

3. Does the “Mur 24E” Document Prove Five Years of Sowing & Reaping Following a Jubilee Year?

In his document entitled “An Excerpt from Chapter 10 of *Discovering the Jewish Messiah Within the Prophecy of Daniel 9*,” Glenn Moore devotes over four pages to presenting why he believes an ancient rental contract validates his belief that Jubilee cycles consist of 49 years, and, more specifically, his contention that the first Sabbatical cycle of a Jubilee cycle can only include *five* years of sowing and reaping. In order to better assist you with following Glenn’s reasoning, I’ve decided to incorporate all four pages of this section into our study, along with our response.

We have knowledge of a document which establishes another Sabbatical year at the time of the Bar Kochba revolt. A rental contract dated to the era of the Bar Kochba revolt (labeled as “Mur 24E”), show that in the second year of the revolt five years of harvest would be collected before the next Sabbatical year. This contract was found among several contracts in the caves of Wadi Murabba’ near Bethlehem. This property was seized by the Jews during the revolt, which began sometime between the Fall of 132 and the Spring of 133 CE and lasted about two and a half years. They are dated on Shevat 20, year two of the Kochba revolt (which is about the month of January or February of the year 134 CE). Here is a translation of part of that document [brackets indicating missing and/or ambiguous text]:

[On the twentieth of Shev]at of the year tw[o] of the Redemption of [I]srael by Shimeon ben K[os]ba, the prince of [I]srael. In the camp which is located in Herodium, [Ye]hudah ben Raba’ said to Hillel ben Grys:

‘I of my free will have [re]nted from you today the land which is my re[n]tal in’ Ir Nabash which I hold as a tenant from Shimeon, the Prince of Israel, This land I have rented from you today Until the end of the eve of Shemitah,¹ which are years Full [f]iscal years, five, of tenancy; [that I wi]ll deliver to you in [Her]jodium: wheat, [of good and pure quality.] th[ree kor]s and a lethekh, [of which a tenth part of the tithe] of these [you will deliver to the silo of the treasury.] And [I am obli]gated [in regard of this matter thusly] [Yehudah ben Raba’, in person] [Shim on ben Kosba’, by dictation.]²

This document clearly indicates five complete “fiscal” years of tenancy to be concluded at the end of the eve of the “Shemitah” (or the Sabbatical year). While some might interpret this to be exactly five years of exactly 12 months each, the term “fiscal years” tells us that at some fixed point in time these years would end. The text plainly says that it will last “until the end of the eve of Shemitah” (meaning, the end of the year before the Sabbatical year). While it is true that the religious year is from Spring to Spring, (and Bar Kochba himself re-introduced this way of counting the years³), for Sabbatical years and “civil” (or “fiscal”) years, such years would

¹ “Shemita” is a Hebrew word meaning “release” that is used in reference to the Sabbatical Year.

² Note: This is Glenn’s footnote: Translated in “The Calendar of Sabbatical Cycles During the Second temple and the Early Rabbinic Period,” by Ben Zion Wacholder, 1973, Hebrew Union College Annual 44, p. 177.

³ Note: This is Glenn’s footnote: *Israel Exploration Journal*, Kanael B., “Notes on the Dates Used During the Bar Kokhba Revolt,” 1971, pp. 39-46.

Does the “Mur 24E” Document Prove Five Years of Sowing & Reaping Following a Jubilee Year?

extend from Fall-to-Fall (Tishri-to-Tishri), as noted in *The Mishnah*.⁴ Please note that even today this tradition has continued, as a “fiscal year” often ends in late summer or in the fall. The fact that payment is to be made every year in the form of wheat shows that there must be five harvest seasons—or five “fiscal years.” If you do as Wachover suggests (and extend this to five years and six months) then what you will end up doing is collecting six years of harvest, instead of five years. As a result, the way you calculate this so as to collect only five years of harvest can be seen in the following chart:

Chronology of Kochba Revolt and the Rental Contract									
Bar Kochba Revolt Begins Officially in Spring 133 CE	Second Year of Revolt: Rental Contract Given Feb. 134 CE		Bar Kochba Revolt Ends About this Year						
Year of Jubilee (See Chart p. 105)	First Harvest at End of Same Year	Second Harvest	Third Harvest	Fourth Harvest	Fifth and Final Harvest	This Year Declared Sabbatical Year			
Fall Spring	Fall Spring	Fall Spring	Fall Spring	Fall Spring	Fall Spring	Fall Spring	Fall Spring	Fall Spring	Fall Spring
132/133	133/134	134/135	135/136	136/137	137/138	138/139			

The year that they are still in (the second year of the revolt) has spring and summer yet to be completed. Presuming that the land is already (or is soon to be) under cultivation, that means there must be a harvest in that same year. The conclusion of that second year is the conclusion of year one of the harvest. Four more harvests will take place in years 3, 4, 5, and finally with the contract being completed at the end of year 6 of the revolt. Therefore, according to this document, the Sabbatical year would be year 7 after the revolt. Please note that the previous chart not only reveals for us a Sabbatical year, but also a year of Jubilee—based upon the statement of Bar Kochba that his revolt began in the “first year” of the “redemption.”

According to Jerome’s compilation of the *Chronicon of Eusebius*, the Bar Kochba revolt began in the 16th year of Emperor Hadrian.⁵ While dating the 16th year of Hadrian has its share of problems (because of the various methods used in different places) the most likely way this event was dated is by the Roman method of counting the years which begins in August. Using this method, the 16th year of Hadrian would have begun in August of 132. For certain that revolt was in full bloom by the spring of 133 CE. We know this because of a document from that period which identified the first year of the revolt. It says: “On the first of Iyyar, Year 1 of the redemption of Israel by Simeon Bar Kosiba, prince of Israel.”⁶ Iyyar is the month which corresponds to April/May. The phrase “Year 1 of the redemption” means for certain the first year of the revolt. But it is also a significant clue which *clearly indicates* another special year—a Jubilee Year. Based upon our previously cited reference to the phenomena of

⁴ Note: This is Glenn’s footnote: “The first day of Tishre is the New Year for the reckoning of years, for Sabbatical years, and for Jubilees. . .” *The Mishnah, A New Translation*. Edited by Jacob Neusner. Yale University Press: New Haven and London, 1988. ROSH HASHSHANAH 1.1, p. 299.

⁵ Note: This is Glenn’s footnote: *Die Chronik des Hieronymus. In Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte*, Eusebius VII, by Rudolf Helm, Akademie-Verlag, Berlin, 1984.

⁶ Note: This is Glenn’s footnote: *Israel Exploration Journal*, Kanael B., “Notes on the Dates Used During the Bar Kokhba Revolt,” 1971, p. 41.

Does the “Mur 24E” Document Prove Five Years of Sowing & Reaping Following a Jubilee Year?

Chronomessianism, the dating of events from “Year 1 of the redemption” clearly places that year in a year of Jubilee. While the revolt of Bar Kochba did not officially begin until the Spring of 133 CE, unofficially it probably had already begun at some time late in the year 132 CE. Therefore, it started within the year 132/33 of the Fall-to-Fall Jewish civil calendar. As added confirmation, the revolt is often dated from 132-135 CE by modern dictionary/encyclopedia sources (lasting two and a half years).⁷ The revolt began sometime between the Fall of 132 and the Spring of 133 CE, a year of Jubilee.

Jubilee Calendar							
Blue Numbers Below = Count From Start of Seleucid Era							
Cycle 85							
Week	1st Day Year	2nd Day Year	3rd Day Year	4th Day Year	5th Day Year	6th Day Year	Sabbatical Year
1	4117 CD Bar Kochba Begins Revolt in Year of Jubilee (132/133 CE) Fall 444 SE Year 1 132 CE	4118 Rental Lease Begins 2nd Year of Revolt Fall 445 Year 2 133	4119 446 Fall 134	4120 447 Bar Kochba Killed - Revolts Ends (135 CE) Fall 135	4121 448 Fall 136	4122 449 Rental Lease Ends Before Sabbatical Fall 137	4123 450 Rental Lease Declares this Year + Sabbatical Fall 138
	451 Fall 139	452 Fall 140	453 Fall 141	454 Fall 142	455 Fall 143	456 Fall 144	457 Fall 145
3	4131 458 Fall 146	4132 459 Fall 147	4133 460 Fall 148	4134 481 Fall 149	4135 482 Fall 150	4136 483 Fall 151	4137 484 Fall 152
	4138 465 Fall 153	4139 466 Fall 154	4140 467 Fall 155	4141 468 Fall 156	4142 469 Fall 157	4143 470 Fall 158	4144 471 Fall 159
5	4145 472 Fall 160	4146 473 Fall 161	4147 474 Fall 162	4148 475 Fall 163	4149 476 Fall 164	4150 477 Fall 165	4151 478 Fall 166
	4152 479 Fall 167	4153 480 Fall 168	4154 481 Fall 169	4155 482 Fall 170	4156 483 Fall 171	4157 484 Fall 172	4158 485 Fall 173
7	4159 486 Fall 174	4160 487 Fall 175	4161 488 Fall 176	4162 489 Fall 177	4163 490 Fall 178	4164 491 Fall 179	4165 492 Fall 180
	4166 85th Jubilee 181						

Top Numbers = Creation Date (CD) Black Numbers = Common Era (CE)
Red Numbers = Before Common Era (BCE)

⁷ Note: This is Glenn’s footnote: See *Wikipedia* article on Simon Bar Kokhba, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Simon_bar_Kokhba

Does the Bar Kochba revolt reveal to us both a Sabbatical and Jubilee year? Well, indirectly, *yes it does*. Bar Kochba was a messianic figure, and messianic figures were expected to come at exactly the right time. Many Jews believed Him to be the promised Messiah—although they later changed their minds. The fact that he came and began his revolt in the year 132/33 CE (which is, I believe, a Jubilee year) strongly supports this contention. The fact that a land rental contract begins in the second year of this revolt and ends at the end of 5 years (on the “eve of the shemita”) also directs us to a Sabbatical year in the year 138/139 CE. Finally, Bar Kochba is dating future events based on the first year of the revolt and calling it the “year of redemption” and he shows great concern so as to identify *when* the next Sabbatical year is. This is another indication that his designation of the first year is a special count of years from “year one”, since he calls it the “year of redemption.” This brings to mind the redemption that Israel was supposed to receive every 50th year in the year of Jubilee. Based upon all of this, the year 132/133 would most certainly have to be a Jubilee year.⁸

The above commentary/proposal is untenable for several reasons. I will here address the more glaring concerns:

1. How can anyone know with certainty that the starting point of this contract is the year following a Jubilee year? The answer is, we **cannot!** Glenn *presumes* that the year before the rental contract began was a Jubilee year, even though the contract itself says no such thing, and even though there is no surviving record from anyone who lived during that time period that a Jubilee year had just passed. Here, again, are the pertinent words from the rental contract:

This land I have rented from you today
Until the end of the eve of Shemitah, which are years
Full fiscal years, five, of tenancy;

Notice that the author of the above words tells us how long it was from the time the contract was written until the “eve of Shemitah.” Thus, we know the ending point was the year before a Sabbatical Year; but where are we told that the year before the *starting point* was a Jubilee Year? We are told no such thing. Thus, it is entirely possible that the rental contract was written two years following a Jubilee year, or even two years following a Sabbatical Year. We can hopefully agree that the maximum number of years that land could be rented was until the next Jubilee. However, land could certainly be rented for a shorter period, even including a starting point that fell within any of the six years of a Sabbatical cycle. The question that Glenn needs to answer is, “How do you know that this first year of the rental contract fell immediately after a Jubilee year?” Where in the above text does it say any such thing? There is no law that says a rental contract must begin during a year that follows either a Sabbatical year or a Jubilee year. If the contract contained a statement to the effect of “this year following the Jubilee,” then Glenn might have a point ... presuming the Jews were properly observing the Jubilee cycle at that time. This brings us to point #2, in which Glenn admits that there isn’t even any evidence that the Jews were keeping Jubilee years:

2. Glenn wrote, “The phrase “Year 1 of the redemption” means for certain the first year of the revolt. But it is also a significant clue which *clearly indicates* another special year—a Jubilee Year.” His proposal presupposes that Jews were observing Jubilee years, even though Glenn is already on record as

⁸ From “An Excerpt from Chapter 10 of *Discovering the Jewish Messiah Within the Prophecy of Daniel 9*,” May 2008, pp. 5-9. This excerpt may be read in its entirety by accessing the following URL:
<http://www.itsaboutthattime.net/PDF%20Files/Discover%20Messiah%20Ch10.pdf>

agreeing that there is no “[direct historical confirmation of the keeping of Jubilee years.](#)” In his rebuttal entitled, “In response to *The Jubilee Cycle*,” Glenn wrote the following:

Yes, Larry, [there is no direct historical confirmation of the keeping of Jubilee years.](#) However, there is plenty of direct historical confirmation of the keeping of Sabbatical years. And since that historical record supports continuous cycles of seven years length over a period of about 500 years—that is definitely evidence of repeating cycles of seven!! This leads us to the conclusion that the [Jubilees \(if they were kept at all by anyone\)](#) would have had to have been subordinate to the 7 year cycles (i.e., the first year of the next Jubilee cycle)—if they were kept, which we have no conclusive evidence to show that they were kept (in the Second Temple era, of course).⁹

Since Glenn understands that there is no direct historical confirmation of anyone ever observing Jubilee years, how can he be so certain that “Year 1 of the redemption” clearly indicates a Jubilee Year? Answer: He can’t. This is simply a literary device he uses to persuade others that “Year 1 of the redemption” signified a Jubilee Year. The “redemption,” as understood by all who have studied and researched the Bar Kochba revolt, simply referenced the Jewish belief that they were about to be delivered from foreign oppression.

3. It is fairly obvious that Glenn identifies “redemption” with “Jubilee,” but the question is whether or not his remarks to this effect can be substantiated. Unless he can produce evidence substantiating his claim, the answer to the question is, “No.” Regardless of any similarities between the two terms, “redemption” and “Jubilee” are not the same thing. Certainly, if Jewish thought was that a Jubilee Year meant their “redemption,” then we should expect to see references from at least *one* historian to the Jubilee year having occurred at or near the time of the Bar Kochba revolt. However, there are no such historical references, leaving us with only Glenn’s interpretation of the events. Glenn wrote, “[Please note that the previous chart not only reveals for us a Sabbatical year, but also a year of Jubilee—based upon the statement of Bar Kochba that his revolt began in the ‘first year’ of the ‘redemption.’](#)”

Again, with nothing but his own desire to identify “redemption” with “Jubilee,” Glenn’s assessment above cannot be regarded as authoritative or even reasonable.

4. Glenn believes that the appearance of a “messianic figure,” in the person of Bar Kochba, in and of itself, indirectly reveals a Jubilee Year. He wrote, “[Does the Bar Kochba revolt reveal to us both a Sabbatical and Jubilee year? Well, indirectly, yes it does. Bar Kochba was a messianic figure, and messianic figures were expected to come at exactly the right time.](#)” In view of the fact that, according to Glenn’s timeline, the *true Messiah* didn’t come at “exactly the right time,” i.e., during a Jubilee Year, I find it bizarre that Glenn would attribute the appearance of a *false messiah* to a Jubilee Year! If a messianic figure is supposed to appear during a Jubilee year, and this makes Bar Kochba an ideal candidate, then why didn’t Yeshua the Messiah live to see a Jubilee year (at least not with Glenn’s system)? That’s right, if you examine Glenn’s Jubilee calendar, you will notice that he attributes a Jubilee

⁹ From “In response to *The Jubilee Cycle*,” by W. Glenn Moore, December 2008, page 17. At one time, Glenn posted this rebuttal on his web site, but he removed it in the spring of 2009. For reference purposes, we have decided to post his original study on our web site. It may be read in its entirety by accessing the following URL:

<http://www.ponderscripture.org/PDF%20Files/Jubilees%20-%20Glenns%20Original%20Rebuttal%20to%20Our%20Study%2011-01-08.pdf>.

Does the “Mur 24E” Document Prove Five Years of Sowing & Reaping Following a Jubilee Year?

Year to the year 15 BCE (*before the birth of Yeshua*) and the next Jubilee Year came in the year 34 CE (*after Yeshua’s resurrection*).