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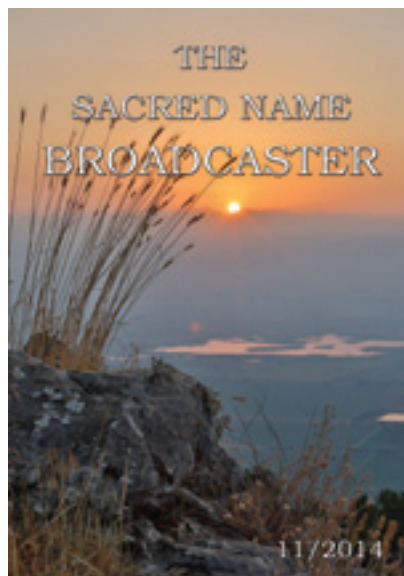
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Our Cover:

The Hula Valley in Israel transitions from verdant colors to those of wintertime brown. After a period of dormancy, the spring will arrive in just a few short weeks, and another growing cycle will begin. "While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease." (Genesis 8:22).

"He sends out his commandment upon earth; his word runs very swiftly. He gives snow like wool; he scatters the hoar-frost like ashes. He casts forth his ice like morsels: who can stand before his cold? He sends out his word, and melts them: he causes his wind to blow, and the waters flow." (Psalm 147:15-18). When we look down from a lofty mountaintop upon Yahweh's creation, we exclaim: "How great you are, Father Yahweh!"

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The Sabbatical Year

in End-Time Prophecy



Students of Bible prophecy have understood that the number seven comprises the number symbolizing spiritual perfection. Many events in Bible prophecy appear to relate directly to the number seven. Seven has been known to represent the number of special importance to our Father in heaven; it has been known to symbolize the number of spiritual perfection. Let us notice how the number relates to the heavenly family of Creator Beings.

When Elohim created the heavens and the earth, He completed the actual work of creation in six days. Then, on the seventh day, He rested and, thereby, created yet another sequential day of the week on which He was refreshed. Subsequently, the scriptural week came to comprise a period of seven days through the actions of our Creator Elohim. There

by Elder Jacob O. Meyer

is actually no regulatory movement of heavenly bodies to distinguish this unique, seven-day time period. To man's perception, it is an arbitrary cycle of time established exclusively **by our Father in heaven**, one specific purpose being to focus the attention of the human family upon Bible prophecy, and, additionally, to give them a period of much-needed physical rest—a day of spiritual pursuits to refresh the mind, heart, and spirit.

We are shown Yahweh's purpose for commanding the observance of the Sabbath by reading Exodus 31:12-18. ***“And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, Speak also to the children of Israel, saying, You***

must keep my sabbaths: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that you may know that I am Yahweh who sanctifies you. Therefore you shall keep the sabbath; for it is holy to you: every one who desecrates it shall surely be put to death; for whoever does any work in it, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Six days shall work be done; but on the seventh day is a sabbath of solemn rest, holy to Yahweh: whoever does any work on the sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. Therefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel forever: for in six days

Yahweh made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed.

“And he gave to Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him upon mount Sinai, the two tables of the testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of Elohim.”

Both of the points noted above emerge clearly in this passage. The expressed purpose for which Almighty Yahweh wishes us to keep the scriptural seventh-day Sabbath is that it can serve as a **sign** between Him and His people forever, throughout all generations. It constitutes a perpetual Covenant through which each successive human generation, by obedience, enters into an agreement with Yahweh. The keeping of the seventh-day Sabbath became a significant covenantal sign, because on this specific day of the week Almighty Yahweh rested and was refreshed.

Turning to Hebrews chapter 4, we discover that the Sabbath day bears an additionally important prophetic significance. In this passage, it becomes obvious that the keeping of the scriptural seventh day of the week points toward the future Kingdom of Yahweh, the Millennium, the thousand-year Messianic reign on earth. Here the Bible student can perceive an obvious interrelationship or interconnection between past history, the present time, and the prophetic future. A significant relationship may be additionally seen between the seven-day week, the Millennium, and the biblical DAY OF YAHWEH.

Just as the seven days of each week comprises 24 hours of time, similarly the seven-day prophetic week comprises seven periods (days) of 1,000 years each. Man has been allotted six “days” (or six thousand years), but the seventh day (or the seventh thousand-year time period) will be the Day of Yahweh. This

millennial age will be the era when all of the corrupt practices of this present human age will finally be terminated and the righteousness intrinsic to the Law of Yahweh will be universally implemented as a way of life.

Such a system of cyclical time measurement was recognized by the Apostle Peter. He says in 2 Peter 3:8, ***“But forget not this one thing, beloved, that one day is with Yahweh as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.”*** He continues in verse 10 to describe the Day of Yahweh and what would occur at the moment it arrives. Incidentally, this term, “THE DAY OF YAHWEH,” is found in 20 passages in Bible prophecy. It relates to the time when the righteous rule from heaven will be imposed upon this world through

Man has been allotted six “days” (or six thousand years), but the seventh day (or the seventh thousand-year time period) will be the day of Yahweh.

Yahweh’s judgment, and the Kingdom of Yahweh will, thereupon, be established at the Second Coming of Yahshua the Messiah, under Yahweh’s anointed King.

The Sabbath has been designated in the Word of Yahweh as the seventh day of each week. This is the 24-hour time period that Almighty Yahweh Himself sanctified. Please review Genesis 2:1-3. ***“And the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day Elohim finished his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And Elohim blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it: because that in it he rested from all his work which Elohim had created and made.”*** The Sabbath day is called the day of rest because of the Hebrew verb *shavath*, which

means *He rested*, from which the noun **Sabbath** (properly *shabbath*) is derived. This grammatical relationship between the two words is known as a verb-noun cognate. (Both verb and noun are derived from a common root term, either the verb or noun may be the root.)

If you have not as yet read our free article entitled, **The Fourth Commandment Enigma—Which Day to Keep?** write in immediately and request it. It will come to you without cost or obligation. This article carefully examines all of the scriptural passages in regard to the keeping of the seventh day of each week as the Sabbath. Additionally, it answers objections some have raised against the keeping of one specific day each week as a sacred time of worship. This enlightening article draws together all of the facts in the

case regarding the scriptural Sabbath. Send for this free informative article today by writing to Assemblies of Yahweh, PO Box C, Bethel, PA 19507.

From reading the Scriptures, it becomes clear that Almighty Yahweh marks time in periods of sevens. The Hebrew word for week has as its root the number seven. In **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible**, it is #7620, *shabua*. It is from the Hebrew cardinal number *seven*; see #7650 and #7651. Its meaning is literally *sevened* (separated into sevens) and, by extension, a week.

Interestingly, a *paranomasia* (play on words) may be noted here. This word *shabua* also bears the auxiliary meaning of *oaths*. What does Almighty Yahweh intend to convey to us by this word with two meanings? Obviously, there is a relationship between the number seven (Yahweh’s perfect number) and His oath, His reliable promises, His eternal Word. Therefore, one can say that the Feast of Weeks, Shavuoth (plural of *Shabua*), or,

in Greek, Pentecost, designating a feast observed annually, can also have the secondary meaning of the *feast of oaths*. This idea becomes true when we consider the Covenant (agreement) ratified on that day at Mount Sinai. See Exodus chapter 24.

Almighty Yahweh has made promises to those who obey His commandments. The believer's humble obedience to Yahweh's Covenant entitles them to receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:32). There are many interesting and significant things related to this particular line of thought if we were to pursue them, but we must turn our attention elsewhere. If you are interested, you might visit our website for a list of sermons available on CD on the subject of the Feast of Weeks and, also, some sermons dealing with the subject of end-time prophecy. You may be interested particularly in the series on the Anti-Messiah.

Numbering the Seven Weeks

Let us notice the instructions regarding how we shall number the Feast of Weeks. The directions are quite clear in Leviticus 23:9-16.

“And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them, When you have come into the land which I will give to you, and shall reap the harvest of it, then you shall bring the sheaf of the first-fruits of your harvest to the priest: and he shall wave the sheaf before Yahweh, to be accepted for you: on the day after the sabbath the priest shall wave it. And in the day when you wave the sheaf, you shall offer a he-lamb without blemish a year old for a burnt-offering to Yahweh. And the meal-offering of it shall be two tenth parts of an ephah of fine flour mingled with oil, an offering made by fire to Yahweh for a sweet savor; and the drink-offering of it shall be of wine, the fourth part of a hin. And you shall eat neither bread, nor

parched grain, nor fresh ears, until this very day, until you have brought the oblation of your Elohim: it is a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.

“And you shall count from the day after the sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave-offering; seven sabbaths shall there be complete: even to the day after the seventh sabbath shall you number fifty days; and you shall offer a new meal-offering to Yahweh.”

This passage of Scripture sets forth in a quite concise and crystal clear statement the reasons regarding how it directs that we shall specify a day for the Feast of Weeks each year. We shall begin counting with the first day of the week, counting seven full weeks. We must terminate our count with a weekly Sabbath. Seven **weeks** shall be complete weeks—forty-nine days. The following day is the 50th day, Pentecost. This term *Sabbath*, incidentally, is the identical word used in verse 3 of Leviticus chapter 23 for the weekly Sabbath. Therefore, we can only conclude that the Jewish rabbinical manner currently in use for setting the Feast of Weeks is in error. We must use the method directed by the Bible and adhere strictly to the inspired, sacred Word. Weeks of days may not be broken. (A number of additional biblical points prove this method of counting employed by the Assemblies of Yahweh.)

We can see quite clearly that the keeping of the Feast of Weeks is not meant to interfere with the regular weekly cycle of seven days, but, rather, it marks the beginning of a new cycle of weeks. What we have, in effect, is a double Sabbath. The weekly Sabbath reminds us of the day on which Israel appeared before Mount Sinai where they heard the voice of Yahweh speaking the 10 Commandments (Exodus 19). On the first day of the week, the following day, Moses presented the book he had written to record

Yahweh's Law to Israel and the nation ratified the Covenant (Exodus 24). Therefore, the seventh day of the week is observed as a weekly holy day, while the adjoining first day of that following week serves as an annual holy day—two Sabbaths observed consecutively (one, the weekly day of rest and worship; the second, a day of the remembrance of oaths). The 50th day falls on the day beginning the next weekly cycle, but does not break the seven-day weekly cycle.

Although it is not a popular or widely observed doctrine in christianity; nevertheless, a number of religious groups do believe in keeping the holy days of Leviticus 23. But some are not keeping these holy days correctly. We must note that the keeping of Yahweh's holy days revolves in an annual cycle. However, a much more subtle nuance of significance may be discovered in the observance of the Feast of Weeks. We can clearly note that the count was begun with the cutting and offering of the first sheaf, the firstfruits, of the barley harvest. During the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the flour used was changed from old to new. Consequently, the Feast of Weeks, or Pentecost, served as the thanksgiving for the new barley harvest just completed and the offering of the firstfruits of the wheat harvest. It, also, must be noted that on Pentecost day, during the beginning of the Apostolic Assembly, adopting the new Covenant allowed the members of Yahshua's Assembly to receive the Holy Spirit. Please refer to Acts chapter 2.

This point may be understood more clearly by reading Exodus 34:22. ***“And you shall observe the feast of weeks, even of the first-fruits of wheat harvest, and the feast of ingathering at the year's end.”*** The Feast of Weeks ended one period of harvest and recognized another to follow.

Let us notice also that the beginning of the count toward the Feast of Weeks starts with the time when the sickle is put to the STANDING

grain. ***“Seven weeks shall you number to yourself: from the time you begin to put the sickle to THE STANDING GRAIN shall you begin to number seven weeks.”*** (Deuteronomy 16:9).

Consequently, the count must begin with the time when the antitype firstfruits offering, Yahshua the Messiah, was STANDING ON HIS FEET AFTER THE RESURRECTION. This significant event occurred on the first day of the week, Yahshua having been raised in the end of the Sabbath (Matthew 28:1). Yahshua rested in the tomb for three full days and three full nights, until the end of the Sabbath, but was standing again on the first day of the week (after His resurrection). Meanwhile, rabbinical Judaism was cutting the wavesheaf and beginning their count toward Pentecost on Friday that year, which was the 16th of Abib, too early according to the instructions in the sacred Scriptures.

The Sabbatical Years

Very little has been taught or published on the scriptural subject of the Sabbatical years. One of the first references to them is in Yahweh’s Covenant Law, and it precedes the mention of the seventh-day Sabbath.

“And six years you shall sow your land, and shall gather in the increase of it: but the seventh year you shall let it rest and lie fallow; that the poor of your people may eat: and what they leave the beast of the field shall eat. In like manner you shall deal with your vineyard, and with your olive grove.” (Exodus 23:10-11).

You will notice that the above citation is found adjacent to the directive regarding the weekly Sabbath. Consequently, Yahweh must have had a special reason for placing the weekly Sabbath and the Sabbatical year in such a close relationship and proximity when He extended His Covenant to Israel. Doubtless, the reason is that He wishes us to relate both the weekly

Sabbath and the Sabbatical year closely together in our minds. No type of Sabbath can be neglected, whether a weekly, an annual, or a seven-year cycle observance; they all appear in Yahweh’s Covenant commandments.

We are told in this Covenant commandment that the Sabbatical year means a one-year REST FOR THE LAND. It shall lie fallow—at rest—during that time. It shall not be sown, or reaped for storage, but the poor people of the land, and the beasts can eat the fruit that volunteers from it.

Let us turn to Leviticus 25, where we find an expanded view of the Sabbatical-year commandments. ***“And Yahweh spoke to Moses in mount Sinai, saying, Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them, When you come into the land which I will give you, then shall the land keep a sabbath to Yahweh. Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard, and gather in the fruits of it; but in the seventh year shall be a sabbath of solemn rest for the land, a sabbath to Yahweh: you shall neither sow your field, nor prune your vineyard. That which grows of itself of your harvest you shall not reap, and the grapes of your undressed vine you shall not gather: it shall be a year of solemn rest for the land. And the sabbath of the land shall be for food for you; for you, and for your servant and for your maid, and for your hired servant and for your stranger, who sojourns with you. And for your cattle, and for the beasts that are in your land, shall all the increase of it be for food.”*** (Leviticus 25:1-7).

You will notice Yahweh’s direction in this passage that the observance of the Sabbatical year is to begin **when Israel comes into the land** which Yahweh would give to them. It is of vital importance that we retain this time element in our minds as we continue this study and relate it to end-time prophecy.

These passages are quite clear and straightforward, because they indicate that no tilling and sowing of the ground or reaping shall be done during the Sabbatical or the Jubilee years. The poor of the land may help themselves to whatever grows naturally (volunteer growth), and animals and birds may also help themselves.

You will notice that the seventh year is the time of release. Yahweh directed that all debts shall be cancelled. Any individual who had borrowed from another was released from that obligation. ***“At the end of every seven years you shall make a release. And this is the manner of the release: every creditor shall release that which he has lent to his neighbor; he shall not exact it of his neighbor and his brother; because Yahweh’s release has been proclaimed.”*** (Deuteronomy 15:1-2).

Let us bring this release into perspective for our time. If this righteous law were still being observed, there would be no oppressive, gigantic, growing national debt under which many of the countries of the world are struggling today. There would be no mountainous private debt such as is crushing down heavily upon the shoulders of too many individuals right now. Initially, this righteous law would caution a creditor about the character of the individual who was borrowing. No creditor would allow anyone to fall too deeply into debt. Furthermore, it would relieve the oppression of the one who has borrowed beyond his means and is struggling miserably to repay various loans. Furthermore, the creditor knows that he must collect his loan repayment in just seven years, while the borrower knows he would be restricted from going too deeply into debt.

Have you seen our article entitled, **Usury—America’s National Curse?** This article will enlighten you to the lurking quicksand of debt into which the world is gradually sinking. It will help you to understand the correct and proper

One of the most noteworthy events in the life of an American citizen is to stand before the Liberty Bell in Independence Mall in Philadelphia and read the inscription on this well-known national artifact. The inscription is quoted from Leviticus 25:10, “... **proclaim liberty throughout the land to all the inhabitants of it....**” What the people of the United States neglect to understand is that this passage refers to the JUBILEE YEAR, which represented a special time of liberation experience in the life of the nation of Israel and its citizens. We often wonder if those who always have enjoyed freedom really appreciate the liberty they daily take for granted.



methods of economics and finance as they are righteously outlined for us in the Word of Yahweh. If you have never read this intriguing article, be sure to write for your free copy today.

From these scriptural passages we can observe that Almighty Yahweh marks time with cycles of years just as He marks time in cycles of days. Seven years for Yahweh constitutes a unit of time measure, while multiple units are also combined to form yet another significant larger unit of time.

Carrying this thought one step farther, we must remember that throughout Bible prophecy we are confronted with the terms **time** or **times**. A **time** comprises a year; **times** (plural) would indicate two years. Consequently, we can readily determine the meaning of the three and one-half years as 42 months, 1,260 days. “**A time, times, and half a time**” of the prophecy in the book of Daniel and the Revelation relates to half of a seven-year Sabbatical cycle—three and one half years.

Have you ever before considered that Yahweh’s Laws were so intrinsically interrelated with daily life on earth, so that they applied in such a clear manner to Bible prophecy? Perhaps you should note at this

point that those who keep the commandments of Yahweh and have a faith in the Messiah will understand events leading up to the end of the age. Thereby, those who obey will be able to take necessary evasive actions that would somewhat assist them to avoid the coming catastrophic times.

The Jubilee Year

Similar to the seven weeks of seven days employed to count the Feast of Weeks, we discover a cycle of seven cycles of seven years, with the following year called the Jubilee year. This special time period is described in Leviticus 25:8-13.

“And you shall number seven sabbaths of years to you, seven times seven years; and there shall be unto you the days of seven sabbaths of years, even forty and nine years. Then shall you send abroad the loud trumpet on the tenth day of the seventh month; in the day of atonement you shall send abroad the trumpet throughout all your land. And you shall hallow the fiftieth year; and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all the inhabitants of it: it shall be a jubilee unto you; and you shall return every man to his possession, and you shall return every man to his family. A

jubilee shall that fiftieth year be to you: you shall not sow, neither reap that which grows of itself in it, nor gather the grapes in it of the undressed vines. For it is a jubilee; it shall be holy to you: you shall eat the increase of it out of the field. In this year of jubilee you shall return every man to his possession.” (Leviticus 25:8-13).

One of the most noteworthy events in the life of an American citizen is to stand before the Liberty Bell in Independence Mall in Philadelphia and read the inscription on this well-known national artifact. The inscription is quoted from Leviticus 25:10, “... **proclaim liberty throughout the land to all the inhabitants of it....**” What the people of the United States neglect to understand is that this passage refers to the JUBILEE YEAR, which represented a special time of liberation experience in the life of the nation of Israel and its citizens. We often wonder if those who always have enjoyed freedom really appreciate the liberty they daily take for granted.

Notice what took place at that time. Any land or property that had been sold during the previous forty-nine years was declared

to revert back again to its former owners. Notice, also, in verses 23 and 24 that the sale of the land constituted merely a **transferral of its use** (in effect a rental) for a certain period of time. The land remained the property of a family in perpetuity. Any sale of land in Israel was only considered a rental, with a limit of such sale to less than 49 years, up to the next Jubilee year. ***“And the land shall not be sold in perpetuity; for the land is mine: for you are strangers and sojourners with me. And in all the land of your possession you shall grant a redemption for the land.”*** (Leviticus 25:23-24). Additionally, the Jubilee year was a “sacred time of rejoicing,” because it constituted a restoration, as well as a time of liberation.

How Are Sabbatical and Jubilee Years Counted?

There have been a number of questions raised regarding the Sabbatical and Jubilee years and just exactly how to reckon them. Let us examine this question carefully, because the answer will additionally confirm the correct counting of the Feast of Weeks, Pentecost, as this feast is observed by the Assemblies of Yahweh.

Counting the Jubilee Years

We have already seen from Leviticus 23 that Almighty Yahweh has directed us to **count** the Feast of Weeks. Seven full (complete) weeks (from the first day of each week to the Sabbath comprises one full week) are to be completed and, then, the fiftieth day, the first day of the following eighth week, is to be observed as Pentecost (the fiftieth day). Pentecost day is the first day of the week, at the beginning of the following weekly cycle of seven weeks. No interruption of the seven-day weekly cycle will ever occur.

The Sabbatical years and the Jubilee year are similarly counted.

Seven weeks of years are followed by the Jubilee. Obviously, therefore, this time sequence of weeks of seven years is never broken, but remains intact even though an additional Sabbatical year, known as the Jubilee year, is observed following the seventh Sabbatical year. Therefore, **THE FIRST YEAR and THE LAST YEAR OF EACH 49-YEAR CYCLE ARE SABBATHS OF REST FOR THE LAND.**

The **Encyclopedia Judaica** (Volume 14, page 579) notes that a Baraitha says, *“The Jubilee is the 50th year after the previous Jubilee and thus also the first of the ensuing Shemittah 7 year [Sabbatical cycle] and Jubilee,”* (Ned. 61a).

This is quite an interesting observation to ponder. The rabbis of modern-day “pharisaical” Judaism have always taught that Pentecost should be observed by beginning the 50-day count after the first High Day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (the 16th of Abib). They apparently do not recognize that the method of counting Pentecost and the Jubilee years are identical and were established by rabbis of long ago. The contradiction becomes more candidly obvious when a comparison relates these two divisions of marking time as given directly by Almighty Yahweh.

Consequently, we can clearly see that Almighty Yahweh has a purpose for directing how we record time. It is a much more efficient system than that which is presently employed in contemporary rabbinic chronology. Scripturally speaking, one might specify that a particular event occurred in the 20th year of a certain Jubilee period, and we could personally relate more readily to pinpointing the event than by using a date numbering almost as high as the second millennium (as for example: 1994).

Significance of Daniel’s Seventy Weeks

Next let us consider a very enlightening prophecy that has

confused many students who have misinterpreted it. The following explanation will greatly expand and clarify our view of Yahweh’s plan for this system of things if we come to understand the prophecy correctly. Consider carefully how this passage relates to us living in these end days in which we are now living.

“Seventy sevens are decreed upon your people and upon your holy city, to finish transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy.” (Daniel 9:24).

Here Daniel was shown that at the end of 70 weeks there would be a complete restoration of this earth. Finishing the transgression and making an end to sins has not yet occurred, since sin and transgression remains very much in evidence all around us. Reconciliation for iniquity was indeed completed in Yahshua the Messiah and His atoning death upon the tree of Calvary when He shed His blood for us. Everlasting righteousness will be imposed when Yahshua the Messiah reigns as the supreme King during the Millennium (Isaiah 9:6-7). Then, the vision and prophecy will finally be sealed and completed.

Now we encounter what some commentators consider a difficult passage. This is the Hebrew term *qodesh qadashim*, usually translated *Holy of Holies*. Most commentators feel that it was never used for a person; but for them to state that it was always used for the Tabernacle and the Temple compartment by that name is totally in error. Dr. E. W. Hengstenberg has summarized the arguments quite well in his notable composition, **Chr-stology in the Old Testament**. He has shown that this term can also refer to the Messiah, who is the subject and focal point of the 69 weeks in verse 25. The Messiah is the Most Holy One who was anointed to rule this earth during the Kingdom of

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Christmas

a man-made holiday

by Elder Jacob O. Meyer

People frequently follow customs set by society without questioning where these time-honored traditions originate. They assume that the world around them accurately portrays the way people should live. It is their belief that since the denominations of nominal Christianity use the Bible in their teachings, they are faithfully following the biblical way of life with the traditions and customs that they keep.

However, your Bible warns continually against accepting the ways of the world. Jeremiah 10:2 admonishes us not to learn the way of the heathen (Hebrew *goyim*, *the nations of this world*). The line drawn between the practices of the Apostolic Assembly, on the one hand, and the religious lifestyle of the world, on the other, is forcefully driven home by a multitude of Scriptures. Just because millions of people do something is no clear indication it has been derived from the Bible.

Almighty Yahweh brought Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees, placing him in the region of the mountains of Canaan to teach him the way of Truth. This can be spiritualized to mean that Yahweh brought Abraham out of the system of the world and taught him the true way of life in an isolated place, much as we of the Assemblies of Yahweh today are being taught.

Israel, Abraham's descendants,

came out of Egypt and spent 40 years in the wilderness learning the ways of Yahweh. Paul describes this in Acts 13:18 by saying, "**And for about the time of forty years as a nursing father he bore them in the wilderness.**" Yahweh intended Israel to leave behind the ways of that sinful civilization. Yahweh intended Israel to provide a witness of the heavenly way of life to the surrounding nations. Your Bible contains a record of the progress and failures of people who were to be Yahweh's witnesses.

For several years, a file of newspaper and magazine articles relating to the pagan customs attached to the Christmas celebration has been building here at Bethel. Studying the contents of this file in preparation for writing this composition was again quite enlightening. The numerous authors who wrote these informative articles fully comprehend and understand the pagan origins of the traditions and customs of Christmas (as well as many of the other holidays celebrated by the world). Nevertheless, few and far between are the individuals who actually advocate eliminating these customs from their lives. While they know and comprehend these facts, they will not allow themselves to be corrected by the biblical and secular evidence. Many people of the world reflect this stubborn attitude.

Are you an open-minded person? Have you dedicated your life exclusively to serving the Most High Heavenly Father? Will you be guided by the Word of Yahweh the Most High? Do you allow the Bible to correct you? If you can answer in the affirmative to all of these questions, then we would urge you to read this article carefully. Check the facts for yourself, then make up your mind. The facts published here can be verified in libraries which contain the noted reference works.

When the Apostolic Assembly sprang to life, the members totally committed themselves to making their personal preparation for the Second Coming of Yahshua the Messiah. The Apostolic Assembly of the book of Acts was never numerically large. It was a small group, but completely dedicated to obeying Yahweh's Truth.

The brethren of the Apostolic Assembly found themselves in the midst of a very strong empire—Rome. The religion of this mighty empire was based primarily upon that of ancient Greece. In the Pantheon, a huge building located in Rome, every major religion was represented, and the image of every mighty one was enshrined. Foremost among these pagan mighty ones was Jupiter, the Latin representation of the ancient Greek mighty one, Zeus. So strongly was the religion

December 25 was a sacred day for the worship of Zeus and other pagan mighty ones. Some writers even claim that Zeus was born on December 25—the winter solstice.

of Jupiter and Zeus (the father of the mighty ones) imprinted upon the minds of ancient people that, evidently, some of those pagan religious ideas were subsequently carried over into the Messianic Assembly by people who began to follow the biblical Faith.

December 25 was a sacred day for the worship of Zeus and other pagan mighty ones. Some writers even claim that Zeus was born on December 25—the winter solstice. Let us note what we find in 1 Mac-cabees 1:52-64.

“And many of the people and everyone who was ready to forsake the Law joined with them and they did wrong in the land, and forced Israel to hide in every hiding-place they had. On the fifteenth day of Chislew, in the one hundred and forty-fifth year, he erected a dreadful desecration upon the altar, and in the towns of Judah round about they built altars, and at the doors of their houses and in the squares they burned incense, and wherever they found the book of the Law, they tore them up and burned them, and if anyone was found to possess a book of the agreement or respected the Law, the king’s decree condemned him to death. The Israelites who appeared from month to month in

the towns they treated with force. On the twenty-fifth of the month they offered sacrifice upon the altar which was set up on the altar of burnt offering. The women who had circumcised their children they put to death under the decree, hanging the babies around their necks, and destroying their families and the men who had circumcised them. Yet many in Israel stood firm and resolved in their hearts not to eat what was unclean; they preferred death to being polluted with food or profaning the sacred agreement, and so they died. And Israel suffered intensely.” **The Complete Bible. An American Translation.**

Why do Christians celebrate Christmas on December 25? Yahshua the Messiah was not born on December 25. Our published article on that subject will clearly prove this to you, if you are open-minded. Yahshua the Messiah was probably born on the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles in the fall of the year. This can be ascertained from Luke chapter 1. The word *Christmas* means *the mass of Christ*; the mass held in celebration of his birth.

Since they are idolatrous figures representing sun worship, most pagan mighty ones were born around the winter solstice which was

anciently set at December 25. The birthday of Mithra was on December 25. Mithra symbolized the sun, as did other heathen mighty ones like Osiris, Hercules, and Bacchus, who were also said to have been born on that day. Interestingly, China’s pagan savior, Zao, was born on December 25. (Did you note the close similarity to the Greek word Zeus?) Additionally, the Egyptian mighty one Horus, the Hindu mighty one Vishnu, and the Syrian mighty one Tammuz, had their birthdays on December 25, as did the Greek mighty one Dionysus, who was a personification of Zeus.

Sun worship is the key to understanding why Christmas today is celebrated on December 25. The seasonal circuit of the earth around the sun was of great concern to ancient agrarian people. On the night between the 24th and 25th of December, the sun was perceived to be furthest from the earth, beginning its journey back from south to north. Since the sun is the light of the world, cold and famine would inevitably exterminate the human race if the sun did not return from the south. Consequently, in the north where most of the early civilizations arose, great rejoicing broke out when the people saw the sun turning. This is how these mythological traditions originated.

The ancient heathen religions called the sun their savior. Since this solar savior comes, or returns, to save the world suffering from a harsh winter, it means that new life and hope was given to the people of the world. Therefore, you can see the pagan thoughts retained in some of the Christmas carols, songs that do not express the true biblical message of the Messiah’s birth. The relationship between ancient pagan sun worship and the modern Christmas observance can readily be noted.

In ancient Rome, the time of the Saturnalia and Brumalia was fixed in the middle of December. These feasts were known as the Paganalia. The name *Saturn* meant



Santa Claus is usually called Old Nick, and you can prove that this was one of Satan’s names by checking the word Nick in the dictionary.

abundance. Distinctive traditions of the Saturnalia are closely akin to those of Chr-stmas as it is celebrated today. Gigantic feasts were held throughout Saturnalia day. Slaves were given liberty and often were served by their masters at the feast. There was a general suspension of all public affairs. Courts and schools were recessed; commercial and all military activities were suspended. Most prominent among the festive dishes served were the boat's head with an apple or orange in its mouth, plum pudding, mince pies, with decorated sweets and cookies for dessert. Dolls were frequently given as gifts. Some historians believe that these dolls represented original human sacrifices, since human sacrifices were once offered to Saturn. (Incidentally, the English word *doll* is derived from the word *idol*.) The word *brumalia* means *winter solstice*. The word *solstice* comes from a combination of words meaning *the sun* (Latin *sol*) *standing still*.

Additionally, parades and mummeries, such as you find at the Pasadena Rose Parade and the Philadelphia Mummers Parade, were conducted at the Saturnalia. Such revelry formed an integral part of the extended feasts of Saturn at the winter solstice just as they do today with the Chr-stmas/New Year celebration. If anyone were to return from those ancient times, he might conclude that he is right at home among the present-day Chr-stmas/New Year celebrations. Actually, it would seem that the eight-day observance of today has replaced Yahweh's annual festival called the Feast of Tabernacles (Leviticus 23:33-44).

Common in some European countries, especially England, is the yule log. The term *yule* according to **Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language**, 2nd College Edition, is defined as *the original name of a heathen festival at the winter solstice, akin to the old Norse Jol*. From this old Norse festival comes our word *jolly*, used most

However, the entire corpus of this (Santa Claus) tradition is based upon telling lies to the children, undermining their faith and trust in spoken truth.

frequently around the Chr-stmas season to describe the revelry that cannot be supported scripturally.

It is interesting to note that the word *yule* also means *wheel* in the ancient Norse language. The celebration of yule honored the mighty one Woden with the rebirth of the wheel-shaped sun. To use anything with a wheel during the two weeks of rejoicing (work was suspended), such as wagons or spinning wheels, would have been an insult to the sun implying that it was not moving north fast enough. To hasten the return of the sun, ancient people built huge bonfires (a yule fire with the log). Traps, snares, and fish nets were also brought in so that even the fish, birds, and animals might find *yuletide* (two weeks, a fortnight; 12 weekdays plus two Sundays), a time of peace. In ancient Chaldean, *yule* mean *the feast of the child*.

Lighting the yule log signaled the beginning of the holiday merriment. In Britain, it was a religious ceremony for the Druids who blessed the log. The charred remains of the past year's log were used to light the new fire. The burning fire symbolized home and safety. The Tutons believed the burning of the yule log represented the death of the old sun, and the evergreen Chr-stmas tree stood for the annual rebirth of the solar savior. The Romans called this annual rebirth *Sol Invictus*—the *unconquerable sun*.

The legend of Santa Claus coming down the chimney also was derived from the early Norsemen. Their stories tell of the mighty one called Hertha appearing on the hearth of the fireplace and bringing good luck to the house. Therefore, a Santa Claus-type figure came down the chimneys of the ancient

Norse people.

Santa Claus is usually called Old Nick, and you can prove that this was one of Satan's names by checking the word *Nick* in the dictionary. Satan has been masquerading under a variety of names to draw worship to himself. The word *Santa* actually means *Saint*, and he was supposed to have been called Saint Nicholas. You will notice in Revelation 2:6 and 15 the word *Nicolaitanes*, derived from the Greek word *Nike*, who was the evangelist of Zeus. *Santa Claus* is a contraction of the term *Saint Nicholas*, and this can present a clear association with Nike. Santa Claus, therefore, was sent to announce the advent of the solar mighty one Zeus. Some traditional beliefs are that the present Santa Claus myth was developed from an actual Saint Nicholas who lived during the fourteenth century. He was credited with miraculous healings. According to one legend, he tossed bags of gold into the windows of three girls who wanted to get married, but had no dowries. Some believe that here is where the custom of giving Chr-stmas gifts began. The wise men, you will remember, did not give gifts to each other, but they gave them to the Savior, Yahshua the Messiah.

It was the writer Clement Moore, in 1822, and the cartoonist Thomas Nast, in 1863, who dressed Santa Claus in a red suit with reindeer and toys, and had him coming down the chimney on Chr-stmas Eve. However, the entire corpus of this tradition is based upon telling lies to the children, undermining their faith and trust in spoken Truth.

Chr-stmas trees are entirely pagan, also. You will see in Jer-

Continued on page 14.

PROPHETIC **TRENDS**



A BLESSING, OR A CURSE?

“See, I have set before you this day life and good, and death and evil; in that I COMMAND YOU THIS DAY TO LOVE YAHWEH YOUR ELOHIM, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his ordinances, that you may live and multiply, and that Yahweh your Elohim may bless you in the land which you go in to possess. But if your heart turns away, and you will not hear, but shall be drawn away, and worship other elohim, and serve them; I declare to you this day, that you shall surely perish; you shall not prolong your days in the land, which you pass over the Jordan to go in to possess. I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse: THEREFORE CHOOSE LIFE, that you may live, you and your seed; to love Yahweh your Elohim, to obey his voice, and to hold fast to him; for he is your life, and the length of your days; that you may dwell in the land which Yahweh swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.”

The Law of Yahweh repeatedly admonishes us that, if we are faithful to His Covenant and observe all of His Commandments joyfully, He will bless us abundantly. He has given us the choice of life and good (blessings) or death and evil (curses) if we transgress his commandments. Yahweh has made this declaration clearly through the pen of Moses, and, yet, it seems that mankind cannot understand the importance of keeping Yahweh's Laws.

At this moment in history, we stand at an intersection whereby, if we choose the correct path, we will receive great blessings from Yahweh. *“And it shall come to pass, if you shall listen diligently to the voice of Yahweh your Elohim, to observe to do all his commandments which I command you this day, that YAHWEH YOUR ELOHIM WILL SET YOU ON HIGH ABOVE ALL THE NATIONS OF THE EARTH: and all these blessings shall come upon you, and overtake you, if you shall listen to the voice of Yahweh your Elohim. Blessed shall you be in the city, and blessed shall you be in the field. Blessed shall be the fruit of your body, the fruit of your ground, the fruit of your beasts, the increase of your cattle, and the young of your flock. Blessed shall be your basket and your kneadingtrough. Blessed shall you be when you come in, and blessed shall you be when you go out. Yahweh will cause your enemies that rise up against you to be defeated before you: they shall come out against you one way, and shall flee before you seven ways. Yahweh will command the blessing upon you in your barns, and in all that you put your hand to; and he will bless you in the land which Yahweh your Elohim is giving you. Yahweh will establish you for a holy people to himself, as he has sworn to you; if you shall keep the commandments of Yahweh your Elohim, and walk in his ways. And all the peoples of the earth shall see that you are called by the name of Yahweh; and they shall*

be afraid of you. And Yahweh will make you plenteous for good, in the fruit of your body, and in the fruit of your cattle, and in the fruit of your ground, in the land which Yahweh swore to your fathers to give you. Yahweh will open to you his good treasure the heavens, to give the rain of your land in its season, and to bless all the work of your hand: and YOU SHALL LEND TO MANY NATIONS, AND YOU SHALL NOT BORROW. And Yahweh will make you the head, and not the tail; and you shall be above only, and you shall not be beneath; if you shall listen to the commandments of Yahweh your Elohim, which I command you this day, to observe and to do them, and shall not turn aside from any of the words which I command you this day, to the right hand, or to the left, to go after other elohim to serve them.” (Deuteronomy 28:1-14). Wouldn't we rather receive a blessing from Yahweh than a curse?

“But it shall come to pass, if you will not listen to the voice of Yahweh your Elohim, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command you this day, that all these curses shall come upon you, and overtake you. Cursed shall you be in the city, and cursed shall you be in the field. Cursed shall be your basket and your kneading-trough. Cursed shall be the fruit of your body, and the fruit of your ground, the increase of your cattle, and the young of your flock. Cursed shall you be when you come in, and

cursed shall you be when you go out. Yahweh will send upon you cursing, confusion, and rebuke, in all that you put your hand to do, until you be destroyed, and until you perish quickly; because of the evil of your doings, whereby you have forsaken me. Yahweh will make the pestilence hold fast to you, until he has consumed you from off the land, which you go in to possess. Yahweh will strike you with consumption, and with fever, and with inflammation, and with fiery heat, and with the sword, and with blasting, and with mildew; and they shall pursue you until you perish. And your heaven that is over your head shall be bronze, AND THE EARTH THAT IS UNDER YOU SHALL BE IRON. Yahweh will make the rain of your land powder and dust: from heaven shall it come down on you, until you be destroyed. Yahweh will cause you to be defeated before your enemies; you shall go out one way against them, and shall flee seven ways before them: and you shall be tossed to and fro among all the kingdoms of the earth. And your dead body shall be food to all birds of the heavens, and to the beasts of the earth; and there shall be none to frighten them away. Yahweh will afflict you with the BOIL of Egypt, and with the TUMORS, and with the scab, and with the itch, of which you cannot be healed. Yahweh will afflict you with MADNESS, and with BLINDNESS, and with astonishment of heart; and you shall grope at noonday, as the blind gropes in darkness, and YOU SHALL NOT PROSPER IN YOUR WAYS: and you shall be only oppressed and robbed always, and there shall be none to save you. You shall betroth a wife, and another man shall lie with her: you shall build a house, and you shall not dwell in it: you shall plant a vineyard, and shall not use the fruit of it. Your ox shall be killed before your eyes, and you shall not eat of it: your ass shall be violently taken away from before your face, and shall not be restored to you: your sheep

shall be given to your enemies, and you shall have none to save you. Your sons and your daughters shall be given to another people; and your eyes shall look, and fail with longing for them all the day: and there shall be nothing in the power of your hand. The fruit of your ground, and all your labors, shall a nation which you know not eat up; and you shall be only oppressed and crushed always; so that you shall be mad for the sight of your eyes which you shall see. Yahweh will afflict you in the knees, and in the legs, with a sore boil, of which you cannot be healed, from the sole of your foot to the crown of your head.” (Deuteronomy 28:15-35).

Notice that if we listen to the voice of Yahweh, then we will obey Him. However, if we refuse to hear and obey His voice, then we will receive cursing, confusion, and rebuke in all that we put our hand to do until we are eventually destroyed. One of Yahweh’s blessings that He has promised to this nation if we would only obey Him, is that we will be a lending nation and not a debtor nation. Interestingly, the United States has only been debt-free ONCE in our history—during the administration of President Andrew Jackson—NEARLY 200 YEARS AGO!

How many times in recent years have we seen a debilitating drought, where the earth is dry and as hard as iron? This is one of Yahweh’s curses! *“If you will not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that you may fear this glorious and fearful name, Yahweh your Elohim; then YAHWEH WILL MAKE YOUR PLAGUES FEARFUL, and the plagues of your seed, even great plagues, and of long duration, and sicknesses, and of long duration. And he will bring upon you again all the diseases of Egypt, which you were afraid of; and they shall cling to you. Also EVERY SICKNESS, and EVERY PLAGUE, which is not written in the book of this law, them will Yahweh bring upon you, UNTIL YOU BE DESTROYED. And you shall be left few in number,*

whereas you were as the stars of heaven for multitude; because you did not listen to the voice of Yahweh your Elohim. And it shall come to pass, that, as Yahweh rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you, so Yahweh will rejoice over you to cause you to perish, and to destroy you; and you shall be plucked from off the land where you go in to possess it.” (Deuteronomy 28:58-63). And, yet, why haven’t the nations of the world turned back to Almighty Yahweh, to serve Him with their whole heart?

Another familiar passage of Scripture regarding the blessing and the curse is found in Leviticus 26. This sobering chapter begins with a command to avoid idolatry, yet, idolatry is proliferated all over the world! Graven images abound, and the populace bows to the Baalim. Leviticus 26:2 commands us to keep Yahweh’s Sabbaths (plural). This is a reference to the weekly Sabbath—not Friday or Sunday, but the seventh day of the week (Saturday). The other Sabbaths of Yahweh are the annual holy days found in Leviticus 23. Finally, we are commanded in Leviticus 25 to observe the sabbatical year, a Sabbath of solemn rest for the land.

“If you walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them; then I WILL GIVE YOUR RAINS IN THEIR SEASON, AND THE LAND SHALL YIELD ITS INCREASE, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit. And your threshing shall reach to the vintage, and the vintage shall reach to the sowing time; and you shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land safely. And I will give peace in the land, and you shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid: and I will cause evil beasts to cease out of the land, neither shall the sword go through your land. And you shall chase your enemies, and they shall fall before you by the sword. And five of you shall chase a hundred, and a hundred of you shall chase ten thousand; and your enemies shall fall before you by the sword. And I will have respect to you, and make you fruit-

ful, and multiply you, and will establish my covenant with you. And you shall eat old store long kept, and you shall bring forth the old because of the new. And I will set my tabernacle among you: and my soul shall not abhor you. And I WILL WALK AMONG YOU, and will be your Elohim, and you shall be my people. I am Yahweh your Elohim, who brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, that you shall not be their bondmen; and I have broken the bars of your yoke, and made you go upright.” (Leviticus 26:3-13). Yahweh promises peace in the land, if we obey Him. When was the last time we had peace in America? Furthermore, if we walk in Yahweh’s statutes, then He will walk among us! Yahweh will bless us with abundance and not curse us with famine!

“But if you will not listen to me, and will not do all these commandments; and if you shall reject my statutes, and if your soul abhors my ordinances, so that you will not do all my commandments, but break my covenant; I also will do this to you: I will appoint terror over you, even consumption and fever, that shall consume the eyes, and consume the soul; and you shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it. And I will set my face against you, and you shall be defeated by your enemies: they that hate you shall rule over you; and you shall flee when none pursues you. And if you will not yet for these things listen to me, then I WILL PUNISH YOU SEVEN TIMES MORE FOR YOUR SINS. AND I WILL BREAK THE PRIDE OF YOUR POWER: and I will make your heaven as iron, and your earth as bronze; and your strength shall be spent in vain; for your land shall not yield its increase, neither shall the trees of the land yield their fruit.” (Leviticus 26:14-20). Notice that Yahweh promises to multiply His punishments by a factor of seven. Yahweh also has promised to break the pride of our

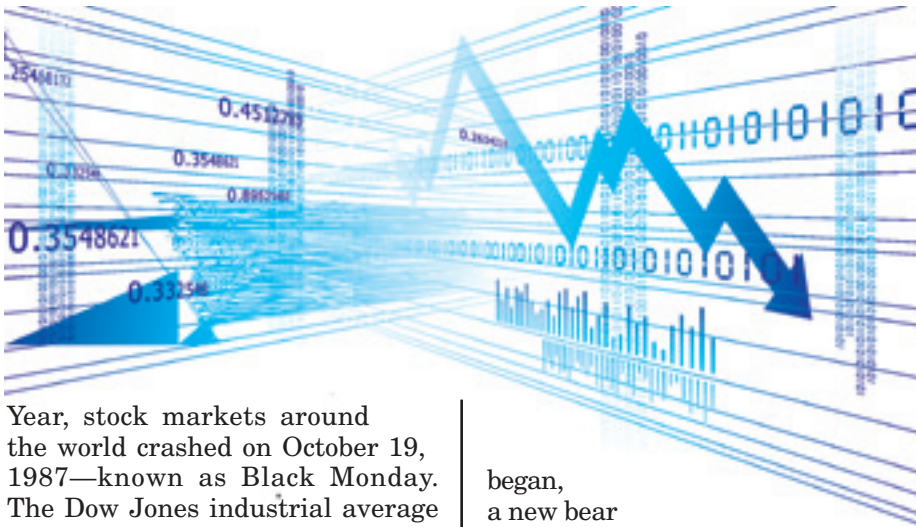
power, because of the transgression of His Laws. Again, drought is one of the curses that Yahweh pours out upon the nations that disobey Him. Did you realize that 98 percent of the state of California is in a drought condition? Water rationing has begun! Will there be enough water to irrigate the fields? Could this be a way for Yahweh to assert His Sabbatical Year upon those farmers who are violating it?

“And if you walk contrary to me, and will not listen to me, I will bring SEVEN TIMES MORE plagues on you according to your sins. And I will send the beast of the field among you, which shall rob you of your children, and destroy your cattle, and make you few in number; and your ways shall become desolate. And if by these things you will not be reformed to me, but will walk contrary to me; then I will also walk contrary to you; and I WILL AFFLICT YOU, EVEN I, SEVEN TIMES FOR YOUR SINS. And I will bring a sword upon you, that shall execute the vengeance of the covenant; and you shall be gathered together within your cities: and I will send the pestilence among you; and you shall be delivered into the hand of the enemy. When I break your staff of bread, ten women shall bake your bread in one oven, and they shall deliver your bread again by weight: and you shall eat, and not be satisfied. And if you will not for all this listen to me, but walk contrary to me; then I will walk contrary to you in wrath; and I also will punish you seven times for your sins. And you shall eat the flesh of your sons, and the flesh of your daughters shall you eat. And I will destroy your high places, and cut down your sun-images, and cast your dead bodies on the bodies of your idols; and my soul shall abhor you. And I will make your cities a waste, and will bring your sanctuaries to desolation, and I will not smell the savor of your sweet odors. And I will bring the land into desolation; and your

enemies that dwell in it shall be astonished at it. And I will scatter you among the nations, and I will draw out the sword after you: and your land shall be a desolation, and your cities shall be a waste. (Leviticus 26:21-33). With each Sabbatical cycle, Yahweh has increased His judgments that fall upon this wicked age. **“THEN SHALL THE LAND ENJOY ITS SABBATHS...”** (Leviticus 26:34a). How clear can it be? We should make it our utmost endeavor to keep this Sabbatical Year, which began on September 6, 2014, and hallow the seventh year.

A cycle of economic downturns also accompany the sabbatical cycles. In January 1973, for example, during a Sabbatical Year, a bear market hit the major stock markets of the world. Between January 11, 1973, and December 1974, the New York Stock Exchange’s Dow Jones industrial average lost 45 percent of its value. This bear market was the seventh-worst bear market in the history of the Dow Jones index. Although the Dow had gained 15 percent in 1972 (the sixth year of the Sabbatical cycle), a bear market struck about three months into the Sabbatical Year. It was at this time that the American economy contracted substantially. Do you remember President Nixon’s price freezes to stave off inflation?

Then, in 1979, just as a new Sabbatical Year began, inflation became rampant, oil prices doubled (gas rationing was again imposed as it was in 1973), interest rates rose to over 20 percent and Iran seized Americans and held them hostage for over 400 days. Following President Reagan’s economic policies, the economy grew through the 1980s, leading to a time of decadence and excess. Greed abounded on Wall Street, as Wall Street bankers became millionaires and billionaires. In the first part of 1987, the Dow Jones industrial average had gained 44 percent over its previous year’s closing of 1895 points. Then, just following the Feast of Tabernacles and the end of the Sabbatical



Year, stock markets around the world crashed on October 19, 1987—known as Black Monday. The Dow Jones industrial average dropped 508 points in one day.

As is human nature, we quickly forget the lessons that Yahweh is teaching. In the late 1990s, greed again entered into the picture. Investors believed they could ride the “dot-com” bubble to soaring new heights. With low interest rates fueling start-up capital, people with get-rich-quick ideas rushed in to make millions. News stories of sudden millionaires, fueled greedy economic ventures, inflating a market bubble that burst in March, 2000, which was also the sixth year of the sabbatical cycle. Irrational exuberance inflated the value of dot-com companies, some of which were not even turning a profit. Soon, the bubble burst, and many (if not most) of those Internet companies failed throughout the next year.

Then, immediately following the end of the Sabbatical year, the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 sent the market sharply downward. After closing the markets for a few days, the market slowly struggled to recover the more than 1000-point loss. This stock market downturn caused the loss of \$5 trillion in market value of companies from March 2000 through October 2002. As always, the market slowly recovered and was reinflated in value throughout the next Sabbatical cycle. A new bubble formed, fueled by low interest rates.

By early October 2007, the stock market was pushed beyond 14,000, peaking on October 9, 2007. Literally days after the Sabbatical Year

began, a new bear market emerged.

Then, on September 29, 2008, just after the Sabbatical Year ended, the Dow Jones industrial average had a record-breaking drop of over 777 points. From its peak on October 9, 2007 until March 6, 2009, the market lost over 50 percent of its value, to a market low of 6443 points. Throughout the past six years, the market has rebounded to over 17,000 points. Market pundits assert that the market is resilient and will continue its upward trend; yet, common sense indicates that “what goes up must come down.” With interest rates at near 0 percent, people have been able to borrow “free money” and invest it in the stock market, raking in billions of dollars.

Although Yahweh promises to punish seven times more (literally “add seven”) for this generation’s rejection of His commandments, statutes, and judgments, He still ends Leviticus 26 with a promise of hope. If we confess our iniquities, and the iniquity of our fathers, and the trespass that we have trespassed against Yahweh, then Yahweh has promised that He will forgive. Yahweh has promised that if we are repentant, He will not reject His people at the end of the age. He will, however, fulfill the Covenant that He made to our forefathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This hope is of utmost importance for us in these end times, because Yahweh promises that if our uncircumcised heart is humbled, and we accept the

punishment of our iniquity, then He will extend grace to us.

“And THEY SHALL CONFESS THEIR INIQUITY, and the iniquity of their fathers, in their trespass which they trespassed against me, and also that, because they walked contrary to me, I also walked contrary to them, and brought them into the land of their enemies: if then their uncircumcised heart is humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity; then will I remember my covenant with Jacob; and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember; and I will remember the land. The land also shall be left by them, and shall ENJOY ITS SABBATHS, while it lies desolate without them: and they shall ACCEPT OF THE PUNISHMENT OF THEIR INIQUITY; because, even because they rejected my ordinances, and their soul abhorred my statutes. And yet for all that, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not reject them, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them; for I am Yahweh their Elohim; but I will for their sakes remember the covenant of their ancestors, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations, that I might be their Elohim: I am Yahweh.” (Leviticus 26:40-45).

In preparation for the Second Coming of Yahshua the Messiah, Yahweh is extending a gracious hand to each and every one of us. Will you accept the offer of forgiveness that He is offering? ***“Behold, Yahweh’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear...”*** (Isaiah 59:1). Read the remaining verses of Isaiah 59, and Yahweh’s plan of salvation comes into view. Salvation is offered in the only ***“... name under heaven, that is given among men, in which we must be saved,”*** Yahshua the Messiah. Will you call out to Him today? **5ND**

emiah 10:2-4 a scriptural passage that closely relates to tree worship. ***“Thus says Yahweh, Learn not the way of the nations, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the nations are dismayed at them. For the customs of the peoples are vanity; for one cuts a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman with the axe. They deck it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it moves not.”***

In America, the Chr-stmas tree was brought to our shores by German immigrants. Long before they acquired the custom, worship with the use of a tree had been a traditional custom in the ancient Middle East. This dated back to the cutting down of the tree, which represented Nimrod. Aescalapius the physician, represented as a serpent, wrapped himself around the dead stump bringing forth a new shoot from its roots with the rebirth, or reincarnation, of Nimrod’s son—Tammuz.

Surprisingly, the shepherds and wise men did not arrive at the same time to pay homage to the Savior, as they are depicted in the creche. Shepherds abiding in the fields near Bethlehem (Luke 2) would have undoubtedly been tending the sacrificial animals for the Feast of Tabernacles. They were pasturing their animals in a cultivated field (Greek is *agros—a field in which agriculture is pursued*). The angels

did not announce to the shepherds Messiah’s birth by singing a song or carol. The angel spoke—angels in the Bible never sing. It is an insult to the Bible student to hear the Chr-stmas carols annually declaring that angels sing songs.

When the wise men arrived in Bethlehem, Yahshua and His parents lived in a house, Matthew 2:11. He was no longer in a stable, if He ever was born in a stable. (We are not told that He was, only that He was laid in a manger). Yahshua the Messiah was most likely born in a tent out in a field where a small manger stood for feeding animals at pasture. This was then used as a crib for the Messiah. No mention is made that He was born in the inn stable, only that there was no room for them in the inn.

During the month of December, the shepherds have brought their flocks into the folds for the winter around Bethlehem in the Holy Land. Shepherds would not abide in the fields keeping watch over their flocks by night after the eighth month of the biblical year, since the weather turns cold and wet after the Feast of Tabernacles.

To this very day, the Scottish people celebrate Hogmanay at the winter solstice. The word is said to be derived from the old Norman-French term *hoguiane*, a festival in which New Year’s gifts were given and exchanged. Traditionally, Hogmanay feasting begins at mid-

night with the arrival of a tall, dark stranger. Music is an indispensable part of traditional Hogmanay.

But where does this festival originate? Is it found in the Bible? Actually, none of the customs, traditions, and festivals attached to the Chr-stmas/New Year holidays can be found anywhere in the Bible, except that some of them are condemned as being pagan. Hogmanay actually comes from the Hebrew word for feast (*hog*, Hebrew *chag*—means *feast*, and *manay* is *number—Mene*). Please research Isaiah 65:11 very thoroughly from the original text where you find that those who forsake Yahweh and the keeping of His commandments are keeping pagan feasts. One of these feasts is furnishing a drink offering to Mene. Customarily on New Year’s eve, people of the world go dancing and drinking to celebrate the arrival of a new numbered year. (Did you know that the words *money* and *mene* can be traced to a single root? What are the implications?)

One of the most abominable aspects of the Chr-stmas/New Year celebration is people’s quest for the Chr-stmas spirit (out of a bottle, that is). During the Chr-stmas holidays, more people get drunk, more divorces result, more drunken driving, and other tragedies happen that are connected with intemperate use of alcohol, than at any other similar period throughout the year. Evidently, this kind of Chr-stmas



Surprisingly, the shepherds and wise men did not arrive at the same time to pay homage to the Savior, as they are depicted in the creche.

spirit is evil.

Modern Chr-stmas plants can kill you if you're not careful. Poinsettia, holly, and mistletoe contain deadly poisons that can sicken or kill a child or pet curious enough to eat the leaves. Mistletoe, a parasitic plant, was originally used by the Druids as a type of peacemaking plant. Kissing under the mistletoe was explained as heaven reaching down to kiss the earth through the rebirth of the son of heaven. None of these plants are mentioned in the Bible.

Many people go deeply into debt to buy Chr-stmas presents, a practice which is not at all scriptural. The wise men did not give presents to each other, but they brought presents to Yahweh's King, Yahshua the Messiah. Wouldn't it be better to give Yahshua the glory, as did the Magi? Better yet, we should keep Yahweh's holy days rather than any birthday.

Among the Hebrew people, birthdays were never observed. It is not wrong to wish each other a happy

birthday, but to engage in birthday parties and other festivities may be traced directly to paganism, especially to ancient Rome.

Julius Sextus Africanus was the first person to specify December 25 as Yahshua's birthday. Before the year 225, it was never observed as such. The winter solstice was selected by Julius Sextus Africanus as the Messiah's birthday through his association with pagan religious practices.

It would appear as though most of the customs of Chr-stmas are derived directly from the ancient anti-Messiah and false-savior Nimrod and his mother-wife Semiramis. The world today worships a false savior and an anti-Messiah under the guise of sun worship. To restore the pure worship of the Bible, and to eliminate from our lives festivals and celebrations displeasing to Almighty Yahweh, should be our aim. Let us read the Bible and see for ourselves how groundless are the

traditions attached to the Chr-stmas festivities observed today.

Now that we have examined the customs and traditions of the Chr-stmas-New Year celebration and have found them to be derived from ancient pagan mythology, what shall we do? Shall we continue to observe them, however half-heartedly we may enter into the celebration, now that we know it is wrong? Or should we do as Yahshua Messiah Himself has told us—to obey His Word and keep His commandments (Matthew 5:17-20)? Yahweh gives His Spirit to those who obey Him (Acts 5:32). Those who keep Yahweh's commandments will be blessed (Revelation 22:14). Those who do not, curse themselves (Deuteronomy 27, 28).

Let us not add to the Word, or diminish from it, but let us keep the commandments of Yahweh for our good (Deuteronomy 6). Eliminate that which is displeasing to Yahweh from your worship and receive His blessing today. ✠

Continued from page 6.

Yahweh. He kept the Law of Yahweh faithfully without violating it so that His was a perfect sacrifice. Please see 1 Peter 2:21-25.

Consequently, although the Messiah has given His life for the sins of the world, He has, as yet, not received His commission to rule. He sits at this very moment in the heavens, in the very throne of Almighty Yahweh, at the right hand of the Great Majesty, Yahweh Elohim, awaiting the instruction to return to earth and establish the government of Yahweh despite the objections of mankind. May that glorious day of His Kingdom come soon!

Now to put those points together. The most vitally significant fact regarding this prophecy that is apparently overlooked by the translators is that the term *shabua* should have been translated **sevens** rather than **weeks**. Certainly, the term must mean *weeks of years* or *Sabbaticals*. Consequently, the passage would correctly read,

“Seventy sevens [weeks of years] are decreed upon your people [Israel] and upon your holy city [Jerusalem]....”

We can observe that the Messiah would be cut off **after** the initial 69 sevens. During the first 49 years the city, the wall and the Temple were rebuilt and the sacrificial system reestablished after the commandment was given, and, then, another 62 sevens brings us to the final seven-year Sabbatical cycle. This totals 483 years and would bring us to about 25 C.E. (Common Era); that is if the date of the commandment being given is 458 B.C.E. (before the Common Era). See Ezra 7:6-8.

Furthermore, concerning Daniel 9:27, we can interpret this verse as the Messiah confirming the Covenant with many for one Sabbatical cycle—but in the middle (after three and one-half years), He was cut off. Such an interpretation would not negate a Wednesday impalement, however. Interestingly, this is the only year from 25 to 34 C.E. when a

Wednesday impalement is possible. Additionally, the anti-Messiah will emulate the time element assigned to the True Messiah.

This means that 69 and one-half sevens of the prophetic vision have been fulfilled with only one-half of a cycle remaining (three and one-half years). The Beast ruler, or anti-Messiah, makes an agreement with the people for one seven (a Sabbatical cycle), but in the midst of this seven, he also will cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease (Daniel 9:27). Please see this supported by Daniel 12:11-12.

However, can we notice a more complete interpretation, one that will point directly toward our time? Not having taken into account the *sitz im leben* (life setting) of the Bible, few students understand that these sevens can actually refer to the Sabbatical cycles and Jubilee years. Consequently, the 70 sevens can also be interpreted as 70 cycles of sevens, meaning seventy Jubilees. Consequently, after the world

***Nevertheless,
just as we prove
the correct day
on which the
weekly Sabbath
of Yahweh falls,
and we keep it at
that time, even
then we can and
must prove the
correct time for
the Sabbatical
year.***

rejected the True Messiah, Yahshua, the age-ending prophecy was extended to its full length of about 6,000 years. Therefore, a break or breach of about 2,000 years would separate the time allotted to the True Messiah and the false messiah.

Do you realize the significance of this new, increased knowledge? There would be 70 Jubilees until the end of the age of man. These 70 Jubilees would be completed when Yahshua the Messiah returns to establish the Kingdom of Yahweh on this earth, an era when everlasting righteousness is finally imposed by His supreme government.

Daniel 9:24 shows us that at the end of 70 sevens, **everlasting righteousness will be imposed** and this brings us down to our day. When the Kingdom of Yahweh takes over the rulership of the world, an era of righteousness will be established that will be continued from then on and extend throughout eternity without ever ending. The vision and the prophecy given by Almighty Yahweh will be sealed up and completed throughout the Millennium, another indication that the complete interpretation could not have ended with the first advent of the Messiah.

The Apostolic Assembly of the book of Acts used this verse to prove that Yahshua was the Messiah. The anointing of the Most Holy was considered to mean the Messiah Himself, as aforementioned. If the 70 weeks of years equal 490 years, then from the time that the commandment to restore and rebuild Jerusalem in Ezra 7, it should be possible to locate the year the Messiah died. Notice that His death was to occur just **at the middle** of the seventieth cycle after the sixty-ninth week (cycle). See Ezra 7:25-26. Consequently, a plausible date for the Messiah's impalement would be 29 C.E. This would have been exactly 486 and one-half years (69 weeks plus three and one-half years) after 458 B.C.E., when the Jews of Ezra's day received the approval to restore and rebuild Jerusalem (Ezra 7:6-7).

***Locating the
Jubilee and
Sabbatical Years***

When people begin to observe the Law of Yahweh and then encounter the directive in the commandments regarding the Sabbatical and Jubilee years, they frequently imagine that these years cannot be accurately pinpointed. Consequently, some people merely keep the seventh year after they came into a knowledge of the Truth as their personal Sabbatical year. Others seek to find the Sabbatical and Jubilee years historically. Some have been frustrated in their attempts to do so. Nevertheless, just as we prove the correct day on which the weekly Sabbath of Yahweh falls, and we keep it at that time, we can and must prove the correct time for the Sabbatical year.

The Jews have maintained a record of the Sabbatical (Shemitah) years, although this ethnic group has not kept them correctly within the past millennium or more. The commentators can pinpoint a Sabbatical year from the writings of Josephus, because the year 135 B.C.E. is identified as a Sabbatical.

Let us turn to the **History of**

Josephus, "Antiquities of the Jews," book XIII, chapter 8, sections 1 and 2. "And as the siege was drawn out into length by this means, **that year on which the Jews used to rest came on; for the Jews observed this rest every seventh year, as they do every seventh day; so that Ptolemy being for this cause released from the war, he slew the brethren of Hyrcanus and his mother: and when he had done so, he fled to Zeno, who was called Cotylas, who was then the tyrant of the city Philadelphia but when Antiochus being very uneasy at the miseries that Simon had brought upon him, he invaded Judea in the fourth year of his reign, and the first year of the principality of Hyrcanus, in the hundred and sixty-second Olympiad.**"

Consequently, we can determine that the first year of the reign of John Hyrcanus was a Sabbatical year. We can cross-reference this date to the fourth year of the reign of Antiochus. Josephus said it was in the hundred sixty-second Olympiad according to the historians. This was in the year 135 B.C.E. Having referenced this date into the chronology, we discover that it represents the Sabbatical year and is, therefore, correct.

Relative to the Sabbatical years in history, the Jewish commentators have stated that 69 C.E. was a Sabbatical year. In relation to the destruction of the second Temple, this is most interesting. Maimonides said 1195 C.E. was a Sabbatical year, and this year is also in agreement with the Sabbatical year chronology.

Since we have now pinpointed a number of confirmed dates of Sabbatical years as checkpoints, it becomes a simple matter to figure back to the time when Israel left Egypt and entered the Promised Land. Some conservative scholars state that the date when Israel left was about 1491 B.C.E. This would have made their entry into the Promised Land in 1450 B.C.E. We are told in 1 Kings 6:1 that Solomon began building the Temple in the 480th year after Israel de-

parted from Egypt, or 1011 B.C.E., if dated that way. Leon Wood dates the Exodus at 1446 B.C.E. and the Temple construction beginning in 966 B.C.E. William LaSor dates this construction at 967 B.C.E. We must remember, nevertheless, to be certain these datings agree with Sabbatical and Jubilee years, for which we have found verification.

Some Bible students and scholars have maintained that it required seven years for Israel to subdue the Promised Land after their entry into the Holy Land. They then began the counting of the Sabbatical years from that time. We see in Yahshua 14:15, the last part of the verse, “... **And the land had REST from war.**” However, could it be that a vital piece of scriptural understanding was missed?

Yahshua has already told Israel, “... **Yahweh your Elohim gives you rest, and will give you this land.**” (Yahshua 1:13). Therefore, the rest could conceivably be construed to be their entrance into the Land of Promise.

A correct interpretation of Yahshua 5:10-11 is essential to the solution of this problem. “**And the children of Israel encamped in Gilgal; and they kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the month at evening in the plains of Jericho. And they ate of the produce of the land on the day after the passover, unleavened cakes and parched grain, in the same day.**”

We can readily note that Israel enjoyed the blessing of receiving their daily bread, the supply of manna, throughout the 40 years in the wilderness. When they entered the Promised Land and kept the first Passover on the west bank of the Jordan River at Jericho, the manna ceased on the day that the wave sheaf was cut. You will remember that when Israel was to enter the Promised Land and reap the harvest thereof, the first sheaf of the harvest was to be a wave offering to Yahweh (Leviticus 23:9-14). We must note that no parched grain

of any kind was to be eaten before this first-fruits offering was given to Yahweh. Consequently, the day after the Abib 14 Passover, on the day of Abib 15, 1435 B.C.E., could have been the very day the manna ceased and the day on which the count began toward that first Pentecost. Israel ate a harvest which they did not plant (Deuteronomy 6:10-11). Therefore, the count also began toward the first Sabbatical year.

This date would lead us to conclude that the year 1387 B.C.E. was very likely the 49th year of the first Jubilee cycle. The following year, 1386 B.C.E., would then have been the first Jubilee—the 50th year after Israel came into the Promised Land and the first year of the following cycle. The one problem with this dating is not knowing with absolute certainty the exact date of the Exodus. If the dates are provable, the Jubilee would stand; but it could very well have been that Israel entered the Promised Land seven, or even more, years later.

The Seventieth Jubilee

There is a question when the 70th Jubilee will occur. Since we do not know the precise date when Israel entered the Promised Land, this 70th Jubilee may be difficult to identify. The Jews have kept a continuous record of the Sabbaticals, but not of the Jubilees. If Israel had entered the Promised Land in 1435 B.C.E., the 70th Jubilee could be 1995 C.E., but if the date of the Exodus was in 1426 B.C.E., for example, it could be as late as 2024 C.E. However, it is certain that Almighty Yahweh knows the time cycles and when the Messiah will return. We must be prepared at all times to meet Him in the air when He returns to establish the Kingdom of Yahweh on this earth, should this occur at any time He specifies. In other words, do not try to learn a date so you can sin up until the very end of that time—and then repent.

Judgment for Disobedience

Failure to keep the Sabbatical years brought judgment upon ancient Israel. We can see this predicted in Leviticus 26. Notice how much more important becomes the term *times* now that we have seen it to mean years, and how it is closely related with the number seven, meaning a Sabbatical cycle. Can we perceive how the punishment of Yahweh has been poured out with greater intensity over the past half century? The forthcoming tribulation will be of much greater scope and magnitude!

When Almighty Yahweh punished ancient Judah, one of the reasons was their failure to observe the Sabbatical years (2 Chronicles 36:21). The land of Judah was to keep these Sabbaticals, because the people had not obeyed Yahweh.

Possibly the only mention of Sabbatical and Jubilee years together is to be found in Isaiah 37:30. “**And this shall be the sign to you: you shall eat this year that which grows of itself, and in the second year that which springs of the same; and in the third year sow, and reap, and plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of it.**” The timesetting of this prophecy is during the reign of King Hezekiah of Judah when the 185,000 man Assyrian army was destroyed.

A Beginning Point?

Some chronologists set the date for the regnal year of Hezekiah's reign at 715 B.C.E., among these are the **International Standard Bible Encyclopedia** and the **Encyclopedia Judaica**. The **Encyclopedia Britannica**, eleventh edition, set the date at 722 B.C.E., but this would include the co-regency with his father, King Ahaz.

Why Judgment Historically Follows a Sabbatical Year

The rabbinical commentary,

Pirke Avoth (Ethics of the Fathers), has a most thought-provoking analysis of the root cause for some of Yahweh's judgments. The following is a quote from chapter 5, sections 10 to 12. "Seven kinds of punishment come to the world for seven capital transgressions. When some people give tithes and others do not, there comes a famine for lack of rain; then some go hungry and others have plenty. If all have decided not to give tithes, there comes a famine from panic of war and drought; if they have further resolved not to set apart the dough-cake [for the priest], there

The seventh trumpet sounds during a time of war. When it is blown, the judgment will occur and the saints and prophets receive their reward (at the resurrection).

comes a famine of extermination.

"Pestilence comes to the world to inflict those death penalties mentioned in the Torah, the execution of which is not within the function of a human tribunal, and for making forbidden use of the harvest of the Sabbatical year. The sword comes to the world for the suppression [or delay] of justice, and for the perversion of justice, and on account of those who misinterpret the Torah. Wild beast come to the world on account of perjury, and for the profanation of [Yahweh's] name. Exile comes to the world on account of idolatry, incest, bloodshed, and for not allowing the soil to rest in the Sabbatical year.

"At four periods pestilence in-

creases: in the fourth year, in the seventh [Sabbatical] year, in the year following the Sabbatical year, and at the conclusion of the Feast of Tabernacles in every year. In the fourth year, for having failed to give the tithe to the poor which was due in the third year, in the seventh year, for having failed to give the tithe to the poor which was due in the sixth year, in the year following the Sabbatical year, for having made forbidden use of the harvest of the Sabbatical year; and at the conclusion of the Feast of Tabernacles in every year, for having robbed the gifts assigned to the poor [in the course of the whole agricultural year]."

By glancing over a chart of Sabbatical and Jubilee years, it becomes obvious that judgment has indeed occurred, and something significant happened immediately after these special years. Be certain to check this carefully, and you will also remember additional significant things that occurred. Observation by Bible students has proved worthwhile over the centuries.

The Last Trumpet

In his prophecy of the last days, Paul predicts that Yahshua the Messiah will return at the last trumpet. "***Behold, I tell you a mystery: We all shall not sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.***" (1 Corinthians 15:51-52).

The last trumpet described by Paul should be associated with the seventh trumpet of Revelation 11:15-19. You will notice in this prophetic text that the termination of the age of man occurs when this angel sounds. The seventh trumpet sounds during a time of war. When it is blown, the judgment will occur, and the saints and prophets receive their reward (at the resurrection).

This seventh trumpet could then be compared with the seventieth Jubilee trumpet, which is blown

to signal a release for the people of the world enslaved by the Mark of the Beast. It may well signal the beginning of the Kingdom of Yahweh.

Daniel the prophet predicted in chapter 12, verse 4, that in the last days knowledge will be increased. People generally assume that this means scientific knowledge, but in the prophecy it also points toward an increase in the knowledge of the Bible. In recent months and years, we can see the Holy Spirit leading the Assemblies of Yahweh into ever greater Truth. As these deep things in the Bible come to light, and we faithfully obey the directives of our Heavenly Father, He blesses us with an ever greater understanding of the Word.

When will the 70th Jubilee occur? As we have previously stated, at this time there is no way to really pinpoint with a fair amount of accuracy which year it will be. If we observe the Sabbatical years as Yahweh directs us to do, we shall most likely be blessed with greater understanding as the end of the age approaches. There is no way to specify which year the Messiah will return, nor do we ever attempt such a prediction. To do so would be the height of folly and arrogance in view of Matthew 24:36. "***But of that day and hour knows no one, not even the angels of heaven, neither the Son, but the Father only.***" We teach that all should be prepared at all times for the end of the age to occur.

However, let us also be reminded that Yahshua predicts that the thrilling events of the last days would burst upon this Babylonish system like a trap (Luke 21:36). He compares the events leading directly up to the culmination of the age to the stealthiness of a thief. Paul seems to echo Yahshua's words in 1 Thessalonians 5:1-5.

Are you prepared for what lies just ahead of us? You should be ready to meet the Messiah in the air at all times. World events alert us to the fact that Yahshua's return is

drawing very close; few people truly realize how near it could be. Entirely too many people who profess a deep spiritual faith are today feasting and imbibing (playing games with religion), when they should be living in eager expectation of the coming Kingdom of Yahweh and doing all in their power to proclaim its advent. Perhaps you are one of these people. If you are, then repent and turn immediately to serve the Most High more faithfully.

Why not allow the Holy Spirit to point you in a different direction? Beginning right now—today—turn away from the attractions of this present worldly system, with its corrupt thinking, and turn toward Almighty Yahweh and His Kingdom way of life. This decision may be somewhat painful for you now, but it is absolutely necessary if you are to be spared from Yahweh’s judgment.

Have you truly separated yourself from worldliness and begun to serve Almighty Yahweh completely? This may be your final opportunity to break free from the shackles of the world and begin living in anticipation of Yahweh’s Kingdom to come. The choice is ultimately yours. **You have now received your warning.**

Further Facts to Consider

It becomes necessary to reiterate that we cannot at present pinpoint the Jubilee years with a great degree of accuracy. These Jubilee cycles, however, appear to be firmly anchored to Israel’s entrance into the Promised Land. The precise dating of this event is obscure, as you can notice by looking at various chronologies. It is difficult to establish the exact year Israel entered into the Promised Land.

We CAN, however, determine the Sabbatical years, because the Jews have continued to record them down through the ages. Josephus, in his histories, knew the dating of the Sabbatical years, as we pointed out previously. In the introduction to his noted translation of the New Testament called **The Authentic**

New Testament, Dr. Hugh J. Schonfield specified the years 26-27 and 40-41 C.E. as Sabbatical years. This is in harmony with dates on our published chart.

Daniel 9:24, if understood accurately from the Hebrew, would not merely refer to literal 490 years in prophecy from the time of the commandment to restore and to rebuild Jerusalem (Ezra 7:6-8). However, it can refer also to the 70 Jubilee cycles, meaning 70 sevens (7x7=49, 70x49=3430) of years. Therefore, the 70th Jubilee takes on special significance in end-time prophecy, affirming that we are definitely in the last days at the close of this age.

Problems with Dating Jubilee Years Biblically

Sparse indeed are the references to actual occurrences of the Jubilee years which were observed in biblical times. Therefore, dating the Jubilee years exactly becomes extremely uncertain. You will recall our statement previously made that possibly the only biblical reference to a Jubilee year is to be found associated with the reign of King Hezekiah in 2 Kings 19:29 and Isaiah 37:30, the verses being virtually identical. Notice that this verse is found within the account of the supernatural destruction by Yahweh of the Assyrian armies surrounding Jerusalem. Therefore, let us focus our attention upon this event in order to ascertain if we could locate the date of the Jubilees more accurately.

“Now in the FOURTEENTH YEAR of king Hezekiah Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah, and took them.” (2 Kings 18:13). Consequently, the invasion of Judah by the Assyrian armies is dated in the Bible as the fourteenth year of the reign of Hezekiah.

King Hezekiah was beset by a demand for ransom by the king of Assyria. Hezekiah gave him much silver and gold and even some of the

treasures of the Temple of Yahweh and the king’s palace. This did not satisfy Sennacherib, but, rather, he sent one of his court officials, Rabshakeh, from Lachish (which he held under siege) to the very walls of Jerusalem where Rabshakeh demanded the unconditional surrender of the Judean kingdom.

When King Hezekiah received the demand to surrender in the form of a letter, the Judean King went immediately into the Temple of Yahweh and prayed a very heart-rending petition. Not only did he humble himself completely before Yahweh, but he put on sackcloth and ashes under his royal robes. Almighty Yahweh answered this humble spiritual sacrifice by destroying the invading Assyrian army. All this, you will remember, occurred in the **14th year of King Hezekiah’s reign.**

If we check the various chronologers who have sought to date the reign of King Hezekiah, we find the following years specified as the accession year of Hezekiah:

- Usher.....727 B.C.E.
- Anstey.....725 B.C.E.
- Kamphausen.....714 B.C.E.
- Rühl.....714 B.C.E.
- Kugler.....721 B.C.E.
- Couche.....727 B.C.E.
- Lewy.....728 B.C.E.
- Begrich.....725 B.C.E.
- Mowinckel.....715 B.C.E.
- Albright.....715 B.C.E.
- Thiele.....715 B.C.E.

The above list from the chronologers is taken from the book **The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings** by Edwin R. Thiele, published in 1951 by the University of Chicago Press, pages 254 and 255. In the same book, in the chart of page 149, Dr. Thiele dates Hezekiah’s accession year 716-715 B.C.E. Leon Wood, in his book **A Survey of Israel’s History**, dates Hezekiah’s reign from 715 B.C.E. **but as co-regent with his father Ahaz** dating from 728 B.C.E. Therefore, the root of the

Almighty Yahweh wishes to bless His people with increased knowledge in these last days.

difference between the chronologers soon becomes apparent, as we noted previously.

Consequently, the 14th year of King Hezekiah might possibly be 702-701 B.C.E. This would have been the year of the destruction of the Assyrian army before the walls of Jerusalem. It would, therefore, have been a Sabbatical year, with a Jubilee falling on 701-700 B.C.E.

If you will peruse the accompanying chart of the Sabbatical years, you will observe that 702-701 was indeed a Sabbatical year. In that chart we have listed the following year (701-700) as the 15th Jubilee. This would mean that King Hezekiah began His reign in a Sabbatical year; hence, a double meaning may be found in the term **14th year**.

If, as shown above, Hezekiah's accession year can be proven to fall in 716-715 B.C.E. then the 14th year of this reign would have been 702-701 B.C.E. The Jubilee, which occurred during the 14th year of this reign, would have occurred in 701-700 B.C.E.

Therefore, if these dates are accepted as being accurate, our published chart would show the forthcoming 70th Jubilee to fall during 1994-1995 C.E., or it could be following several forthcoming Sabbatical years (2000-2001, 2007-2008).

Again, we should emphasize at this point that **it cannot be definitely proven in which year the Jubilee will occur**, because we do not know the precise year Israel entered the Promised Land. However, it is important that we are always prepared for the Second Coming of Yahshua. We do not know at this point the day, or the hour,

when Yahshua the Messiah will return. The Father alone knows when that day will be, but the signs of Yahshua's imminent return are evident all around us. The prophetic trends in the world today are quite clear and revealing in this regard.

Closer Examination of Scholarly Datings

701 B.C.E.—Hezekiah's 14th year, Sabbatical; 700 B.C.E.—Hezekiah's 15th year—Jubilee; the datings of the Sabbatical and Jubilee years must agree with the Jubilee year mentioned in Isaiah 37:30. This specified Jubilee was evidently Hezekiah's 15th regnal year. If we omit his co-regency with his father Ahaz and count only the years of his own reign, chronologers usually agree on the date of 700 B.C.E. as the year of the Jubilee of Isaiah 37:30.

Although merely CIRCUMSTANTIAL, it is interesting to note that this 15th year of Hezekiah's reign could also represent the 15th Israelite Jubilee. This would make the Exodus occur in 1475 B.C.E. The 70th Jubilee would then fall in the year 1994-1995 C.E.

But, again, we urge caution by noting that if the Sabbatical cycles were counted from **seven years after Israel's entry into the Promised Land**; thereby, 2001-2002 C.E. (or even 2008-2009) could be the 70th Jubilee.

Exodus of Israel

- Exodus: 1475 B.C.E.
- Entry into Promised Land: 1435 B.C.E. (begin counting Sabbatical and Jubilee years)
- Temple building started (1 Kings 6:1): 995 B.C.E.
- Solomon's reign begins: 999 B.C.E.
- David's reign begins: 1039 B.C.E.

Israel Enters Canaan

- 1435 B.C.E. plus 1995 C.E. equals 70 Jubilees (70x49=3430 years)

Since we must be in harmony with the counting of the Jubilee and

Sabbatical years, much discussion has centered around the dating of 1 Kings 6:1. Here we see that the first Temple was begun four years after Solomon began to reign and 480 years after Israel came out of Egypt.

Let us note what several noteworthy commentators have to say in regard to the dating of the Exodus. *"Attempts to establish a chronology for the Exodus have resulted in some of the most perplexing problems in the entire panorama of Hebrew history, as has been noted in an earlier chapter. Two principal views of the situation have arisen, one of which envisages a date in the fifteenth century B.C.E., while the other assigns the Exodus to the thirteenth century B.C.E."* (**Old Testament History**, R. K. Harrison, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, page 316—emphasis ours).

"The principal objection on Biblical grounds is that this date does not fit the 480 years that 1 Kgs. 6:1 gives between the Exodus and the foundation of Solomon's temple ca. 970. This calculation would place the Exodus in the mid-fifteenth century. However, the Old Testament, as an ancient Near Eastern book, does not necessarily use numbers in the same way as modern chronology. Thus, the 480 years can be understood as an 'aggregate' or 'round number,' probably based on the total of twelve generations of 40 years each." (**Old Testament Survey**, William Sanford LaSor, David Allan Hubbard, Frederic Wm. Bush; William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; Grand Rapids, page 127—emphasis ours).

"Most perplexing problems," indeed! Perhaps they are looking backward into history through a darkened glass. However, if the chronologers can come within a quarter century of harmonizing all the dates, it should encourage us. But it should also allow us the necessary latitude to incorporate and identify the Sabbatical and Jubilee years without arousing too much criticism.

Various Exodus Datings

• **Encyclopedia Judaica**—they say the Exodus occurred the second third of the 15th century: 1450-1430 B.C.E. [should be 1460-1430 B.C.E.].

• E. W. Bullinger: 1491 B.C.E.

• George L. Robinson—*probable* date of Exodus: 1445 B.C.E.

• G. W. Gayer—Old Testament chronology, Exodus: 1486 B.C.E.

• Leon Wood—Exodus: 1446 B.C.E.

• Edwin R. Thiele—967 B.C.E. (Temple construction) plus 480 years of 1 Kings 6:1 equals the Exodus: 1447 B.C.E.

• Gleason Archer—966 B.C.E. plus 480 years of 1 Kings 6:1 equals the Exodus: 1446 B.C.E.

As you will note from the datings of the Exodus given above by various chronologers, you can clearly notice the spectrum of dates they have established. These dates are usually predicated upon the dating of some later or adjacent event. Consequently, we feel justified in establishing our dating for the Exodus with regard to their agreement with the Sabbatical and Jubilee years. One date possibly remaining is that the Exodus occurred in 1426 B.C.E.; therefore, the entry into the Promised Land would then be 1386 B.C.E., making the dating of 1 Kings 6:1 (the start of Temple construction) as 946 B.C.E. But this date would be more difficult to harmonize with the other datings, although the differential is 21 years (three Sabbatical cycles).

Again, we would caution the reader not to depend too heavily upon the dates extending time longer in the future. Yahshua speaks of the shortening of time (Matthew 24:22). He warns us that when we see the trends established in His prophecies begin to come to pass, we should look up in anticipation of His Second Coming (Luke 21:28). We must be ready at all times to meet Yahshua in the air, for He will come at an hour when the world will not

expect Him.

“Watch therefore: for you know not on what day your Master comes. But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what watch the thief was coming, he would have watched, and would not have permitted his house to be broken through. Therefore be you also ready; for in an hour that you think not the Son of man comes.” (Matthew 24:42-44).

Yet, we know that Yahweh is patient and merciful, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. See 2 Peter 3:8-13.

When Will Yahshua Return?

Will Yahshua the Messiah return in a Jubilee year? The answer to this question is problematical also. The Jubilee was a year of release (Leviticus 25:9-10). We might conclude that Yahshua the Messiah will release this world from its bondage to sin (typed as Egypt and Babylon) at His Coming, but we could also interpret this Jubilee release as the beginning of Yahweh’s tribulation judgment because Satan presently maintains his clutches on this Babylonish world. Therefore, Almighty Yahweh will bring great pressure to bear upon him and his subjects, and He will release His obedient people as He did ancient Israel from their bondage in Egypt. EITHER INTERPRETATION COULD BE VALID.

From what we have seen, it is obvious to those who have been enlightened in the truth of Yahweh’s Word that very few years remain until the Second Coming of Yahshua the Messiah. In the past we have asked, “If a mere ten more years remain until Yahshua returns, would we be ready to meet Yahshua the Messiah in the air?” As we can see the end of the age approaching quite rapidly, what are we, as individuals, doing to prepare ourselves for that earth-shaking event? Will we be prepared to meet Yahshua the Messiah at His return?

Conversely, do we continue to give evidence of the Laodicean, lukewarm attitude that may eventually force our Savior to reject us? Or, are we laboring diligently to show ourselves approved unto Yahweh by being wise (prudent) spiritual virgins?

Almighty Yahweh wishes to bless His people with increased knowledge in these last days. You have the opportunity to be blessed by that knowledge right now! Do not spurn His call, but begin preparing yourself today. When the day and hour of the Messiah’s return occurs (whenever that may be), we must be ready, or we will be rejected. But that day will not fall upon the saints of Yahshua the Messiah unaware.

“But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief: for you are all sons of light, and sons of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness; so then let us not sleep, as do the rest, but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night: and they that are drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, since we are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for a helmet, the hope of salvation. For Yahweh appointed us not to wrath, but to the obtaining of salvation through our Savior Yahshua the Messiah, who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him. Therefore exhort one another, and build each other up, even as also you do.” (1 Thessalonians 5:4-11).

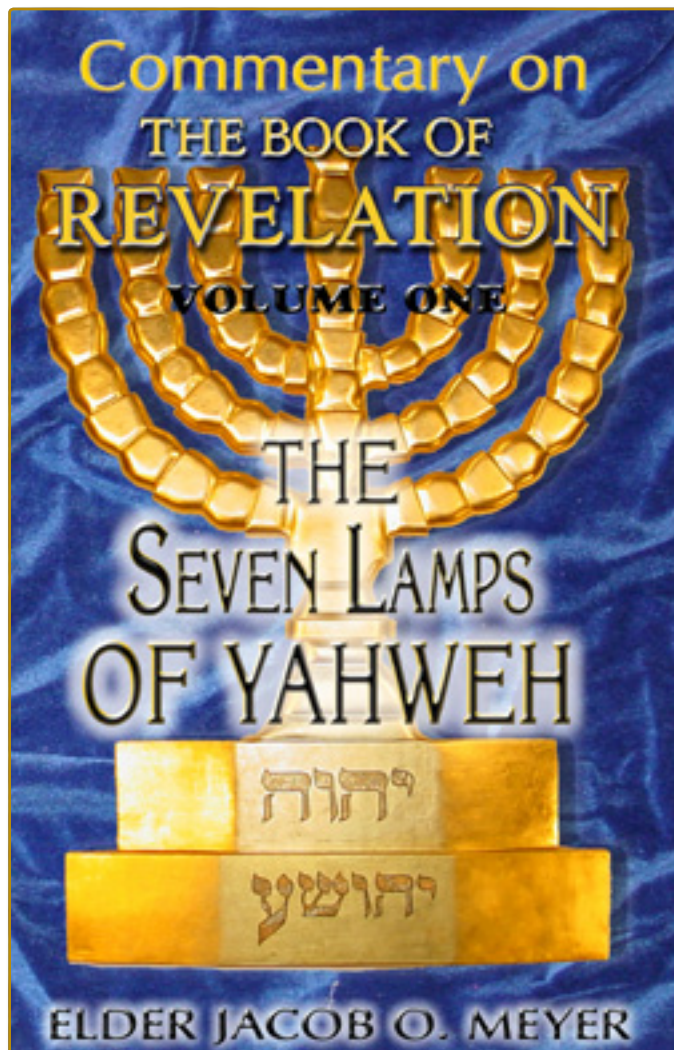
“But watch you at every season, making supplication, that you may prevail to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.” (Luke 21:36).

“And what I say to you I say to all, Watch.” (Mark 13:37).

Will you heed these Scriptures? Will you be prepared when the Messiah returns? We hope this study has assisted you toward achieving that end.

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