

Further reading: the following writings all expand or clarify different aspects of this article:

- Chronology of the Scriptures
- Sabbath Rest
- David & Solomon
- Babylon
- Moses and the Path of Sonship
- The Coming of the Lord.

# The Year of Jubilee



Bible quotations are taken from the NIV or retranslated

Promised Land. Like Abraham's birth this might seem like a small and insignificant beginning. But they left Babylon and went to the land of Israel where alone God's plans and purposes could be fulfilled. If the Jews had not returned from Babylon Jesus could not have been born to a Jewish mother in Bethlehem.

The 5<sup>th</sup> great Jubilee was the beginning of a completely new order in God. All previous Jubilees were only types and shadows. Jesus came to fulfil the law and the prophets, and indeed the whole of Israel's history. He brought the spiritual reality of which all those things were just shadows and pictures. This fifth Jubilee corresponds most strongly to the second. Jesus like Moses comes to deliver a people from bondage. Jesus does in the spiritual realm what Moses did in the natural realm. The Exodus was the birth of Israel, the natural people of God. This Jubilee was the birth of the true church, the spiritual people of God.

The 6<sup>th</sup> Jubilee is like the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Jubilees. Like them it is a new birth and beginning. It is the birth of the sons of God, and the beginning of a new order. For this reason, I believe, though it has already begun it is not yet widely and clearly visible.

As in previous Jubilees this Jubilee is a liberation. This liberation is both from Egypt and from Babylon. The sons of God will have victory over both. For centuries the true people of God have been held captive by manmade religious systems. God is now calling them out of this captivity, and more and more people are hearing, understanding and obeying that call.

This Jubilee may be the beginning of the fulfilment of the wonderful words of Revelation 11:15: "The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: 'The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ (Anointed), and he will reign for ever and ever.'"

May we be partakers of this glory which is to come.

## A Seventh Jubilee?

Was this sixth great Jubilee the last in the series? I know of no definite evidence that there are more to come; but two things make me believe there will be a seventh great Jubilee.

The third great Jubilee, as we have seen, was the dedication of the temple and the climax of Israel's history. All other Jubilees, including the sixth Jubilee in 1933, were new beginnings. The third Jubilee was a time of total fulfilment and a grand climax. This argues for a seventh Jubilee not just for the land of Israel but worldwide in its scope.

Six is the number of man and of imperfection. The sixth Jubilee took place on the 12<sup>th</sup> day of the 6<sup>th</sup> month after 6000 years from Adam. Delegates of 66 nations were present at the conference. Seven is the number of perfection and demands a seventh Jubilee to complete the pattern.

## Conclusion

The 1<sup>st</sup> great historic Jubilee was like the seed of a seed. The birth of Abraham was the barely visible beginning of a vast divine plan. Abraham did two essential things. Firstly, he came out of Babylon and secondly he lived in the Promised Land. He was delivered from the slavery of Babylon; and he began by faith to possess his future inheritance. None of the further Jubilees would have occurred if he had not obeyed God and done these two things.

At the Exodus, the 2<sup>nd</sup> great Jubilee, the Israelites came out of Egypt. Like Abraham they escaped from slavery and set out to claim the land that God had promised them for an inheritance. This Jubilee was another birth, but this time not just of one man, but of a nation.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> great Jubilee, the dedication of Solomon's temple, was the fruit and fulfilment of the second. The liberated slaves have now totally possessed their promised land and completed the building of God's temple. In grand consummation the power and presence of God descends and fills it.

The 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> great Jubilees re-enact in different ways the first two.

The 4<sup>th</sup>, the return from Babylon, was like the 1<sup>st</sup>. A small group of pilgrims set out in the steps of their father Abraham to live again in the

## Introduction

The most unusual observance that God commanded the Israelites through Moses was the keeping of the year of Jubilee. For most people this celebration occurred only once in their life time, and for some not even that, as it occurred only once every 50 years.

At this year of Jubilee all Israelites who had sold themselves into slavery were set free, and all land that had been sold reverted to its original owners. This meant that no Israelite could ever be in permanent slavery; nor could any Israelite permanently lose his inheritance.

The English word *Jubilee* comes from the Hebrew word *yobel* (יִּוֵּבֵל) meaning a trumpet or ram's horn. These rams' horns were blown on the Day of Atonement to announce the start of the year of Jubilee. For some reason the translators did not translate the word *yobel* into English, but instead created the word *Jubilee*, an anglicised version of *yobel*. So Jubilee has now passed into the English language and we have the Year of Jubilee, rather than the Year of the Trumpet. The word *Jubilee* should not be confused with the word *jubilation* which comes from a Latin word meaning to *rejoice*. The year of Jubilee was no doubt a time of great jubilation, but the similarities of these two words are (at least humanly speaking) a coincidence.

To understand the year of Jubilee more clearly we must first review the concept of the Sabbath.

## The Sabbath

Sabbath observance was part of the ceremonial law that God gave Israel through Moses. Normally we think of the Sabbath as a day of the week, but its meaning in scripture is much wider. Its teaching applies not only to the seventh day of the week, but also to the 7 festivals of Israel's calendar and to periods of 7 years and 7 times 7 years. Such is its importance that, unlike any other part of the ceremonial law, its keeping is even one of the 10 commandments.

The words of the fourth commandment are: 'Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days shall you labour and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or

maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore, the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.'

The ancient Israelites understood the Sabbath as a literal day of the week, the seventh day which corresponds to our Saturday. On that day they strictly refrained from all work. This was a sign and covenant between them and Yahweh their God, which separated them from the tribes who surrounded them.

In Exodus 31:15 God prescribed the death penalty for anyone who broke the Sabbath. 'For six days, work is to be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of rest, holy to the LORD. Anyone who works on the Sabbath day must be put to death.'

In Deuteronomy 5, where the commandments are repeated, we find this addition to the fourth commandment: 'Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and that the LORD your God brought you out of there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore, the LORD your God has commanded you to observe the Sabbath day.'

During their wanderings in the desert the Israelites observed the Sabbath strictly. They found a man gathering sticks on the Sabbath and brought him to Moses. God told Moses that he should be put to death, and they stoned him (Num 15: 32-36).

God said that the Sabbath was to be a holy day. This simply means a day that is set apart or different from other days. It was set apart as a day of rest.

Why do we find this ceremonial commandment to keep the Sabbath numbered among the 10 commandments? It is the longest of all the commandments and is even placed before all the moral commandments such as 'Do not murder' and 'Do not steal'? I suggest 3 reasons:

- The Sabbath embodies the gospel. Central to the whole gospel message is the fact that God *gave*. Man did not *earn*. We have earned or deserved nothing. God freely gave his only son to save us from our sin.
- The Israelites were slaves in Egypt. Slaves are not given days off! The whole idea was absolutely new and revolutionary.

him; but those clouds will not be clouds of physical water. Rather they will be a great cloud of witnesses who have been spiritually drawn up from the earth to reign with him in heavenly places. Every eye will see him when he is manifested in the many sons whom he is bringing to maturity.

I have written separately on this also under the title *The Coming of the Lord*.

### 3. The Sabbath

The writer to the Hebrews wrote: "There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God" (Heb 4: 9). He looked forward to a time that was yet to come. According to Peter, "With the Lord a day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years are as a day" (2Peter 3:8). 6000 years from Adam ended on the same day in 1933 that was also the 120<sup>th</sup> Jubilee. The seventh millennium began. This was the beginning of the Kingdom of God.

### 4. The Festival of Tabernacles

As stated earlier, the Hebrew religious calendar had 3 great festivals, namely Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles. These festivals have deep prophetic meaning. They speak of 3 stages of spiritual experience in the lives of the people of God, both as individuals and as a whole.

The church as a whole has experienced Passover and Pentecost and many individuals have celebrated these festivals in their personal lives. However, the Festival of Tabernacles remains largely unfulfilled.

The Festival of Tabernacles was the climax of Israel's religious calendar. Unlike the one-day festival of Pentecost its celebration lasted a full 7 days. It was the final harvest festival of the year when all the crops were gathered. It was the festival of fullness and perfection.

This festival remains to be fulfilled and I believe it corresponds to the sixth great Jubilee.

For more on this read [The Festivals of Israel](#).

## God's New Age

What is there in scripture that indicates that God has a new age? We will call 4 witnesses:

### 1. Paul's specific prophecy

Paul looked forward to an event, which in Romans 8 he described as *the manifestation of the sons of God*. He wrote, 'The creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the sons of God.' When we look more closely at the context of these words, we find an exact parallel with the Exodus from Egypt. His words are filled with the language of Jubilee. Rom 8: 18-21 reads as follows:

'I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.'

The children of Israel groaned in their sufferings for more than 80 years in Egypt. They were crying out for deliverance and freedom. God was preparing Moses to be their deliverer. Moses was, I believe, the prototype of the manifested sons of God. God spent 40 years preparing Moses who was then ready, in the mighty power of God, to bring the children of Israel out of slavery in Egypt and into their promised inheritance. Now I believe God has sons, like Moses, in the wilderness that he is preparing for the deliverance of the whole creation. This time it will not just be one man delivering one people from a physical slavery. It will be a multitude of sons delivering multitudes of people from spiritual slavery. (See *Moses and the Path of Sonship*.)

The Exodus from Egypt took place, as we have seen, at the 50<sup>th</sup> great Jubilee and was the beginning of a new age.

### 2. Jesus said: "I will come again"

Many Christians all over the world have been taught to expect a literal fulfilment of these words. They expect Jesus to return physically in person and set up his kingdom on this earth. Further examination of the scriptures can lead to a very different view. Jesus is coming again *in his people*, just as he did at Pentecost. He will *come with the clouds, and every eye will see*

- The sabbath, as we will now see, is the foundation of all other Hebrew festivals.

I have written a separate article on *the Sabbath*.

## Annual Festivals

The idea of a sabbath rest is the foundation of all the other celebrations of the old covenant. When we look at the festivals we find that no unnecessary work must be done on any of them.

Pentecost is the Greek name for the Hebrew שבועות (*Shavuot*) or Festival of Weeks. This is how it is described in Lev 23:15,16: 'From the day after the Sabbath, the day you brought the sheaf of the wave offering, count off seven full weeks. Count off fifty days up to the day after the seventh sabbath, and then present an offering of new grain to the LORD'. We see then that this festival was a sabbath of sabbaths.

The sabbath is a special day. That is what the word *holy* means - set apart or special. The seventh sabbath is a special day among special days.

For comparison, what do we mean by the King of kings? A king is a unique and special person, above all his subjects. The King of kings is a unique and special person among kings. He is so special that before him even kings are as ordinary people and bow before him.

What do we mean by the holy of holies? The holy place is a place that is set apart and special and different from ordinary places. The holy of holies is special and set apart even when compared with the holy place.

So also then a sabbath of sabbaths is special and set apart even when compared with the sabbath. Pentecost or *shavuot* was a sabbath of sabbaths, special and holy even among sabbaths.

The seventh day of the week or sabbath was a special day, and we also find that the seventh month of the Hebrew calendar was a special month. In it there were 3 festivals and 4 extra sabbath days. The first day of the seventh month was the Festival of Trumpets. This was also a sabbath. Likewise the tenth day of the seventh month was a sabbath. This was the great Yom Kippur or Day of Atonement. Yom Kippur was followed on the fifteenth day of the seventh month by the 8 day Festival of Booths or Tabernacles. The first and last days of this festival were also sabbaths.

We see then that not only was the seventh day of the week a special day, but also that the seventh month was a special month containing 3 festivals and 4 extra sabbath days.

I have written a separate article on the *Festivals of Israel*.

## Sabbatical Years

The seventh day was special and the seventh month was special, and so also was the seventh year. It was a sabbatical year. Leviticus 25:1-4 reads: 'The LORD said to Moses on Mount Sinai, Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'When you enter the land I am going to give you, the land itself must observe a sabbath to the LORD. For six years sow your fields, and for six years prune your vineyards and gather their crops. But in the seventh year the land is to have a sabbath of rest, a sabbath to the LORD. Do not sow your fields or prune your vineyards''''.

The sabbath *day* was a time of rest for everyone, male, female, masters, servants and even animals. The seventh *year* was a time of rest for the land.

Why does the human body need about 8 hours' sleep in every 24? What happens during those 8 hours? Scientists still cannot answer these questions. We understand the need for food, but why should we need sleep? God has so designed creation that everything needs rest. He could have designed it a different way, but he chose to build the need for rest into the very fabric of creation. He did this to teach and illustrate a vital spiritual lesson.

## Jubilees

This brings us to the main subject of this writing. Leviticus 25:8-55 describe the year of Jubilee. The first few verses are as follows: 'Count off seven sabbaths of years -- seven times seven years -- so that the seven sabbaths of years amount to a period of forty-nine years. Then have the trumpet sounded everywhere on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the Day of Atonement sound the trumpet throughout your land. Consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a Jubilee for you; each one of you is to return to his family property and each to his own clan'.

is 7 x 360. 360 years is a "time" in Scripture and these are the times of the Gentiles of which Jesus spoke.

## Spiritual Israel

We must look now at the implications of this sixth great Jubilee for the spiritual Israel which is the true church of God.

Just as the Jews, the natural Israel, lost their inheritance in the land of Israel, and went into physical exile and captivity first in Egypt, then in Babylon and then worldwide; so the spiritual Israel has spent much of the last 2000 years in *spiritual* exile and captivity.

The church began her history at Pentecost with the descent of the Holy Spirit and a massive display of the power of God. Like ancient Israel they left Egypt and set out for their Promised Land, the Kingdom of God. The early believers were led by the Holy Spirit and moved in the power of God. Little by little man began to take control. In 313 AD the emperor Constantine granted complete tolerance to all religions and especially favoured Christianity; and in 380 AD Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire. From Constantine on Paganism in all kinds of forms entered the church. John in the book of Revelation (17:5, 6) saw a vision of what the church was to become "**Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and of the Abominations of the Earth. And I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus. And when I saw her, I was utterly amazed**". John could hardly believe that the church of God that had begun on the day of Pentecost with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit had become so totally corrupted that it was slaughtering the true followers of Jesus.

Much has changed since the dark days of the height of the Papacy. The Reformation and subsequent moves of the Holy Spirit have brought great blessings to the people of God. Much truth that was lost in the dark ages has been restored, and the grip of the clergy over the laity has been largely broken. However, I believe 1933 marked the official beginning of a New Age: not the pagan New Age of which we have heard so much, but God's New Age. Many people, most of whom know nothing of this date in 1933, believe that the church age is now over and the Kingdom Age has now begun. The date of June 12<sup>th</sup> 1933 and the 4 time periods that ended simultaneously on it give a solid foundation to that belief.

I have expanded on the above facts and explained the chronology in more detail in my writing on *Bible Chronology*.

So what was the significance of this date in 1933? Apart from the London Economic Conference nothing took place visibly and immediately at that date; but since then huge changes have taken place both for the Jewish people and land of Israel and for the spiritual Israel which is the true church consisting of real believers in Jesus Christ. We will consider first the implications of this Jubilee for the natural Israel and then consider its parallel meaning for the spiritual Israel.

## Natural Israel

The descendants of Jacob, known first as the children of Israel and later some of them as the Jews, have experienced three great exiles. The Bible describes their first two exiles in Egypt and then Babylon. The third exile began in 70 AD with the fall of Jerusalem to the Romans and the destruction of the temple. After the Bar Kochbar revolt in 135 AD, all Jews were forbidden from entering Jerusalem on pain of death. For about 1800 years the Jews were scattered to almost every country of the world and suffered endless persecutions and massacres.

The return of the Jews to Israel began towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and has continued in varying degrees till this day. 1933 was in some ways a key year in the process. Hitler became chancellor of Germany and this led to the most terrible years of Jewish history in which 6 million Jews perished in the holocaust. This ended in 1945 and 3 years later this horrific national death was followed by a national resurrection. On May 14th 1948 Israel once again became an independent nation, after almost 2000 years of subjugation and exile. These words of her national anthem were fulfilled:

“התקנה בת שנות אלפים להיות עם חפשי בארצנו”

“our hope of 2000 years of being a **free people in our own country**”

These prophetic words, originally written about 70 years earlier, once again echoed the two features of Jubilee: *freedom* and *restoration of inheritance*.

This date in June 1933 was also 2520 years on from the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of her temple by Nebuchadnezzar. The Jews were subject to gentile powers till they became a free nation in 1948. 2520

Like the day of Pentecost, the year of Jubilee is a sabbath of sabbaths. It is a special year among special years. Its climax was the great Day of Atonement. What happened then on this momentous once-in-a-lifetime occasion? Trumpets were sounded throughout the land of Israel, and two amazing things took place.

- All Hebrews slaves were set free.
- All land returned to its original owner or owner's family.

We cannot understand the full impact of this without knowing its historical background. For more than 80 years before the Exodus, the Israelites had been slaves in the land of Egypt, without freedom and without possessions. When they reached the land of Canaan, Joshua divided the land among their tribes and their families, so that each had his own inheritance. Every adult male among them became a land owner. This land was a permanent possession that could never depart from his family. If a man became poor he could sell part or all of his land, but *only temporarily*. It would always revert to him or his descendants at the year of Jubilee. If he became even poorer and was unable to pay his debts, he could sell himself into slavery, and work to pay off his debts. Again that slavery could only ever be temporary. When the great Day of Atonement in the year of Jubilee came he became a free man once again and repossessed his inheritance.

What a marvellous provision this was! How many landless slaves in the poorer countries of the world today would wish they lived under such laws!

These then were the laws of the sabbath, the festivals, sabbatical years and Jubilees that God gave to ancient Israel through his servant Moses, and it is not difficult to read and study them. But we must do more than that. We must ask what significance these Jubilees have had throughout history, and what meaning they have for us 3500 years or so after they were first decreed.

Whether and how long the Israelites observed Jubilees after the time of Moses is not recorded as far as I know in history. There is no further explicit mention of Jubilees after the book of Numbers. However, study of the Bible's chronology reveals the remarkable fact that unknown to Israel God observed special Jubilee years. **5 of the most important and significant events in Bible history occurred exactly on key Jubilee years.** (I have explained the calculation of time periods in the Bible in my



writing *Chronology of the Scriptures*, and so will not repeat those explanations here.)

We will now look at these five great Jubilee events and see how the two main aspects of Jubilee - freedom and repossession of inheritance - have been fulfilled in them. We will then look forward to their fulfilment in an even greater Jubilee in our present times.

## Past Jubilees

The day of Pentecost, as I have said, was the 50<sup>th</sup> day and was the day following the 7 weeks from the Passover. The year of Jubilee occurred after 7 sabbatical years, or 49 years. It began on the Day of Atonement in the 49<sup>th</sup> year and ran on till the Day of Atonement in the 50<sup>th</sup> year. God counted these 49 years as 50. On the same principle God reckons 490 years as 500 years and 1960 years as 2000.

### The Birth of Abraham

The first notable Jubilee that God (unknown to man) observed was the birth of Abraham. He was born exactly 40 Jubilees or 2000 years in Bible reckoning from Adam.

We cannot exaggerate the future importance of what was at the time a quiet, unspectacular event. It was the start of God's redemptive purposes for the whole creation. Without Abraham there would have been no Israel, no Moses, no law, no Exodus from Egypt or Babylon and no Jesus. Abraham was God's new beginning.

Abraham was born in a city called Ur of the Chaldees in the land of Babylonia. This was a corrupt place and the first thing God did was to call him out of it. His first recorded words to Abraham were: 'Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you.'

Here we find the seeds of the Jubilee. Abraham left Babylon (which was later to become the land of captivity for the Jews) and went to the country which God was going to give him for an inheritance. We will see these two themes- freedom from slavery and possession of inheritance - repeating themselves in the other great Jubilees that followed.

## What Happened in 1933

Jesus said: "Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the **Times of the Gentiles are fulfilled**" (Luke 21:24). In late 1932 a group of Bible students led by a man named Arthur Ware became convinced that these *Times of the Gentiles* were going to end in June 1933. They believed also that Jesus would return at this time. They publicly announced that these things would take place round about the 12<sup>th</sup> June. (They did not specify an exact date.) Jesus did not return visibly to earth on June 12<sup>th</sup> as they had expected; but the date was not uneventful. Exactly on that date for the first time in history, delegates from all the major nations of the earth (66 in number) met together in London in an attempt to solve the world's economic problems. The situation then was very similar to the economic crisis that began in 2008. The conference ended in total failure and achieved nothing. It probably helped pave the way for the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War which followed 6 years later. Several websites describe this conference including [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/London\\_Economic\\_Conference](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/London_Economic_Conference).

Was this group of Bible students just another group among the multitude of misguided enthusiasts who have attempted to predict the end of the world and then made all manner of excuses when it didn't happen according to plan? No doubt many people would have thought so. In spite of their apparent failure none of these men ever doubted that they had been led by the Holy Spirit. They settled down to a detailed and comprehensive study of Bible chronology and discovered some amazing facts. They discovered that the date of June 12<sup>th</sup> 1933 was the exact end to the day of not just one but four chronological periods. It was:

- The end of the Times of the Gentiles.
- 40 Jubilees from the resurrection of Jesus
- 1900 solar years from the ascension of Jesus
- 6000 solar years from Adam

This meant that June 12<sup>th</sup> 1933 was in fact the sixth major Jubilee in history and the 120<sup>th</sup> Jubilee from Adam.

Arthur Ware and his friends concluded that Jesus had come **as a thief in the night** (Mat 24:43 & 1Thes 5:2). When that happens, no one knows about it till they wake up in the morning and find something is missing! What did Jesus take? He took the candlestick (of testimony) from the church (Rev 2:5).



the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.' (Isaiah 61:1, 2 and Luke 4:18,19). He spoke of freedom to the prisoners and releasing the oppressed and proclaiming the year of the Lord's favour. What other year could this mean but the year of Jubilee? After proclaiming it he went on to bring deliverance from sin, sickness and Satan to multitudes of those who were bound and afflicted. All this culminated with his own deliverance from the chains of death, and 50 days later the deliverance of his followers from all fear on the glorious day of Pentecost. They in turn proclaimed deliverance and release to captives wherever they went.

## Further Jubilees

We have considered 5 great Jubilees that occurred in Bible times. The following table shows these Jubilees with their equivalent number of Bible years from Adam.

Event	Jubilee	Years from Adam	Date
1. Birth of Abraham	40 <sup>th</sup>	2000	2129 BC
2. Exodus	50 <sup>th</sup>	2500	1639 BC
3. Dedication of Solomon's temple	60 <sup>th</sup>	3000	1019 BC
4. Decree to Rebuild Jerusalem	70 <sup>th</sup>	3500	458 BC
5. Death and Resurrection of Jesus	80 <sup>th</sup>	4000	33 AD
6. Start of a New Age	120 <sup>th</sup>	6000	1933 AD
7. Final Jubilee	?	?	?

Were these 5 great Jubilees that took place in Bible times the end of the story, or have there been others since and are there more to come?

In the table above I have added a sixth Jubilee occurring in 1933, and a final seventh Jubilee at some unknown future date. What grounds are there in Scripture and historical events to support these further jubilees?

## The Exodus

Most amazing for its timing is what happened in the year that was exactly the 50<sup>th</sup> Jubilee from Adam. A Jubilee itself is a very special year, being a Sabbath of Sabbaths. What then is a 50<sup>th</sup> Jubilee but a Jubilee of Jubilees or we could say a Sabbath of Sabbaths of Sabbaths of Sabbaths! So what happened in the year 2500 from Adam - this Jubilee of Jubilees or Sabbath of Sabbaths of Sabbaths of Sabbaths? This was the very year that the Israelites came out of Egypt! This event was a wonderful Sabbath. The Israelites were able to rest from their hard labour in the land of Egypt. It was also the ultimate fulfilment of the Bible law of Jubilee. The 2 great Jubilee features were both remarkably present. The Exodus was the greatest setting free of slaves the world has ever seen. It was also the start of the process by which the land of Canaan returned to its rightful owners. God had promised the land of Canaan to Abraham and his descendants. When they were set free from Egypt the way was open for them to march in and claim their inheritance.

50 days after the Exodus on the day of Pentecost, the Israelites arrived at Mt. Sinai. We read in Exodus 19: 16 'On the morning of the third day there was thunder and lightning, with a thick cloud over the mountain, and a very loud trumpet blast. Everyone in the camp trembled.' This was no other than the trumpet of Jubilee.

Now I say this was the greatest liberation of slaves that has ever taken place in history, and speaking in the natural that is true. But there came a day when Moses and Elijah stood with Jesus on the mountain of transfiguration, and (translating literally) 'they spoke about his Exodus which he was about to fulfil at Jerusalem' (Luke 9: 31). The Exodus that Moses led from Egypt was a liberation of the Israelites from physical slavery to the Egyptians. The Exodus that Jesus led was and is a liberation from spiritual slavery to sin and Satan. What Jesus did was greater and wider and more far-reaching than the greatest event that ever happened in ancient history. Jesus was the greater Moses bringing about a greater Exodus from a greater slavery.

## The Dedication of Solomon's Temple

500 years on from the Exodus came the high point in Israel's national history. During those 500 years the Israelites had wandered through the desert under Moses, and then conquered Canaan under Joshua. After several centuries under the judges they had their 3 greatest kings. Saul defeated the

Amalekites who were their most powerful enemies. David went on from Saul's foundation to gain victory after victory. Solomon could then enjoy the fruits of David's victories and turn his attention to amassing wealth and building great buildings.

Solomon had the privilege of building the temple or house of God. How great and wonderful was the occasion when the temple was finally finished and the time came to dedicate it to God. The year (unknown to Solomon) was the 60<sup>th</sup> Jubilee from Adam and the time was the Festival of Tabernacles. On this most special occasion the Holy Spirit came down with great power, and the priests were unable to stand to minister because of the glory of the Lord (1 Kings 8: 11).

This moment in history was the completion of everything that had begun at the Exodus. The Israelites were for a brief period a totally free people living in their own land - a status they soon lost and did not regain at any time in their history till the last century. Previously they had been oppressed by the Egyptians, the Canaanites, the Midianites and the Philistines among others. Later they were oppressed in turn by the Syrians, the Assyrians, the Babylonians and the Persians, the Greeks and then the Romans. But for a brief interval under David and Solomon they were totally free. God gave them rest from all their enemies, and they were able to possess and enjoy their inheritance to the full.

I have written more on this subject under the title *David and Solomon* and will limit my comments here.

## The Return from Babylon

The following 500 years were an unhappy period of decline for Israel. At the end of it the unbelievable happened. God, *who cannot lie*, had twice promised the land of Israel to Abraham as an '*everlasting possession*' (Gen 17: 8 and 48: 4). That promise had been marvellously fulfilled. Israel had gone from being a rabble of slaves in a foreign land to being a powerful independent people in their own kingdom. Now again they became captives in a foreign land. What had happened to God's promises?

This captivity was very different from the time in Egypt. It was a judgement and a consequence of sin. Most especially it was a judgement on the people of God for worshipping other gods. It was a judgement on religious sin.

Babylon in scripture is a picture of man's religion. For centuries manmade, man-centred, man-controlled religion has held the true people of God in captivity.

Daniel and Nehemiah fasted and wept and confessed their sins and the sins of their people, and God granted deliverance. Cyrus, king of Persia, issued a decree that the Jews should return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple (Ezra 1: 1-5). This decree was issued at exactly the 70<sup>th</sup> Jubilee from Adam. Once again we see the terms of the Jubilee fulfilled. The captives were set free and returned to possess their inheritance.

The deliverance from captivity in literal Babylon is a picture of a much greater deliverance from a spiritual Babylon.

I have written a separate article on *Babylon*.

## The Death and Resurrection of Jesus

490 (reckoned as 500) years on from the Jewish return from Babylon we reach the times of the New Testament. This time period is clearly described in Daniel's prophecy: '*Seventy 'sevens' are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy ...*' (Dan 9: 24).

What happened to fulfil this prophecy? Nothing less than the greatest event in all recorded history: the Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ! Appropriately this occurred at the 80<sup>th</sup> Jubilee from Adam, the number 8 and its multiples being associated especially with Jesus and his resurrection.

The children of Israel were set free from Egypt at the Exodus. The Jews were set free from Babylon after their 70 years of captivity. Jesus at his resurrection was set free from death. We also read in Matt 27:52,53 that '*The tombs were opened and the bodies of many saints who slept were raised to life. They came out of the tombs, and after Jesus' resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many people.*'

This was an expression of Jubilee that exceeded all previous Jubilees. Jesus himself was set free from the ultimate imprisonment. He overcame death for himself and opened a way of deliverance for the whole creation.

Jesus began his ministry with a clear reference to the year of Jubilee. In the synagogue at Nazareth he read these words from Isaiah: '*The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to*