

Sabbatical and Jubilee Analysis Part 1

Background, History and Secular Record

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*And thou shalt number seven sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years; and the space of the seven sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years. Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubile to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land. And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubile unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family.
(Lev 25:8-10 KJV)*

The start of this Holy Day season in the fall has just begun. We look forward to the blowing of that final trumpet when Yahushua returns to this earth and we pray that we are counted worthy to escape the things and stand before Him when he returns in the clouds.

Agenda

- Part 1 – Background, history, secular record
 - Encyclopedia Judaica and Jewish Encyclopedia
 - Torah Commentary and Josephus
 - Seder Olam and Maimonides
 - Zuckermann vs. Wacholder dating
 - Post exile Sabbatical years
- Part 2 – Torah instructions, attributes and stipulations
 - Sabbatical attributes
 - Release from servitude
 - Land rest
 - Debt release
 - Lending to the poor
 - Sabbatical instructions - Leviticus 25
 - Six year growing cycle
 - Fallow seventh year
 - Jubilee instruction - Leviticus 25
 - 50 year cycle
 - Land redemption
 - Real estate transactions
 - Bankruptcy
- Part 3 – How to count the Sabbatical and Jubilee cycle
 - Counting sevens
 - Agricultural practices
 - Dating systems
 - Jubilee counting alternatives
- Part 4 – OT Jubilee timeline - when is the Sabbatical and Jubilee?
 - 3 sessions
 - Southern Kingdom geo-politics circa 600 BCE
 - 3 Babylonian sieges and 6 deportations
 - Fall of Jerusalem - Temple destroyed in 587 BCE
 - Ezekiel proclaims Jubilee in 574 BCE
- Part 5 – NT Jubilee timeline - when is the Sabbatical and Jubilee?
 - Yahushua's ministry
 - Yahushua proclaims Jubilee in 27 CE

This new project is quite extensive and we will go over the agenda before we get into the first part. The first part will be about the background, history and secular record of the Sabbatical and Jubilee, this study has been ongoing for about the last eight years. We kept our first Sabbatical in 2012 and learned a lot during that first cycle. We actually wrote a couple of papers and posted them on the website about the Sabbatical and Jubilee.

Seven years later, we are here at the conclusion of the current Sabbatical. We didn't plant this year because we started keeping the Sabbatical one year ago at the conclusion of the feast last year. We are at the full completion of the Sabbatical now and are going to look into more detail and will go deeper into this project that has been ongoing for the past year. A lot has been learned since the first time we looked into the matter and I will be presenting the results of the research that have been accomplished.

The first part will have to do with the background, history and secular records. In the second part we will look into the actual Torah instructions. Its implications, attributes and stipulations will be divided up into several subsections. The Sabbatical attributes and instructions and then the Jubilee instructions. There is more to come.

Part three will be about how to count the Sabbatical and Jubilee. What we have discovered is that there is quite a controversy on how to count the Sabbatical years. Should the Jubilee be included in the 49 year count or is it a separate intercalated year? We will look into that matter in detail. Counting in sevens, the dating system and other alternatives we have seen over the years. We have researched even more this cycle giving us a greater understanding.

Part four will be the actual timeline for a Jubilee discovered in Ezekiel chapter 40. When is the Sabbatical and Jubilee? As I did a lot of research, I found there was so much material that I wanted to include so Part 4 will be three separate sessions. It will be a history lesson if you like history. The first session will look at the geo-politics in the Southern Kingdom of Israel around the year 600 BCE.

The next two sessions will detail scripturally when the events happened, when the kings ruled, and when Ezekiel's prophecy in Ezekiel 40 actually took place. This was the center core of this project was Part 4.

Part 5 has to do with Yahushua's ministry and his proclamation of a Jubilee in Luke 4:18.

This time we will put our attention on Part 1 and will look at a number of secular sources. This first part will be mostly secular material but there is some scripture in it. We are not ignoring the scriptures but want to get a foundation for the rest of the presentation. So much of the study material that you find takes just one or two sources and then makes a whole case based

on that. What I want to do is present the summary of a number of the secular records so you can have a good foundation to make up your mind for yourself what is true and what isn't.

Scope of Analysis

- Survey secular records for Sabbatical and Jubilee year
- Examine scriptures that provide instructions for Sabbatical and Jubilee year
- Establish counting system for Sabbatical and Jubilee cycle
- Examine how Jubilee is reconciled within schedule
- Reconcile Sabbatical cycle with Jubilee year timetable
- Determine if scriptural instructions specify a 49 or 50 year repeating cycle
 - Jubilee year included in 49th year of current Sabbatical cycle?
 - Jubilee year included in 1st year of next 7 year Sabbatical count?
 - Jubilee year separate intercalated 50th year

The first item I like to accomplish when I take a project on is to ask what the scope of the project is. The overall scope starts not only with the secular records but also examining the scriptures that provide the instructions for the Sabbatical and Jubilee year. We need to look at the counting systems and establish if we have a 49 or 50 year cycle and how the Jubilee is reconciled within the cycle. Toward the end of this scope statement, there are a series of charts in a subsequent presentation that include looking at the 49th year as the Jubilee inside of a Sabbatical cycle. We may ask if the Jubilee year is included in the first year of the next Sabbatical cycle or if it is totally separate.

I would state that this is a fitting time of the year because when this presentation was given was Memorial of Trumpets, or Yom Teruah. The scriptures show us that it is Atonement that the Jubilee trumpet is blown. Our reconciliation of this and how the scriptures come out to us is that this is the time of the year that you start and end a Sabbatical. This would be specifically on the Day of Atonement but there are some extra Biblical sources that say that Yom Teruah is the start of the Sabbatical. We don't want to get hung up on that detail quite yet, it's just a ten day period of time.

We know that the month of Ethanim in the calendar is the beginning of the year, some would object to that but we will go into that detail also in the calendar part of this and how that works out. Our study indicates that this is the beginning of the year, yes, it's the end of the last year, but what it has to do with is agriculture. We will start by looking at the secular records that we have found regarding the Sabbatical and Jubilee.

Prologue

- Scriptures provide agricultural and property directives for observing the Sabbatical and Jubilee
Includes timetable
- Jubilee - from Hebrew Yovel or Yobale (H3104) = blast of a horn
Root H2986 = to flow or bring forth
- Wide variations regarding implementation practices
- Assumptions 7th year Sabbatical
Land Sabbath directive remains in affect
All other regulations practiced selectively
Fallen into disuse - likely restored in Millennium
Uninterrupted count since creation
- Assumptions for Jubilee
Fallen into disuse - likely restored in Millennium
Uninterrupted count since creation
- Land Sabbath used interchangeably with “Sabbatical” or “Sabbatical Year”
- Current environment
Practical limitations and legal obstacles in society regarding remission of debt or redemption of tangible property to original family owner
Fee simple most common private property transaction
- Presentation not intended to focus on societal implications
Mechanics of implementation
Best farming practices
Do’s and don’ts of Biblical instructions

The scriptures provide agricultural and property directives for observing the Sabbatical and Jubilee. Extra sources are a good background but the scriptures are our focus and guideline and also the timetable, although they are discussed in the secular record they need to be proven from the scriptures and that is what we have endeavored to do.

We will run across the word Jubilee is from the Hebrew word Yovel or Yobale in Strong’s it is H3104 and it means a blast of a horn. It has a root in Hebrew that means to flow or bring forth.

There is certainly a wide variation regarding the implementation of the Sabbatical and Jubilee. There are assumptions that we have included in this presentation and you may or may not agree with them.

The first assumption is that the Land Sabbath and Jubilee directive was created at creation and remain in effect today. All other regulations have been practiced selectively. We will see that there are not good records of either the Sabbatical or Jubilee kept particularly during the first Temple, and the Jubilee not kept in the second Temple. Fundamentally all of this practice and the Torah legislation that YHWH has provided to us have fallen into disuse. I would say that it is likely going to be restored in the Millennium. We see evidence of that in Ezekiel chapters 40 through 48 and the Year of Liberty is mentioned in the Millennial Temple setting that Ezekiel is presenting.

We also view, and again it's an assumption that the cycle has been uninterrupted since creation and there are people that would disagree with that also. I am just telling you where we are coming from. It may or may not be what you believe but this is the foundation of what we are building upon.

The assumption for the Jubilee specifically is that it has fallen into disuse and it will likely be restored in the Millennium, and it was also uninterrupted since creation just as the Sabbatical was.

The term "Land Sabbath" isn't intended to be anything other than just a different name for the "Sabbatical" or "Sabbatical year". When we first learned about this, the Sabbatical became the Land Sabbath and we thought that was its fundamental use. I would say that it is a good start. To let your land rest is certainly a good practice, and should be done, and some people do it today as we have done. The Sabbatical in this study will take on a much broader range because there is forgiveness of debt and freedom of servants that go along with it.

There are a couple of statements about what is currently the environment that we live in today, the 21st century. There are certainly practical limitations and legal obstacles in the society regarding the remission of debt or the redemption of tangible property to the original owning family. We are not advocating in any way that we should take up and do all this, it would be great to go to your banker and tell him it's the 50th year Jubilee and that your house mortgage is no longer in effect and that he has to forgive that. It's not something that would happen today.

Property ownership in the Tanakh has to do with a lease arrangement as we would describe it today. However, real estate transactions today are performed as something called fee simple in most places in the world, maybe not all but certainly in the United States. Fee simple is the most common private property transaction and it's a transaction that is meant in perpetuity.

Also, this presentation is not intended to focus on any societal implications like the mechanics of how you would implement a Sabbatical or best farming practices and the do's and don'ts of the Biblical instructions. We will see in one of the sources named Maimonides that he has a lot of practical implementation advice. But that isn't the purpose of this presentation. The purpose is to dig in and to find out how the Sabbatical was kept or if it wasn't. It is to dig in and find out if the Jubilee was kept or not, and also what the cycle is all about.

The first secular source that we look at is in the Jewish Encyclopedia. The sources that I am using are all highly regarded. They aren't third party sources that don't have a lot of credibility on their own merit, the Jewish Encyclopedia and the others that will be mentioning are highly regarded in most circles as having done good research. You can look these up yourself, the URL's are below. You will find the section which is called Fifty- and Forty-nine-Year Cycles.

What they talk about is conflicting opinions.

Background - Jewish Encyclopedia and Conflicting opinions

There is a difference of opinion in the Talmud as to whether the jubilee year was included in or excluded from the forty-nine years of the seven cycles. The majority of rabbis hold that the jubilee year was an intercalation, and followed the seventh Sabbatical year, making two fallow years in succession. After both had passed, the next cycle began. They adduce this theory from the plain words of the Law to "hallow the fiftieth year," and also from the assurance of God's promise of a yield in the sixth year sufficient for maintenance during the following three years, "until the ninth year, until her fruits come in" (Lev. xxv. 22), which, they say, refers to the jubilee year. Judah ha-Nasi, however, contends that the jubilee year was identical with the seventh Sabbatical year (R. H. 9a; Giṭ. 36a; comp. Rashi ad loc.). The opinion of the **Geonim** and of later authorities generally prevails, that the jubilee, when in force **during the period of the First Temple, was intercalated,** (inserted as an extra 50th year) **but that in the time of the Second Temple, when the jubilee was observed only "nominally," it coincided with the seventh Sabbatical year. In post-exilic times the jubilee was entirely ignored,** though the strict observance of the shemiṭṭah was steadily insisted upon. This, however, is only according to a rabbinical enactment (Tos. to Giṭ. 36a, s.v. "Bizeman"), as by the Mosaic law, according to R. Judah, shemiṭṭah is dependent on the jubilee and ceases to exist when there is no jubilee (Giṭ. l.c. and Rashi ad loc.).

<http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/>

<http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/12967-sabbatical-year-and-jubilee>

We examine Leviticus 25:22 in the next presentation. I think you will have a different perspective after we examine it. I only read what the source says.

We will run into some terminology that I will try to clarify along the line, this term of "Geonim" is something we will see in a few of the examples I am providing. The Geonim is an academy of Talmudic interpretations and there are a series of these by historical timeline. The Geonim Academy is approximately 589 to 1038 CE. We will see another academy called Tannaim and another one of earlier use. There is a series of academies that were in place to interpret the Talmudic traditions and Torah.

The Geonim provided the decisive role in the transmission and teaching of the Torah and Jewish law. This was particularly useful. The Geonim provides rabbinic commentary Vis a Vis the Talmud.

Scrolling down on the same page you will find a section called:

Jewish Encyclopedia - Talmudic and Samaritan Calculation of Jubilees

The exact year of the shemittah is in dispute, and different dates are given. According to Talmudic calculations the entrance of the Israelites into Palestine occurred in the year of Creation 2489, and 850 years, or seventeen jubilees, passed between that date and the destruction of the First Temple. The first cycle commenced after the conquest of the land and its distribution among the tribes, which, occupied fourteen years, and the **last jubilee occurred on the "tenth day of the month [Tishri], in the fourteenth year after that the city was smitten" (Ezek. xl. 1), which was the New-Year's Day of the jubilee** ('Ab. Zarah 9b; 'Ar. 11b-12b). Joshua celebrated the first jubilee, and died just before the second (Seder 'Olam R., ed. Ratner, xi. 24b-25b, xxx. 69b, Wilna, 1895).

The Samaritans in their "Book of Joshua" date the first month of the first Sabbatical cycle and of the first jubilee cycle as beginning with the crossing of the Jordan and the entrance of the Israelites into their possession; and they insist that the date was 2794 of Creation, according to the chronology of the Torah "and the true reckoning known to the sages since the Flood" ("Karme Shomeron," ed. Raphael Kirchheim, § 15, p. 63, Frankfort-on-the-Main, 1851)

To bring up a couple of the highlights that I view when I read through this, the last kept Jubilee was the 14th year after the fall of Jerusalem. That is noteworthy to try to remember when we get to the later sections of this presentation series. We will see that we can actually prove that to be the case. Going on in this section of the Talmudic and Samaritan Calculation of the Jewish Encyclopedia:

The First and the Second Temple, the Talmud says, were destroyed "on the closing of the Sabbatical year" ("Moza'e Shebi'it"). The sixteenth jubilee occurred in the eighteenth year of Josiah, who reigned thirty-one years; the remaining thirteen years of his reign, together with the eleven years of those of Jehoiakim and Jehoiachin and the eleven years of that of Zedekiah (II Kings xxv.), fix the first exilic year as the thirty-sixth year of the jubilee cycle, or the twenty-fifth year of the captivity of Jehoiachin, or fourteen years from the destruction of the Holy City ('Ar. and 'Ab. Zarah l.c.; see Rashi ad loc.).

The Babylonian captivity lasted seventy years. Ezra sanctified Palestine in the seventh year of the second entrance, after the sixth year of Darius, when the Temple was dedicated (Ezra vi. 15, 16; vii. 7). **The first cycle of shemiṭṭah began with the sanctification of Ezra.** The Second Temple stood 420 years, and was destroyed, like the First, in the 421st year, on the closing of the shemiṭṭah ('Ar. 13a

An irony of all of this is that the first and second Temples were destroyed both on the year after a shemittah according to this account. The highlights of this are stunning.

- 1st and 2nd Temple destroyed on Sabbatical year
- 16th Jubilee was 18th year of Josiah
- 1st year of Southern Kingdom exile was 36th year of Jubilee cycle
- Jubilee year was 25th year of Jehoiachin captivity
- Jubilee year was 14 years after destruction of Jerusalem

You could say, well that's the Talmud, that it's not a Biblical source, and I would agree with that 100 percent. It turns out though, that from the scriptures, all of these statements are true. We will get to that and I will show you for your own edification. You can decide on your own whether they are true.

Some of these statements like the 25th year of Jehoiachin captivity and the 14 years after the destruction of Jerusalem was something my wife Linda and I discovered eight years ago when we first studied this topic. We didn't know of the sources in the Talmud that provided some of these extra details, and it turns out, since then we have made the same discoveries only to find this statement that matches up to them. Also, under the Jewish Encyclopedia under the Second Temple Sabbatical practice in the Fifty and Forty-nine-Year Cycles. we find this statement:

That **the Sabbatical year was observed during the existence of the Second Temple** is evident from the history of the Maccabees (I Macc. vi. 51, 55). The Mishnah includes in

the examination of witnesses questions as to dates, in giving which there must be specified the Sabbatical year, the year, month, week, day, and hour (Sanh. v. 1).

It turns out; when you go to 1 Maccabees you indeed do find this:

He ^{Seleucid General Lysias} made peace with the men of Beth-zur, and they evacuated the city, because they had no provisions there to withstand a siege, since **it was a sabbatical year for the land**. So the king took Beth-zur and stationed a guard there to hold it. Then he encamped before the sanctuary for many days. He set up siege towers, engines of war to throw fire and stones, machines to shoot arrows, and catapults. The Jews also made engines of war to match theirs, and fought for many days. But they had no food in storage, because **it was the seventh year**; those who found safety in Judea from the Gentiles had consumed the last of the stores. (1Ma 6:49-53 RSVA)

We see evidence from 1 Maccabees, and by the way, Maccabees is a good historical account. Yes, it is apocryphal and we would not count it as part of the canon, although in some circles it is. It does provide a good historical base for events that happened during the Hasmonian Dynasty, the time of the Maccabees. The Sabbatical was kept during the 2nd Temple from this account, and going on to the Encyclopedia Judaica which is another parallel source to the Jewish Encyclopedia.

Background - Encyclopedia Judaica - Second Temple Jubilee Abandoned Jubilee in the Second Temple Period

The laws of the Jubilee were not in practice in the time of the Second Temple, but since the laws of the Jubilee and the calculation of the years of the shemittah ^{H8059=release, suspension of labor (only found in Deuteronomy - 4 verses)} are linked with the laws of the Sabbatical Year, which were in force, one can find in these halakhot ^{written and oral Torah} something of the life and customs of that period...**The halakhah also combined the Jubilee with the Sabbatical Year with regard to their applicability during the Second Temple period....** The verse, "And in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing" (Ex. 21:2), was interpreted as referring not to the seventh year, which was the Sabbatical Year, but to the seventh year from the date on which he was sold.

<https://ketab3.files.wordpress.com/2014/11/encyclopaedia-judaica-v-17-ra-sam.pdf> pg 626

This scripture in Exodus is one we will get into next time and I think you will have a different perspective of what this is saying exactly. We will look into it and compare it to Deuteronomy accounts that talk about this same topic.

Of note, the word shemittah is mentioned and the calculations of the years of Shemita are linked with the laws of the Sabbatical year. This word Shemittah is found in Strong's, it's the number H8059 and it means release or suspension of labor. It is only found in the book of Deuteronomy and in four verses, all of which we will take a look at.

The word Shemittah, sometimes is also cross-referenced to mean the same thing as a Sabbatical year. I would say that is fine and well but something to remember we will address when we get to the next session.

Post Biblical - Whereas the Sabbatical Year was in force during the second Temple period (and is applicable, in theory, to the present day), **The Jubilee was no longer observed**. The two subjects are therefore treated separately. (ibid)

- Jubilee not kept during 2nd Temple
- Sabbatical and Jubilee combined during 2nd Temple

You will see that theme in several places when we look into these scholarly sources.

Encyclopedia Judaica - Calculation of the Jubilee

Both in the tannaitic ^{see note} literature and in the Apocrypha **two different systems of calculation for the Jubilee and the Sabbatical Year are found**. A baraita ^{a tradition in the Jewish oral law not incorporated in the Mishnah} declares that **the Jubilee year is the 50th year, after the completion of the seven sabbatical cycles, the following year being the first of the ensuing shemittah** ^{stacked into 49 year cycle} (Ned. 61a; TJ, Kid. 1:2, 59a). This cyclical system also occurs in the *Seder Olam ^{as an intercalated 50th year} in respect of the First Temple period. Judah, however, holds that "the Jubilee year enters into the calculation of the heptad ^{sevens}," i.e., the Jubilee Year is the 50th year after the previous Jubilee and thus also the first of the ensuing shemittah and Jubilee ^{49 year cycle} (Ned. 61a). According to Judah's view there was a widespread tannaitic tradition that, with the exile of the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, the laws of **the Jubilee fell into desuetude**. According to the Geonim, not only were the laws of the Jubilee not in force from the time of the exile of these tribes, but **after the destruction of the First Temple the Jubilee Years were not even calculated**; only those of the shemittot...**the fact is that only Sabbatical Years were counted from the Second Temple period onward**. ..according to the Bible (Lev 25:9), the release of slaves and the return of land took effect on the Day of Atonement, the Jubilee was regarded as starting on Rosh Ha-Shanah.

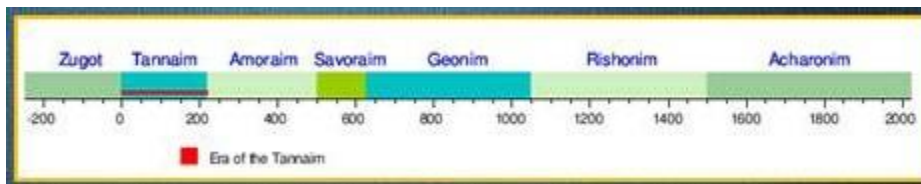
(ENCYCLOPEDIA JUDAICA, Second Edition, Volume 17 pg. 626 - 627)

I take that a “baraita a tradition in the Jewish oral law not incorporated in the Mishnah” to be something that somebody has said along the way but it isn’t in the Mishnah let alone in the scriptures. A baraita declares that the Jubilee year is the 50th year after the completion of the seven Sabbatical cycles, the following year being the first of the ensuing Shmita. In other words, the Jubilee is stacked into the 49th year of the Sabbatical cycle. Notice that it’s a tradition and not in the oral law.

It turns out that this tradition has been handed down to today. There are many that believe this is how it’s to be kept. In fact, it was kept this way starting in the second Temple but it wasn’t originally ordained to be that way, particularly when we look into the legislation instruction that YHWH provided in Torah.

It says that “the Jubilee was regarded as starting on Rosh Ha-Shana” so here is that tradition and you can see that in a number of places that the Jubilee was regarded as starting on Rosh Ha-Shana, however the trumpet was blown 10 days later as the announcement of the Jubilee year. The scriptures don’t tell us that but that is what this says.

I’ve mentioned the Tannaim previously as another one of these eras of Biblical study, the study of Torah. You see on this chart when the Geonim occurred, there are other groups of scholarly



study mentioned. It is like a history of the study groups going back to the first century and the

Tannaim was one of the early ones that were brought together to study the scriptures and the oral law to bring them together for interpretation in the Mishnah and Talmud. Also on this chart was mentioned the exile of Reuben Gad and Manasseh. The exile of Reuben Gad and Manasseh took place before the final exile of the Northern tribes in 722 BCE probably around the year 740 you find the exile of Reuben, Gad and Manasseh by this Assyrian King whose name was Tilgath Pileser, you see evidence of that in a scripture associated with that in 1 Chronicles 5:25 if you want to look at it yourself.

In other words these three tribes were taken captive before the final downfall of the Northern Kingdom and when some of the tribes leave the land, according to what this testimony is in this source, and then the laws of the Jubilee fell into desuetude so they quit keeping the Jubilee. I think it’s fundamentally a work-around to say “well some of our tribes left so we don’t need to do that anymore”.

Background
Encyclopedia Judaica
The Jubilee in History

It is certain that the precepts of the Sabbatical Year, such as the remission of debts at the close of the Sabbatical Year and the redemption of houses, were practiced, as is shown by numerous references in both tannaitic and other sources....**there is no evidence throughout the whole Temple period of the actual observance of the Jubilee,** ⁽¹⁾ would agree with that with the exception of Ezekiel 40 and his testimony but that wasn't an observance, that was a vision from ^{YHWH}) From Alexander's conquest and during the period of Roman rule, there is evidence that foreign rulers took into account the problem of tax payments on agricultural produce in the Sabbatical Year, when the Jews did not cultivate their fields. Either they freed them from taxes, as did Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar, or insisted on payment, as did Hadrian after the Bar Kokhba war. There is, however, no echo of the complex problems which would have been raised by the Jubilee in this regard either in the Talmud or in other contemporary documents... or in documents revealed by archaeology.

The sources of actual evidence are thin here and certainly no record of Jubilee observance, and I would agree with that, I don't think there are any scriptures that talk about the twelve tribes of Israel keeping Jubilee anywhere that I can find.

Background
Encyclopedia Judaica
Sabbatical Observance Post Biblical Period

This is after the downfall or destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE.

Following the destruction of the Temple (70 CE.), the observance of the sabbatical prohibitions imposed ever-increasing economic hardships upon the agrarian society of ancient Israel. It became a constant source of challenge to the religious tenacity of the farmers. The rabbis constantly exhorted the masses to continue to observe properly the sabbatical restrictions, declaring that exile, poverty, and pestilence result from the transgression of these laws... after the unsuccessful Bar Kokhba Revolt ^{132-135 CE}; the Roman government abrogated its previous tax exemption. (The Romans were really upset with Bar Kokhba, and the Jews and so any previous tax exemptions were just thrown out) Many Jews now compromised their observances due to the new economic pressures engendered by the demand for taxes during this year. Some gathered sabbatical crops in order to pay these taxes, while others even traded in the produce... **As a consequence of the hardships now encountered in sabbatical observances, the**

rabbis relaxed many of the prohibitions. Their actions were probably also prompted by the viewpoint of Judah II that **the institution of the Sabbatical Year was only rabbinic** (That is in contrast to the scripture authority) **during the Second Temple period when the Jubilee was not operative because the land was not fully occupied by Israel...** Judah ha-Nasi also permitted the buying of vegetables immediately after the close of the Sabbatical Year and the importing of produce from the Diaspora during the Sabbatical Year, both transactions which were previously forbidden.

The Sabbatical has become compromised and it started in the Second Temple but it continued on after the destruction and fell into disuse totally. Even today, if you happen to mention to someone that you keep/kept a land Sabbath and let your land rest they often times look at you a little askew and wonder why you would want to do that. In any case it is what has happened over time.

We jump down to a more modern period, the 19th and 20th century.

With the dawn of modern Zionism and the subsequent settlement of Erez Israel, it became a practical problem for the settlers. Before the shemittah of 1889, the leading rabbis of the generation debated whether it was permissible to enact a formal sale of all the Jewish-owned fields and vineyards to non-Jews in order to permit the working of the land during the Sabbatical Year. R. Isaac Elhanan issued the following statement permitting this transaction:

I find it necessary to deal with this important problem and permit the work in the fields, **by selling them to the Muslims for a period of two years only. After that period, the vineyard and the fields go back to the owners** Apparently this was in 1889 CE as he was looking forward to that particular sabbatical year; and the sale must be to Muslims only and may take place during the coming summer...Before the Sabbatical Year of 1910, the controversy regarding the sale of the land to Muslims revived...attempts to **grow vegetables in water** (Hydroponics), have met with some success as a method of observing the restrictions of the Sabbatical Year. Various Israel institutes devoted to studying agriculture in light of *halachah* collective body of Jewish religious laws derived from the written and Oral Torah also experiment with methods suitable to growing fruits and vegetables during the Sabbatical years. (ibid pg. 630)

What you see as time goes along here is that workarounds abound. We have this problem and we need a way that we are keeping the original law that YHWH put in place but we need workarounds and come with high tech solutions and that is what develops.

Another source that was a delight to find was a book called "The Torah - A modern Commentary" if anyone is interested in doing this type of research, it's probably the one best source that I have found. It is by Gunther Plaut. It is a useful addition to your library if you like

to do research in these matters. The book is the five books of Torah and it's well researched and documented. It has sections on commentary, gleanings and essays. Not only are the scriptures in English but are in Hebrew also. There is good commentary in the book and includes what we would call Torah, the five books, however, the section that I focused on had to do with Leviticus 25 and Deuteronomy 15. There is excellent material contained in this book.

Background

The Torah - A Modern Commentary

Sabbath and Jubilee Practice

The "Sabbath of the land" was observed for many centuries. **No information about such observance has come down from the period of the First Temple, but there is ample attestation from the centuries preceding the Common Era and thereafter...**The subject is treated extensively in a treatise of the Mishnah and the Palestinian Talmud entitled "Shviit - Seventh Year"^{A section in the Shmita}. The actual cases cited in these works make it plain that the issue was indeed a practical one. The surprising thing is not that the law was sometimes broken - many persons were suspected of trafficking in fruits of the seventh year - but that so many Jews observed it at great cost to themselves. (The Torah - A modern Commentary, Revised Edition, W. Gunther Plaut, © 2005 URJ Press, pg 885)

Another section on-going in this book:

According to the plain sense of Lev 25:8ff. and to Jewish tradition, the Jubilee year follows the seventh year sabbatical year - that is, **There is to be two consecutive years without agricultural activity.** Was this law ever practiced? Was this inspiring proposal ever more than an idealistic vision? According to Talmudic sources, the law is in effect only when all the tribes are resident in their respective territories;^{according to the Talmud} it therefore fell into abeyance as soon as the trans-Jordanian tribes of Reuben and Gad were exiled. **There is no record that it was ever practiced during the second Commonwealth.** (ibid pg 856)

1st Temple Sabbatical we see no evidence of compliance, the First Temple Sabbatical

2nd Temple Sabbatical we see substantial evidence of compliance

2nd Temple Jubilee there is no record of compliance

This is according to Plaut, he doesn't mention the first Temple so there is no evidence of compliance of the Sabbatical, obviously there wouldn't be evidence of compliance of the Jubilee because the Jubilee follows the Sabbatical.

What is interesting about this is that, and we will come back to this but I'll just mention it here, the reason that's listed in 2 Chronicles 36:21 is that they went into captivity for 70 years

because they hadn't been keeping the land rest. Apparently they learned their lesson; going into captivity and that scripture in 2 Chronicles 36 shows us that they must have known why they went into captivity. Of course that's the tip of the iceberg.

The Second Temple they made a big effort to keep the Sabbatical so it's probably why we see so much evidence in the Second Temple and not in the first.

Josephus weighs in on this as well and there are several comments from his commentaries.

Background

Josephus

Torah Commentary

He ^{Moses in Torah} gave them rest to the land from ploughing and planting every seventh year as he had prescribed to them to rest from working every seventh day; and ordered, that then what grew of its own accord out of the earth should in common belong to all that pleased to use it, making no distinction in that respect between their own countrymen and foreigners: and he ordained, that **they should do the same after seven times seven years (after the same pattern), which in all are fifty years; and that fiftieth year is called by the Hebrews The Jubilee, wherein debtors are freed from their debts, and slaves are set at liberty;** which slaves became such though they were of the same stock, by transgressing some of those laws the punishment of which was not capital, but they were punished by this method of slavery. This year also restores the land to its former possessors in the manner following: When the Jubilee is come, which name denotes *liberty*, he that sold the land, and he that bought it, meet together, and make an estimate, on one hand, of the fruits gathered; and, on the other hand, of the expenses laid out upon it. (Jos Ant 3.12.3)

They make a balance sheet of expense and revenue basically and settle up on the cost of the reset. Going on in Josephus:

If anyone be sold to one of his own nation, let him serve him six years, and on the seventh let him go free. But if he have a son by a woman servant and his purchaser's house ^{his master}, and if, on account of his good-will to his master, and his natural affection to his wife and children, he will be his servant still, **let him be set free only at the coming of the year of Jubilee, which is the fiftieth year,** and let him then take away with him his children and wife, and let them be free also. (Jos Ant 4.8.28)

You see the reset of servants and slaves although YHWH did not want slavery to be in effect. The term is used sometimes as slaves or servants. You will notice there are two different

accountings of the release. One is a seven year release and the other is after 50. You see that in these writings and in scripture.

Also in Josephus you see evidence of Sabbatical tax exemption.

Background

Josephus

Sabbatical Tax Exemption Commentary

And when the Book of Daniel was showed him ^{Alexander} wherein Daniel declared that one of the Greeks should destroy the empire of the Persians ^{Dan 7:6, 8:3-8, 8:20-22, 11:3}, he supposed that himself was the person intended. And as he was then glad, he dismissed the multitude for the present; but the next day he called them to him, and bid them ask what favors they pleased of him; whereupon the high priest desired that they might enjoy the laws of their forefathers, and might **pay no tribute on the seventh year**. He granted all they desired. And when they entreated him that he would permit the Jews in Babylon and Media to enjoy their own laws also, he willingly promised to do hereafter what they desired. (Jos Ant 11.8.5)

When Alexander came to Jerusalem the priest apparently met him and this request was made. It was probably little known that Alexander in fact granted this. This goes back to 330 BCE so we have tracks going back pretty far that they were keeping the Sabbatical, at least from these records. Josephus wrote about it as well as others, and going on in Josephus.

Caius ^{Julius} Caesar, imperator the second time, hath ordained, That all the country of the Jews, excepting Joppa, **do pay a tribute yearly for the city Jerusalem, excepting the seventh**, which they call the sabbatical year, because thereon they neither receive the fruits of their trees, nor do they sow their land; and that they pay their tribute in Sidon on the second year (of that sabbatical period), the fourth part of what was sown. (Jos Ant 14.10.6)

Looks to me like Caesar gave them dispensation but the other group, on the second year, imposed 25 percent tax burden. He is saying that they could have their sabbatical year off but the next year you get to pay twenty five percent. It goes on in Josephus.

It is also our pleasure that the city Joppa, which the Jews had originally, then they made a league of friendship with the Romans, shall belong to them, as it formerly did; and that Hyrcanus II, the son of Alexander ^{Janneus}, and his sons, have as tribute of that city from those that occupy the land for the country, and for what they export every year to Sidon, twenty thousand six hundred and seventy five modii every year, **the seventh**

year, which they call the Sabbatic year, excepted, whereon they neither plough, nor receive the product or their trees. (ibid)

It's talking about the exemption again of the tax burden on the sabbatical year. Another source that you will run into is the Seder Olam.

Background

Seder Olam Rabbah

AKA the Great order of the World

- This work comes from the 2nd century CE
- It is Hebrew Language Chronology; it details dates of biblical events from creation to Alexander the Great's conquest of Persia.
- It specifically enumerates the number of years Joshua led the Israelites, it contains interesting precision. It is an extra source so you have to be skeptical the accuracy.
- There is a tradition that it was written approximately 160 CE by Yose ben Halafta. I can't find if that is sure but it is tradition.
- Likely supplemented and edited at a later period
- Jubilee cycles were 50 years
Ezekiel 40 vision recognized as a Jubilee event

Now Israel stayed 850 years from the time they entered until they left, these are 17 complete Jubilee periods. And so it says (Exe 40:1): *"In the 25th year of our exile, on the day of the New Year, on the tenth of the month, 14 years after the destruction of the city of Jerusalem"*. When did he (Ezekiel) have this vision? At the beginning of a Jubilee period. (Seder Olam Rabbah 11:48)

What you can surmise from this is 17 complete Jubilee periods in 850 years is a 50 year boundary. This is talking about 50 year Jubilee cycles. Also, again is another source that talks about Ezekiel 40 as a vision recognized as a Jubilee event.

We had recognized Ezekiel 40 as a Jubilee event going back about eight years ago when we first studied this but I didn't know of any of these writings then. It's been an interesting discovery through the secular writings that are on record.

Background

Rabbi Moses ben Maimon

Maimonides

Another well-known historian in this study is Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon, commonly known as Maimonides. You have probably heard of him somewhere along the line. I'll tell you a little about him and then read some of his writings. Some of these Rabbis have acronyms and Maimonides is catenation of Rabbi Moses ben Maimon or Rambam. If you look into the records and you find a note from a guy named Rambam you know who it's talking about.

Rambam lived 1100 to 1200 CE, a Jewish philosopher and historian. He was a prolific and influential Torah scholar and writer. He wrote a number of works, one that he composed is called the Mishnah Torah and this is probably the headstone of his best known works. The Magnum Opus if you will.

The Mishnah Torah is well received by scholars and researchers, yes; there are people that disagree with some of the things he says but its well written, concise, a compendium and exposition of oral and written law consisting of 14 books. It's actually a lot of material and Maimonides objective was to merge the scriptural record and the Talmudic record into one work that is all you need to have to be compliant with Torah.

In chapter 10 of the work, it turns out there is a lengthy section on the Shmita. Chapter 10 was a great discovery for us in our research over the last year. It details the laws that were in effect during the first and second Temple period regarding the Shmita. This particular version was translated by a guy named Eilyahu Touger. The highlights of the Mishnah Torah go from the first entry into the Promised Land under Joshua, the first commonwealth if you will. The seventy years of desolation and then the second commonwealth which he divides into three phases under Zerubbabel, Ezra and Nehemiah. Quite a work and was probably one of the premium discoveries in all the research and background that we have looked at.

Here are a few entries of the Mishnah Shmita sections:

The Jewish people counted 17 Jubilee years from the time they entered (Eretz Yisrael) until they departed. The year they departed, when the Temple was destroyed the first time, was **the year following the Sabbatical year and the 36th year in the Jubilee cycle.** For the first Temple stood for 410 years. When it was destroyed, this reckoning ceased. After it ceased, the land remained desolate for seventy years. Then the second Temple was built and it stood for 420 years. In the seventh year after it was built, Ezra ascended (to Eretz Yisrael). This is referred to as the second entry. From this year, they began another reckoning. They designated the thirteenth year of the Second Temple as the Sabbatical year ^{began counting from Ezra's arrival} and counted seven Sabbatical years and

sanctified the fiftieth year. Although the Jubilee years was not observed in (the era of) the Second Temple, they would count it ^{not intercalated} in order to sanctify the Sabbatical years. (MishTor Shmita 10.3)

They would count it and it wouldn't be intercalated as an extra year. What he is saying here is the first Temple was on a 50 year Jubilee cycle and the Second Temple was on a 49 year cycle. When you research into this, what you find is when you have a 49 year cycle the Jubilee is either stacked or compressed into either the 49th year of the current cycle or the first year of the next 49 year cycle and that is how it was done. Going on with Rambam:

Nevertheless, all of the Geonim have said that they have received a tradition, transferred from teacher to student that in the seventy years between the destruction of the First Temple and the building of the Second Temple, they counted only Sabbatical years, not the Jubilee year. ^{That is what you find in the historical records} similarly, after the destruction of the Second Temple, they did not count the fiftieth year. Instead, they counted only sets of seven from the beginning of the year of the destruction. (This interpretation) is also apparent from the Talmud in Avodah Zarah. This reckoning is a received ^{oral} tradition. (MishTor Shmita 10.5)

- The Geonim (the 11 and 12 century body of scholars) were the accepted spiritual leaders of the Jewish community worldwide in the early medieval era. (589 - 1038 CE).
- There was 70 years of desolation that is talked about and during the exile only Sabbatical years were counted.
- After the second Temple only Sabbatical years were counted
- This is an oral tradition, it's handed down.

Maimonides writes about this and incidentally if you want to look at this section of Mishnah Torah, it is all online.

https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/1007157/jewish/Shemita.htm

You will jump right to the Shemita section although there is a link at the top of the page you can find you entire way to Mishnah Torah and see what interests you. It is quite a work.

The Jubilee year is not counted in the set of Sabbatical years.²⁵ Instead, the 49th year is a Sabbatical year and the fiftieth year is a Jubilee year. Then the 51st year is the first of the six years ^(harvesting years) of the [next] Sabbatical cycle. This is true of

every Jubilee year. From the time the tribes of Reuven and Gad and half the tribe of Menasheh were exiled,²⁶ [the observance] of the Jubilee year ceased, as [implied by [Leviticus 25:10](#)]: “You shall proclaim freedom throughout the land to all of its inhabitants.” [One can infer that this commandment applies only] when all of its inhabitants are dwelling within it. [Moreover,] they may not be intermingled; one tribe with another, but rather each tribe is dwelling in its appropriate place²⁷. When the Jubilee is observed in *Eretz [Yisrael]*, it should also be observed in the Diaspora,²⁸ as [implied by the phrase used in the above verse:] “It is the Jubilee,” [i.e.,] in every place. [This applies] whether the Temple is standing or whether the Temple is not standing.²⁹

25. This applies whether the Jubilee year was observed in its full sense, as in most of the First Temple era, or it was merely counted as throughout the Second Temple era.

26. The tribes of Reuven and Gad and half of the tribe of Menashe were exiled approximately 18 years before the remaining seven and a half tribes. They in turn were exiled approximately 130 years before the destruction of the Temple and exile of the tribe of Judah.

What this is telling you is something like about 740 BCE the Reuben, Gad, Manassah were exiled about 722 BCE, the entire Northern Kingdom was exiled and then 130 years later at 587 BCE the Southern Kingdom was exiled.

27. For each tribe was given an ancestral heritage of its own.

28. With regard to the freeing of Hebrew servants.

29. I.e., it is the presence of the Jewish people in the land and not the existence of the Temple which determines the land's sanctity.

That is according to Rambam's thinking and going on:

With regard to the land being allowed to rest, the laws of the Jubilee year are the same of those of the Sabbatical year. Whatever agricultural labors are forbidden in the Sabbatical year are forbidden in the Jubilee year. Whatever is permitted in the Sabbatical year is permitted in the Jubilee. Whenever the performance of a labor is punishable by lashes in the Sabbatical year, it is punishable by lashes in the Jubilee year. [Similarly,] the laws governing the eating, sale, and removal of the produce of the Jubilee year are the same as those governing the produce of the Sabbatical year in all respects.

- This has to do with volunteers and land management is the same for Sabbatical and Jubilee. No sowing or reaping
- Harvest guidelines are also the same for the Sabbatical and Jubilee.

The Sabbatical year has an added dimension lacking in the Jubilee, for debts are nullified in the Sabbatical year, and they are not nullified in the Jubilee. The Jubilee year has an added dimension lacking in the Sabbatical year, for in the Jubilee, servants are released and land is released. This refers to the laws regarding the sale of land in the Torah. This is a positive commandment, as [Leviticus 25:24] states: "You shall grant redemption to the land". The Jubilee year releases land at its beginning, while the Sabbatical year does not release debts until its conclusion, as explained. (MishTor Shmita 10:16)

The scriptures are mute on a lot of these points and when you dig into this subject you start asking these questions such as if it is a Sabbatical year does your debt free up at the beginning or the end? If it's a Jubilee year, when is your inheritance restored, at the beginning or the end? Rambam is weighing in on all of this.

What he says is that in the Sabbatical year, the creditor release is at the end of the Sabbatical year. If it's a Jubilee, voluntary servants are released. There seems to be a conflict in the scriptures, but there is not. Some commentaries analysis of when a servant is released in a Sabbatical year versus a Jubilee. The essence of it is that one is voluntary such as debt and the other is an involuntary situation resulting as a punitive action perhaps as a judgment against some breaking of law. In the Jubilee the voluntary servants are released. Likely this involuntary servant released on the Sabbatical, you see this in Exodus 21:2

If thou buy an Hebrew servant, six years he shall serve: and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing. (Exo 21:2 KJV)

Also in Deuteronomy 15 it says:

And if thy brother, an Hebrew man, or an Hebrew woman, be sold unto thee, and serve thee six years; then in the seventh year thou shalt let him go free from thee. (Deu 15:12 KJV)

There is also a controversy about this, is it any 6 years and any 7th year or is the boundary actually the Sabbatical year? Rambam says that the land inheritance is restored at the beginning of the Jubilee year.

Background

Rabbi Moses ben Maimon

Mishnah Torah Shmita - 13 Chapters ^{80 pages}

Land Management Cultivation Irrigation and tree maintenance Fertilizing and composting Land clearing and stone walls Planting and grafting Plowing an orchard Growing and harvesting vegetables, fruits & vines Utilization of the volunteer crops Harvest and consumption of fruits and vegetables Commercial use of produce Buying, trading or selling sabbatical produce Disposition of volunteers preserved for storage Money received from volunteer crops Requirements of biyur ^{removal} after growing season Agriculture zones Usage of farming tools and accessories Purchasing species that don't have tithe obligation	Nullification of debts Promissory notes and oaths as security of debt Settlement of alimony Civil judgments Counting the Jubilee year 1 st and 2 nd Temple sabbatical and Jubilee counting Intercalating the Jubilee year Sabbatical and Jubilee instructions Sale of property Establishing the value of property Reconciling improvements to property Sale of houses in a walled city Redemption of consecrated houses or land Definition of a walled city Levitical inheritance Selling and redeeming Levitical property Inheritance of Levitical property by Israelites
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My wife Linda and I have gone through these 13 chapters of the Mishnah Torah Shmita and Linda catalogued and wrote a Table of Contents for what is inside of all of the chapters. It turns out that there are 80 pages typed. The chapters contain nearly a book of information. It's like anything you want to know, any question that you come up with, Rambam has his decision and his recommendation on what you should do.

Most of the items of the topical index are in these thirteen chapters, anything from land management to cultivation. Rambam gets into the do's and don'ts so if you have a question that isn't answered in scripture, Rambam's perspective on these matters, and his weighing in, gives you a place to research to someone who has answered some of them. What about planting and grafting, ploughing an orchard, or weeding? How close can you weed to your volunteer crop and is it actually helping the volunteer's? What about watering and the commercial use of products? What about buying, trading and selling sabbatical products, what does Rambam say about that? Can you sell or is there money received from a volunteer crop? What about tools and accessories, civil judgments and settlement of alimony, promissory notes, the counting of the Jubilee year?

How would you deal with the sale of a house in a walled city versus the sale of a house not in a walled city? What is the definition of a walled city, the Levitical inheritance, and the inheritance of Levitical property by other Israelites? These questions are a few of the topics and you will find a detail of this if you want to read through it go to the link on page 19 to the

Chabad.org website, it is interesting reading. When Linda and I went through this, it took us several weeks of Bible Studies to go through and read all of this but it was useful to see where Rabbi Moshe Ben Maimon was coming from.

Jubilees Calendar

- Book of Jubilees - Aka the Lesser Genesis
- Pseudepigrapha - accepted by Ethiopian and Tewahedo Orthodox Churches
- Dates to ca. 150 BCE - Maccabean revolt and early Hasmonean Dynasty
- Discovered at Qumran - Label 4Q317
- Chronological schema paraphrasing and embellishing Genesis through Exodus 12
solar based
Chronological system of 49 year Jubilee periods
Composed of seven cycles of seven years
- Based on sevens
7 day week, 28 day month 4×7 , 49 year Jubilee 7×7
- Consistent with 364 day Enoch ^{Qumran} calendar properties
Every calendar day always occurred on same day of week
Recurring schedule - Sabbaths fall on same day/date every year
Year and season started on Wednesday - 4th day of creation (Gen 1:14-19)
Asymmetrical alignment with current tropical year (365.24 days)
Seasonal drift w/o intercalation of year duration has changed
- Calendar specs found in apocryphal books of Enoch and Jubilees
(both ca. 100-200 BCE)

Something else you are going to run into when you study the topic is the Jubilees calendar. There are some that have taken the Jubilees calendar and say that is the way it is so they haven't really gone much further. They found it is actually an interesting source and it speaks with authority but the question is if it is valid?

The Jubilees calendar is taken from the book of Jubilees which is known as the Lesser Genesis. It is pseudepigrapha, in other words it's apocryphal, but it is accepted by some groups such as the Ethiopian and Orthodox Churches. It dates back to about 150 BCE which is the time of the Maccabean revolt and the early Hasmonian Dynasty.

This calendar was discovered at Qumran and has a Label = 4Q317. You can Google that if you chose and you will find information about it. It is a chronological ordering or a schema paraphrasing and embellishing Genesis through Exodus chapter 12. It ends up being a solar based calendar, has a chronological system of 49 year Jubilee periods, not 50, and is composed of 7 cycles of 7 years. It is based on 7, has a 7 day week, 28 day month, and a 364 day year and a 49 year Jubilee. These are all multiples of 7.

It is consistent with the Enoch or Qumran calendar. Some people label it that meaning that it is a 364 day calendar and every calendar day always occurs on the same day of the week. It has a recurring schedule, the Sabbaths fall on the same day of the week and the same date every year so the Sabbaths are all predictable in terms of which days of the week.

The year and season starts on a Wednesday which is the 4th day of creation. It has an asymmetrical alignment with the current tropical year. In other words, it doesn't line up. It's a 364 day calendar versus a 365 ¼ day calendar for the Gregorian calendar that we have in use today.

There is a seasonal drift of 1 ¼ days and it isn't addressed anywhere that I can find in any of the writings about this and how you would deal with the seasonal drift other than intercalation which is not in any of the discoveries being made at Qumran.

The calendar specs are also found in the books of Enoch and Jubilees both pseudepigrapha in the 100 to 200 BCE timeframe. Here are a few highlights of this calendar so that you are familiar with it.

Jubilees Calendar

- And command thou the children of Israel that they observe the years according to this reckoning three hundred and sixty-four days, and (these) will constitute a complete year, and they will not disturb its time from its days and from its feasts; for everything will fall out in the according to their testimony, and they will not leave out any day nor disturb any feasts.
- But if they do neglect and do not observe them according to His commandment, then they will disturb all their seasons and the years will be dislodged from this (order), (and they will disturb the seasons and the years will be dislodged) and they will neglect their ordinances.

You see the drift of what this is saying.

- And all the children of Israel will forget and not find the path of the years, and will forget the new moons, and seasons, and Sabbaths and they will go wrong as to all the order of the years.

- For this reason the years will come upon them when they will disturb (the order), and make an abominable (day) the day of testimony, and an unclean day a feast day, and they will confound all the days, the holy with the unclean, and the unclean day with the holy; for they will go wrong as to the months and Sabbaths and feasts and **jubilees**.
- For this reason I command and testify to thee that thou mayst testify to them; for after thy death thy children will disturb (them), so that they will not make the year three hundred and sixty-four days only, and for this reason they will go wrong as to the new moons and seasons and Sabbaths and festivals, and they will eat all kinds of blood with all kinds of flesh. (Jubilees 6:25-38)

If you read this and don't realize that it's an extra source, you may get wound into accounting for 364 day calendar, and some have done that and have tried to make this the standard in how they keep the calendar.

And the sun and the stars bring in all the years exactly, so that they do not advance or delay their position by a single day unto eternity; but complete the years with perfect justice in 364 days. (1 Enoch 74:12)

It's interesting that this calendar is there dating from the 1st and 2nd century BCE. It has made me wonder if there was any relevance to a time that the Qumran Essenes were keeping a 364 day calendar in terms of the actual revolution of the earth around the sun. In other words, was there a time when there was 364 days and why they came up with this and kept it? I do not know the answer; there is dialogue that goes with it for another time.

Jubilee - Qumran Calendar

This calendar lends itself to a vertical orientation rather than horizontal. You can see that it is divided into three sessions of four months each. Each section is described by a series of months. It is a solar calendar and the New Year is on the first Wednesday after the vernal equinox. It is a 364 day calendar as already talked about, and it has four equal seasons of 91 days each. That is what this chart is showing.

Each of the four seasons include these three months and you will see that the first month has 30 days, the second has 30, and the third month of each section has 31 days. This makes a total of 91 days. $91 \times 4 = 364$ day total.

This makes the year exactly 52 weeks and the days of the months are fixed to the days of the week. Every year you have this same repetitive pattern. It's a perfect business man's calendar. You know exactly what day of the week each calendar date is for every day of the month consistent year to year.

The only problem is that it doesn't follow the current orbital pattern of the earth around the sun of 365.2425 days. This is so you are aware when or if you study the Jubilees calendar.

Background
Jubilee - Qumran Calendar

	Months 1, 4, 7, 10					Months 2, 5, 8, 11					Months 3, 6, 9, 12				
Wed	1	8	15	22	29		6	13	20	27		4	11	18	25
Thurs	2	9	16	23	30		7	14	21	28		5	12	19	26
Fri	3	10	17	24		1	8	15	22	29		6	13	20	27
Sat	4	11	18	25		2	9	16	23	30		7	14	21	28
Sun	5	12	19	26		3	10	17	24		1	8	15	22	29
Mon	6	13	20	27		4	11	18	25		2	9	16	23	30
Tues	7	14	21	28		5	12	19	26		3	10	17	24	31

- Solar calendar – New Year = 1st Wed after vernal equinox
- 364 days - 4 equal seasons of 91 days
- Each season had 3 equal months of 30 days +1
- Exactly 52 weeks - Days of month fixed to days of week

Sabbatical Year - Zuckermann vs Wacholder

- Post exile second Temple sabbatical year
- 2 proposals differ by one year

You will likely run into two gentleman scholars that have studied the calendar, Zickermann and Wacholder. Both chronologies are specifically about the post-exile Second Temple Sabbatical year. Not the First Temple.

They have two different schemes differing by one year. Their proposals are similar with the exception of one year off-set. Both men have published books that I have read.

1. Benedict Zuckermann

- Published table of Sabbatical years (Zuckermann - Treatise on the Sabbatical Cycle, 1866, pg 31, 47 - 48)

Commencement of a new starting point - the laws of Sabbatical years and Jubilees fell into disuse during the Babylonian captivity.

Does not agree with chronologists who assume unbroken continuity of septennial Sabbaths and Jubilees

Restarted with second Temple after second commonwealth

Knew about but omitted from table Antiochus Eupator's siege of fortress Beth-zur

Dated by Zuckermann to 163/162 BCE ^{Historically correct} - but one year too late according to his chronology so he left it out (Ant 12.9.5, 1 Ma 6:49-50)

Established Herod the Great's siege of Jerusalem - 38/37 BCE as Sabbatical year (controversy 1 year late) (Jos Ant 14.16.2, 15.1.2)

Note - Herod accession to power coming up NT Jubilee session

Interpreted Seder Olam text of 2nd Temple destruction **as year after** a Sabbatical year making 68/69 a Sabbatical year

Table considered by many as the standard position

Agrees with Geonim chronology (medieval Jewish scholars)

Used in Orthodox Judaism today

Extrapolation - 2014-15, 2021-22, 2028-29

Zuckermann published a table of sabbatical years back in 1866 called the Treatise of the Sabbatical Cycle. His work is not contemporary with current time but back in 1866 he did a magnificent job of cataloguing and describing with great amount of detail the sabbatical process and chronology since the Second Temple. His viewpoint is that there was a start of a new calendar date that the law of the sabbatical and Jubilee's fell into disuse during the Babylonian captivity, and then everything was started over at the commencing of the Second Temple. That is the starting point that he goes with.

Zuckermann understands the scripture in Leviticus 25 and you see reference to it in his writings but he views the Second Temple was a different starting point as a result of the exile. His work doesn't agree with the chronologists who assume an unbroken continuity of septennial Sabbaths and Jubilees. I would say it would be my understanding that there is an unbroken continuity even though the Sabbatical and Jubilees are not kept, or kept on a different date. That doesn't change the orientation of chronology of when YHWH ultimately set them in place just as he has done the weekly Sabbath. The weekly Sabbath hasn't changed, I would suggest

that the Sabbatical and Jubilee's haven't either, it's just been changed by the convenience of the system, particularly the Second Temple system as it became more and more corrupt.

Zuckermann restarted with the Second Temple after the second commonwealth. There are some provable problems with his chronology. One of them is that he knew but omitted from his book, a table of his dates. He omitted Antiochus Eupator siege of the fortress in Beth-zur. Zuckermann dated this to 163/162 BCE which has proven to be historically correct and it's referenced as a Sabbatical year in other documentation. However, it's one year too late according to his chronology so he left it out of his book because he didn't have an explanation for it and it didn't fit his pattern or chronology.

Also, Herod the Great had a siege of Jerusalem and according to Zuckermann that siege was 38/37 BCE. He included that as a Sabbatical year and I think it is provable that it is one year too late. That siege was actually 37/36, so there is a controversy about that. Josephus talks about it as well as other historians. By the way, when we get into the session on the New Testament and Yahushua's declaration of Jubilee, we will look into Herod's accession to power and the dates associated with that which figures into this overall timeline.

Zuckermann also interpreted the Seder Olam text about the Second Temple destruction in a Sabbatical year as the year after the Sabbatical year making 68/69 CE a Sabbatical year which is one year too early by most chronologists' timeline today.

You find it said that the destruction of the first Temple was at the end of Sabbath, at the end of a Sabbatical year ^{versus the year after a Sabbatical year}, when the priests of the family of Yeholariv was officiating on the ninth of Ab, and the same happened the second time. (Seder Olam Rabbah 30.116 ^{Rudd translation})

If the interpretation of this terminology is at the end of a Sabbatical year, Zuckermann interprets that to be a year after most people today and it has been proven that this really included the end of that year, at the end of a Sabbatical year, versus the year after a Sabbatical year. That is the difference between Zuckermann and Wacholder his counterpart.

However Zuckermann is thought as the standard position by many scholars and people. It agrees with the Geonim chronology (now that we know who the Geonim is). Apparently their chronology largely agrees with this. It is used today in Orthodox Judaism so all this matches up. If you were an Orthodox Jew and are paying attention to Sabbatical, and they do, you will find if you extrapolate what Zuckermann has put in his chronology that 2014 and 2015 was the last Sabbatical year. 2021 and 2022 will be the next Sabbatical, and that is the standard position with these people and they all tend to agree according to Zuckerman's table.

2. Ben Zion Wacholder - The Calendar of Sabbatical Cycles During the Second Temple and the Early Rabbinic Period, Hebrew Union College Annual 44 (1973), pp. 153-196)

- Published table of sabbatical years in 1973
- Sabbatical dates one year later than Zuckermann
 - Resolved Antiochus Eupator’s of fortress Beth-zur
 - Dated to 163/162 BCE ^{historically correct} (Ant 12.9.5, 1Ma 6:49-53)
 - Recalculated Herod the Great’s siege of Jerusalem - 37/36 BCE as Sabbatical year (Jos Ant 14.16.2, 15.1.2)
 - Interpreted Seder Olam text of 2nd Temple destruction as year of ^{not year after} a Sabbatical year
 - Making 69/70 a Sabbatical year (Seder Olam Rabbah 30.116 ^{Rudd translation})
- Calendar adopted by modern scholars as resolution to Zuckermann inconsistencies.

His work is more current and he also resolved all of the issues associated with the three objections that I just mentioned such as the Antiochus Eupator’s siege of fortress Beth-Zur and that happens to agree with Wacholder’s chronology.

Wacholder’s chronology also agrees with the siege of Jerusalem in 37/36 rather than 37/38 and Wacholder’s interpretation of the Seder Olam verse writing was the destruction of the Temple as the year of, not the year after a Sabbatical year.

I would say probably more modern scholars that have studied this tend to side with Wacholder and this calendar was adopted by modern scholars as a resolution to Zuckermann’s inconsistencies. I would also say in our study that everything that I see supports the Second Temple usage and keeping of the Sabbatical so Wacholder has it correct.

There is a pectoral of the differences this chart might help. I just took the destruction of the Second Temple as an example.

Destruction of the Second Temple Controversy							
<Jan 68 CE		<Jan 69 CE		<Jan 70 CE		<Jan 71 CE	
Abib	Ethanim	Abib	Ethanim	Abib	Ethanim	Abib	Ethanim
Benedict Zuckermann Autumn Theory 1		Ben Zion Wacholder Autumn Theory 2					
		Spring Alternative Theory 3		Spring Alternative Theory 4			

On our Gregorian calendar we keep the year from January to December so January is over at the left hand edge of these years. Jan 68, Jan 69, 70, and 71. This is the year range of the Second Temple destruction. Zuckermann has the destruction as 68 and 69, and Ben Zion Wacholder has it one year later. One of the things you will have to deal with when you study this is that the Gregorian calendar gets in the way of, and you have to adjust to it to keep track of the Abib calendar of the Ethanim calendar which is another complication. Some will say that the beginning of the year is Abib, or Nisan and some will say that the beginning of the year is Ethanim of Tishri as the seventh month. I put those on here so you can see Abib is approximately the third or fourth month on the Gregorian calendar and Ethanim is usually the ninth or tenth month on the Gregorian calendar. You have to adjust and keep track of all of that when you study this. As a note, there are two other theories and writings about the destruction of Jerusalem and they both have to do with the spring calendar alternative versus Wacholder and Zuckermann's fall calendar alternative.

It becomes a little bit complicated to keep track of when the year starts and when it ends. I will go into that and identify and you can judge on your own where the truth of the matter is.

Dr. Ernest L. Martin

Ernest Martin has a website and has studied this subject also.

- We are told by 1 Maccabees 6:49 that Judas Maccabee's defeat at Beth-Zur was in a Sabbatical year. And this can be dated to the Sabbatical Year from the autumn of 163 to autumn 162.

Martin's calculation ends up agreeing with Wacholder's .

- Josephus, the Jewish historian, shows the murder of Simon the Hasmonean as happening in the Sabbatical Year of autumn 135 to autumn 134 BCE.
- Josephus shows Herod's conquest of Jerusalem as occurring in the last part of the Sabbatical Year of 37 to 36 BCE.
- King Agrippa the First - recited the section of Deuteronomy which a king was required to do as associated with the Sabbatical Year (Deu 31:10-13). He performed it as a time which historically shows that Agrippa's Sabbatical Year was CE 41-42.
- A papyrus document written in Aramaic has recently been found in Palestine which is dated to the second year of Nero, and it says that that year was a Sabbatical Year. Thus, CE 55 to 56 was a Sabbatical.

- A reference in the 2nd century Jewish work called the *Seder Olam* can be interpreted as showing the Temple at Jerusalem being destroyed in a Sabbatical Year. That would have been CE 69 to 70.
- Dated documents have been found concerning the Sabbatical- Bar Kokhba revolt of the Jews against the Romans which show that the year CE 132 to 133 was a Sabbatical Year.
- The ruins of an ancient synagogue have recently been uncovered which have a date, in a mosaic, for the Jewish year 4000, and that it was the second year of a Sabbatical cycle. This answers to CE 237/238.
- There is a reference in the Jewish Talmud (Sanhedrin 97b) that the Messiah will release the world from its bondage of corruption in the year after 4291 of the Jewish calendar. Since it was believed this would occur in a Sabbatical Year, this reference becomes important (though the prophecy did not occur) because the year after 4291 was CE 531 to 532, and it was a Sabbatical.
- Agrees with Wacholder chronology

When you put this all together Martin's calculation and Wacholder's are the same. If you extrapolate that out, we have one year difference between that and Zuckermann's.

- 21st century extrapolation
2015-16
2022-23
2029-30

Of course these are 49 year calculations that have no intercalation of the 50th year included in them. I want you to know the background of this and who is coming from what perspective. This is the URL for Dr. Martin's website

(Sabbatical Year - Dr. Ernest L. Martin
Founder, Associates For Scriptural Knowledge)
Ask Elm - <http://askelm.com/star/star021.htm>

If you look in Wikipedia, there is some excellent information under Shmita. You can use the URL <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shmita> you will find that the Sabbatical Years Post-exilic period has a lot of commentary. Actually the whole article has good background in it. You will find there is a continuous run of seven year cycles that bridges between 331 BCE and 748 CE. That is over a thousand years and a hundred and fifty four cycles and they all are on seven year boundaries.

The first one was the remission of taxes under Alexander the Great in 331, and then a battle of Beth-Zur in 163, the murder of Simon the Hasmonean in 135, tax relief decreed by Ceasar in 44, Herod conquers Jerusalem on the 10th of Tishri in 37 CE. Recital of Deuteronomy 7:15 by Agrippa in a post-Sabbatical year in 41, Note of indebtedness from Wadi Murabba' at the 2nd year of Nero in 55, the destruction of Jerusalem in 69 and 70. In 132 a rental contract from Bar Kokhaba, a Papyrus from Wadi Murabba in 139, there were three 4th and 5th century tombstones near Sodom indicating 433/44 and 440/41 CE were Sabbatical years. In 748/49 CE a great earthquake on a Sabbatical, so all of this together is interesting continuity of 49 year Sabbatical cycles dating back to Alexander the Great of all places, and all add up to a 49 year cycle.

Sabbatical Years - Post-exilic period	
Continuous run of 7 year cycles - between 331 BCE and 748 CE	
Bridges 1078 years (154 cycles of 7 years)	
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shmita	
Year	Event
331-330 BCE	Remission of taxes under Alexander the Great for Sabbatical years
163-162 BCE	Second battle of Beth-Zur; summer 162 BCE - 1Ma 6:20,49; Jos Ant 12.9.5
135-134 BCE	Murder of Simon the Hasmonean 1Ma 16:14-21 (Sabbatical not mentioned); Jos Ant 13.8.1; Wars 1.2.4
44-43 BCE	Tax relief decree of Caius Caesar - Jos Ant 14.10.5-6
37-36 BCE	Herod conquers Jerusalem on 10 Tishri (Day of Atonement) just after end of Sabbatical year 37/36 BCE Jos Ant 14.16.2, 15.1.2; Wars 1.17.9-18.1
41-42 CE	Recital of Deuteronomy 7:15 by Agrippa I in a post-Sabbatical year, making the Sabbatical year 41/42 Mishnah Sotah 7:8; Jos Ant 18.8.3; Wars 2.10.5
55-56 CE	Note of indebtedness from Wadi Murabba' at in 2nd year of Nero, 55/56 CE - indicating 55/56 Sabbatical
69-70 CE	Destruction of Jerusalem in the latter part (motsae, "going-out") of the Sabbatical year 69/70 Seder Olam 30; Tosefta Ta'anit 3:9; Jeru Talmud 4.5.6; Bab Talmud Ta'anit 29a; Arakin 11b
132-133 CE	Rental contracts of Simon bar Kosiba ^{AKA Kokhba} indicating 132/133 as a Sabbatical year
139-140 CE	Wadi Murabba papyrus
433-434 and 440-441 CE	Three 4 th & 5 th century tombstones near Sodom indicating 433/434 & 440/441 CE were Sabbatical years
748-749 CE	Great Earthquake of the Sabbatical year, felt from Egypt to Persia, tens of thousands died, archaeological excavations at Beth Shean in the Levant - on 23 Shevat=18 Jan 749 CE

The article in Wikipedia will show you more about this chart. Let's summarize what we have gleaned from the first part of this presentation series.

Summary

- Extensive collection of secular literature

There is more, what I have shown you fundamentally highlight what I would call the AAA sources of the material but there is more to be found.

- **The 1st Temple**

1st commonwealth started with Joshua, the first Yahushua and it is a 50 year cycle

50 year Cycle

Jubilee intercalated

No scriptural evidence the Jubilee was kept

No scriptural evidence the Sabbatical was kept

The commentaries that we have read are generally in agreement, that the First Temple was a 50 year cycle and that the Jubilee was an extra intercalated year. However, there is not scriptural evidence that a Jubilee was ever kept. There certainly was scriptural evidence that the Sabbatical was not kept for 490 years. This is the scripture I mentioned earlier.

And they burnt the house of YHWH, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem ^{talking about the Babylonians}, and burnt all the palaces thereof with fire, and destroyed all the goodly vessels thereof. And them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon; where they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia: To fulfil the word of the YHWH by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths: for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years. (2Ch 36:19-21 KJV)

This tells us that they were not keeping the Sabbaths and the end result is that they were taken into captivity so the land could receive its rest. Seventy years of Sabbaths would be 490 years of cycle and if you add that to the date they were taken into captivity, 587 BCE plus 490 year period, you go back to 1077 BCE, and that would be the time of Samuel and Saul.

I conclude from this that they weren't keeping Sabbaticals they weren't keeping Jubilee's either. That would include the time of Saul, David, Solomon and then all under the United Kingdom. When the divided Kingdom came they weren't keeping them either up to the time of the exile. This is amazing testimony to see. They were taken into captivity as a result and I think they learned their lesson.

- **2nd Temple-** They kept the Sabbatical cycle

2nd commonwealth started with Zerubbabel/Ezra/ Nehemiah - return from exile

49 year cycle

50th year stacked into year 1 of Sabbatical cycle

Jubilee forgotten

Sabbatical kept - learned lesson from 2Ch 36:21

Out of sync with 1st commonwealth

49 year Sabbatical verified from 331 BCE - 748 CE

Ezra/Nehemiah's return from exile would have been around 538 BCE and they kept the 49 year cycle although the 50 year cycle appears to have been stacked into year one of the subsequent 49 year cycle. The Jubilee was kept in word but not in practice. They probably learned their lesson from 2 Chronicles and they didn't want to go back into captivity again but it's out of sync with the first commonwealth. The 49 year cycle doesn't match up to the 50 year cycle. There appears to be a 49 year verifiable cycles for over a thousand years starting with Alexander the Great.

Do Your Own Homework

Every word of God is pure ^{G6884=to fuse metal, refine}; he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar. (Pro 30:5-6 KJV)

And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search ^{H1875= to tread or frequent, seek or ask} for me with all your heart. (Jer 29:13 KJV)

And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive. (Mat 21:22 KJV)

Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try ^{G1381=test, examine} the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. (1Jn 4:1 KJV)

I want to be clear that I am not trying to add to YHWH's words or His scripture. All I am trying to do is present secular information as evidence of the direction that the Sabbatical and Jubilee has gone. It doesn't form the conclusion of the matter, the scriptures do. I would say that also many false history teachers are out in the world also, and this kind of work needs prayer, study, research but I want to be clear that everything I have presented is intended to be background and foundation so we can go forward and look into the scriptures to see if we can understand clearly what YHWH wants us to understand.

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