

6. The Claim: Yahweh Did Not Require the Israelites to Observe the First Jubilee that Fell After Their Entrance into the Promised Land

Until the late summer of 2008, I hadn't ever really given much thought to the instructions that Yahweh gave to Israel in the first part of Leviticus chapter 25. They've always seemed pretty straightforward: *When you enter the land which I give you, then shall the land keep a Sabbath.* Okay, at first glance, I will agree that it appears Yahweh told Moses that the Israelites were to keep a Sabbatical Year upon entering the Promised Land. However, if we read on, we find that the very next instruction was to work the land for six years, after which the seventh year was to be a "sabbath of rest" for the land. Again, if we didn't read any further, I could see how someone might conclude that this *second* reference to the land keeping a Sabbath was merely an allusion to the second Sabbatical Year.

Nevertheless, if we stop there, we are in danger of reaching a premature conclusion; so we need to continue reading. We find that once Yahweh had finished laying the groundwork for the "**six years of working the land, then giving it a rest**" principle, He explained that the Israelites were to number *seven* of those "sabbaths of rest" for a total of forty-nine years and *then* the children of Israel were to cause the "trumpet of the jubilee" to sound on the 10th day of the seventh month. Consequently, the fiftieth year was to be "hallowed," effectively creating a double land Sabbath. When June and I put those first 12 verses of Leviticus 25 together in what we feel is the proper context, we understand that the first "land Sabbath" referenced in this chapter is actually a reference to the Jubilee Year. This initial "sabbath" year, then, was in fact the culminating Jubilee Year for a cycle that was yet unknown to the children of Israel. That Jubilee Year may or may not have been revealed as such to the Israelites; however, if we can recognize a possible clue from Josephus, the name given to the Israelites' very first encampment after entering the Promised Land, *Gilgal*, has an alternate meaning of *liberty*, a word that expresses the ultimate fulfillment of the Jubilee cycle.¹

Equipped with the above information from Leviticus 25:2-12, June and I have long understood the Jubilee Year during which the children of Israel entered the Promised Land as being the forerunner to the Jubilee cycle that was to begin when that "land Sabbath" year ended. Once they counted seven such "land Sabbaths," they were to sound the "trumpet of the jubilee," and the ensuing 50th year would complete the Jubilee cycle ... the first one observed by the children of Israel.

Our understanding of the Jubilee cycle is one that we had privately shared with other believers, and that understanding hadn't ever been challenged by anyone – until the summer of 2008. One afternoon in our home, as I pecked at the computer keyboard while working on a separate study, Glenn and June were engaged in a discussion about the Jubilee cycle. Since I had heard nearly all of Glenn's arguments before, I was paying more attention to what I was typing than to what they were saying. At one point in their conversation, however, June expressed being curious as to how Glenn could explain an apparent problem that the opening segment of Leviticus 25 presents for his argument – specifically, that he must not believe that the Israelites observed the first-occurring Jubilee subsequent to their entrance into the Promised Land.

¹ Cf., *The Works of Flavius Josephus*, translated by William Whiston, A. M., Vol. II, *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book V, ch. 1, sec. 11, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1992, p. 293. For a more in-depth treatment of Josephus' translation of *Gilgal*, please see Part II, chapter 7 ("[Did the Israelites Enter the Promised Land During a Jubilee Year?](#)").

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My semi-attentive ears perked up a notch so as to hear Glenn's response. With all due respect to Glenn's intelligence, I feel that the answer he provided was so incredulous that, at first, I thought he was joking. Since I had not been paying very close attention to their discussion, I was subconsciously waiting to hear Glenn laugh at his own joke. However, when no laughter, not even a chuckle, ensued, I suddenly began paying closer attention to their conversation.

I had just overheard Glenn agree with June's contention that his method requires believing that the Israelites could not have observed the first Jubilee year occurred following their entrance into the Promised Land. Again, not hearing any laughter after making this comment, I shot a quick glance towards Glenn to see if he at least had a "just kidding" look on his face. He did not, so all of a sudden I developed a keen interest in learning more about this particular aspect of Glenn's belief pertaining to the Jubilee cycle. As I just mentioned, this aspect focuses on the opening verses of Leviticus 25. Although these verses have been previously cited, we really haven't addressed them ... until now. For review purposes, here they are again:

¹And Yahweh spake unto Moses in mount Sinai, saying,

²Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the land which I give you, then shall the land keep a sabbath unto Yahweh.

³Six years thou shalt sow thy field, and six years thou shalt prune thy vineyard, and gather in the fruit thereof;

⁴But in the seventh year shall be a sabbath of rest unto the land, a sabbath for Yahweh: thou shalt neither sow thy field, nor prune thy vineyard.

According to this passage, the Israelites were commanded to observe a "land sabbath" when they came into the Promised Land. Although it doesn't specify whether or not this "land sabbath" fell during a Jubilee year, June and I believe that if we continue reading we can, by process of elimination, determine that it was indeed a Jubilee year. We need to bear in mind that there is no requirement for Scripture to *specify* that the year of entry was a Jubilee Year because, as we already know, a Jubilee year is observed as a "land sabbath." Thus, a Jubilee Year *is* a "Sabbatical Year." Nevertheless, for those who might suggest that I am "adding to the Word" or otherwise reading into the text by concluding that the Israelites entered the Promised Land during a Jubilee year, I will simply state that, as we are about to see, this understanding has the support of historical evidence. Moreover, there are "Year 50 = Year 1" adherents who agree that, indeed, it was a Jubilee year.²

You may wonder, "What *difference* does it make whether or not the year the Israelites entered the Promised Land was a Jubilee year?"

It makes a *huge* difference because if the year during which they entered the Promised Land was a Jubilee year, then, according to Glenn's view, this same year would *also* have been "year 1" of the next cycle. For Glenn's model, a Jubilee Year entrance poses a critical problem because, as we've already learned, this would have allowed only *five years* of sowing and reaping before the subsequent Sabbatical year. However, according to verse three, upon observing that first "land Sabbath," the Israelites were instructed to count off *six years*, not five. Thus, it would be to the detriment of Glenn's position for the

² See footnote #12 of chapter 1 ("The Connection Between Jubilee Cycles and the Timing of the Messiah's Return") for details.

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year during which the Israelites entered the Promised Land to have been a Jubilee year. Surprisingly, if you noticed my comment in footnote #12 of chapter 1, an author who agrees with Glenn that “year 50” coincides with “year 1” promotes the position that the Israelites *did indeed enter the Promised Land during a Jubilee year!* In fact, I have come across the writings of *other* “Year 50 = Year 1” proponents who agree with our position that the Israelites entered the Promised Land during a Jubilee year. Here’s one example, taken from study entitled “Joshua’s Seventieth Jubilee,” by John P. Pratt:

An extremely impressive anniversary of that date is approaching. Mon 6 Apr 2009 will mark exactly seventy jubilees on the (Perpetual) Hebrew Calendar since that date. The year of the jubilee has been lost to modern Hebrews, but the results of my research indicate that the jubilee year occurred in that very year of entering the Promised Land. The Lord told Moses to begin counting sabbath years and the jubilee cycle when they entered the promised land (Lev. 25), which suggests beginning the count immediately at that time. The jubilee is the fiftieth year after the cycle begins, but the cycle only has seven sets of seven years, or 49 years. Thus, the 50th year of the cycle is the same as the first year of the cycle. That and several other events indicate that they indeed entered the promised land in a jubilee year. The year 2009 marks 70 sets of 49-year jubilee cycles since 1422 BC.³



The River Jordan

If June and I (as well as the above author) are correct in understanding that Leviticus 25:2-12 validates that the year during which the Israelites entered the Promised Land was a Jubilee year, the ensuing six years of sowing and reaping presents no problem because there will *always* be six years of sowing and reaping prior to each Sabbatical year. On the other hand, Glenn recognizes that if the year they entered the Land was a Jubilee Year, by his method that year was *also* “Year 1” of the next Sabbatical cycle, leaving only five years to “sow and reap,” whereas the text plainly directed them to sow their fields, prune their vineyards and gather in the fruit for *six* years (verse 3).

You might ask, “*Why do some proponents of the 49-year Jubilee cycle teach that the Israelites entered the Promised Land in a Jubilee Year if this means there could only have been five years of sowing and reaping once that year ended?*” There are two possible answers:

(1) Unlike Glenn, those proponents may believe the Jubilee Year of entrance into the Land was the ***first-ever Jubilee Year***. As such, that particular Jubilee Year would not coincide with “Year 1” of the next Sabbatical cycle.

(2) Another possibility involves the fact that not all proponents of 49-year Jubilee cycles share Glenn’s “Year 50 = Year 1” belief. For example, we are about to present a commentary from a well-respected

³ From “Joshua’s Seventieth Jubilee,” by John P. Pratt, reprinted from *Meridian Magazine* (18 May 2006). ©2006 by John P. Pratt. All rights Reserved. The entire article may be read online by accessing the following URL:
<http://www.johnpratt.com/items/docs/lds/meridian/2006/joshua.html#fn1>

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author who agrees with Glenn's view that the Jubilee cycle consists of 49 years, yet he is persuaded that the 49th year always coincides with a Jubilee Year.

Of course, June and I disagree with both of the above options. We agree with Glenn Moore's proposal that Jubilee cycles were instituted at Creation, so even though Scripture does not present the existence of Jubilee cycles prior to the Israelites' entrance into the Promised Land, we are persuaded that they did, nonetheless, exist. The author of *The Book of Jubilees* had this same understanding. The fact that the author of *The Book of Jubilees* shared our personal view doesn't mean it's correct, but nevertheless, it's a view that we believe makes sense. In other words, we lean towards believing that the Jubilee cycle, in the same way as the weekly cycle, was "put in motion" at Creation.

With regard to option #2 above, we have already devoted some space towards expressing our view that the year of Jubilee is, in and of itself, presented by Scripture as a *specified exception*. I feel that commentator John Wesley did an outstanding job of expounding on why the 50th year is precisely *that ...* the 50th year:

25:10 The fiftieth year - The year of jubilee was not the forty and ninth year, as some learned men think, but precisely the fiftieth. The old weekly sabbath is called the seventh day, because it truly was so, being next after the six days of the week and distinct from them all: and the year of release is called the seventh year, Leviticus 25:4, as immediately following the six years, Leviticus 25:3, and distinct from them all. And in like manner the jubilee is called the fiftieth year, because it comes next after seven times seven or forty - nine years, Leviticus 25:8, and is distinct from them all.⁴

If those of Glenn's persuasion can be properly referred to as "Year 50 = Year 1" proponents, then those who believe that the forty-ninth year coincides with the Jubilee Year can be referred to as "Year 49 = Year 50" proponents. Neither view recognizes "Year 50" as being a separate, distinct year, and this is where both sides, in our estimation, took a wrong turn. Nevertheless, if we were to believe that the Israelites entered the Land in the 49th year ... and if we believed that 49th year was *also* a Jubilee Year, we would have no problem with the command to sow and reap for the next six years. By making year 50 a "ghost year," there can be no concerns about reducing the number of years needed to work the land.

Historical Evidence: The Israelites Entered the Promised Land During a Jubilee Year

As we continued researching Glenn's claim that the Israelites didn't enter the Promised Land during a Jubilee Year, not only did we find that he is at odds with those who share his view with regard to the length of the Jubilee cycle, but his belief *also* contradicts the beliefs of historical Judaism. This is not a new revelation; in fact, even Glenn has expressed the understanding that ancient Judaism "has tended to believe" that the Israelites entered the Land during a Jubilee Year.

Historically, the Jews have tended to believe that the entrance into the promised land came in a year of Jubilee. The alignment of the chronology of *Seder Olam* supports that view as well.

⁴ From *John Wesley's Explanatory Notes on the Whole Bible*, by John Wesley, (produced between 1754 and 1765); online version may be accessed at the following URL:

<http://www.biblestudytools.com/Commentaries/WesleysExplanatoryNotes/wes.cgi?book=le&chapter=025>.

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While I do not necessarily find proof in Scripture that Israel's entrance into the promised land actually took place in a year of Jubilee, the point is that this is what they typically believed (including Maimonides).⁵

As we can see, Glenn is compelled to agree that, right or wrong, Jews have historically recognized that the Israelites entered the Promised Land during a Jubilee Year. Elsewhere in his writings, Glenn attempts to downplay this historical understanding, branding it as a "Jewish tradition" that is "merely an assumption."⁶ Nevertheless, this is indeed a Jewish belief that has been handed down from generation to generation. In determining whether it is right or wrong, a great place to start is the very Word of Yahweh. This is why June and I believe as we do – based on our own understanding of Leviticus 25:2-12. To us, it makes sense to glean from this text that, since the Israelites were to begin "Year 1" of the Jubilee cycle in the year that *followed* their entrance into the Promised Land, this can only mean that the *preceding year* – the year in which they entered – was a Jubilee Year.

Independent authors share this same view. I did an internet "Google" search to see if I could find believers who, solely based on their understanding of the Scriptural account, believe the Israelites entered the Promised Land during a Jubilee Year. I found that there are *many* who share this view. Here is just one example:

And the year Israel entered the promised land was a Jubilee year (Deut 31:7-11; Josh 1:11,13; 4:1-7; 5:10-12), which is also prophetic of the time of liberty and rest in the Kingdom of God during the millennium that will occur at the return and reign of Jesus Christ (Isa 61:1; Lk 4:16-21; Heb 4:1-16; Rev 20:4).⁷

The author of the above commentary believes that Scripture, in and of itself, supports believing that the Israelites entered the Promised Land during a Jubilee Year. What I find interesting is the fact that the verses he uses to validate his belief are not the same verses that June and I use. Nevertheless, if you were to ask him *why* he believes the Israelites entered the Promised Land during a Jubilee Year, he would answer, "My interpretation of Scripture."

This brings us to the "Jewish tradition" that Glenn Moore mentions above. Glenn recognizes that Jewish tradition supports believing that the Israelites entered the Promised Land in a Jubilee Year, but he downplays it as "an assumption ... (which may or may not be correct)." Certainly, I would agree that there are many Jewish traditions that are unscriptural; the question is, "Is this tradition one of them?" Is the tradition that the Israelites entered the Promised Land during a Jubilee year unscriptural? Based on what we've just seen, modern-day proponents of a Jubilee Year entrance, including June and me, agree that this tradition is *based on an understanding of what we are given by Scripture*.

⁵ From "An Excerpt from Chapter 10 of *Discovering the Jewish Messiah Within the Prophecy of Daniel 9*" by W. Glenn Moore, p. 10. I located this commentary at the following URL:

<http://www.itsaboutthattime.net/PDF%20Files/Discover%20Messiah%20Ch10.pdf>

⁶ Cf., Glenn Moore's "Answering Objections" page on his web site, which was initially posted at:

http://www.itsaboutthattime.net/answer_objections.htm, but later moved to

http://www.itsaboutthattime.net/49_vrs_50_cycles.htm.

⁷ From "Keeping the Sabbath & Jubilee Years... For a Prosperous Sustainable Agricultural Economy," by Allen L. Stout, 2007 by Serf Publishing, Inc. This study may be read in its entirety by accessing the following URL: <http://www.cgca.net/serf-publishing/sab&jubyears.htm>.

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When we examine the writings of those ancients who believed the Israelites entered the Land during a Jubilee Year, it becomes clear that our modern-day interpretation is in synch with the understanding that those believers gleaned from the Word.

Although the Jewish historian Josephus doesn't tell his readers outright whether or not the Israelites entered the Promised Land during a Jubilee Year, he does offer a clue that it very well could have been. As we know, the Jubilee Year is the time when the captives are set free, hence the term *liberty* is used in association with the Jubilee. It is not at all surprising, then, that the name given to the first place of encampment following their entrance into the Promised Land is a name that, according to Josephus, denotes *liberty*:

Now the place where Joshua pitched his camp was called Gilgal, which denotes *liberty*; for since now they had passed over Jordan, they looked on themselves as freed from the miseries which they had undergone from the Egyptians, and in the wilderness.⁸

I find it very interesting that, according to Josephus, the Israelites didn't officially consider themselves "freed from the miseries which they had undergone from the Egyptians" *until* they entered the Promised Land. Glenn Moore, on the other hand, believes the Jubilee Year occurred during the year of their departure from Egypt, as though they were "set free" *that* year. I will not argue the point that the Israelites were indeed "freed" from the Egyptians the year of the Exodus, but, again, Josephus expresses the understanding that they didn't *officially* consider themselves as "freed" until they crossed over into the Promised Land. In fact, Yahweh Himself expressed that very same understanding when, in Joshua 5:9, He said to Joshua, "This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you." Were the Israelites freed from the "reproach of Egypt" when they finished crossing the Red Sea or was it when they finished crossing the Jordan River?

Many will search the meaning of the Hebrew word *Gilgal* and conclude that Josephus didn't know what he was doing when he expressed that it denotes "liberty." According to Hebrew-English lexicons, *Gilgal* means "circle" or "wheel"; hence, the connotation of "rolling" or "rolling away." Thus, it might appear that Josephus didn't know Hebrew very well. However, in a footnote to his translation of Josephus' commentary, translator William Whiston wrote the following:

I agree here with Dr. Bernard, and approve of Josephus' interpretation of Gilgal for *liberty*. See Josh. v, 9."⁹

Is it possible that the naming of the Israelites' first encampment after crossing into the Promised Land had anything to do with the Jubilee Year? I would answer yes. However, in our drive to produce historical evidence that ancient believers understood a Jubilee Year entrance into the Promised Land, the above commentary from Josephus is the "tip of the iceberg," so to speak.

Rather than go into extensive detail providing our version of the historical evidence supporting the fact that ancient believers recognized a Jubilee Year entrance into the Promised Land, we have decided to

⁸ Cf., *The Works of Flavius Josephus*, translated by William Whiston, A. M., Vol. II, *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book V, ch. 1, sec. 11, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1992, p. 293.

⁹ *Ibid.*

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allow a proponent of the 49-year Jubilee cycle do it for us. What follows is a commentary from a supporter of the 49-year Jubilee cycle, who cohesively explains that the historical understanding aligns with a Jubilee Year entrance into the Promised Land:

The Date When Counting Started

Previously it was stated that the timing of all Jubilee years can be calculated by going back in 49-year intervals from Ezekiel's Jubilee that started in Tishri of 574 BC, i.e. 574t in the notation of Table 1. The first year of this Jubilee cycle must have been 48 years earlier, in 622t, which is consistent with the tradition of the *Seder Olam* and the Talmud that the prior year (Josiah's 18th year, 623t) was a Jubilee. If we go back 16 Jubilee cycles (16 x 49 = 784 years) from 622t, we find that the year beginning in Tishri of 1406 BC was the first year of a Jubilee cycle. According to the religious calendar that started the year in Nisan (Ex 12:2), this was in the year beginning on Nisan 1 of 1406 BC. This is identical to the date for the entry into Canaan that can be derived from 1 Kings 6:1, the verse that synchronizes Solomon's fourth year with the 480th year of the Exodus-era. When used in conjunction with Edwin Thiele's date for the beginning of the divided kingdom, 1 Kings 6:1 places the Exodus in 1446 BC and the beginning of the Conquest, 40 years later, in 1406 BC.¹⁰

There is only one chance in 49 that 1406 BC, the date for the entry of Canaan that is derived from 1 Kings 6:1, would start a Jubilee cycle if it is maintained that the book of Leviticus was not in existence at that time. The calendar of Jubilee and Sabbatical years therefore establishes the accuracy of the time of the Exodus and entry into Canaan as derived from 1 Kings 6:1, since these dates fit in exactly with the Jubilee/Sabbatical-year calendar.

Earlier, it was demonstrated that the timing of the Sabbatical years was known as early as the time of Jehoshaphat in the ninth century BC. But the Jubilee cycles now give evidence that their timing goes all the way back to 1406 BC. For those who hold to the non-Mosaic authorship of Leviticus, the situation has gone from embarrassing (the mention of activities associated with a Sabbatical year long before the exile) to a major setback (all the mentioned activities fit exactly into the Jubilee/Sabbatical-year calendar), to inexplicable. Late-date theories of the composition of the Pentateuch cannot explain how 1406 BC, when Israel entered Canaan according to 1 Kings 6:1, just happens to fall at the beginning of a Jubilee cycle, as derived from the Jubilee beginning at the time of Ezekiel's vision (Ez 40:1).

For Late-Date Theories, It Gets Worse

The *Seder Olam* (chap. 11) and the Talmud (*Arakin* 12b) give the number of Ezekiel's Jubilee: the 17th. This is in exact agreement with the entry into Canaan in 1406 BC. The authors of the *Seder Olam* and the Talmud could not have done the calculation to get this accuracy, because their known calculation methods were not adequate to solve the chronological problems of the kingdom period and the time of the judges. Their methods were even incapable of correctly calculating the 49 years between Josiah's Jubilee and Ezekiel's Jubilee, which indicates that the Jubilees at these times, as well as the number of Ezekiel's Jubilee, were historically remembered, not calculated by later writers (Young 2006c: 77).

The date for the entry into Canaan based on the Jubilee calendar is derived by a method that is independent of the method of deriving this date from the 480 years of 1 Kings 6:1. However, the dates given by the two methods are identical. This affirms the correctness of the

¹⁰ The year of the Israelite entrance into the Promised Land as proposed by Mr. Young (1406 BCE) is clearly at variance with the year proposed by Glenn Moore (1396 BCE) – a ten year difference.

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1446 date for the Exodus. But it does more: it shows that Thiele's date for the beginning of the divided monarchy (the date that is essential for determining Solomon's fourth year) is assured because it can be established by two independent methods. Since Thiele's date for the division was derived by a careful study of the exact chronological data for the kingdom period found in Kings and Chronicles, the fact that the date has been independently verified gives confidence not only in that date, but in all other dates, reign lengths, and synchronisms that Thiele used to derive it. This is similar to balancing one's checkbook against the ending balance shown in the bank's statement: when our ending total agrees with the bank's, then we can have confidence that all our individual figures and calculations that went into deriving our ending total are correct.¹¹

According to the findings of the above author, himself a proponent of the 49-year Jubilee cycle, the Israelites entered the Promised Land during a Jubilee Year. As he establishes, his findings corroborate the writings of the *Seder Olam*, which is a second century Jewish writing,¹² as well as the Talmud. As we read earlier, even Glenn agrees that the *Seder Olam* provides historical support for believing that the Israelites entered the Land in a Jubilee Year. However, the *Seder Olam* only dates back to the second century CE. There is *another* historical writing that predates the *Seder Olam* by at least three centuries!

In our previous chapter, we addressed Glenn Moore's heavy reliance on *The Book of Jubilees* as being an ancient record testifying of believers who recognized 49-year Jubilee cycles. In his attempt to drive home his point, Glenn emphasized that *The Book of Jubilees* was very popular "at and before the time of the Messiah." In fact, he added that this work "was very popular and even considered Scripture by many Jews at that time." We noted that Glenn "pulled all the stops" in attempting to call our attention to the historical significance of *The Book of Jubilees*. However, we also noted (in a separate footnote) that Glenn avoids, omits and dismisses *The Book of Jubilees* when it conflicts with his own personal theological understanding. One of those major areas of conflict is the timing of the Israelites' entrance into the Promised Land. We have already seen that, even among those who share Glenn's "Year 50 = Year 1" position, many agree with June and me in believing that the Israelites entered the Promised Land during a Jubilee Year. Moreover, every historical reference we have thus far examined *also* agrees that Joshua led Israel into the Promised Land during a Jubilee Year. Most notable among those historical references is the very reference touted by Glenn in support of the 49-year Jubilee cycle: *The Book of Jubilees*.

¹¹ From "Evidence for Inerrancy from a Second Unexpected Source: The Jubilee and Sabbatical Cycles," by Rodger C. Young, *Bible and Spade Magazine*, Vol. 21, No. 4 (Fall 2008 issue), Associates for Biblical Research, Akron, PA, pp. 118-119. As we indicated prior to citing this article, Mr. Young shares Glenn Moore's position that the Jubilee cycle consists of 49 years. However, unlike Glenn, Young does *not* believe that "Year 50 = Year 1." Rather, he believes that "Year 49 = Year 50," as evidenced by the following quote: "There are also practical considerations that show that the Jubilee cycle was 49 years instead of 50. If the Jubilee was a separate year following the seventh Sabbatical year, then there would be two successive years of voluntary refraining from sowing and reaping, and there is no indication of such anywhere in Scripture. All these considerations establish that the Jubilee cycle was 49 years, and the Jubilee year was identical to the seventh Sabbatical year."

¹² According to *Wikipedia*, "**Seder Olam Rabbah** (Hebrew: סדר עולם רבה) is the earliest post-exilic chronicle preserved in the Hebrew language. Tradition considers it to have been written about 160 CE by Yose b. Halafta ... the author probably designed the work for calendrical purposes, to determine the era of the creation." For more information, you may read the online *Wikipedia* article "Sedr Olam Rabbah" at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seder_Olam_Rabbah. We will later see that Glenn Moore extensively uses the *Seder Olam* as a basis for determining calculations of Sabbatical years.

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The Book of Jubilees, as you may know, consists of a narrative of the history of the world as given to Moses by the “angel of the face.” Of course, as Glenn has established, this historical narrative includes a chronological timeline consisting of 49-year Jubilee cycles. However, what Glenn omits from his commentaries on *The Book of Jubilees* is the fact that Moses is indirectly informed that the Israelites would enter into the Promised Land *during a Jubilee Year*. The book draws to a close with Moses being told that, up until that point in time, forty-nine Jubilees, in addition to one “week” of years (i.e., seven years), *plus two years*, had elapsed from the days of Adam. In other words, since the expiration of the 49th Jubilee, nine years had passed. From that moment in time, according to the “angel of the face,” forty years lay ahead of the Israelites until they crossed the Jordan River. When we “do the math,” we see that the final year of the remaining 40 years would *also* be the *forty-ninth year* of that Jubilee.

If we follow the sequence of events presented by *The Book of Jubilees*, we understand that as the Israelites were making preparations for entering the Promised Land, the New Year began with the month known in Hebrew as *Abib*. This marked the ending of the 40th year of their wandering and the beginning of what is known as the Israelite conquest of Palestine. That New Year, according to *The Book of Jubilees*, was a Jubilee Year. Since the text doesn’t actually come out and state that it was a Jubilee Year, we have to “do the math.” With this in mind, in order to definitively illustrate the fact that the author of *The Book of Jubilees* regarded the year during which the Israelites entered the Promised Land as being a Jubilee Year, we will first provide the pertinent quote from *The Book of Jubilees*:

CHAP. L. 1. And after this law I made known to thee the days of Sabbaths in the desert Sinai, which is between Elam and Sinai. 2. And I told you concerning the Sabbaths of the earth on Mt. Sinai, and concerning the years of jubilees with the Sabbaths; and also the year I mentioned to you; but the year thereof we did not tell you, until thou comest into the land which ye shall possess; and ye shall make the land also observe the Sabbaths for those dwelling in it, and the years of jubilees shall learn. 3. Concerning this I have ordained for thee the weeks of years and the jubilees, from the days of Adam to this day: forty-nine [jubilees] and one week and two years; and yet forty years are before for learning the commandments of YHWH, until ye cross the border of the land of Canaan, crossing the Jordan on the western side, and jubilees will pass by until Israel shall be cleansed from all fornication and guilt and uncleanness and contamination and sin and transgression, and shall dwell in all the land in safety, and no Satan and no evil one will injure him, and the land will be cleansed from that time on and to eternity.¹³

As revealed by the author of *The Book of Jubilees*, forty-nine Jubilee cycles since the days of Adam had come and gone, in addition to one “week” (seven years) and two extra years. Since Moses and the Israelites had 40 years of wandering ahead of them, this tells us that Moses was given this information shortly after the Israelites’ departure from Egypt. Thus, with the passing of the 49th Jubilee cycle, the 50th cycle began *nine years prior to the Exodus*. In order to more vividly illustrate our point, we are breaking it down mathematically as follows:

¹³ *The Book of Jubilees*, Chapter 50, vv. 1-3, Translated from the Ethiopic by George H. Schodde; first printed in Oberlin, OH by E. J. Goodrich, 1888, p. 130.

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As we know, the 50th Jubilee cycle had already begun:

- + 7 years (one “week” of years)
- + 2 years
- = 9 years of the 50th Jubilee had elapsed
- + 40 years of Wandering that lay ahead of them
- = 49th Year of the 50th Jubilee marked the final year of Wandering

Conclusion: Since the 49th year of Wandering ended when the Israelites entered the Promised Land, this means *the 50th year had begun* – a Jubilee Year.

The foregoing is an incontrovertible fact, at least as presented by the author of *The Book of Jubilees*. Remember, this is the same historical work that Glenn Moore insists as having been “[very popular and even considered Scripture by many Jews at that time](#),” i.e., before and during the time of the Messiah. In the “Introductory Notes” to *The Book of Jubilees*, the translator affirms the understanding that fifty Jubilee cycles elapsed between Creation and the Israelites’ entrance into the Promised Land:

The time between the creation and the entrance of Israel into Canaan is counted as fifty jubilees, or 2,450 years, which in general agrees with the biblical records.¹⁴

We thus see that *The Book of Jubilees*, in spite of Glenn’s support of this historical reference, presents a *Jubilee Year Entrance* into the Promised Land, which conflicts with his teaching. We might also point out that whereas *The Book of Jubilees* conveys that the entrance was at the *beginning point* of the 51st Jubilee cycle, Glenn Moore teaches that the Israelites entered the Promised Land towards the *end* of the 53rd Jubilee cycle. We will cover this particular discrepancy later in our study.¹⁵

For those of you who, like me, process information better with the use of visual aids, we have decided to offer a side-by-side comparison of the Jubilee calendar offered by Glenn Moore with the Jubilee calendar described in *The Book of Jubilees*:

¹⁴ Ibid, “Introductory Notes,” p. xiii.

¹⁵ See Part II, ch. 10, “[Selective Scholarship and Glenn’s Use of The Book of Jubilees](#).”

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A Side-by-Side Comparison of Two Jubilee Calendars Depicting the 40 Years of Wandering

Jubilee Calendar According to W. Glenn Moore								
Cycle 53								
Week	1st Day Year	2nd Day Year	3rd Day Year	4th Day Year	5th Day Year	6th Day Year	Sabbatical Year	
1	2549 CD Plagues - Exodus Spring 1438 BCE Start of 40 Years Fall Year 1 1437: BCE	2598 1	2591 2	2592 3	2583 4	2594 5	2585 6	
2	2596 7	2597 8	2598 9	2599 10	2600 11	2601 12	2602 13	
3	2563 14	2564 15	2565 16	2566 17	2567 18	2568 19	2569 20	
4	2578 21	2579 22	2578 23	2578 24	2580 25	2581 26	2582 27	
5	2577 28	2578 29	2579 30	2580 31	2581 32	2582 33	2583 34	
6	2584 35	2585 36	2586 37	2587 38	2588 39	2589 40 Israel Enters Land in Spring 1396	2590 41 First Observed Sabbatical Year Fall 42	
7	2591 43	2592 44	2593 45	2594 46	2595 47	2596 48	2597 49 Second Observed Sabbatical Year Fall 42	
	2538 53rd Jubilee 1388	Six Years of Sowing and Reaping					2597 50th Jubilee 1389	
		Five Years of Sowing and Reaping						

Jubilee Calendar According to The Book of Jubilees								
Cycle 50								
Week	1st Day Year	2nd Day Year	3rd Day Year	4th Day Year	5th Day Year	6th Day Year	Sabbatical Year	
1	50th Jubilee Spring Year 1	Spring Year 2	Spring 3	Spring 4	Spring 5	Spring 6	Spring 7	
2			1st year of wandering Jubilees 50:3	2	3	4	5	
3	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
4	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	
5	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	
6	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	
7	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	
	Israel Enters Land in 51st Jubilee Spring 50	Five Years of Sowing and Reaping						

This is a screen capture of Cycle 53 of Glenn Moore’s Jubilee Calendar, depicting the Israelites’ entrance into the Promised Land during the 40th year of that cycle. The only addition I made to his calendar was to insert the large yellow arrow depicting the fact that Glenn’s proposed model **requires five years** of sowing and reaping at the beginning of each Jubilee cycle. Glenn also has the Israelites entering the Promised Land prior to a Sabbatical year, leaving them a full five months for planting and harvesting a garden (if they so desired) before the onset of Glenn’s proposed Sabbatical Year. Yet the command was, “When you come into the land which I give you, then shall the land keep a rest unto Yahweh.” (Lev. 25:2)

According to Jubilees 50:3, **forty-nine** Jubilee cycles, in addition to “a week and two years,” had elapsed from Creation until the moment the “angel of the face” imparted to Moses the history of the world. He added that 40 years yet lay ahead of them before crossing into Canaan. Since nine years of the current Jubilee had already transpired, this meant that “year 40” of their wandering would coincide with the forty-ninth year of the Israelites’ wandering - the seventh Sabbatical year of that cycle - bringing the Israelites into the Promised Land at the beginning of the 51st Jubilee cycle. According to this model, since it was a Jubilee Year, the Israelites would not have been permitted to sow or reap until the following spring. Of course, the problem with this model, which is the same problem faced by Glenn, is the fact that there could only be five years of sowing and reaping at the beginning of the next Jubilee cycle (see Part I, chapter 2), whereas the Scriptural command states that they were to sow and reap for **six years** (Lev. 25:3).

The Israelites’ First Jubilee Year in the Promised Land ... According to Glenn Moore

As I mentioned earlier, Glenn Moore’s chronological timeline requires believing that the Israelites did not observe the Jubilee year that fell subsequent to their entrance in the Promised Land. Although I had seen and reviewed Glenn’s “Jubilee calendar” on several occasions, I hadn’t studied it with the intense scrutiny that would have enabled me to discern this key aspect, and he certainly does not advertise anything to the effect of, “The Israelites didn’t observe the first Jubilee year that fell subsequent to their entrance into the Promised Land!” I don’t blame him for not advertising this fact, for it adds no credibility to his position and, as I will demonstrate, it defies sound reasoning. In response to my request for a visual aid, Glenn very graciously reproduced this particular time frame from his Jubilee calendar and

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offered it for my review. It is displayed on page 44. Before you examine his calendar, I believe I should point out some key aspects worthy of note:

1. Glenn ascribes a Jubilee year to the year of the Exodus (an indication that a Jubilee year has a considerable measure of significance, since the Israelites' "year of release" coincided with a Jubilee year).
2. Glenn believes the Israelites entered the Promised Land during year 42 of that Jubilee count, which coincided with a Sabbatical year. (This Sabbatical year was observed by Israel, so it follows that they would have *also* observed the upcoming Jubilee year).
3. Glenn maintains that although "year 50" fell eight years after their entrance into the Promised Land, it was ignored.
4. For Glenn's theory to be correct, the Israelites must have counted eight Sabbatical cycles after their entrance into the Promised Land before observing their first Jubilee year, even though Yahweh plainly instructed them to "number seven sabbaths of years unto thee" from the time they entered the Promised Land. A careful reading of the first 13 verses of Leviticus 25 reveals that, if we stay within the context, the instructions given there apply to what the Israelites were commanded to do once they entered "the land which I give you" (Lev. 25:2). One of those instructions had to do with hallowing the 50th year (Lev. 25:9-13). Glenn chooses to interpret verses 9-12 as occurring *eight* sabbatical cycles after their entrance into the Promised Land, even though the plain context of the entire setting demonstrates a sequence of *seven* sabbatical cycles.

To briefly summarize the differences that we have with regard to Glenn's interpretation of Leviticus 25:3-13, June and I believe that verses 3-7 specify the instructions pertaining to how to count to and observe their first Sabbatical year. Verses 8-13 add the instructions pertaining to what they are to do after having observed seven of those cycles (*not* seven additional cycles, as proposed by Glenn). Glenn interprets verses 3-7 as pertaining to sabbatical cycle #1 (following their entrance into the Land), and then he believes the Israelites skipped a Jubilee observance before counting seven additional cycles, and only then did they observe their first-ever Jubilee year.

As I mentioned earlier, I was somewhat confused by the scenario described by Glenn, so I asked him to provide a visual aid of sorts depicting the time frame from the Jubilee Year which Glenn believes fell at the time of the Exodus, extending to the first Jubilee Year that the Israelites observed in the Promised Land. As the calendar he produced on the following page reveals, the Israelites skipped the observance of the Jubilee Year that fell 50 years after they left Egypt:

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The following calendar was composed by W. Glenn Moore on 09/06/2008:

Scenario of events beginning with Israel's entrance into the Promised Land (49-Year Jubilee Cycle):

Jubilee Year at Exodus	2	3	4	5	6	7
Count of 40 years begins	2	3	4	5	6	
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
29	30	31	32	33	34	35
28	29	30	31	32	33	34
36	37	38	39	40	41	42
35	36	37	38	39	40	Israel Enters Land in Sabbatical Year
43	44	45	46	47	48	49
Sow and Reap the land for Six Years						Rest on Sabbatical Year
50	1	2	3	4	5	6
Jubilee Year NOT observed	Count Seven Times Seven Years to Jubilee					7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31	32	33	34	35
36	37	38	39	40	41	42
43	44	45	46	47	48	49
Jubilee Year						

Notice that, upon the Israelites' entrance into the Promised Land, Glenn's system requires believing that they observed a Sabbatical year, but Yahweh had them ignore the upcoming Jubilee year! In fact, when that particular "year 50" came around, it was a year of sowing and reaping! Why did Yahweh require the Israelites to observe the institution of the Sabbatical year upon entering the Promised Land, but IGNORE the upcoming Jubilee year?? Moreover, according to Glenn, Yahweh intended for the Israelites to wait to number the "seven sabbaths of years" until after they had already counted off one "null" cycle of seven years! I refer to it as a "null cycle" because it had no effect on any Jubilee count insofar as Israel was concerned ... even though they had been told to number "seven times seven" years from the time that they entered the land.

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If we review the above calendar, the number of “exceptions to the rule” that Glenn needs to justify his position is simply overwhelming. Not only must he maintain that the “five years of sowing and reaping” is an exception to the rule, but he is left to believe that the Israelites, contrary to the plain instructions in Leviticus 25:8, waited out an entire Sabbatical cycle before numbering the “seven Sabbaths of years.” Thus, instead of counting seven Sabbaths of years, Glenn believes they were supposed to “just know” that Yahweh meant for them to count eight. At first I thought that Glenn’s interpretation that the Israelites counted eight Sabbatical cycles before observing the Jubilee year was another “exception,” but in a subsequent explanatory note, I learned that he is adamant that this is “no exception,” ... he believes this is the only way the text can be properly understood.¹⁶ In other words, verses 3-7 are more than instructions for counting to and observing the Israelites’ first Sabbatical year. They are, in Glenn’s estimation, to be understood as the final cycle of the seven Sabbatical cycles. Then, after skipping the observance of that Jubilee year (another exception), the Israelites counted seven more Sabbatical cycles, at the end of which was their first-ever Jubilee year observance (Lev. 25:8-13).

Given the above items of consideration, I maintain that we cannot and should not expect Yahweh to introduce the Jubilee cycle to a group of people who had never observed it before and expect them to understand it the way Glenn explains that it had to be done. According to Glenn, the Israelites, who at that point in time had never so much as even *heard* of a “Jubilee year,” were expected to learn that, in order to arrive at a Jubilee year, one has to first count seven Sabbatical years. As such, the year prior to beginning such a count would have to be a Jubilee year. However, Glenn has the Israelites *ignoring* the Jubilee year that he believes occurred prior to their counting off the next seven Sabbatical cycles. We find this reasoning to be unreasonable and unsupported by the Scriptural account. Certainly, an explanation is in order, and I asked Glenn to give me a written explanation, which he willingly provided. I began the question to Glenn in this manner:

Yahweh instructed the Israelites to keep the land Sabbath when they entered the Promised Land, but eight years later He had them ignore His Jubilee year. This is because

Here is how Glenn responded:

Yahweh doesn’t explain this in the text, but it is clear that keeping a year of Jubilee at the start was not required. We know this because the text of Leviticus 25 does not mention it or require it. He only required them to keep it in the 50th year. So, it is not such a big problem as some may believe.

I would like to suggest that the reason He did not require a year of Jubilee first is because they had not been living in the land very long. To keep a Jubilee would require (as the text plainly states) that they count 49 years. Since they had only been in the land 8 years, they could not be expected to do this.

¹⁶ This comes from a rebuttal that Glenn sent me on 11/01/2008. Here are his exact remarks: “COMMENT: The Israelites counted everything out just as given in Leviticus 25. When they entered the land they counted that as a sabbatical year. Seven years later they counted another sabbatical year. Then they were commanded to count seven more sabbatical years for a grand total of nine (not eight) sabbatical years, including the first one that took place when they entered the land. How do I know this? Because, **that is what it says in the text!!**”

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Again, they did not keep a Jubilee at the start, but then it is clear from the text that Yahweh did not require it of them -- for whatever the reason.

Essentially, what Glenn is saying here is this: The Jubilee year really did come and go eight years after entering the Promised Land, but it wasn't observed because it wasn't the right time yet. This would be like a student in the public schools whose parents move during the school year. The new reading teacher tells the student that at the end of every six-week grading period a book report is due. The student begins during the third week of the second six-week period. At the end of the six week period the student does not submit a book report. When asked for an explanation, he states, "You told me the book report is due at the end of every six-week grading period, but I've only been here for three weeks. Therefore, I don't begin working on the project until a new grading period begins." Do you really think a teacher will let the student get away with this?

In the same way, Glenn has the Israelites entering the Promised Land during the course of an already-in-progress Jubilee cycle. Glenn even has them observing an important aspect of the Jubilee cycle, which is the Sabbatical year. Yet, when the Jubilee year of that cycle arrives, Glenn has them ignore it. This is simply inconsistent with the way Yahweh works. Yahweh specified a new concept heretofore unknown to the nation of Israel ... the Jubilee cycle ... which was to begin upon their entrance into the Promised Land. June and I maintain that when the Jubilee year arrived, it was *observed*, not ignored. Only when the Israelites began drifting away from obedience to Yahweh's laws did the Jubilee year begin to be ignored.

If a new student arrives at a public school during the middle of a grading period, that student is expected to participate along with the other students; so if a book report is due by the end of the grading period, the new student has to produce a book report. Granted, he may be given a few breaks due to the obvious adjustments that have to be made from his previous school program, as well as an accommodation for the shorter amount of time he is given to read the book, but a book report is still due! However, to complete the analogy, June and I maintain that the student did not arrive during the third week of the grading period. Rather, he arrived at the "school break" just prior to the *beginning* of a new grading period.

Like the new student who arrived at the "school break," in the same way, the Israelites arrived during a Jubilee year "break." The following year, they sowed the land and reaped a harvest. In fact, they sowed and reaped for six years. During the seventh year, they observed the "Land Sabbath." They repeated this cycle six more times for a total of 49 years, and then they observed their first-ever Jubilee year. We believe this understanding fits the context of Leviticus 25:1-12, whereas Glenn's view requires force-fitting his interpretation into the text.¹⁷

In his commentary, Glenn explains, "Keeping a year of Jubilee at the start was not required. We know this because the text of Leviticus 25 does not mention it or require it." I answer that the reason it

¹⁷ In his rebuttal to our original study, Glenn responded to this illustration by commenting, "I believe the Israelites came to school 'late' in the semester, and as such were only required to take the standard 'Sabbatical year' test, but not the 'Jubilee year' test—since that test required them to have the full and complete knowledge from the start of the semester." In other words, according to Glenn, observing their first-ever Sabbatical cycle was all the Israelites could handle! They needed 48 additional years before they would be capable of observing a Jubilee year!

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isn't mentioned where he thinks it should be mentioned is because it didn't even *occur* until 50 years after they entered the Land. For Glenn's explanation to be true would be akin to someone making a ridiculous claim that a new moon occurred on the 8th day of the month, and the reason no one is recorded as having observed that new moon is because the text didn't mention it or require it!

I am displaying below the calendar that I believe makes the most sense with regard to the Israelites' entrance into the Promised Land:

Comparing Opposing Jubilee Views Pertaining to the Israelites' Entry into the Promised Land

Scenario of events beginning with Israel's entrance into the Promised Land (50-Year Jubilee Cycle):

"Then shall the land keep a Sabbath unto Yahweh."	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
	29	30	31	32	33	34	35
	36	37	38	39	40	41	42
	43	44	45	46	47	48	49
50							

With this scenario, the Israelites kept a land Sabbath upon entering into the Promised Land (Lev. 25:2), then they sowed and reaped for six years before keeping another land Sabbath (Lev. 25:3). They numbered seven "Sabbaths of years" (Lev. 25:8), then proclaimed liberty throughout the land, observing the year of Jubilee in the 50th year (Lev. 25:9-12). By deduction, we can ascertain that the land Sabbath that they immediately kept upon entering the Promised Land was the year of Jubilee. Notice that upon keeping this year of Jubilee, they sowed and reaped for six years, not five, as required by the opposing belief system. Moreover, the typology fits: Just as the land returns to its rightful owner during the year of Jubilee, the Promised Land returned to its rightful owners the year the Israelites entered it! It is fitting that this was a Jubilee year.

I feel obligated to add an historical note of interest. Glenn places a great deal of value on historical evidence, including his position that the *Book of Jubilees*, which he believes was very popular within the ranks of first-century Judaism, serves as strong evidence that Jews of this time period regarded the Jubilee cycle to be forty-nine years in length. That, of course, is a separate discussion, but suffice it to say that Glenn places a great deal of value on historical evidence. This having been established, I find it very interesting that Glenn understands that, historically, Judaism has understood that the Israelites entered into the Promised Land during a Jubilee year. The following commentary is taken from Glenn's work entitled *Discovering the Jewish Messiah Within the Prophecy of Daniel 9*:

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Historically, the Jews have tended to believe that the entrance into the promised land came in a year of Jubilee. The alignment of the chronology of *Seder Olam* supports that view as well. While I do not necessarily find proof in Scripture that Israel's entrance into the promised land actually took place in a year of Jubilee, the point is that this is what they typically believed (including Maimonides).¹⁸

I find it somewhat contradictory to, on the one hand, place such a high value on historical understanding -- to the point that it is used as evidence supporting a certain belief, but then, on the other hand, when faced with *additional* historical evidence that conflicts with that same belief, that evidence is dismissed or otherwise rejected. We should also take note of Glenn's remark in which he states that he doesn't see any evidence from Scripture that Israel's entrance into the Promised Land actually took place during a Jubilee year. As we established at the beginning of this chapter, it is precisely because this is how June and I understand the Scriptural instructions given to the Israelites in Leviticus 25 that June and I base our own understanding. Indeed, it is through proper exegesis that we determine that Scripture only supports the Israelites' entrance into the Promised Land as having occurred during a Jubilee year ... just as Judaism has historically believed and taught. Regrettably, this is a case of an individual's strong bias influencing his interpretation of Scripture to the point that he is unable to see that which Judaism has always understood as being true.

¹⁸ From "An Excerpt from Chapter 10 of *Discovering the Jewish Messiah Within the Prophecy of Daniel 9*" by W. Glenn Moore, p. 10. I located this commentary at the following URL:
<http://www.itsaboutthattime.net/PDF%20Files/Discover%20Messiah%20Ch10.pdf>