

5. *Mistaken Associations*

We have all experienced mistaken associations. A common example of mistaken associations is when we attribute evil to a group or race of people because individuals within that group perpetrated violence on others. This, example, known as “profiling,” presumes that if one person of a certain class acted wrongly, then no one within that class of people can be trusted. Japanese Americans experienced mistaken associations during World War II, and many Moslems have been wrongly associated with the attacks of 911, all because it was Moslem extremists who carried out the acts of violence. June and I believe this same “mistaken association,” though certainly on a much tamer level, exists between the Jubilee cycle and the count to Pentecost. Certainly, the two counts are very similar in that “seven sevens” are counted to arrive at the designated date or year, and both counts require counting to the number fifty. Does this similarity prove a connection?

Glenn Moore insists that there is indeed an association between these two counts. He offers the following explanation in his comparison of the Jubilee cycle with the count to Pentecost:

An even better example of an exception to the rule is the count to Pentecost. The 50 day count to Pentecost is a direct parallel to the 50 year count to Jubilee—and yet, when the day of Pentecost comes it does not force us to alter the regular weekly cycle as some suggest we should do in regard to the Jubilee cycles. If such is true for Pentecost, it would also be true in regards to the year of Jubilee—the keeping of that special year does not alter the regular Sabbatical cycle.¹

In response to the above, I would like to first point out that nowhere in Scripture are we ever told that we should compare the count to Pentecost to the Jubilee cycle, nor is there an approved Scriptural example of anyone ever doing so. Nevertheless, Glenn has taken it upon himself to state that “the 50 day count to Pentecost is a direct parallel to the 50 year count to Jubilee.”² Glenn can argue, as some folks do, that the count to Pentecost and the Jubilee cycle are connected until he’s “blue in the face,” but it still won’t change the fact that this is his own private interpretation, and not something that is ever stated in Scripture. Are there similarities? Certainly, but that does not prove a connection any more than the seventh day of cleansing (*as prescribed in Numbers 19:19*) proves a connection to the seventh-day Sabbath (*as commanded in Exodus 20:8-11*), even though both fall on “the seventh day.”

Henry Browne, M.A., in his book *Ordo Sæclorum: A Treatise on the Chronology of the Holy Scriptures*, observes the similarity between the Jubilee cycle and the count to Pentecost, but unlike Glenn, he approaches the similarity from the perspective of the actual formula being used in arriving at the respective day or year, *not* whether or not the weekly cycle is affected. He writes:

The numerical definition of the jubilee is plain: it is the 50th or $7 \times 7 + 1^{\text{st}}$ year, just as the day of Pentecost is the $7 \times 7 + 1^{\text{st}}$ day from the 2nd day of unleavened bread. The jubilean period, each and every period, contains just 50 years reckoned from a fixed epoch, the 10th day of the

¹ Cf., Moore, W. Glenn, *The Jubilee Code*, 2008, p. 62.

² We are not persuaded that Glenn Moore has a proper understanding of how to reckon the count to Pentecost. As we will read elsewhere in this study, Glenn states that Pentecost (more properly termed the Feast of Weeks by Scripture) cannot fall during the third month. We are uncertain where Glenn came up with this notion, especially in view of the fact that he recognizes it as being a “50 day count.” If you begin the fifty-day count at any time during the Feast of Unleavened Bread (which occurs during the 1st month of the Scriptural year), you *must* end on a date that falls during the *third* month of the Scriptural year.

7th month. It is surprising that any careful reader should have misunderstood these very plain expressions; yet such is the fact.³

Just as the author of the above commentary doesn't recognize any association between the count to Pentecost and the weekly cycle, neither do June or I recognize the association that Glenn attempts to infuse between the Jubilee cycle and the count to Pentecost.

This brings us to Glenn's contention that those of my persuasion are faced with an apparent dilemma, because reckoning the Jubilee cycle the way we do requires "altering the regular Sabbatical cycle." As I mentioned previously, for those who insist that there must be a seamless transition from one Jubilee cycle to the next (without disrupting the Sabbatical cycle in the process), I can only ask, "Why?" For all we know, each Jubilee cycle represents the generation of mankind, with the final Jubilee "year" being representative of eternity, and eternity certainly falls *outside* of what we understand as "time." Since that 50th year is only *representative* of eternity, this means we can only observe that Jubilee year here on earth during what is known as "the time side of eternity." As such, once that year ends, we begin a new count to the next Jubilee ... a new countdown representative of the dawn of man moving towards the goal of eternal life. With each new "countdown," the cycle resets itself, so there is certainly no need for a seamless transition requiring "year 50" and "year one" to coincide with each other. Even with the count to Pentecost, once the day of Pentecost comes and goes, the cycle is over, and the next "count to Pentecost" won't take place until the following year. If Glenn wants to remain consistent with his "Pentecost/Jubilee" analogy, he will need to immediately begin another count to Pentecost as soon as Pentecost arrives ... with "day 50" also being representative of "day 1" of the count to the next day of Pentecost.

Over the years, I have found myself in the middle of some intense discussions pertaining to the calendar. In the course of some of those discussions, I have occasionally been accused of elevating historical evidence above Yahweh's Word. The most frequent accusers have been lunar sabbatarians who are displeased with the fact that the historical record just happens to agree with my interpretation of Scripture. The historical record bears out that Judaism has always understood there to be a continuously-repeating weekly cycle, with the seventh day falling on the day commonly known as Saturday. The issue of determining the Jubilee years, however, proves that when "push comes to shove," I will put Yahweh's Word above the record of history. It seems that everywhere I turn, chronologists and Bible students alike are insisting that, historically, the Jubilee year coincided with "year 1" of the following Jubilee cycle.⁴

³ Cf., *Ordo Saeculorum: A Treatise on the Chronology of the Holy Scriptures*, by Henry Browne, M.A., published by John W. Parker, London, 1844, p. 288. Of course, as mentioned in chapter 3, we do not agree with Mr. Browne's assertion that the 50 years is reckoned from the 10th day of the seventh month. Our point in quoting Mr. Browne is simply to demonstrate that there is scholarly disagreement with the opinion that there is a connection between the Jubilee cycle and the count to Pentecost.

⁴ Cf., Keil & Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, Vol. 1, "The Pentateuch," by C. F. Keil, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 2001 (originally published T. & T. Clark, Edinburg, 1866 – 91). Keil writes, "This grand year of grace was to return after seven times seven years, i.e., as is expressly stated in v. 10, every fiftieth year was to be sanctified as a year of jubilee. By this regulation of the time, the view held by *R. Jehuda*, and the chronologists and antiquarians who have followed him, that every seventh sabbatical year, i.e., the 49th year, was to be kept as the year of jubilee, is proved to be at variance with the text, and the fiftieth year is shown to be the year of rest, in which the sabbatical idea attained its fullest realization, and reached its earthly temporal close." Note: C. F. Keil refers to an ancient view that, while in agreement with Glenn's view that the Jubilee cycle consisted of 49 years, it nevertheless differed with Glenn's view in that they regarded the 49th year as not only the seventh Sabbatical Year, but the Jubilee Year as well. It is thus that those of this persuasion reckoned Jubilee cycles in terms of 49-year cycles instead of 50-year cycles. As affirmed by Keil, this view (not the one espoused by Glenn Moore)

At the same time, I believe it should be noted that there is disagreement among scholars with regard to the historical record. For example, according to medieval Jewish philosopher Maimonides (1135 - 1204), “the jubilee period was of 50 years, the 51st year commencing a new period.”⁵ We should also bear in mind that the scholarly community is constrained to admit that “There is no positive record of any jubilee year having been kept at any time.”⁶ Nevertheless, the historical record does reveal that at least one sect of Jews regarded “year 50” as coinciding with “year one” of the following Jubilee cycle. This understanding is made manifest in *The Book of Jubilees*, an ancient document found among the Dead Sea Scrolls. While *The Book of Jubilees* proves that certain Jews regarded the 50th year as coinciding with the first year of the next cycle, at the same time, it should be noted that both Judaism and Christianity, as a whole, rejected this work by the 4th century CE. According to the online reference *Wikipedia*, “In the 4th century, after Bishops had been appointed by the Roman Emperor Constantine, they similarly rejected many of the same books that had been rejected by the Jews, including *Jubilees*. It is only through the canons of the Oriental Orthodox Churches, that were outside the jurisdiction of Rome, and the Dead Sea Scrolls, that the book has managed to survive at all.”⁷ We read the following in *Mercer Dictionary of the Bible*: “Given the probable date of *Jubilees*, it is best to see it as a proto-Essene writing which was produced before the split which led to the formation of the Qumran community.”⁸

In response to the above information pertaining to *The Book of Jubilees*, which was also supplied in our original version of this study, Glenn Moore wrote the following in his rebuttal:

COMMENT: Larry, have you forgotten that the book of Jubilees was a very popular work at and before the time of the Messiah?⁹

represents the “majority view.” However, in terms of faithful adherence to the text, June and I agree with Keil’s position that this majority view “is proved to be at variance with the text.”

⁵ Cf., *Dr. William Smith's Dictionary of the Bible: Comprising Its Antiquities, Biography, Geography, and Natural History*, Vol. 1, by William Smith, William George Smith, Horatio Balch Hackett, Ezra Abbot, Published by Houghton, Mifflin, and Co., Boston, MA, ¹⁸⁸⁸, page 438. This page may be read online by accessing the following URL: <http://books.google.com/books?id=4tkMAAAIAAJ&pg=PA438&lpg=PA438&dq=>

Note: According to this same reference, Maimonides also mentioned that “The Jews had a tradition that after the destruction of the first Temple only sabbatical years, and no jubilee years, were observed.”

⁶ Ibid. Also, from *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Vol. 3, David Noel Freedman, Editor-in-Chief, Doubleday, New York, NY, 1992, pp. 1027-28, we read, “But did it ever happen? Were the jubilee regulations real and practicable legislation, or were they academic and utopian? While there is evidence that kinship redemption was practiced (Jeremiah 32, Ruth 4), there is simply no evidence of a national jubilee in the extant historical documents of Israel (though some would discern an illusion to a jubilee year in Isa 37:30, where a double year of fallow seems to be envisaged; but it may refer merely to the disastrous effect of invasion). This silence does not, of course, prove that it never did happen. Nor can we say that it was economically impossible and so could not have happened, because there is evidence from other ANE (Ancient Near Eastern) civilizations of periodic nationwide remissions of debt in connection with the accession of a new king. However this ANE evidence comes from centuries earlier than the origins of OT Israel (Gordon 1953; Finkelstein 1961; Lewy 1958).”

⁷ From *Wikipedia*, the Free Encyclopedia, article entitled “Jubilees.” The article may be read in its entirety by accessing the following URL: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jubilees>.

⁸ From *Mercer Dictionary of the Bible*, Watson E. Mills, General Editor, Mercer University Press, Macon, GA, 1997, p. 474.

⁹ From “In response to *The Jubilee Cycle*,” by W. Glenn Moore, 11/01/2008, p. 17. At one time, Glenn posted this study 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>.

I need only point out that the popularity of a work does not establish whether or not it is true (or inspired). I was merely pointing out that both Judaism and Christianity as a whole rejected the authenticity, and hence the inspiration, of this book by the 4th century CE.

Shortly after asking the above question, Glenn added the following comments:

COMMENT: Larry, these same “bishops” condemned people as heretics for following anything “Jewish!” If this is the case, how much credibility can they have in our eyes? And after the fall of Jerusalem the Jews did reject the book of Jubilees as part of the canon of Scripture. But the fact that they even had to deal with the issue at all shows that the book of Jubilees was very popular and even considered Scripture by many Jews at that time.¹⁰

Once again, we are looking at a case of “mistaken association.” I find it a bit premature to accuse “these same bishops” -- the ones who rejected the inspiration of *The Book of Jubilees* -- as being the same bishops who condemned people as “heretics” for following anything Jewish. Nevertheless, regardless of how “condemning” those bishops were, “these same bishops” recognized the inspiration of the Torah, regardless of whether or not they felt that the laws commanded therein are still in effect. Please keep in mind that nothing recorded in *The Book of Jubilees* post-dates the first five books of Torah, so certainly if these “bishops” recognized the authenticity of the Torah, there would have been nothing preventing them from doing the same for *The Book of Jubilees*. The last recorded account found in *The Book of Jubilees*, by the way, is the giving of the law at Sinai. Let’s face it: If those bishops believed the Torah was “done away at the cross,” yet they recognized the Torah as inspired, what would keep them from recognizing the inspiration of *The Book of Jubilees*?

Right now, in the estimation of Glenn, not only is *The Book of Jubilees* of great historical value, but apparently he regards it as being divinely inspired.¹¹ I agree that it is a valuable historical reference, but judging by the response that Glenn gave above, he is of the opinion that the bishops (and Jews) should have recognized *The Book of Jubilees* as a writing that was inspired by Yahweh. This is a vastly different opinion than the one expressed by Glenn a few years earlier. In an online forum, Glenn posted his understanding regarding the Jubilee cycle, and he offered a short commentary pertaining to *The Book of Jubilees*:

The historical evidence from ancient Jewish writings shows a link between the sabbatical cycles and the prophecy of Daniel 9. The book of Jubilees is just one example--provided we take it with a "grain of salt", for obviously it would be difficult to accept everything that is written in that book. However, it does prove that it was a common belief at that time among the Jews that the Sabbatical cycles were endlessly repeating cycles of time--"weeks of years", patterned after Creation (which gave us the weekly cycle).¹²

¹⁰ Ibid, p. 18.

¹¹ Glenn denies believing that *The Book of Jubilees* is inspired in a later addition to his website. The brief article is entitled “Is the Book of Jubilees Infallible Scripture?” (June 2009), and may be read by accessing the following URL: http://www.itsaboutthattime.net/is_jubilees_inspired.htm. Of course, based on Glenn’s previously-cited comments, I can only wonder: If, after the fall of Jerusalem, Judaism had recognized *The Book of Jubilees* as inspired Scripture, would he have supported their decision?

¹² From a posting that Glenn Moore submitted on 08-20-2006 01:59 PM in the True Sabbath Forum at EliYah’s Forums. The forum thread was entitled “**70 Week Prophecy Confirms Weekly Cycle**” The True Sabbath Forum was closed in 2008.

Why did Glenn, in the year 2006, regard *The Book of Jubilees* as being a writing to be taken with a “grain of salt,” whereas two years later he disparaged the bishops who “took it with a grain of salt”? We really need to be careful to not allow our biases to cloud our judgment.

I should add that, even during the month in which Glenn submitted the above posting, he was apparently torn with regard to whether or not *The Book of Jubilees* should be considered “inspired.” On the 20th of August, he wrote that it should be taken with a “grain of salt,” but on the 31st day of the same month, he inferred that they might be inspired:

Now there are those who will say that Jubilees and Enoch are not Scripture. While I agree that they are probably not Scripture, that does not mean they are not necessarily inspired or considered such by the Apostles of Yahushua. And since these books were widely read and used in Judea at that time, we have to at least consider them a valuable contributor to our understanding of Jewish history and culture.¹³

The above musing is an exhibition of confusion. If *The Book of Jubilees* is “probably not Scripture,” then how could it be inspired? And if it *is indeed inspired*, then why should we take it “with a grain of salt”?

Glenn goes so far as to express the view that *The Book of Jubilees* supports the view that first-century normative Judaism agreed with his position that the Jubilee cycle is 49 years in length. Curiously, on a separate occasion, in a private (*but by no means confidential*) discussion, Glenn had expressed a different notion. On that particular occasion, he agreed with my view that normative Judaism regarded the Jubilee cycle as being 50 years in length, but, of course, he disagreed with their collective opinion. It thus appears, based on the following comment made in the “Answers to Objections” section of his website, that Glenn has reversed his stand:

The Book of Jubilees demonstrates that Jubilee cycles were historically understood by normative Judaism to be 49 year, not 50 year, cycles. This book was published 2 centuries before the Messiah, and was extremely popular among many Jews.¹⁴

Is it true, as Glenn now maintains, that normative Judaism understood the Jubilee cycle as being 49 years long instead of 50 years? To answer this question, we first need to find out why Glenn believes *The Book of Jubilees* serves as evidence that the majority of Judaism agreed with his position. Clearly, as Glenn has already written, he believes *The Book of Jubilees* was “very popular” during the first century CE. Upon what evidence does he base this conclusion? He doesn’t say.

Upon looking into the matter of the alleged popularity of *The Book of Jubilees* during the first century CE, I reviewed the findings as presented in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, and this reference does not support Glenn’s conclusion. First of all, according to the information found in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, the author of *The Book of Jubilees* could not have been either a Sadducee or a Pharisee. Since those two factions comprised what is known as “normative Judaism,” Glenn’s claim that this book was

¹³ From a posting that Glenn Moore submitted on 08-31-2006 05:44 PM in the now-defunct “True Sabbath” Forum at EliYah’s Forums. The forum thread was entitled “**The Dead Sea Scrolls proves lunar Sabbaths**”

¹⁴ From “Answers to Objections,” (the answer to the question, “How can you be certain that the Jubilee cycle is 49 years, and not 50 years as some teach?”) Located at the following URL: http://www.itsaboutthatime.net/answer_objections.htm

popular among normative Judaism is shown to be an erroneous conclusion, perhaps based more on wishful thinking than intense research. Here is what we find written about *The Book of Jubilees* in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*:

Students of the legal material in *Jubilees* have recognized that it does not correspond with the traditions of either the Pharisees or the Sadducees, but that it stands closer to what is known of Essene halakah. The Qumran literature has documented their thesis; the 364-day solar calendar is just one fundamental point on which *Jubilees* and the scrolls (including now the Temple Scroll) agree. It is likely, then, that the priestly author belonged to the movement that was later called Essene, whatever may have been its original name.¹⁵

As demonstrated by scholars who have cross-referenced the teachings found in *The Book of Jubilees* with the practices and beliefs of normative first-century Judaism, the author of this book could not have been a member of either the Sadducees or the Pharisees, thus automatically eliminating him as having been among the ranks of what is considered “normative Judaism.” As such, one cannot and should not depict *The Book of Jubilees* as having been “popular among many Jews.” This comment by Glenn, as you may have noticed, was not accompanied by supportive evidence, and should not be regarded as authoritative.

Moreover, if we read the entire article on **Jubilees, Book of**, as presented in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, we can see that Glenn embellishes the popularity of this ancient book without just cause. This reference makes no mention with regard to the popularity of *The Book of Jubilees*, but the allusions it offers indicates that it wasn't nearly as popular as Glenn would like for us to believe. Notice the following information:

The commonly accepted theory about the textual evolution of *Jubilees* is that it was written in Hebrew, translated from Hebrew into Greek and possibly into Syriac, and rendered from Greek into Latin and Ethiopic. The Hebrew original and the Greek version were lost long ago; in fact, Western scholars had no text of the book until the 19th century, when Ethiopic and Latin copies first became available. Today, the entire text is preserved only in Ethiopic (the book enjoyed canonical status in the Abyssinian church); 27 copies of this granddaughter version have been identified to date. The Latin translation exists now in one manuscript (a palimpsest) which contains more than one-fourth of the text. The Greek version remains lost; only citations of it in some Greek and Latin writings from the patristic and Byzantine periods have survived. The Syriac version, if there ever was one, is visible presently only through 29 citations which have been found in an anonymous chronicle and which reproduce all, or more frequently parts, of about 137 verses. Fragments from 12 manuscripts of the original version have been discovered among the Dead Sea Scrolls; nevertheless, only a few of these have been published. Though a fragment of another copy was reportedly found at Masada, this now appears not to be a part of a Hebrew text of *Jubilees*.

The above commentary hardly reflects any indication that *The Book of Jubilees* was “popular among many Jews,” as asserted above by Glenn Moore. The online *Wikipedia* article pertaining to *The Book of Jubilees* does present the book in a more popular light, yet it certainly falls far short of the level indicated by Mr. Moore:

¹⁵ From *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Vol. 3, David Noel Freedman, Editor-in-Chief, Doubleday, New York, NY, 1992, p. 1031.

The book of Jubilees was evidently held in high regard, and sometimes quoted, by the Early Church Fathers of the Christian Church. There is no record of it in Rabbinic sources, and it was among several books that were left out of the canon established by the Sanhedrin (possibly at Yavne, ca. 80 AD).¹⁶

Since *The Book of Jubilees* presents Jubilee cycles the way Glenn believes they should be understood, we can expect him to want to attribute a great deal of importance (and popularity) to this book by ancient Judaism.¹⁷ However, we find nothing substantiating this claim. Moreover, as we will see as we proceed with our study, *The Book of Jubilees* deals crucial blows to some of Glenn Moore's most critical doctrines.

For now, let's address Glenn's claim that Jubilee cycles were historically understood by normative Judaism to be 49 year, not 50 year, cycles. Since he seems to base this understanding on the (greatly exaggerated) "popularity" that he attributes to *The Book of Jubilees*, it should be also understood that Glenn is likely mistaken with regard to his conclusion about ancient Judaism's understanding of the length of Jubilee cycles. Notice the information found in the *Wikipedia* article "Jubilee (Biblical)":

Since the 49th year was already a sabbatical year, the land was required to be left fallow during it, but if the 50th year also had to be kept fallow, as the Jubilee, then no new crops would be available for two years, and only the summer fruits would be available for the following year, creating a much greater risk of starvation overall;^[10] Judah haNasi contended that the jubilee year was identical with the sabbatical 49th year.^[11] However, the majority of classical rabbis believed that the biblical phrase *hallow the fiftieth year*,^[12] together with the biblical promise that there would be three years worth of fruit in the *sixth year*,^[13] implies that the jubilee year was the 50th year.^[6] The opinion of the Geonim, and generally of later authorities, was that prior to the *Babylonian captivity* the Jubilee was the intercalation of the 50th year, but after the captivity ended the Jubilee was essentially ignored, except for the blast of the *shofar*, and coincided with the sabbatical 49th year;^[6] the justification given for this lapse of adherence to the Jubilee was that the Jubilee was only to be observed when the Jews controlled all of Canaan, including the territories of *Reuben* and *Gad* and the eastern half-tribe of *Manasseh*.¹⁸

As revealed by the *Wikipedia* article, Glenn Moore's notion that the majority of Judaism supported his position is simply a distortion of the facts. As I mentioned previously, at one time Glenn verbally expressed agreement with June and me that first-century normative Judaism regarded the Jubilee cycles as

¹⁶ This excerpt was taken from the *Wikipedia* article "Jubilees," which may be read in its entirety by accessing the following URL: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jubilees>

¹⁷ We will later see that *The Book of Jubilees* actually conflicts with some critical links in Glenn's doctrinal exposé, including his belief pertaining to an original *fall-to-fall* calendar as well as the timing of the Israelites' entrance into the Promised Land. Moreover, there is an 80-year difference between Glenn's chronological timeline and the one offered by *The Book of Jubilees* (see Part II, ch. 10, "*Selective Scholarship and Glenn's Use of The Book of Jubilees*"). Predictably, Glenn either downplays or completely omits acknowledgement of these three critical differences.

¹⁸ This excerpt was taken from the *Wikipedia* article "Jubilee (Biblical)," which may be read in its entirety by accessing the following URL: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jubilee_\(Biblical\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jubilee_(Biblical))

consisting of 50 years. He has obviously changed his mind, but to do so without offering any tangible evidence to support such a shift is very puzzling.

We should point out that the information offered by the above *Wikipedia* article is supported by other credible references. The following information, taken from *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, validates the understanding that normative Judaism regarded the Jubilee cycle as consisting of 50 years:

Fifty-and Forty-nine-Year Cycles.

There is a difference of opinion in the Talmud as to whether the jubilee year was included in or excluded from the forty-nine years of the seven cycles. The majority of rabbis hold that the jubilee year was an intercalation, and followed the seventh Sabbatical year, making two fallow years in succession. After both had passed, the next cycle began. They adduce this theory from the plain words of the Law to "hallow the fiftieth year," and also from the assurance of God's promise of a yield in the sixth year sufficient for maintenance during the following three years, "until the ninth year, until her fruits come in" (Lev. xxv. 22), which, they say, refers to the jubilee year. Judah ha-Nasi, however, contends that the jubilee year was identical with the seventh Sabbatical year (R. H. 9a; Git. 36a; comp. Rashi *ad loc.*). The opinion of the Geonim and of later authorities generally prevails, that the jubilee, when in force during the period of the First Temple, was intercalated, but that in the time of the Second Temple, when the jubilee was observed only "nominally," it coincided with the seventh Sabbatical year. In post-exilic times the jubilee was entirely ignored, though the strict observance of the shemittah was steadily insisted upon. This, however, is only according to a rabbinical enactment (Tos. to Git. 36a, s.v. "Bizeman"), as by the Mosaic law, according to R. Judah, shemittah is dependent on the jubilee and ceases to exist when there is no jubilee (Git. *l.c.* and Rashi *ad loc.*).¹⁹

One important item that bears considering from the above article is the fact that Judaism recognizes that *prior to the Babylonian exile*, Judaism was practicing the observance of **50-year Jubilee cycles** (hence the intercalation or *insertion* of the Jubilee year). We will later read of how the chronologist on whom Glenn Moore relies the most heavily for dating Sabbatical years of antiquity, Benedict Zuckermann, understood this to be true, and even noted that he did *not* agree with chronologists who assume "an unbroken continuity" of Sabbatical years and Jubilees.²⁰ Thus, scholars understand that, following the destruction of the first temple, observance of the fifty-year Jubilee cycle came to an end, most likely due to the fact that Judea was no longer an independent nation, but was henceforth governed by other nations, including the Persians, Greeks and Romans. The Land was no longer theirs.

Please understand that we are not citing *The Jewish Encyclopedia* out of any desire to establish rabbinical authority, but rather to underscore the fact that, even from a very early period, there has been disagreement among believers with regard to the correct interpretation of the commandment given in Leviticus 25. However, rather than approach the reasoning used in supporting a 50-year cycle from the perspective that the yield in the sixth year would be sufficient to sustain the people for the following three years (as maintained by the above-cited reference), I am persuaded that the reasoning we have already presented vividly illustrates the problematic dilemma faced by those who believe the Jubilee cycle only

¹⁹ Taken from the *Jewish Encyclopedia* article "Sabbatical Year and Jubilee." This article may be read in its entirety by accessing the following URL:

<http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/view.jsp?artid=18&letter=S>

²⁰ For more details, please read Part II, ch. 12 ("[Benedict Zuckermann Disagreed With Glenn Moore's Dating of Maccabees Sabbatical Year](#)").

consists of 49 years. I refer to it as a “problematic dilemma” because it requires believing that when Yahweh said, “Six years thou shalt sow thy field, and six years thou shalt prune thy vineyard, and gather in the fruit thereof, but in the seventh year shall be a sabbath of rest unto the land,” He didn’t really *mean* what He said! Instead, from their perspective, there must be only *five* years of sowing and reaping for one of those seven Sabbatical cycles, and their only explanation is, “That must be an ‘exception to the rule.’”

If you take the time to read the entire excerpt supplied above from *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, you will notice a claim that the promise of the sixth year being sufficient to sustain the people for the following three years offers evidence of a 50-year cycle. This same claim was also mentioned in the previously-cited excerpt from the *Wikipedia* article. I do not agree with this particular interpretation of the Scriptural text, nor do I even regard any of the “following three years” as being a reference to the Jubilee year. Notice the actual command as it appears in the King James Version’s translation of Leviticus 25:20-22:

²⁰And if ye shall say, What shall we eat the seventh year? behold, we shall not sow, nor gather in our increase:

²¹Then I will command my blessing upon you in the sixth year, and it shall bring forth fruit for three years.

²²And ye shall sow the eighth year, and eat yet of old fruit until the ninth year; until her fruits come in ye shall eat of the old store.

Again, I do not view the above as being a reference to the Jubilee year. Rather, I see it as being Yahweh’s response to those who express concern over what they will eat during the seventh year of a normal Sabbatical cycle, since they obviously would not be allowed to sow or reap during that year. Yahweh answers, “I’m going to give you such an abundant crop during that sixth year that you won’t have to worry about what to eat during the seventh year. Not only that, but since you won’t be allowed to sow during that seventh year, you’re going to have plenty of food during the year in which you’re waiting for your first crop of the new cycle to ripen (the 8th year). So, in summary, you’re going to be just fine during all this time, all the way up until the 9th year, when everything returns to normal!”

Verse 22 validates that the above passage cannot be a reference to the Jubilee year, for the Jubilee year would be the “eighth year.” No sowing is permitted during the Jubilee year ... and since sowing *is* permitted during the “eighth year” referenced by this verse, the eighth year cannot possibly refer to the Jubilee year. It should be noted that since Yahweh has already specified the Jubilee year as the lone exception to the sabbatical cycle, we know that no sowing would occur during either the seventh *or* the eighth years that occur at the end of the seventh sabbatical cycle.

Moreover, notice that *The Jewish Encyclopedia* mentions that the yield in the sixth year is sufficient for maintenance during “the following three years.” However, this is not what the text says. The actual wording is such that the sixth year’s produce will produce a crop for three years, which would be *inclusive* of that sixth year. Thus, not only would the Israelites enjoy the crop of the sixth year, but that same crop would also provide sustenance for the Sabbatical year, plus there would be enough leftovers to see them through the interval between the sowing of the “eighth year” and the reaping of that crop. This understanding is supported by the Jewish sage known as Rashi (1040 –1105). The following excerpt is taken from *The Chumash*:

21. לשלש השנים — *For the three-year period.* The sixth year crop will suffice for parts of three calendar years: the sixth year from Nissan until the end of the year, throughout the seventh year, and at least until Nissan of the eighth year, when the new winter crop will be fully grown (*Rashi*).²¹

I believe *The Chumash* more adequately expounds upon the intent of the Author of Leviticus 25:21-22. The “fruit of three years” blessing promised by Yahweh extends from the sixth year through the eighth year, during which time the Israelites awaited the maturation of their crops -- their first harvest since the concluding harvest of the sixth year.

²¹ *The Chumash*, The Stone Edition, The Torah: Haftaros and Five Megillos with a commentary anthologized from the Rabbinic writings, by Rabbi Nosson Scherman, published by Mesorah Publications, Ltd., Brooklyn, NY, 1997, p. 701.