

As we approach the question of the usage of the word *min*, something that could affect its meaning strikes us almost immediately. In every one of its 31 uses, *min* is preceded by a preposition, and it is the same proposition in every case. This preposition (?) has the meanings "to, according to, for." It would appear that the meaning "according to" best fits its usage in these cases.

Unfortunately, this preposition has sometimes been translated by the English preposition "after," and this has caused readers to think that there is some temporal idea, some time component in the Scriptural phrase. There is no idea in the Hebrew preposition ? of something "coming after" something else, or of one thing "following" another. This time idea must be expunged from our understanding, if we wish to correctly interpret these usages. The meaning of this preposition, in all of its usages with *min*, is simply "according to."

Let us proceed, then, to an examination of those scriptural passages in which *min* is used. However, lest we enter upon this examination of a portion of the Word of God in a careless manner, let us pause and ask ourselves, "What method of examination will best facilitate our study?"

In inductive studies in which a considerable number of items are involved, it is sometimes quite sufficient to study them in simple enumerative order. At other times, especially when the items to be studied differ in degree of difficulty, it is often more efficient to begin with the less difficult problems and proceed to the more difficult ones. In this study, we shall adopt the latter approach.

Let us begin at Genesis 6:19-20. Here we read God's words to Noah

And from every living thing, from all flesh, two of each shall you cause to come into the ark, to preserve alive with you; they shall be male and female. From the bird, *according to its kinds*, and from the cattle, *according to its kind*, and from every creeping animal of the ground *according to its kinds*; two of each shall enter unto you to preserve alive.

It is important to note that there is no time element, no before-and-after sequence in this passage. Verse 20 says nothing about birds, cattle, and