

The 120 Year Jubilee Calendar and the Return of Messiah

By Richard Samuel

1 Corinthians 2:7-10 - *But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him." But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.*

In Leviticus 25, we learn of God's Jubilee calendar of 50-year cycles which God commanded Israel to observe. The 50th year is called the "year of release" or "year of liberty" because all land reverted back to its original owner and all debts were cancelled.

This Jubilee Year followed every seven Sabbatical cycles (years of years), 7x7 years totaling 49 years. The Jubilee was the 50th year. It did not coincide with the 7th Sabbatical year, but followed it, rounding out the 7 weeks of years to an even 50 years.

The Sedar Olam Rabbah, the ancient 2nd century Jewish chronology, the oldest word on the subject, states plainly that the Jubilee cycles were a full 50 years.

Modern scholars point to Josephus' accounts of certain Sabbatical years being observed shortly before his time as proof that the Jubilee year was not added by the Jews. But the fact is, by that time the Jews had stopped celebrating the Jubilee year altogether. The Jewish Encyclopedia states: "*The fiftieth year, that following the last year of seven Sabbatical cycles, is the jubilee.*"

Whether the Jews followed the Law or not, the original Sabbatical – Jubilee calendar that God commanded them to keep required that the Jubilee year be after seven Sabbatical cycles. If this calendar was indeed a sacred calendar, by which God Himself was guiding history and fulfilling prophecy, then it is the calendar that ought to be used as the basis for any chronology of the Bible.

Early Christian writers also acknowledged that the Jubilee cycle was 50 years, not 49 years. Hippolytus expressed this clearly in his commentary on the Psalms.

Let us inquire, further, why there are one hundred and fifty psalms. That the number fifty is sacred, is manifest from the days of the celebrated festival of Pentecost, which indicates release from labors, and (the possession of) joy. For which reason neither fasting nor bending the knee is decreed for those days. For this is a symbol of the great assembly that is reserved for future times. Of which times there was a shadow in the land of Israel in the year called among the Hebrews Jobel' (Jubilee) which is the fiftieth year in number, and brings with it liberty for the slave, and release from debt, and the like. Thus, then, it was also meet that the hymns to God on account of the destruction of enemies, and in thanksgiving for the goodness of God, should contain not simply one set of fifty, but three such, for the name of Father, and Son, and Holy Spirit.

There is evidence in Scripture that this calendar was in use before Moses and the Law. We learn of Jacob's serving Laban for 7 years for each of his wives, a total of 14 years. He then served 6 more years, and departed on the 7th year (a total of 20 years of service) departing at the beginning of the 21st year. In

the Law, slaves were to serve for 6 years, and be given their freedom in the 7th year. Jacob agreed to serve Laban one “week” of years for Leah, and another week of years for Rachael. He then agreed to serve a third week of years for his flocks and goods.

Yet, the fact that he left at the end of the 6th year instead of the end of the 7th year strongly suggests that their agreement was in accord with what Moses commanded later concerning the Sabbatical and Jubilee calendar – slaves were to be set free at the beginning of the 7th year.

We can infer that Moses merely reemphasized something that was already known, no doubt having been handed down through Noah, and perhaps practiced from the very first year of creation.

Ancient extra-biblical sources also indicate the Sabbatical – Jubilee calendar being in use before Moses. After the Babylonian exile, perhaps shortly after the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, a Hebrew apocalyptic scroll was produced bearing the name “Jubilees,” sometimes called “The Little Genesis.” It gives a fuller account of some of the history in Genesis and Exodus.

The book of Jubilees claims to be angelic revelation to Moses during his 40 days on Mt. Sinai. It covers time from creation to the Messianic Kingdom in Sabbatical weeks of years and Jubilees.

“And He said to the Angel of the Presence: ‘Write for Moses from the beginning of creation till My sanctuary has been built among them for all eternity. And the Lord will appear to the eyes of all, and all will know that I am the God of Israel and the Father of all the children of Jacob, and King on Mount Zion for all eternity. And Zion and Jerusalem will be holy.’ And the Angel of the Presence who went before the camp of Israel took the tables of the divisions of the years – from the time of the creation – of the law and of the testimony of the weeks, of the Jubilees, according to the individual years, according to all the number of the Jubilees [according to the individual years], from the day of the creation until the heavens and the earth shall be renewed and all their creation according to the powers of the heaven, and according to all the creation of the earth, until the sanctuary of the Lord shall be made in Jerusalem on Mount Zion, and all the luminaries be renewed for healing and for peace and for blessing for all the elect of Israel, and that thus it may be from that day and unto all the days of the earth.’
(Book of Jubilees, Charles’ Translation, pp. 32-33)

The understanding of the complete Jubilee cycle is that the Sabbatical – Jubilee Calendar was intended as the basis for all of Bible chronology, from creation to the coming of Christ’s Kingdom, and this is not new. It is a very ancient Jewish tradition.

The Jubilee calendar was intended to count down to the establishment of the Messianic Kingdom on the earth, when the heavens and earth will be made new. According to the author of the Jewish Book of Jubilees, all of history recorded in the Jewish Bible is to be understood through this divine calendar, from creation to the Messianic Kingdom.

The book of Jubilees gives the creation account and includes the genealogies found in Genesis. But, rather than the dates being given based on the age of each father when his son was born, (as in Genesis), they are given on a calendar of Jubilee cycles and Sabbatical years (according to the Jubilee calendar in Leviticus 25).

“And in the fifth week of the fifth Jubilee Seth took Azura his sister to be his wife, and in the fourth year of the sixth week she bore him Enos. He began to call on the name of the Lord on the earth. And in the seventh Jubilee in the third week Enos took Nôâm his sister to be his wife, and she bare him a son in the third year of the fifth week, and he called his name Kenan.

And at the close of the eighth Jubilee Kenan took Mûalêlêth his sister to be his wife, and she bare him a son in the ninth Jubilee, in the first week in the third year of this week, and he called his name Mahalalel. And in the second week of the tenth jubilee Mahalalel took unto him to wife Dînâh, the daughter of Barâkî'êl the daughter of his father's brother, and she bare him a son in the third week in the sixth year, and he called his name Jared.'

While none of the early Christian writers who taught the millennial week (6000 years + Millennial Sabbath - The 7,000th year) mentioned this Jubilee calendar specifically, some of them quoted from the book of Jubilees.

It was well known to Early Christians, as evidenced by the writings of Epiphanius, Justin Martyr, Origen, Diodorus of Tarsus, Isidore of Alexandria, Isidore of Seville, Eutychius of Alexandria, John Malalas, George Syncellus, and George Kedrenos. Obviously they were familiar with the main meaning of this book – the idea of a divine Jubilee calendar spanning from creation to the Messianic Kingdom. They already saw this time period as a week of millennia, with 6,000 years from Adam to the Messianic Kingdom.

The Septuagint gives greater ages for the patriarchs when their sons were born than the Hebrew text. The Septuagint systematically adds 100 years per generation. For example, the Hebrew says that Adam was 130 years old when Seth was born, but the LXX says 230 years. The Hebrew says that Seth was 105 when Enos was born. The LXX says he was 205. This one hundred years per generation error compounds, making the Genesis genealogies in the LXX too long by over 1500 years. Because of this, the early Christians thought that they were much closer to the end of the 6000 years than they actually were.

Perhaps the reason they did not mention the Jubilee creation calendar specifically was because the book of Jubilees generally follows the Hebrew text for the genealogies in Genesis, while the early Christians used the Septuagint's much longer genealogies.

The book of Jubilees would not agree with their Greek Old Testament. Also, the Book of Jubilees uses a 49 year Jubilee cycle, which would not divide equally into 6000 years. However, when these two things are corrected (using the Hebrew text dates, and a 50 year cycle), there is perfect harmony between the Millennial Week and the main premise of the book of Jubilees, with the 6000 years being divided into 120 Jubilee cycles.

120 Jubilees in Genesis 6

There is a very curious statement by God in Genesis 6:3. *„And the LORD said, ‘My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years’.*’ The period of 120 years in this passage has usually been interpreted one of two ways.

Many suppose that God was limiting the lifespans of humans to 120 years each. Yet, after the flood many people lived to well beyond this age. Human lifespans did decline over time, but not until many years after the flood. And they did not settle to around 120, but to around 70-80.

No doubt God made this statement to Noah 120 years before the flood. So its application is to the destruction by the flood. Yet, Peter had an interesting comment about this passage, which strongly suggests that he viewed the 120 years in Genesis 6 as a two-fold prophecy, giving both the year of the flood and the year of Christ's return.

Peter characterized the period of time between Christ's first and second comings in terms of millennial days when he wrote: "*But, beloved, do not forget this one thing that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise*".

He also made a fascinating statement about Genesis 6:3, applying it to both the flood and the Day of the Lord. 2 Peter 3:8-9

Peter spoke of the old world being preserved (*by the statement of God*). This "statement" delayed God's judgment of the flood. The only "statement" of God that Peter could be referring to is Genesis 6:3, *My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.*'

2 Peter 3:5 The heavens used to be of ancient times, also the land having stood out of water and in water by the statement of God, through which [statement] the world was destroyed by a deluge of water. Yet, the present heavens and the land, having been reserved by the same statement, are being kept for fire unto the Day of Judgment and destruction of ungodly men.'

The "statement of God" that Peter referred to did two things: It held back the judgment of God by a flood for a specified period of time (120 years). Yet, it also brought that judgment at the end of 120 years.

Some might argue that the "statement of God" refers to the creation week when God spoke these things into existence. But, the next verse proves that incorrect: "*by which the world was destroyed.*'

The pronoun "which" refers back to the "statement of God." So, it was by the same "statement of God" that the judgment was delayed for a time, and also the judgment came. That is, the same "saying" that permitted a temporary situation to exist during which God delayed the flood, was also the same "saying" that brought the flood.

Why? Because God put an exact time limit on the delay. *My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.*'

Peter then made a very remarkable statement. **The very same "statement of God" that delayed the flood for 120 years was also delaying the coming of the Day of the Lord.**

How can this be? The only way it could be is if the "statement of God," about a 120-year delay in judgment, has a double meaning. One meaning was for the first destruction by the flood (120 regular years), and a second meaning for the coming Day of the Lord (120 Jubilee years).

This is the only way "the same statement" can apply to the delay of both judgments. So Peter has confirmed the basic premise of the Book of Jubilees.

Bishop Ussher and others have long ago identified the fall of man as occurring on the Tuesday following creation week. Man was created on the 6th day of creation and fell into sin on the 10th day of creation. This was inferred by Ussher from the festival of Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement), which marks the anniversary of the fall of man on the 10th day of the first month (on the Jewish civil calendar). Ussher's claim is strongly supported by the symbolism of this festival. Leviticus 23:26

The civil calendar is the original calendar used by Moses to date the genealogies. It begins on the new moon in September (Tishri 1) Rosh-ha-shana, Yom Teruah –The Feast of Trumpets.

This was the only calendar in use until God commanded Moses to add a second calendar for tracking the festivals. This festival calendar began on the first day of the month in which God led the Israelites out of Egypt, in the spring.

From the time of the exodus onward, the Jews have kept both calendars 6 months apart. The civil (original) calendar (fall to fall) was used to calculate the sabbatical weeks of years for planting and harvesting, and for the year of Jubilee.

The festival calendar was used for everything else. Consequently, the Day of Atonement is on the 10th day of the 1st month (Tishri 10) on the civil calendar and on the 10th day of the 7th month on the festival calendar. Leviticus 16:7-10, Hebrews 10:1-4, Leviticus 16:21, Leviticus 25:8-12.

The civil calendar is offset from the festival calendar by 6 months, making Yom Kippur the 10th day of the 7th month when reckoned on the festival calendar.

The two goats used on the Feast of Atonement symbolized the fall of man and his expulsion from Eden. The first goat was sacrificed for man's sins and its blood sprinkled on the Ark of the Covenant by the high priest once a year on the Day of Atonement, symbolizing man's need for the atonement of Jesus Christ.

The second goat was the scape goat. The high priest laid his hands on the head of this goat, symbolically transferring the sins of the people to the scape goat. It was then abandoned in the wilderness, illustrating Adam's expulsion from Eden carrying his guilt.

Since the Day of Atonement occurs on the 10th day following the first day of the first month, which is Rosh Hashanah marking the first day of creation, we date the fall of Adam to Yom Kippur, Tuesday, Tishri 10, year 1.

It is no coincidence that the Jubilee trumpet is only sounded on Yom Kippur, marking the beginning of the year of Jubilee (50th year).

Yom Kippur is the 10th day of the first month (on the civil calendar). Therefore the Jubilee year is offset from the regular civil years by 10 days, beginning 10 days later than regular years. If we count exactly 120 Jubilee years from the fall of man on Tishri 10th of year 1, the return of Christ must also be on Yom Kippur six thousand years later in order to fulfill the 120 Jubilee years to the very day. The second coming of Christ will occur on a Jubilee year, when "liberty" is proclaimed, as Isaiah proves. *Isaiah 61:1-7*

*1 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me; he has sent me to preach glad tidings to the poor, to heal the broken in heart, to **proclaim liberty** to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind; 2 to declare **the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of recompense**; to comfort all that mourn; 3 that there should be given to them that mourn in Sion glory instead of ashes, the oil of joy to the mourners, the garment of glory for the spirit of heaviness: and they shall be called generations of righteousness, the planting of the Lord for glory. 4 And they shall build the old waste places, they shall raise up those that were before made desolate, and shall renew the desert cities, even those that had been desolate for many generations. 5 And strangers shall come and feed thy flocks, and aliens shall be thy ploughmen and vine-dressers. 6 But ye shall be called priests of the Lord, the ministers of God: ye shall eat the strength of nations, and shall be admired because of their wealth. 7 Thus shall they inherit the land a second time, and everlasting joy shall be upon their head.'*

Compare this passage with the following instructions for the Jubilee year: Leviticus 25:8-11:

8 “And you shall count seven sabbaths of years for yourself, seven times seven years; and the time of the seven sabbaths of years shall be to you forty-nine years. 9 Then you shall cause the trumpet of the Jubilee to sound on the **tenth day** of the seventh month; on the Day of Atonement you shall make the trumpet to sound throughout all your land. 10 And you shall consecrate **the fiftieth year**, and **proclaim liberty** throughout all the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a Jubilee for you; and each of you shall return to his possession, and each of you shall return to his family.

Jesus read from the passage in Isaiah in the synagogue of Nazareth, referring the statements about preaching glad tidings to the poor, and proclaiming the year of liberty (Jubilee) of Himself.

Did Jesus preach about the year of Jubilee? Yes, if this refers to His second coming to establish His Kingdom on the earth. Jesus proclaimed “*the Gospel of the Kingdom*” and had a great deal to say about His second coming and the Kingdom.

It is evident that Jesus will return on the 120th Jubilee, on Yom Kippur, when He will personally sound the *,trumpet of the Jubilee*. ‘This of course corresponds to the *Shofar Ha Gadol* – The Great Trumpet which will blow. He will blow the Jubilee trumpet *immediately after the tribulation*.

Our proposed Jubilee calendar, of 120 Jubilee years from creation to the second coming, can be tested and verified. If we can establish from biblical data an accurate chronology from the creation until the Jews began using the Jubilee calendar under Joshua, and if the Jubilee years on our creation calendar synchronize with Joshua’s Jubilee calendar, this is sufficient proof for our Jubilee calendar theory. There is only a 1 in 50 chance that our creation calendar would synchronize perfectly with Joshua’s actual Jubilee calendar by chance.

Not only does our creation Jubilee calendar synchronize perfectly with Joshua’s Jubilee calendar, but the year of the exodus from Egypt, which was above all else the “year of release,” falls exactly on the 50th Jubilee year from creation, the year 2,500.

If every 50th regular year is a “Jubilee,” the 50th Jubilee year (50x50) would be a Jubilee of Jubilees. It cannot be mere coincidence that the “*year of release*’ from Egypt, the *,year of liberty*’ from slavery, falls in precisely the middle of the 2500th year, the Jubilee of Jubilees.

But, there is more. The decree of Cyrus, setting the Jews at liberty after the 70 years captivity, falls on the 70th Jubilee. Jeremiah prophesied that the captivity would end after 70 years. And sure enough, it lasted exactly 70 regular years. However, the year of their release from captivity was also the 70th Jubilee year from creation. Coincidence?

Here’s more. The birth of Abraham was on the 40th Jubilee. The birth of Isaac was also on the 42nd Jubilee year. God gave David the Davidic Covenant, the promise of the Messiah from his loins, on the 59th Jubilee year. The 70 weeks prophecy in Daniel 9 begins on the 70th Jubilee year. And the “70th week” of Daniel (the 7 year tribulation) necessarily ends on the day before the 120th Jubilee, at sundown on Tishri 9th, exactly 6,000 years from Adam’s expulsion from the Garden of Eden.

There will be 40 jubilees (2,000 years) from Pentecost after the death of Christ to His return.

40 is the number of trial and test (4 is the number that covers the earth and 10 is the number of human responsibility) $4 \times 10 = 40$.

The Gospel will be spread throughout the earth and the inhabitants of the earth will have the opportunity to choose God and life or choose death without Him, the Gospel, the Good News will be preached for 40 jubilee - 2,000 years, the number 2, is the number for the adequate witness and then the return of Christ and judgment on the Feast of Atonement on the 120th jubilee from the sin and fall of Adam.

"And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples (altogether the number of names was about **A HUNDRED AND TWENTY**), and said, 'Men and brethren, this Scripture had to be fulfilled' " (Acts 1:15)

120? Just a coincidence? You decide. The Hebrew meaning of the number 120: Divine period of probation.

In conclusion:

From Adam, it has been almost 6,000 years and 120 Jubilees. The number 120 points to the end of the age of the flesh and the reign of the life of the spirit (Genesis 6:3).

The ultimate fulfillment of the year of Jubilee will take place at the second coming of Messiah.

The earth will be redeemed and come into full and complete rest from the curse brought upon it by Adam's sin. Complete restoration of man's lost inheritance will take place. God's people will be totally set free -- set at liberty, from all sin, sickness and disease, death, and the curse.

Satan the source of all these things will be bound and true rest will be realized.

The tabernacle of God will be with men and He will dwell with them (Revelation 21:1-4).

So, the year of Jubilee and the Day of Atonement speak of the fullness of the redemptive plan of God for man.

For those interested, a thorough introduction and full copy of *The Book of Jubilees* can be read at the following website: www.wesley.nnu.edu

The Wesley Center Online website is a collection of historical and scholarly resources about the Wesleyan tradition, theology, Christianity, and the Church of the Nazarene.

<http://wesley.nnu.edu/sermons-essays-books/noncanonical-literature/noncanonical-literature-of-pseudepigrapha/the-book-of-jubilees/>