

## ~YEAR (498)

[Hebrew, *sha-nah'*, Greek, *e-ni-au-tos'*]

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- The principal Hebrew word for year, *sha-nah'*, comes from a root meaning, repeat, do again, and, like its Greek counterpart *e-ni-au-tos'*, carries the idea of a cycle of time. On earth it is the recurrence of the seasons that visibly marks the completion of the annual periods, the seasons, in turn, are governed by the earth's revolutions around the sun.
- The Creator, therefore, provided the means for measuring time in terms of years by placing the earth in its assigned orbit, with the earth's axis positioned at an inclined angle in relation to its plane of travel around the sun.
- A convenient means for subdividing the year into shorter periods is also provided by the regular phases of the moon. These facts are indicated early in the Bible record.
- And God went on to say; Let luminaries come to be in the expanse of the heavens to make a division between the day and the night, and they must serve as signs and for seasons and for days and years. (Genesis 1:14)
- And they must serve as luminaries in the expanse of the heavens to shine upon the earth. And it came to be so. (Genesis 1:15)
- And God proceeded to make the two great luminaries, the greater luminary for dominating the day and the lesser luminary for dominating the night, and also the stars. (Genesis 1:16)
- For all the days the earth continues, seed sowing and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, will never cease. (Genesis 8:22)

- From the beginning, man made use of these divinely provided time indicators, measuring time in terms of **years** subdivided into months.
- This is the book of Adam's history. In the day of God's creating Adam he made him in the likeness of God. (**Genesis 5:1**)
- Male and female he created them. After that he blessed them and called their name Man in the day of their being created. (**Genesis 5:2**)
- And Adam lived on for a hundred and thirty **years**. Then he became father to a son in his likeness, in his image, and called his name Seth. (**Genesis 5:3**)
- And the days of Adam after his fathering Seth came to be eight hundred **years**. Meanwhile he became father to sons and daughters. (**Genesis 5:4**)
- So all the days of Adam that he lived amounted to nine hundred and thirty **years** and he died. (**Genesis 5:5**)
- And Seth lived on for a hundred and five **years**. Then he became father to Enosh. (**Genesis 5:6**)
- And after his fathering Enosh Seth continued to live eight hundred and seven **years**. Meanwhile he became father to sons and daughters. (**Genesis 5:7**)
- So all the days of Seth amounted to nine hundred and twelve **years** and he died. (**Genesis 5:8**)
- And Enosh lived on for ninety **years**. Then he became father to Kenan. (**Genesis 5:9**)
- And after his fathering Kenan Enosh continued to live eight hundred and fifteen **years**. Meanwhile he became father to sons and daughters. (**Genesis 5:10**)
- So all the days of Enosh amounted to nine hundred and five **years** and he died. (**Genesis 5:11**)
- And Kenan lived on for seventy **years**. Then he became father to Mahalalel. (**Genesis 5:12**)

- And after his fathering Mahalalel Kenan continued to live eight hundred and forty **years**. Meanwhile he became father to sons and daughters. (**Genesis 5:13**)
- So all the days of Kenan amounted to nine hundred and ten **years** and he died. (**Genesis 5:14**)
- And Mahalalel lived on for sixty-five **years**. Then he became father to Jared. (**Genesis 5:15**)
- And after his fathering Jared Mahalalel continued to live eight hundred and thirty **years**. Meanwhile he became father to sons and daughters. (**Genesis 5:16**)
- So all the days of Mahalalel amounted to eight hundred and ninety-five **years** and he died. (**Genesis 5:17**)
- And Jared lived on for a hundred and sixty-two **years**. Then he became father to Enoch. (**Genesis 5:18**)
- And after his fathering Enoch Jared continued to live eight hundred **years**. Meanwhile he became father to sons and daughters. (**Genesis 5:19**)
- So all the days of Jared amounted to nine hundred and sixty-two **years** and he died. (**Genesis 5:20**)
- And Enoch lived on for sixty-five **years**. Then he became father to Methu (**Genesis 5:21**)
- And after his fathering Methuselah Enoch went on walking with the true God three hundred **years**. Meanwhile he became father to sons and daughters. (**Genesis 5:22**)
- So all the days of Enoch amounted to three hundred and sixty-five **years**. (**Genesis 5:23**)
- And Enoch kept walking with the true God. Then he was no more, for God took him. (**Genesis 5:24**)
- And Methuselah lived on for a hundred and eighty-seven **years**. Then he became father to Lamech. (**Genesis 5:25**)

- And after his fathering Lamech Methuselah continued to live seven hundred and eighty-two **years**. Meanwhile he became father to sons and daughters. (**Genesis 5:26**)
- So all the days of Methuselah amounted to nine hundred and sixty-nine **years** and he died. (**Genesis 5:27**)
- And Lamech lived on for a hundred and eighty-two **years**. Then he became father to a son. (**Genesis 5:28**)
- And he proceeded to call his name Noah, saying; This one will bring us comfort from our work and from the pain of our hands resulting from the ground which Yehowah has cursed. (**Genesis 5:29**)
- And after his fathering Noah Lamech continued to live five hundred and ninety-five **years**. Meanwhile he became father to sons and daughters. (**Genesis 5:30**)
- So all the days of Lamech amounted to seven hundred and seventy-seven **years** and he died. (**Genesis 5:31**)
- And Noah got to be five hundred **years** old. After that Noah became father to Shem, Ham and Japheth. (**Genesis 5:32**)
- Most ancient peoples used a **year** of 12 lunar months. The common lunar year has 354 days, with the months having 29 or 30 days, depending on the appearance of each new moon. It is, therefore, about 11 1/4 days short of the true solar year of 365 1/4 days (365 days 5 hours 48 minutes and 46 seconds)

### · In Noah's Time

- In Noah's time we have the first record of the ancient reckoning of the length of the **year**. He evidently divided the year into 12 months of 30 days each.
- In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on this day all the springs of the vast watery deep were broken open and the floodgates of the heavens were opened. (**Genesis 7:11**)
- And the waters continued overwhelming the earth a hundred and fifty days. (**Genesis 7:24**)

- And the waters began receding from off the earth, progressively receding, and at the end of a hundred and fifty days the waters were lacking. ([Genesis 8:3](#))
- And in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. ([Genesis 8:4](#))
- And the waters kept on progressively lessening until the tenth month. In the tenth month, on the first of the month, the tops of the mountains appeared. ([Genesis 8:5](#))
- The log that Noah kept shows 150 days to be equal to five months. In this account the second, seventh, and tenth months of the year of the Flood are directly mentioned.
- Then, following the tenth month and its first day, a period of 40 days occurs, as well as two periods of 7 days each, or a total of 54 days.
- And the waters kept on progressively lessening until the tenth month. In the tenth month, on the first of the month, the tops of the mountains appeared. ([Genesis 8:5](#))
- So it occurred that at the end of forty days Noah proceeded to open the window of the ark that he had made. ([Genesis 8:6](#))
- After that he sent out a raven, and it continued flying outdoors, going and returning, until the waters dried off the earth. ([Genesis 8:7](#))
- Later he sent out from him a dove to see whether the waters had abated from the surface of the ground. ([Genesis 8:8](#))
- And the dove did not find any resting-place for the sole of its foot, and so it returned to him into the ark because the waters were yet upon the surface of the whole earth. At that he put his hand out and took it and brought it to himself inside the ark. ([Genesis 8:9](#))
- And he went on waiting still another seven days, and once again he sent out the dove from the ark. ([Genesis 8:10](#))
- Later on the dove came to him about the time of evening and,

look! There was an olive leaf freshly plucked in its bill, and so Noah got to know that the waters had abated from the earth. (Genesis 8:11)

- And he went on waiting still another seven days. Then he sent out the dove, but it did not come back again to him anymore. (Genesis 8:12)
- There is also an indeterminate time between the sending forth of the raven and the first sending forth of the dove.
- So it occurred that at the end of forty days Noah proceeded to open the window of the ark that he had made. (Genesis 8:6)
- After that he sent out a raven, and it continued flying outdoors, going and returning, until the waters dried off the earth. (Genesis 8:7)
- Later he sent out from him a dove to see whether the waters had abated from the surface of the ground. (Genesis 8:8)
- Likewise another indeterminate period is indicated following the third and final sending forth of the dove at;
- And he went on waiting still another seven days. Then he sent out the dove, but it did not come back again to him anymore. (Genesis 8:12)
- In the following verse, we find the first day of the first month of the following **year** mentioned.
- Now in the six hundred and first **year**, in the first month, on the first day of the month, it came about that the waters had drained from off the earth, and Noah proceeded to remove the covering of the ark and to look, and here the surface of the ground had drained dry. (Genesis 8:13)

What method Noah or those prior to him used to reconcile a year made up of 30-day months with the solar year is not revealed.

.. Egypt And Babylon

- In ancient Egypt the **year** was made up of 12 months of 30 days each, and five additional days were added annually to bring the year into harmony with the solar year.
- The Babylonians, on the other hand, held to a lunar year but added a 13th month, called Veadar, during certain years to maintain the seasons in line with the months to which they normally corresponded.
- Such a year is called a lunisolar or bound year and obviously is sometimes shorter and sometimes longer than the true solar year, depending on whether the lunar year has 12 or 13 months.

### •• The Metonic Cycle

- At some point the system of adding an intercalary, or 13th, month seven times every 19 **years** was developed, giving almost exactly the same result as 19 true solar **years**. This cycle came to be called the Metonic cycle after the Greek mathematician Meton of the **Fifth Century B.C.E.**

### •• The Hebrews

- The Bible does not say whether this was the system the Hebrews originally employed to reconcile their lunar **year** with the solar **year**. The fact that the recorded names of their lunar months are seasonal names shows they did make some such reconciliation.
- Twice each **year** the sun's center crosses the equator, and at those times day and night are everywhere of equal length, approximately 12 hours of daylight and 12 hours of darkness.
- These two times are called the vernal, or spring, equinox and the autumnal, or fall, equinox. They occur about March 21 and September 23 of each of our present calendar **years**.
- These equinoctial occurrences could logically provide the means for noting when the lunar months were running too far ahead of the related seasons and thus serve as a guide for making the needed adjustment by the addition of an intercalary month.
- The **years** were anciently reckoned as running from autumn to autumn, the first month starting around the middle of our present month of September.

- This coincides with the Jewish tradition that the creation of man took place in the autumn. Since the Bible provides a record of Adam's age in terms of **years**.
- And Adam lived on for a hundred and thirty **years**. Then he became father to a son in his likeness, in his image, and called his name Seth. (**Genesis 5:3**)
- And the days of Adam after his fathering Seth came to be eight hundred **years**. Meanwhile he became father to sons and daughters. (**Genesis 5:4**)
- So all the days of Adam that he lived amounted to nine hundred and thirty **years** and he died. (**Genesis 5:5**)
- It is reasonable that the count began with the time of his creation, and if this indeed occurred in the autumn, it would explain to some extent the ancient practice of beginning the new **year** at that time.
- Additionally, however, such a year would be particularly suited to the agricultural life of the people, especially in that part of the earth where both the pre-Flood and early post-Flood peoples were concentrated.
- The year closed with the final harvest period and began with the plowing and sowing toward the first part of our month of October.

## .. A Sacred And A Secular Year

- God changed the **years** beginning for the nation of Israel at the time of their Exodus from Egypt, decreeing that it should begin with the month of Abib, or Nisan, in the spring.
- Yehowah now said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt: (**Exodus 12:1**)
- This month will be the start of the months for you. It will be the first of the months of the **year** for you. (**Exodus 12:2**)
- Speak to the entire assembly of Israel, saying; On the tenth day of this month they are to take for themselves each one a sheep for the ancestral house, a sheep to a house. (**Exodus 12:3**)



- But if the household proves to be too small for the sheep, then he and his neighbor close by must take it into his house according to the number of souls. You should compute each one proportionate to his eating as regards the sheep. (**Exodus 12:4**)
- The sheep should prove to be sound, a male, a **year** old, for you. You may pick from the young rams or from the goats. (**Exodus 12:5**)
- And it must continue under safeguard by you until the fourteenth day of this month, and the whole congregation of the assembly of Israel must slaughter it between the two evenings. (**Exodus 12:6**)
- And they must take some of the blood and splash it upon the two doorposts and the upper part of the doorway belonging to the houses in which they will eat it. (**Exodus 12:7**)
- And they must eat the flesh on this night. They should eat it roasted with fire and with unfermented cakes along with bitter greens. (**Exodus 12:8**)
- Do not eat any of it raw or boiled, cooked in water, but roast with fire, its head together with its shanks and its interior parts. (**Exodus 12:9**)
- And you must not leave any of it over till morning, but what is left over of it till morning you should burn with fire. (**Exodus 12:10**)
- And in this way you should eat it, with your hips girded, sandals on your feet and your staff in your hand, and you must eat it in haste. It is Yehowah's Passover. (**Exodus 12:11**)
- And I must pass through the land of Egypt on this night and strike every firstborn in the land of Egypt, from man to beast, and on all the gods of Egypt I shall execute judgments. I am Yehowah. (**Exodus 12:12**)
- And the blood must serve as your sign upon the houses where you are, and I must see the blood and pass over you, and the plague will not come on you as a ruination when I strike at the land of Egypt. (**Exodus 12:13**)

- **And this day must serve as a memorial for you, and you must celebrate it as a festival to Yehowah throughout your generations. As a statute to time indefinite you should celebrate it. (Exodus 12:14)**
- **You will keep the festival of unfermented cakes. You will eat unfermented cakes seven days, just as I have commanded you, at the appointed time in the month of Abib, because in it you came out of Egypt. And they must not appear before me empty-handed. (Exodus 23:15)**
- **The autumn, or fall, of the **year**, however, continued to mark the beginning of their secular or agricultural year. Thus, at,**
- **Also, the festival of harvest of the first ripe fruits of your labors, of what you sow in the field, and the festival of ingathering at the outgoing of the year, when you gather in your labors from the field. (Exodus 23:16)**
- **The Festival of Ingathering, which took place in the autumn in the month of Ethanim, the seventh month of the sacred calendar, is spoken of as being at, the outgoing of the year and at;**
- **And you will carry on your festival of weeks with the first ripe fruits of the wheat harvest, and the festival of ingathering at the turn of the **year**. (Exodus 34:22)**
- **As at the turn of the year. Likewise, the regulations concerning the Jubilee years show that they began in the autumn month of Ethanim.**
- **And you must count for yourself seven Sabbaths of **years**, seven times seven years, and the days of the seven Sabbaths of years must amount to forty-nine years for you. (Leviticus 25:8)**
- **And you must cause the horn of loud tone to sound in the seventh month on the tenth of the month, on the day of atonement you people should cause the horn to sound in all your land. (Leviticus 25:9)**
- **And you must sanctify the fiftieth **year** and proclaim liberty in the land to all its inhabitants. It will become a Jubilee for you, and you must return each one to his possession and you should**

return each one to his family. (**Leviticus 25:10**)

- A Jubilee is what that fiftieth **year** will become for you. You must not sow seed nor reap the lands growth from spilled kernels nor gather the grapes of its unpruned vines. (**Leviticus 25:11**)
- For it is a Jubilee. It should become something holy to you. From the field you may eat what the land produces. (**Leviticus 25:12**)
- In this **year** of the Jubilee you should return each one to his possession. (**Leviticus 25:13**)
- Now in case you should sell merchandise to your associate or be buying from your associates hand, do not you wrong one another. (**Leviticus 25:14**)
- By the number of the **years** after the Jubilee you should buy from your associate, by the number of the years of the crops he should sell to you. (**Leviticus 25:15**)
- In proportion to the great number of **years** he should increase its purchase value, and in proportion to the fewness of years he should reduce its purchase value, because the number of the crops is what he is selling to you. (**Leviticus 25:16**)
- And you must not wrong anyone his associate, and you must be in fear of your God, because I am Yehowah your God. (**Leviticus 25:17**)
- So you must carry out my statutes and you should keep my judicial decisions and you must carry them out. Then you will certainly dwell on the land in security. (**Leviticus 25:18**)
- The Jewish historian Josephus of the **First Century C.E.**, says that the sacred **year**, beginning in the spring, was used with regard to religious observances but that the original secular **year**, beginning in the fall, continued to be used with regard to selling, buying, and other ordinary affairs. [**Jewish Antiquities, I, 81 [iii, 3]**]
- This double system of a sacred and a secular year is especially prominent in the postexilic period following the release of the Jews from Babylon.

- The first day of Nisan, or Abib, marked the start of the sacred year, and the first day of Tishri, or Ethanim, marked the beginning of the secular year. In each case, what was the first month of one calendar became the seventh of the other.

**See Also CALENDAR**