

WHICH CALENDAR DID NOAH USE?

Many questions have been raised concerning the keeping of time before and during the flood. Some have speculated that planetary motions were different and that a lunar month was then exactly 30 days. Others have suggested that two calendars were used--one a solar calendar for business purposes, another a solar-lunar calendar for religious purposes.

Does the Bible really say that Noah used a 30-day month calendar? Why did the flood begin and end on such seemingly arbitrary dates as the 17th day of the second month and the 17th day of the seventh month? Or are these dates arbitrary?

In the following we shall see that Noah had to use a solar-lunar calendar and that the dates of the flood do have significance.

First of all, let us consider the possibility of a calendar ^{having} being 30-day months. A superficial reading of Genesis 7:11 and 8:3-4 would seem to indicate that the flood lasted five 30-day months. But notice that Genesis 8:3 says, "...and after the end of the hundred and fifty days the waters were abated," which indicates, together with Verse 4, that the ark rested at the end of the 17th day of the seventh month. For there to have been a full 150 days, no more, no less, the flood would have to begin at the beginning of the 17th day of the second month (Gen. 7:11).

Now what would happen if we tried to use 30-day months? The end of the 17th day of the second month would be one full day, the 18th--two days, the 19th--three days, the 20th--four days, the 30th--14 days, the 1st day of the third month--15 days, the 1st day of the seventh

month--135 days, the 2nd day of the seventh month--136 days, and the end of the 17th day of the seventh month--151 days! One day too many!

On the other hand, suppose the Sacred Calendar is used. The first seven months have fixed lengths of 30, 29, 30, 29, 30, 29, and 30 days. If we tried to use this calendar for counting the 150 days we would come up ^{two} to days short.

In order to come out right, there has to be exactly one 29-day month. How can this be? There is still one more fact to consider. The first month of the sacred year, Nisan, was not always considered to be the first month of the year (Ex. 12:2). Prior to the Exodus the seventh month, Tishri, was the first month of the year. To this very day the first of Tishri is called "Jewish New Year's Day." Even the computation of the Sacred Calendar is based on the first of Tishri, not the first of Nisan.

If we use Tishri for the first month, the first six months of the year correspond to the 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th of the sacred year. Of these, only the 10th must have exactly 29 days. All the others either must be or could be 30 days--but, so that the 12th month has 30 days and not 29 days, there must be a thirteenth month of 29 days. Therefore, for there to be a full 150 days beginning at the beginning of the 17th day of the second month and ending at the end of the 17th day of the seventh month, the "second" month must be the eighth month and the "seventh" month must be the thirteenth month of the sacred year.

To complete the picture let us see why these two dates were chosen for the beginning and end of the flood. From the end of the Last Great

Day (22 Tishri) to the beginning of the flood (17 Heshvan), there are 24 days and from the end of the flood (17 Veadar) to the Passover (14 Nisan), there are 25 days. Therefore, the flood was placed right in the middle of the long dead period between the last fall Festival and the first spring Festival.

What better time for the flood? If it were even just a few weeks earlier or later some Holy Days would have had to be held during the flood--hardly a festival atmosphere--a rocking ark, smelly beasts, etc. God does everything else on time--why not the flood?

Moreover, is it not fitting that this present age should have begun on the first of Tishri (Gen. 8:13) just as it very likely will come to a crashing climax on that same day (Rev. 11:15)?