

5. Did the 5th Century BCE Jews on Elephantine Island Reckon the Scriptural Year from Fall-to-Fall?

In his attempt to present historical evidence supporting the Jewish practice of reckoning a fall-to-fall calendar, Glenn turns to the 5th century Jews who lived on Elephantine Island. What follows is Glenn's explanation¹, accompanied by his support references:

There is more historical evidence for a fall-to-fall calendar being used by the Hebrews. Just prior to and after the Babylonian captivity, many Jews fled to Egypt. In Egypt, a temple and fortifications were constructed on an island called Elephantine Island (an island in Upper Egypt, in the Nile river basin), and Jewish beliefs and customs were kept there for several centuries. They have (over the years) discovered several papyri documents dated to the 5th century BCE. These documents are typically written in Aramaic (which is similar to Hebrew) and also tend to have 2 or even 3 forms of dating written on the manuscript (Egyptian, Babylonian, Persian, and/or Semitic). Please note the statement from chronologist Siegfried Horn on the importance of the Elephantine papyri:

That the 5th century Jews actually counted the regnal years of the Persian kings according to their own fall-to-fall calendar is attested not only by Nehemiah, and later on traditionally by the Talmud, but also by some archeological evidence from the well-known Aramaic papyri from Elephantine.²

Based upon the dates listed in these papyri, we can know that the Jews of Elephantine island (*from the 5th century BCE*) clearly used the *Tishri-to-Tishri* fall calendar for establishing dates. It is among these double (or sometimes triple) dated papyri documents (written in Aramaic) that we find that the reigns of the Persian kings were (like Nehemiah 1 and 2) dated according to the *Tishri* fall-to-fall calendar, instead of a *Nisan* calendar (the calendar typically used by the Persians).³

For example, in some of the most recently discovered papyri in the Brooklyn Museum⁴ (the Kraeling papyri) *Kraeling papyrus number 6* is dated as the month of Tammuz, in the fourth month of 420 BCE (July). *Kraeling papyrus number 7* is dated as *Tishri* (or October) of that same year, 420 BCE. However, the regnal year of Darius II listed there changes from year three in papyrus number six to year four in papyrus number seven. The only way this could have happened is if the Jewish authors of these scrolls were using a *Tishri* (fall) calendar, instead of a *Nisan* (spring) calendar.⁵ This is explained in more detail by Horn:

One more papyrus, *Kraeling 7*, should be mentioned in this connection, since it fits into the picture set forth here. It was written three months after the last-discussed document, "in the month Tishri, that is Epiphi, year 4 of Darius." After the 1st of Tishri, the Jewish New

¹ Taken from Glenn's study entitled "Do Sabbatical Years Start in the Spring (Abib) or the Fall (Tishri)?," which may be read in its entirety by accessing the following URL: http://www.itsaboutthattime.net/year_begins_fall.htm.

² Note: This is Glenn's footnote: "The *Chronology of Ezra 7*, by Siegfried H. Horn and Lynn H. Wood, p. 75."

³ Note: This is Glenn's footnote: "Siegfried H. Horn and Lynn H. Wood, 'The Fifth-century Jewish Calendar at Elephantine,' *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, XIII (1954), p. 1-20."

⁴ Note: This is Glenn's footnote: "Emil G. Kraeling, *The Brooklyn Museum Aramaic Papyri*."

⁵ Note: This is Glenn's footnote: "Horn, *The Chronology of Ezra 7*, *Op. Cit.*, p. 88."

Year's Day, all three systems of reckoning, the Persian, Egyptian, and Jewish, were in harmony for several months, as can be seen from Figure 4. Therefore the year number given in this papyrus was the same 4th year (in Tishri which coincided approximately with Epiphi in 420 B.C.) according to all three aforementioned systems.

This document throws some additional light on papyrus *Kraeling 6*, and agrees with the conclusions derived from it. *Kraeling 6*, however, is the important extra-Biblical witness (1) for the existence of a fall-to-fall calendar among the Jews in Elephantine in the 5th century B.C., and (2) for the fact that the Jews there counted the regnal years of a Persian king according to this fall-to-fall calendar in the same way as Nehemiah had done a few years earlier (Neh. 1:1; 2:1).

Siegfried Horn gives much more detail concerning this issue in his paper written on the subject, "The Fifth-century Jewish Calendar at Elephantine."⁶

To a novice Bible student, Glenn's explanation regarding the calendar recognized by 5th century BCE Judaism might be persuasive. However, I'm hopeful that the more advanced students are able to discern that there is a difference between recognizing "regnal years" and *observing* a "regnal year calendar" on a day-to-day basis. Certainly, the author that Glenn cites above understood this important fact, but one would never know this by only reading Glenn's choice of quotations from his book. Glenn presents his reading audience with select quotes from Siegfried H. Horn, but he omitted some additional quotes that would have demonstrated that Mr. Horn understands that the *civil* "fall-to-fall" calendar used by Judaism had nothing to do with how they reckoned their regular day-to-day *Scriptural* calendar. Particularly noteworthy is the fact that Glenn refrains from citing Mr. Horn's comment that the Jews of Elephantine Island practiced a *polytheistic religion* ... something that, even if the fall-to-fall calendar should happen to have Yahweh's *silent approval*, would cause the serious Bible student to at least question its merits.

With this in mind, I would like to present a more detailed excerpt from Siegfried Horn's book *The Chronology of Ezra 7*:

Extra-Biblical Evidence for the Jewish Reckoning

That the 5th century [BC] Jews actually counted the reigning years of Persian kings according to their own fall-to-fall calendar is attested not only by Nehemiah, and later on traditionally by the Talmud, but also by some archeological evidence from the well-known Aramaic papyri from Elephantine.

Elephantine is a Nile island of Upper Egypt situated near the Nubian border at Assuan, the ancient Syene. During the latter part of the 19th and the early part of the present [20th] century, papyrus scrolls were discovered on that island, some of which have only very recently become known.

The first group of papyri was bought from natives some 50 years ago and published in 1906. Many more such documents were discovered in a systematic excavation (1906 – 1908) carried out on behalf of the Berlin Museum. They were published in 1911. Recently another group of papyri from the same place came to light among the personal

⁶ Note: This is Glenn's footnote: "Horn and Wood, 'The Fifth-century Jewish Calendar at Elephantine,' *Op. Cit.*, p. 1-20."

effects of Mr. Charles Edwin Wilbour in the Brooklyn Museum. They had been bought at Elephantine in 1893 but had remained in one of Mr. Wilbour's trunks for half a century before they were rediscovered. They are of the utmost importance, since they more than double the number of dated papyri hitherto available for a reconstruction of the Jewish calendar.

All these documents, dated, and undated, now totaling more than one hundred in number, are written in Aramaic, the lingua franca of the Persian empire. They originate from a Jewish colony on the island of Elephantine. The dated documents are from the 5th century BC, and from internal evidence it can be gathered that the undated papyri also date from the same period.

These documents reveal that the Jews of Elephantine formed a garrison in this fortress of Egypt's southern border, and that they had been there for some time when Cambyses conquered the country and made it a Persian possession. **The papyri are also very instructive in revealing the type of polytheistic religion practiced by these Jews in Egypt,** which was very similar to that found by Jeremiah when he arrived there after Jerusalem's destruction in the early 6th century BC. As contemporary source material of the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, these documents are thus of the utmost value in informing us concerning the economic, religious, and secular history of the 5th century Jewish colony in southern Egypt.

Moreover they form exceedingly important source material for the study of the calendar in use among the Jews of Elephantine during this century.⁷

With the above backdrop providing us with some insight into the history of the Jews of Elephantine Island, Mr. Horn later delves into the evidence that the colonists of Elephantine Island used a fall-to-fall calendar. Notice that, out of all the double-dated documents retrieved, only *one* of them (Kraeling 6), combined with a date found on another document (Kraeling 7) provided them with one piece of evidence that they believe supports their fall-to-fall belief:

The papyrus providing the evidence for the existence of the fall-to-fall calendar among the Elephantine Jews is Kraeling 6. This important document, written early in Darius' reign, contains the following date line: "On the 8th of Pharmuthil which is the 8th day of Tammuz, **year 3 of Darius, the king.**"⁸ With the exception of one other document (Kraeling 1), it is the only one with a date line showing the peculiarity of presenting the Egyptian date first, and then the date using the Babylonian month name, which is **followed by the reigning year of king Darius II.** All other double-dated papyri have the Egyptian month date in the second place, next to the year number. The unusual procedure found in Kraeling 6 was apparently the reason that the scribe, instead of giving the commonly used Egyptian reigning year for Darius II, naturally added to the Jewish month and day the reigning year according to the Jewish reckoning, as the following discussion will demonstrate.

Before showing how this papyrus fits into the picture of the Jewish fall-to-fall calendar, we shall, with the help of figure 4 on page 84, fix the different systems used to count Darius II's reigning years.

⁷ From *The Chronology of Ezra 7: A Report of the Historical Research Committee of the General Conference of Seventh-Day Adventists*, by Siegfried H. Horn, Ph.D., Professor of Archeology, Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary and Lynn H. Wood, Ph.D., Sometime Professor of Archeology, Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Review and Herald Publishing Association, Washington, D.C., 1953, pp. 21-22.

⁸ Please notice that the document is making reference to a *regnal year* – specifically the regnal year of King Darius. This will be an important point of consideration later in Horn's commentary.

The death of Artaxerxes I and the accession of his son, Darius II, to the throne must have occurred in February, 423 BC. The accession year of Darius, according to the Persian reckoning, thus lasted to the following New Year's Day, Nisan 1, which fell on April 11, 423 BC, according to the Babylonian calendar used by the Persians.

In the Egyptian civil calendar, however, a New Year had begun on the previous Thoth 1, which fell on December 7, 424 BC. The year beginning on that date is the 325th of the Nabonassar era, marked in Ptolemy's Canon as the 1st year of Darius II. Since the Egyptians could not know the death date of Artaxerxes I before it occurred, they must have dated all documents after Dec. 7, 424 BC, in the 42nd reigning year of Artaxerxes I until they received word about the accession of Darius II, from which day they began to date documents in the 1st year of Darius. If they had called it the accession year instead, then the 1st Egyptian year would have begun in December, 423, 9 months later than the Persian 1st year. However, the double year dating in papyri AP 25 and 28, which come from the reign, prove that the Egyptian year ran earlier than the corresponding Persian year.

If the Jews, however, used a fall-to-fall civil calendar, they counted the accession year of Darius from February, 423 BC, until their next New Year's Day, Tishri 1, which fell on October 4, 423 BC.⁹ Figure 4 shows graphically the various systems in use under Darius in their relationship to the Julian calendar.

How then does papyrus Kraeling 6 fit into the picture? It was dated in the 3rd year of Darius II, on the 8th day of the Egyptian month Pharmuthi, which in that year was the 8th day of Tammuz (a Persian or Jewish month) that came in midsummer. Figure 4 shows that the 3rd year of Darius II in both Persian and Egyptian calendars includes the summer of 421 BC, but that by the Jewish reckoning, his year 3 did not begin until the fall of 421, and so included the summer of 420 instead. Thus we can see that if this papyrus was written in the summer of 421, it could have been dated in year 3 according to either Persian or the Egyptian calendars, but if it was written in 420, its year 3 could be reckoned only according to the Jewish calendar. Therefore we need to determine in which of these two summers Pharmuthi 8 and Tammuz 8 fell on the same day.

In 421 BC, Pharmuthi 8 was July 11/12 and Tammuz 8 was July 22/23; this year is obviously impossible. But in 420, Pharmuthi fell again on July 11/12 (sunrise to sunrise), whereas Tammuz 8 was July 11/12 (sunset to sunset). Consequently it can be seen that this document must have been written in 420 BC, and that therefore the scribe must have been using the Jewish fall-to-fall calendar.

One more papyrus, Kraeling 7, should be mentioned in this connection, since it fits into the picture set forth here. It was written three months after the last-discussed document, "in the month Tishri, that is Epiphi, year 4 of Darius."¹⁰ After the 1st of Tishri, the Jewish New Year's Day, all three systems of reckoning, the Persian, Egyptian, and Jewish, were in harmony for several months, as can be seen from Figure 4. Therefore the year number given in this papyrus was the same 4th year (in Tishri which coincided approximately with Epiphi in 420 BC) according to all three aforementioned systems.

This document throws some additional light on papyrus Kraeling 6 and agrees with the conclusions derived from it. Kraeling 6, however, is the important extra-Biblical witness (1) for the existence of a fall-to-fall civil calendar among the Jews in Elephantine in the 5th century BC, and (2) for the fact that the Jews there counted the reigning years of

⁹ Please notice, once again that the reference in Kraeling 6 is to a *regnal year* – not a Scriptural year on which the faithful based their day-to-day calendar.

¹⁰ Once again, as with Kraeling 6, Kraeling 7 associates a *regnal year*. We would say the same thing about a U.S. President (i.e., "This event occurred in the spring of 2010, during the second year of President Obama").

a Persian king according to this fall-to-fall in the same way as Nehemiah had done a few years earlier (Nehemiah 1:1; 2:1). Scholars who do not believe in the existence either of such a reigning-year reckoning or of a civil fall-to-fall reckoning among the Jews during that time will declare that the scribe of the papyrus Kraeling 6 made a mistake. Similarly scholars have charged the Nehemiah passages with being erroneous, since these verses do not agree with the theory that the Jews of that time had adopted the Babylonian spring-to-spring calendar. Instead of declaring the Nehemiah passages and this papyrus from Elephantine as mistakes, it is more reasonable to see in them independent evidence supporting each other. Both documents come from the same age - one of them being extant in its original form - and were written by people who belonged to the same religious group. Hence it seems that their strong and united testimony should outweigh the theory of seeing mistakes in their dates.¹¹

As I have already pointed out with regard to Nehemiah's reference to the reign of Persian King Artaxerxes, so it was with the Jews of Elephantine Island. The two key dates described above are **Tammuz 8**, which was during the 3rd year of Darius II, and the following month of **Tishri**, which came only three months later, but was referenced as being the 4th year of Darius II. How do those two dates validate a "Tishri-to-Tishri" reckoning? Answer: *They don't!* Please remember that there are two months separating Tammuz (the 4th month of the Jewish calendar) from Tishri (the 7th month). Those two months are *Ab* and *Elul*. Is it possible that Darius' regnal year began in either *Ab* or *Elul*? Yes! What makes this all the more interesting is the fact that it was likely during the month of either *Ab* or *Elul* when Artaxerxes became king. For all we know, the Persians may have dated regnal years from one of those two months! I'm not saying that's how it was done because, as we will see shortly, no one really knows for sure *how* the Persians really did it, and neither Nehemiah nor the Elephantine Island Jews tell us outright, making it anyone's guess!

Even if we should happen to find out that the Jews of Nehemiah's day really did reckon the reigns of Persian kings from fall-to-fall, what does this prove about the calendar ordained by Yahweh? It would only prove that those Jews ignored it! However, we hopefully know that they did not ignore Yahweh's calendar. For example, we do not read that those Jews regarded the Passover as occurring within the seventh month of the year, nor do we read that they reckoned the festival of Sukkot as falling during the first month of the year. This is what we would have to read in order for us to even *remotely* consider Glenn's proposal.

With regard to whatever method was used by the Jews of Elephantine Island, I might ask how comfortable you would feel adopting a method embraced by a sect of Jews known to have practiced a polytheistic form of worship. As already pointed out by Siegfried Horn, the Jews of Elephantine Island practiced a polytheistic religion, which in and of itself, casts an immediate, ominous pall on whatever support Glenn may have aspired for us to glean from the practices and beliefs of this sect of Jews. Let's not focus on the practices of idol-worshipping ancients who deviated from Yahweh's own instructions. Yahweh Himself told His people "when" the New Year begins. Sadly, Yahweh's own Words do not seem to be sufficient for Glenn.

¹¹ From *The Chronology of Ezra 7: A Report of the Historical Research Committee of the General Conference of Seventh-Day Adventists*, by Siegfried H. Horn, Ph.D., Professor of Archeology, Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary and Lynn H. Wood, Ph.D., Sometime Professor of Archeology, Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Review and Herald Publishing Association, Washington, D.C., 1953, p. 23.

Of course, Glenn Moore presents the findings of Siegfried H. Horn and Lynn H. Wood on a fairly high pedestal because, on the surface, they might seem to lend credence to Glenn's doctrinal stand. However, for those who might prefer a more balanced review of Horn and Wood's conclusion, it might be well to start with *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, where we find that I am not the only one who questions their conclusions about the Elephantine Island Jews:

1. The Elephantine Papyri. The earliest of these extra-biblical sources are the Aramaic papyri of the Jewish military colony in Elephantine on the Nile River. There are some 38 papyri that bear dates, and 22 of these have double or synchronized dates (Egyptian and Persian/Jewish). In the papyri one finds all twelve of the Babylonian/Persian month names:

Nisan	(A. E. Cowley, Aramaic Papyri 21)
Iyyar	(Kraeling, The Brooklyn Museum Aramaic Papyri 14)
Sivan	(Kraeling 1; 5)
Tammuz	(Aramaic Papyri 30; Kraeling 6)
Ab	(Aramaic Papyri 14)
Elul	(Aramaic Papyri 5; 20; Kraeling 3)
Tishri	(Aramaic Papyri 15; Kraeling 4; 7; 8)
Marcheshvan	(Aramaic Papyri 17; 30; 31; Kraeling 9)
Chislev	(Aramaic Papyri 6; 8; 10; 13; 25)
Tebeth	(Aramaic Papyri 26)
Shebat	(Aramaic Papyri 28)
Adar	(Aramaic Papyri 61; 67; Kraeling 10)

Horn and Wood (1954) were able to draw no certain conclusions about whether the Jews of Elephantine had fashioned a precalculated, fixed calendar but noted strong similarities with the Babylonian system. There is no evidence among the Elephantine documents for intercalation. **Horn and Wood argued that Kraeling's text (BMAP 6) implied a civil year that ran from fall to fall, but this has been disputed.**¹²

As displayed above, bonafide chronologists dispute Horn and Wood's conclusion ... a conclusion that they reached on the basis of a single document retrieved from Elephantine ... a document that only proves that between the month *Tammuz* and *Tishri* Darius II's third regnal year became his fourth regnal year. Did the change occur at the onset of *Tishri*, or might it have come during a previous month, such as *Ab* or *Elul*? We aren't told! Leading scholars apparently recognize this fact. We thus see that, whereas Glenn Moore tends to present the findings of chronologists such as Horn and Thiele as though they should "stop all arguments," such is not *truly* the case. Chronologists and non-chronologists alike are left to draw their own conclusions based on the available evidence.

We really should beware of authors who, like Glenn, present chronologists' findings and then expect their readers to regard those findings as "gospel." We should also beware of the reactions of authors who, like Glenn, aren't well pleased when we express a misunderstanding of their conclusions! In a previous version of this study, I made the mistake of stating that Glenn believed that the ancient *Persians* didn't start counting their kings' regnal years until the month of *Tishri*. It turns out that Glenn doesn't believe it was the *Persians* who used this method of counting, but that it was the *Jews*, whom he obviously feels

¹² C.f., *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Vol. 1, David Noel Freedman, Editor-in-Chief, Doubleday, New York, NY, 1992, pp. 817-18.

were incorporating their “standard” fall-to-fall calendar into the reigns of foreign kings. Here is Glenn’s reaction (I am the person he refers to as “this critic”):

∞It is sad that critics, such as the one I previously quoted, are often incapable of even stating the facts correctly--much less coming to the correct conclusions. Evidently, this critic read my remarks and updated his commentary with remarks of his own (which even more pointedly demonstrates his gross "ignorance" and "bias")! He stated "Glenn believes that it is a matter of fact that, no matter when a Persian king began to reign, the Persians didn't start that king's count until the month of Tishri, and he believes that Nehemiah 1:1 and 2:1 prove his theory. Of course, the Bible chronologist whom he cites, Edwin R. Thiele, believes this as well." Could someone please indicate where in this study I (supposedly) stated that the "Persians" began their count of the year in the "month of Tishri" (i.e., in the fall)? Neither I nor Edwin Thiele said anything of that nature. What Thiele said (and that I affirmed) is that **the Jews** (whether the Elephantine community living in Egypt, or Ezra and Nehemiah in Israel) used a Tishri calendar (fall-to-fall) to date the Persian kings in the 5th century BCE. **The Persians never used a fall calendar to date the reigns of their own kings, and the references which he uses do not support this strange view!!** The Persians used a spring calendar. And this idea that a "regnal" year of a king starts in the exact month that the king comes into power is also a flimsy piece of construction "built upon sand!" Even the scholars and chronologists he is quoting from do not believe such rubbish!! When a king dies in the X year of his reign, and another king comes to power in that same X year, the point at which the new king officially begins to reign is the start of their New Year if using accession year reckoning (typically either the following spring or the following fall). If it is non-accession year reckoning, the year the king comes to the throne is counted as his first year, but his first year **will still** follow the *calendar* year (which ends either in the spring or the fall, depending on how they reckoned it). Note this reference from the "patmos papers" website, which explains this more thoroughly:

"Another thing to remember is what is called a king's '**accession year**.' This was the period intervening between a new king's coronation and the end of that calendar year. The 'first year' of a king's reign was considered to be the first full *calendar* year, **not the first 12 months**, after his coronation. Whatever period remained from the time he became king **until that calendar year ended**, was considered his *accession year*." (*Determining Biblical Dates*, <http://www.patmospapers.com/daniel/dates.htm>)

PS: As time permits I will add more documentation for this.¹³

We have already seen that some of Glenn’s “foregone conclusions,” such as the conclusion that the Jews of Elephantine Island used a fall-to-fall calendar, are disputed by scholars. But what about this authoritative remark:

¹³ From “Do Sabbatical Years Start in the Spring (Abib) or the Fall (Tishri)?” (September 2009 revision) by W. Glenn Moore. This study may be read by accessing the following URL: http://www.itsaboutthattime.net/year_begins_fall.htm. Note: Although Glenn at one time mentioned me by name and even offered a link to our study in an attempt to demonstrate how open he was to discussing the issue pertaining to the Jubilee cycle, that approach has since fallen by the wayside.

And this idea that a "regnal" year of a king starts in the exact month that the king comes into power is also a flimsy piece of construction "built upon sand!" Even the scholars and chronologists he is quoting from do not believe such rubbish!! When a king dies in the X year of his reign, and another king comes to power in that same X year, the point at which the new king officially begins to reign is the start of their New Year if using accession year reckoning (typically either the following spring or the following fall). If it is non-accession year reckoning, the year the king comes to the throne is counted as his first year, but his first year **will still** follow the *calendar* year (which ends either in the spring or the fall, depending on how they reckoned it).

Again, using profoundly authoritative statements, Glenn here portrays the notion that a king's regnal year could actually have begun on the precise date that he came to power as "a flimsy piece of construction built upon sand." Based upon what grounds? He offers nothing "authoritatively supportive" other than his own forceful commentary. As Glenn already knows, I'm not a chronologist, so any information I come up with must be based on the works of those who are more knowledgeable in this field than I am, and I have come across sufficient data to at least call Glenn's findings into question.

For example, I have previously demonstrated that if King Artaxerxes came to the throne in either July or August, and his reign began to be dated from either of those two months, then the 20th year of his reign would have been inclusive of the months *Chisleu* through *Nisan*. Can this be disputed? Apparently not, since there are no Persian records to prove otherwise. Nevertheless, in spite of the fact that no Persian records of how regnal years were reckoned exist, some folks are persuaded that the data provided by Nehemiah prove the Jews reckoned the reign of Persian kings with a Tishri-to-Tishri calendar. This line of reasoning is vividly exhibited by author Floyd Nolen Jones in his book *The Chronology of the Old Testament*:

Surprisingly, there are no Persian sources to invoke in order to learn first hand which procedures they used. The Persians were so hated by the Greeks and later by the Moslems that these two conquerors destroyed nearly all of the Persian records. However, the Hebrew Text is most clear in this matter. Nehemiah's speaks of his being at the Persian palace at Shushan (Susa) in the month of Chisleu (Kislev) = the Hebrew 9th month, November/December) in the 20th year of Artaxerxes.

He goes on to record that the month of Nisan (spring) that followed was still in the same 20th year of that selfsame Persian monarch. Therefore, he is referencing by Tishri reckoning because the month of Nisan following the Chisleu of the 20th year would have to have been in the 21st year if Nisan-to-Nisan counting had been invoked (Neh. 1:1, cp. 2:1).

This is confirmed by double-date papyri written by the Jews of Elephantine during the same century as Nehemiah. On the papyri the reigns of the Persian kings were dated by the Tishri-to-Tishri method.¹⁴

Again, whereas some scholars use the Biblical dates used in Nehemiah to "prove" a *Tishri-to-Tishri* calendar, I maintain that it is equally possible that Nehemiah reckoned the reign of Artaxerxes from his actual month of accession, and since no Persian records exist to prove otherwise, at best we have a stalemate on this one point. With regard to the Jews of Elephantine Island, we have seen that scholars

¹⁴ *The Chronology of the Old Testament: A Return to Basics*, by Floyd Nolen Jones, Master Books, Green Forest, AR, 2005, p. 123.

dispute the findings of Horn and Wood, who claim that the “Kraeling 6” document, combined with “Kraeling 7,” proves that those Jews dated the reigns of Persian kings from Tishri to Tishri. It proves nothing of the sort. If anyone can prove that Darius II’s regnal year could not have been from, say, *Ab-to-Ab*, I would love to see the evidence.

Reckoning a king’s reign from the month of his accession is something that Great Britain has done since “ancient times.” While this doesn’t prove how the Persians did it, I find it to be a method that is just as possible as the *Tishri-to-Tishri* method, and is very comparable to how the terms of United States Presidents are reckoned. Here is information regarding the regnal reckoning as used in Great Britain:

Regnal Years

From ancient times, even to the present day, it has been common practice to date some documents not according to the anno domini system, but according to the year of the presiding monarch. The regnal year is normally calculated from the date of the accession of a particular monarch, with the number changing on the anniversary of the accession. In order to interpret such dates, therefore, the user must know the date on which a monarch acceded to the throne. There are resources available to assist with this - in particular, Cheyney’s Handbook of Dates. For details, see the [Bibliography](#).

As an example, then, Henry V acceded to the throne on 21 March 1413. This means that his first regnal year (written 1 Henry V) began on 21 March 1413 and ended on 20 March 1414.¹⁵

While I’m not about to make any claim that Great Britain borrowed their method of reckoning regnal years from the Persians (or from the Jews, for that matter), I will here state that this method of reckoning is a possibility. Whatever method the Jews used in reckoning the reigns of foreign kings, however, should not in any way be so construed as being the way they determined their years. Passover is still observed in the first month, Shavuot (Pentecost) is observed in the third month, and Sukkot (Tabernacles) in the seventh month. In terms of what Yahweh has ordained, that is all we really need to know about reckoning years. Since the calendar ordained by Yahweh (*spring-to-spring*) wreaks havoc with Glenn Moore’s needed model of having the Israelites enter the Promised Land during a Sabbatical Year, we understand that he will “pull all the stops” to promote a different calendar, even to the point of making a huge issue out of the regnal years of Persian kings!

Really, all we really need to request from Glenn (or *anyone* so intent on proving that ancient Israel followed a fall-to-fall calendar) is a verse from Scripture stating something to the effect that *Abib* is the seventh month and *Tishri/Ethanim* is the first. For example, why are we told in Scripture that *Ziv* is the second month of the year?¹⁶ Those who are familiar with the Scriptural calendar understand that the month *Ziv* occurs in the spring and that it is indeed the second month of the year, as in the month that follows *Abib*. However, if I were in Glenn’s position, I would earnestly desire that Scripture recorded *Ziv* as being the *eighth month*, not the second month. We can find numerous texts of Scripture defining when various months occur, and they are consistently listed in an order that coincides with a *spring-to-spring* calendar. Thus, Glenn can produce reams of documentation validating his understanding of how Judaism recorded the regnal years of Persian kings, but in the end all it does is serve as a smokescreen to cover up the plain teaching of Scripture.

¹⁵ From The University of Nottingham’s web site (<http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/mss/learning/skills/dating/regnal.phtml>).

¹⁶ *C.f.*, I Kings 6:1.