

BETWEEN THE LINES

A Deeper Look...

#922- LEARNING GOD'S TIME: Making Sacred Events

The study of time increments in the Scripture is a fascinating, challenging, and rewarding effort. There are many stories related to specific time elements.

- We have the distinct stories related to specific hours of the day (i.e. the crucifixion, the "Midnight Cry" of Matthew 25, etc.).
- There are blocks of days that delineate episodes. (Curiously, these are most commonly three, seven, or forty.)
- Months seem to appear almost exclusively in the demarcation of daily events (i.e. "on the 10th day of the 7th month", etc.)
- Years are (i.e. the prophecy of seventy years of captivity in Babylon and the marking of historic happenings... "in the fourteenth year of Solomon", etc.). In two distinct ways "years" also get jumbled with the term "days" at times. One way is in genealogical listings (i.e. "all the days of Methuselah were nine hundred and sixty nine"). The other is in the traditional prophetic year/day principal of Numbers 14 and Ezekiel 4.

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#### **The Week- A block of time without any natural sign:**

As we have discussed, there is no natural, astronomical phenomenon that marks out the weekly cycle. The sky doesn't turn green every seven days and dogs don't sing "Auld Lang Syne" or "Three Blind Mice" every Sabbath.

Though God sets other markings of time to be related to the celestial bodies in Genesis 1 He seems to be absolutely arbitrary in the demarcation of a seven-day week. So, other than the lingering generational memory of the creation account there seems to be no logical justification for a seven-day weekly cycle. The seven-day week really is not a good fraction of a month or of a year.

But there are so many Biblical stories that come from the basis of a "seven day" focus. Let's just reiterate some of the ones that are found in the *Torah* (Pentateuch/Five Books of Moses)...

- Genesis 7- Noah waited for seven days in the ark.
- Genesis 8- There was one last, waiting week in the ark.
- Genesis 17/18- Circumcision after the first full week of life.
- Exodus 7- The first plague on the Nile lasted one week.
- Exodus 12/13- A *Kashering* (cleansing) week in *Pesah* (Passover).
- Exodus 16- Manna was tied to the weekly cycle.
- Exodus 20- The Sabbath is affirmed as law.
- Exodus 22- Offering of first-born delayed one week.
- Exodus 24- Moses called into the Presence after one week.
- Exodus 29- Priests served in "active duty" for one week at a time. Consecration period for the new Sanctuary.
- Exodus 31- Reaffirmation of Sabbath command.
- Exodus 34- Reaffirmation of *Pesach* regulations.
- Leviticus 8- Separation/Consecration period for Priests.
- Leviticus 12- Time of ritual release due to ritual impurity.
- Leviticus 13-15- Increments for condemnation and release of leper.
- Leviticus 23- *Pesah*, *Yom Kippur* (Atonement) and *Sukkot* (Tabernacles).

- Leviticus 22- First-born offering delay reaffirmed.
- Numbers 12- Miriam fulfills Leviticus 13-15 demands.
- Numbers 19- Pollution by contact with corpse.
- Numbers 28- Pesach again defined.
- Numbers 29- Yom Kippur reaffirmed.
- Numbers 31- Reminder of the ritual uncleanness of dealing with a corpse.

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The Jewish Calendar: Here, for your interest and information, is a comparison of a random Jewish Calendar Year (5756) as it related to the western calendar (September of 1995 through August of 1996...)

Tishrei	(September 25-October 24)	
	<i>Rosh Hashanah</i> - September 25	(Head of the Year)
	<i>Yom Kippur</i> - October 4	(Atonement)
	<i>Sukkot</i> - October 9-17	(Booths/Tabernacles)
	<i>Simchat Torah</i> - October 17	(Conclusion of Tabernacles)
Cheshvan	(October 25-November 23)	
Kislev	(November 24-December 23)	
	<i>Hanukkah</i> - December 17-25	(Festival of Lights)
Tevet	(December 24-January 21)	
Shevat	(January 22-February 20)	
Adar	(February 21-March 20)	
	<i>Purim</i> - March 4-6	(Esther Festival)
Nisan	(March 21-April 19)	
	<i>Pesah</i> - April 2-11	(Passover)
	<i>Yom Hashoah</i> - April 16	(Holocaust Remembrance Day)
Iyar	(April 20-May 18)	
	Israel's Independence Day- April 24	
Sivan	(May 19-June 16)	
	<i>Shavuot</i> - May 23-25	(Weeks/Pentecost)
Tammuz	(June 18-July 16)	
Av	(July 17-August 15)	
Elul	(August 16-September 13)	

Conclusion: It is interesting to remember that time is only a human issue. God is above time... timeless. We are mortal and therefore we mark days and years and the progress of time. "He alone has immortality..." (**I Timothy 6**).

What difference is a penny to someone worth billions and billions of dollars? But, He knows that time is important to us and so He deals with us in concepts that we understand and measure.

What a gracious God! Let's plan to praise Him until "time is no more"!