycle and by four mathematically-based rules of postponement. When neither intercalation nor postponement is needed, the year is composed of six 30-day months and six 29-day months, which makes a year of 354 days. However, many years have a greater number of days due to the need for intercalation or postponement to align the calendar with the actual positions of the sun and the moon. The necessity to adjust the calendar to the orbits of the sun and moon results in six different lengths of years: defective common years with 353 days, regular common years with 354 days, excessive common years with 355 days, defective leap years with 383 days, regular leap years with 384 days, and excessive leap years with 385 days. Knowing the number of days in a specific year enables us to determine whether or not intercalation or postponement was needed that year. Some years may require both processes in order to keep the calendar in time with the movements of the sun and moon. The excessive leap year of 385 days occurs only when both intercalation and the rules of postponement are applied.

This fact has great bearing on the chronology of days and months in the scriptural account of the Noachian Flood. If the chronological record reveals that the year of the Flood was 385 days in length, it is unequivocally established as an excessive leap year and demonstrates that the calculations of the Hebrew Calendar were in effect many centuries before Moses received them from God. Let us examine the scriptural account of the Flood.

Genesis 7:11: “In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened.” This verse gives us the starting day of the Deluge: the seventeenth day of Iyar, the second month. The fact that the Noachian Flood began in the second month of the year tells us that it was the season of spring.

Some may question this statement in the belief that the seventh month, Tishri, should start the year. They may even claim that Adam and Eve had to have been created in the fall of the year in order for them to have food to eat. But the garden was tropical, or semi-tropical, producing food throughout the

year. Moreover, the calendar that God delivered to Moses clearly began in the spring of the year.

Exodus 12:2: *“This month shall be your beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you.”* God gave Moses specific instructions for determining the beginning point of the year. This is the first of many scriptures designating the time that God ordained to start the year.

It should be noted that at this time Moses was not in Jerusalem but in the land of Goshen. According to some, Jerusalem is the only geographical area from which to sight the new moon of the first month. In addition, when God gave His instructions to Moses, the first month had already begun. As the new moon had already arrived, it was too late for Moses to determine the beginning of the year by observation. Instead, Moses received instructions from God for determining the months of the year by calculation.

According to the calculations of the Hebrew Calendar, the first month of the year is composed of 30 days. The account of the Flood states that the forty days of rain started on the seventeenth day of the second month, revealing the passage of 46 days from the first day of the year to the beginning of the Flood. Genesis 7:11: *“In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened.”*

The breaking up of the fountains of the deep depicts massive earthquakes releasing immeasurable quantities of water, producing incredible tsunamis and storms of violence that modern man has never witnessed. No man-made shelter could have withstood the enormity of the violence that passed over the face of the earth. Verse 12: *“And the rain was on the earth forty days and forty nights.”*

This verse records that the initial length of the outpouring of water was forty days, and Genesis 7:17 confirms it: *“Now the flood was on the earth forty days. The waters increased and lifted up the ark, and it rose high above the earth.”*

Note that it was the accumulation of water during the forty days that resulted in lifting the Ark high above the earth. The description in Verses 17 through 23 is relating what took place as a result of the forty days of rain and

the breaking up of the fountains of the deep. At the end of forty days, the Ark was fifteen cubits above the highest mountain (v. 20).

Genesis 7:24: *“And the waters prevailed on the earth one hundred and fifty days.”* The basic meaning of the Hebrew word that is translated “prevailed” is to be “strong, mighty” (Brown, Driver and Briggs, p. 149). The waters did not prevail over the earth on the first or second day of the Flood. They prevailed at the end of the forty days when the Flood reached its maximum depth, making the one hundred and fifty days of prevailing consecutive to the forty days of rain. Both periods of time need to be included in order to determine the total length of time of the events of the Flood.

As recorded in the scriptural account, God did not allow the level of the Flood waters to drop until they had prevailed for one hundred and fifty days. He prevented this by sending additional rain and by bringing up waters from the fountains of the deep. God caused the waters to continue for one hundred and fifty days to maintain the level at fifteen cubits above the highest mountains. This ensured the death of all air-breathing life on land.

Genesis 8:1-3: *“Then God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the animals that were with him in the ark. And God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters subsided. The fountains of the deep and the windows of heaven were also stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained. And the waters receded continually from the earth. At the end of the one hundred and fifty days the waters decreased.”*

These verses describe the process by which God began to dry up the Flood waters. This process continued for an extended period of time as demonstrated by the word translated “decreased” or “abated”²⁶³⁷ at the end of Verse 3. This word is used in the account to describe the removal of the waters from the flooded earth. Gesenius gives the following definition of this word: *“(1) To be devoid of anything, to lack, to be without, followed by an accusative.”* As we continue to examine the scriptural account, we will learn the exact length of time that it took for the waters of the Flood to recede and the ground to become dry.

Genesis 8:4: *“Then the ark rested in the seventh month, the seventeenth day of the month, on the mountains of Ararat.”* This verse gives the impression that the Ark settled down on the mountains of Ararat because

the waters had started to decrease. However, for the Ark to rest on the ground would have required the depth of the water to have fallen considerably. The highest mountains were covered to a depth of fifteen cubits—not a great depth until you consider that fifteen cubits of water above Mt. Everest at 29,000 feet would make a depth of more than two miles above Mt. Ararat at 17,000 feet.

In addition, consider that the date given for this occurrence, the seventh month, the seventeenth day, was only 194 days into the six hundredth year (Nisan 1 through Tishri 17). However, the scriptural account records that 236 days of that year had passed before God started to dry up the Flood waters (46 plus 40 plus 150 equals 236). If you figure that the forty days of rain were part of the 150 days, the total would still be 196 days before the waters began to decrease. It was therefore impossible for the Ark to have been lodged on the ground on the seventeenth day of the seventh month as the waters had not yet begun to decrease.

What then is the meaning of the word “rested” in Genesis 8:4? The word “rested” ⁵¹¹⁷ is describing a stopping of movement or activity. The same Hebrew word is used in Exodus 20:11: “*God rested on the seventh day.*” His activity or movement ended.

The use of this word in Genesis 8:4 tells us that the Ark remained immobile at a specific location. It was no longer rolling and plunging through churning, turbulent Flood waters. The winds that had driven it ceased to blow, the waves subsided, and the waters surrounding the Ark became calm and placid. The Ark came to a stop as if God had anchored it above the tops of the mountains. God maintained the location of the Ark at Mt. Ararat not because it was physically stuck but because God wanted it there. It did not settle upon the ground until after the waters had fully abated from their two-mile depth above Mt. Ararat.

The scriptural account reveals that the decreasing of the waters took place gradually over the remaining months of the year. To determine the total passage of time in the account of the Flood, it is necessary to know the exact date that the last of the waters dried up. This date is recorded in Genesis 8:13: “*And it came to pass in the six hundredth and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, that the waters were dried up from the earth; and Noah removed the covering of the ark and looked, and indeed the surface of the ground was dry.*” This verse tells us that the waters were

dried up on the first day of the six hundredth and first year, and Noah's removal of the covering confirmed this fact. This state of dryness was reached exactly one hundred and fifty days from the time that the waters had ceased to prevail.

It should be noted at this point that counting the initial forty days of the Flood as part of the one hundred and fifty days of the waters prevailing would make the six hundredth year only 345 days in length (46 days to the beginning of the Flood plus 150 days of the waters prevailing plus 150 days of the waters decreasing equals 346 days, minus 1 day for the first day of the 601st year equals 345 days). There is no yearly cycle, either calculated or observed, that would fit a 345-day year. This fact confirms that the 40 days of rain and the 150 days of the waters prevailing were two separate periods of time, just as the 150 days of the waters abating were separate from the 150 days of the waters prevailing. These three periods of time extended from the second month of the six hundredth year of Noah's life to the first month of his six hundredth and first year. Genesis 8:13: *"And it came to pass in the six hundredth and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, that the waters were dried up from the earth; and Noah removed the covering of the ark and looked, and indeed the surface of the ground was dry."*

This verse states that on the first day of the first month all the Flood waters were gone and the earth was dry, but the scriptural account extends beyond this point. Genesis 8:14: *"And in the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth was dried."* This verse may seem to contradict the preceding verse, but the word used in Verse 13 to describe the dryness of the earth does not have the same meaning as the word used in Verse 14. The Hebrew word that is translated "dried" and "dry"²⁷¹⁷ in Verse 13 is *chareb*. However, the Hebrew word translated "dry"³⁰⁰¹ in Verse 14 is *yabesh*. Gesenius notes that these two Hebrew words represent different levels of dryness. The first denotes an absence of water, and the second represents a condition more akin to that of a lack of moisture, or withered. Verse 13 depicts a condition of no standing water whereas Verse 14 is describing dry soil that is no longer saturated. This stage of dryness was reached 56 days after the Flood waters dried up.

The account records that Noah remained in the Ark until the earth reached this second stage of dryness. There was good reason for waiting to leave the Ark until the soil had dried. If Noah had released the animals

before the ground was dry, the elephants and other large animals might have gotten bogged down and entrapped in mud.

After the withdrawal of the Flood waters and drying of the ground, the earth was prepared to receive the survivors of the Flood. They had entered the Ark on the seventeenth day of the second month in the six hundredth year of Noah's life. Below is a computation of the number of days that passed in the year of the Flood.

Gen. 7:11	Flood begins on 17 th day of 2 nd month (30 days in the 1 st month plus 16 days in the 2 nd)	46 days
Gen. 7:12	Rain for 40 days and 40 nights	40 days
Gen. 7:24	Waters prevail	150 days
Gen. 8:3	Waters abate	150 days
	Total:	386 days
Gen. 8:13	Water dried on first day of the next year	-1 day
Total:	385 days	

The chronological facts that are recorded in the account in the book of Genesis clearly establish a period of 385 days in the year of the Noachian Flood. This year length is significant because it is the exact number of days required for an excessive leap year in the Hebrew Calendar. This remarkable account of the Flood, which God inspired to be recorded in his Word, is indisputable evidence that the Hebrew Calendar bears His stamp of approval. There can be no doubt that the calculations of the Hebrew Calendar have been the basis of God's true calendar from the beginning.