

The Period of the Deluge

WHILST DOING WORK in connection with the proposed Concordant Version of the Hebrew Scriptures, and in particular with the passage relating to the Deluge, it was observed that the Septuagint, that is the Greek translation, differed in some details of the dates. In our Authorized Version in Genesis 7:11 we have "the seventeenth day of the second month." This represents the current Hebrew text, but the Septuagint rendering is twenty-seven, or, what is more to the point, the text from which the Septuagint was translated had twenty-seven. The same features apply also to the words "seventeenth day" of our Authorized Version in chapter 8, verse 4. On the other hand, in chapter 8, verse 14, our Authorized Version has "seven and twentieth day" from the Hebrew, and this instance agrees with the Septuagint.

Another detail of difference is that in chapter 8, verse 4, our Authorized Version, representing the Hebrew, has the words "tenth month" twice. But for the second of these the Septuagint has "eleventh month."

The real basis of our investigation of the Old Testament Scriptures is of course the Hebrew text, but reflection upon the value, or otherwise, of these differences in the Septuagint, suggested the query as to whether there was internal evidence in the record that would indicate a preference for one rather than the other. The thought arose: Are the details equivalent to or comparable with a vessel's log-book, and if so, would the various items fill up the whole period?

It will be seen that the Hebrew, and with it the Authorized Version, give the period of Noah's confinement to the ark as one year and eleven days, but the Septuagint gives exactly one year. The vocabulary of our proposed Concordant translation was sufficiently decided to permit consideration of the particulars of the passage, so, with this assistance, the matter was examined, and the following gives the procedure and the result.

Jehovah God is locking the ark about Noah and his family in the year six hundred of Noah's life (7:10,13,16). This was on the twenty-seventh day of the second month.

Jehovah God is speaking to Noah and his family to fare forth from the ark on the twenty-seventh day of the second month of year six hundred and one of Noah's life (Gen.8:13-15).

Thus Noah and his family and whatsoever was with him in the ark were there for the period of one year. Now a year in the scriptures has 360 days. How do the details given of the dates and periods compare with the above? If we carefully examine the various statements we will find that they are in the fullest agreement.

Seven days after the entry into the ark the springs of the vast abyss are rent, and the crevices of the heavens are opened, and the downpour is coming on the earth forty days and forty nights (Gen.7:11,12,17). The water increased exceedingly and is having the mastery till it is fifteen cubits above the lofty mountains (Gen.7:17-20). All in the drained area died (7:22). Only Noah and that which is with him in the ark remained (7:23). The water is lofty on the earth for 150 days (7:24).

Then the water is subsiding, for God passes a wind over the earth, and the springs of the abyss are held in check, and the downpour from the heavens is shut up. From the end of 150 days, the water is abating; it is going and returning off the earth (Gen.8:1-3).

The ark rests on the mountains of Ararat in the seventh month, on the twenty-seventh day. This is exactly five months from the entry into the ark, or the 150 days mentioned above (8:4). Moreover, the abating proceeds until the tenth month, and on the first day of the eleventh month the heads of the mountains

appear (8:5). This gives us three days to complete the seventh month, with thirty days from months eight, nine and ten, which with the one day of the eleventh month, totals 94 days. So we add a further 94 days to the 150, making 244, and leaving a period of 116 days before the exit from the ark.

At the end of forty days, Noah is opening the window of the ark and is sending forth a raven to see if the water on the earth is slight (8:6,7), and it returns not until the drying of the waters off the earth. Noah also sends a dove after it, to see if the water is slight above the surface of the ground. The dove finds no resting place and returns (8:8,9). Here we have two quite short periods, one the time between the sending forth of the raven and the sending forth of the dove, and the other the time the dove was away. These we will decide later. We need however to add the forty days to make 284 days and so leave 76 yet to be filled.

Noah waits further another seven days and sends out the dove. It returns at evening time with an olive leaf in its mouth (8:10). Thus Noah knows that the waters are slight above the earth (8:11). Here we can add seven plus one, the latter being the day the dove is away on this occasion, or eight days, making our total now to be 292, and leaving 68 days still to be accounted for.

Noah waits a further seven days and again sends out the dove. This time it returns no more (8:12). We add this seven, making 299 and reduce our remainder to 61.

In the year six hundred and one of Noah's life, in the first month, and day one, the water drains off the earth. And Noah removes the covering of the ark (8:12). Now from this date to the next (8:14), viz. month two and day twenty-seven, is equal to 57 days, that is, thirty plus twenty-seven from months one and two. So that adding this number to the 299 we reach 356, and reduce our remainder to four days. Two of these days can reasonably be allocated for the sending out of the raven before sending out the first dove, and two days for the sending of this first dove to make its search when it finds no place for the sole of its foot. Thus we account for the whole of the 360 days stated by the dates, as adjusted by the evidence from the Septuagint, for the beginning and the ending of Noah's residence in the ark in view of the waters of the deluge.

It is suggested that this method of procedure for the Concordant Version of the Old Testament, in which the Hebrew is carefully compared with the evidence of the Septuagint, is vindicated by results such as the above, and it is hoped that the faith of God's saints in His word may indeed be confirmed thereby, and their understanding facilitated and enhanced.

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