

Jubilee Year 2_2

That's how you learn a foreign language.

Anybody who isn't willing to experiment with something will get nowhere.

The difference is that these things are learning experiences.

That's a very good term.

And they're learning experiences where the penalty is not a spiritual sin.

That is, it's not a spiritual matter and it doesn't lead to sin.

It may lead to a mathematical error or a bad grammar.

I used to think bad grammar was sin, now it's something commonplace.

That's why I was taught to look at language.

I haven't changed my mind, but I realize today that there is a greater area than I thought, not just black and white.

And who and whom no longer are used as terms, there used to be informal distinctions with respect to case and grammar.

But there are some things we have to learn from God.

And the Bible gives us those things which we need to learn.

And it tells you what we would say is right from wrong, because if you didn't do these revelations, you wouldn't know, and you could physically, as we say, burn your fingers, which has a meaning, you say, that you could definitely do harm to yourself.

The scripture says you shall not commit adultery, you shall not lie, you shall not steal, etc.

And so you recognize there that you don't do that.

But there are other things where you learn that you can experiment with.

So now I want to address some of the things which we shouldn't experiment with.

First, let me say one of the primary questions that people often ask is, what is the church's policy with respect to this matter of letting land rest? And in this country, of course, we have produced so much that land is being allowed to rest interestingly in more than one way.

The government pays you not to work it, or city fathers simply allow you to cover it over with tar or foundation for building.

As my wife says to me, you regularly say that it's a tragedy we're not using some of the finest land, but we're burying it under tarmac cement industrial buildings and houses.

She said that the other side of the coin is at least the stress, and we'll have to clear it off later.

But that's the case, that's the reality.

Anyway, the sabbatical year, the church has as a policy something like this.

It recognizes the impact of the revelation of God in this matter for the good of the soil, for the good of what is raised on the soil, and for that matter for the good of people who do farm the land.

It's good to have a break in order that you can repair the breaks in the best.

In other words, the things that really need to be done after seven years on a farm that you may not have gotten to during the previous six.

And so there's also the opportunity to learn, to do things that you might not otherwise have been able to do, because you can't always leave the farm and go somewhere on vacations or educational breaks, whatever it may be.

But we did not grow up in the Jewish community.

We are not a direct part of the Jewish community as the New Testament church was.

The New Testament church actually grew in the synagogue and grew out of the synagogue.

The Church of God today was not called out in the last century and this.

But today the William Millersonal now does not been called out essentially of Judaism.

It has been called out of Christianity.

And in so doing, there are contacts we do not have in prediction in the Christian world from which many have been called out to become God's sons and daughters in this life.

The commonly thought of the sabbatical year is lost.

And I want to at least address that question properly.

The church has recognized that you were called from year to year.

And we are not living in Palestine.

The Jews don't apply certain of these outside of Palestine or outside of areas that once were significantly Jewish in greater Syria, parts of Mesopotamia, where certain principles were also applied for the general population with Jewish.

But in any case, we are called out from year to year, from month to month.

In many cases not as owners with any cycle, but as renters.

Farmer Canard is a renter.

He didn't want to have to own that land.

He just wanted a renter to show what can be done.

And therefore, the church drew the conclusion that much of our land is being bought.

Banks have acclaimed, relatives have acclaimed as to what you should do with that land from year to year.

So we have encouraged the brethren to let the land rest or to divide the land up in such a way that it does rest, if not all at once.

Because we cannot tell a man, he must let his vineyard rest his year, and the banker comes out and says, if you don't work that, if you don't strangle those grapes and make them produce more of this year, that's what they do.

They call it girdling, strangling.

The nicer word to tell the real truth makes the grapevine think it's going to die.

So they want to produce more.

New techniques they've learned, or things they have.

Anyway, the banker says you let this rest, I'll simply foreclose.

Because it says that you're to keep producing, that's what the original contract requires.

So the church must recognize that we cannot impose on people what they are not prepared to follow through with, in the same way that the Jews later no longer found themselves in a position to enforce the jubilee year, which would be a wonderful thing in solving most of the problems of agribusiness today that they were facing.

And nevertheless, the Jewish community has preserved a tradition, and I will merely cite it.

It is understood from the Jewish community that in the Middle Ages there were Jews who lived in ghettos of Europe who lost the knowledge of the seven-year cycle and it was essentially redefined by Moses Maimonides on the basis of what he understood of Jewish tradition and an examination of the Jewish communities that have been observing the sabbatical year and continuing seven-year patterns without the fiftieth year of the break.

And his conclusion agrees on the basis of all the documentation available to the Jews in the West and Spain for the practice of the Jews in the East.

It is therefore true that we can say the knowledge of the Jewish sabbatical year has been preserved to this day not only intellectually but in practice.

Furthermore, there's a simple way to figure it out.

Seven-seven is at forty-nine plus one is fifty.

So you would have two-fifty-year cycles in a century.

That's an even number, but when you have only seven, then you have forty-nine and forty-nine in a century or ninety-eight years because you don't have two Jubilees.

So you drop back two years every century.

Now if you want to know where we are at each of the figures, you take a historic fact preserved in Jewish intellectual, literary tradition, and in Jewish practice that the year preceding the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70 was a sabbatical year.

That is the year from the autumn and the September early October, or simplicity let's say, early October, in sixty-eight to sixty-nine of the first year, sixty-eight to sixty-nine.

So you take the last part of it and you merely go back three months to see October, November, December.

So AD 69 ended a sabbatical year before the fall of Jerusalem.

Now this is in the nineteenth century, so nineteenth centuries have gone by.

That means you lose two years every century in the cycle of seven, in the cycle that is made up only of seven.

So they're nineteenth centuries.

So we've lost thirty-eight years that would otherwise have been counted.

That means that if you want to have a quick way to figure, you want to know how many times ninety-eight there have been.

That is two forty-nine without the Jubilee because the Jubilee has never been counted from that time to this and from before that.

So AD 69, we have nineteenth centuries. You lose two every century.

There are only ninety-eight years in a series of fourteen cycles of seven.

Seven times fourteen is ninety-eight.

We have nineteenth centuries, so if you've lost two for a century, that's thirty-eight years.

That means if it were AD 69, with the Jubilees, it would have been AD 1969, but there were none.

So you lost thirty-eight from the year 1968-1969, which would correspond if there had been Jubilees, but there had been no Jubilees.

So you subtract two down to nineteen, you lose two every century, you subtract thirty-eight from sixty-nine, and that leaves you with thirty-one.

That means that there was a sabbatical year in 1930 and 1931.

Now that you know that, we could add, say, to 1931, you add forty-nine years, seventy-seven. Forty-nine and thirty-one is ninety-eight.

It's a simple way of doing it.

So 1979-1980 was a sabbatical year.

1986-1987, that was just completed.

This passed on.

It was a sabbatical year, and the Jewish reckoned.

And you go on to bear it.

1979-1980, 1986-1987.

That's going on, and we simply say that the Church has never adopted that as a requirement for everyone, because we have had no direct continuity with the Jewish community.

It's always an administrative question.

It's not a doctrinal question.

If the Church administratively were to come to a decision that we should all have the same one, then we'd at least have to have a financial base in order to enable some people to make decisions and letting the land rest that they would have been unable to financially because it did not prepare.

Hence the Armstrong decision as a non-farmer.

He loves to farm as a visitor.

He said we'll just make it simple so that brethren do not have any basic problems, and each one simply figures it on the basis of when the knowledge came to him as to what he could do, rather than as a collective group or a church or a nation.

What's the state of those kind of affairs? Now we may proceed backward in time, and we come to some interesting things in the Bible.

Let's say that we have the story, both in Chronicles and in Kings, from Jewish tradition, not directly stated in the Bible, but some things of Jewish tradition that have significant merit.

It makes sense, and you work with it, and if it does make sense, fine.

If for some reason it was a misunderstanding, then it is not something that is basic.

But if you take the story of Josiah, he came to the throne when he was eight years old.

Now we learn that later in his reign, he made certain decisions in the 12th year and then in the 18th year.

In the 18th year of his reign, he purged the land.

Second Chronicles 34-8, you can also follow in 2 Kings.

I'm just looking here, in King James Burgess.

At this time, in the purification of the area of the temple that had been closed up in the days of Manasseh, they found the book of the law, and it was so shocking.

Now they had other scriptures, but apparently the circulation of the book of Deuteronomy had, in fact, ceased during this period, and it was a shock to find it.

Now the German higher critic said that this was essentially when the priesthood imposed the book of Deuteronomy, and the priesthood on the nation for some such nonsense.

Anyway, they made a covenant, and it is in the tradition that the 18th year, part of the autumn reckoning of Josiah the King, was, in fact, treated as and understood to be a jubilee year.

And now we may know when that year is, because we know that Josiah was slain in the battle that didn't have to take place, but did, nevertheless, when Theronico was coming up against the new Chaldean King of Assyria, the Chaldeans and the Medes having overthrown Nineveh.

And we have, of course, the Babylonian Chronicle record that was published by the British Museum, and earlier was known, but it was really published after the war, even though it was known before, that people didn't have access to it.

It shows very clearly that there was a potential meeting of the armies in the year 609.

That is, the Egyptian army had come to Palestine in the very year that we would have expected the death of Josiah.

And once we know that the 31st year of the King ended in the autumn of 609, for the Egyptian army had marched through the land in 609 in the summer, and they confronted the Egyptians in the city of Carcames on the Euphrates River.

That means that we can begin the reign 31 years earlier, 609 and 31 to 640, and the 18th year would therefore be 623 to 622.

623 BC to 622.

Now that is the actual date.

That is not the traditional date that the Jews have assigned it, so let me explain a little further.

It is understood in Jewish tradition that the Jubilee was kept as a 50-year pattern in the Old Testament up through the time of Josiah and through to the fall of Jerusalem and afterwards, so that the story of Ezekiel chapter 40 introduces the year that would have been a Jubilee, which was 50 years later than the 18th year of Josiah.

But now we have a problem, just wanted to let you know.

We do know of Jewish tradition that there was just such a Jubilee.

Let's see now if that is correct from the Bible.

Let us take note that in chapter 34 of Jeremiah, in chapter 34 of Jeremiah, there was a point in time in which the rulers of the land released the Hebrews who had been reduced to servitude.

But all the princes, first can and all the people, which had entered into the covenant, heard that everyone should let his servants go free, then they obeyed and let them go.

But afterward, when the Egyptians came up in the Babylonian army lessons, they immediately changed their mind and turned and caused the servants and the landmaids, whom they had let go free, to return and brought them again into subjection.

So God comes and said, "Didn't I tell you that at the end of seven years you were to let every man his brother in Hebrew go to you, which has served you, or who has served you six years, to let him go free, but your fathers are cannot, it is obeyed." Now this was in a year of the siege.

This was in a year of the siege.

St. Josephus says the siege lasted one and a half years.

Therefore, the kings at this time, unlike Josiah and earlier, the kings at this time are wrecked according to the Babylonian method of spring to spring reckoning, which may be established firmly and clearly for the house of Judah at this time in the book of Jeremiah, where he speaks of the seventh month as continuing the same year.

There are places you will find now in the same year, in the seventh month, which means that the year did not end with the previous month, the sixth year, and begin with the sixth month of the year and begin with the seventh.

It began in the spring with the first month and ended with the twelfth or thirteenth.

Now at the end of seven years, you were to let them go.

Now this event is clearly in a year that we would define on the basis of the fact that the Babylonians were besieging them, and this commenced after the siege began.

The siege began according to the Babylonian document in the biblical record in the winter at the beginning of the year 588.

So this sabbatical year that the Jews were going to keep was 588 to 587.

Now if you also take a look at another place in the book of Jeremiah, in the same year at the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah, not during the siege near the end of his reign, but at the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah the king of Judah, at the beginning of his reign, but in the fourth year.

Now the beginning of his reign is the commencement of it, not three to four years later.

But in the fifth month, it was the same year that had been described before, where there was this transition to King Zedekiah.

Now he came to the throne at such a time in the month of Adar that his first year would have begun with the spring of 597, confirmed by the Babylonian Chronicle, which is quite clear.

It is also confirmed by the astronomical record.

You don't need to go into that if that has to be an accessory we can do so.

But if he came in the spring beginning in Adar and then his year, that was the exception month, and he comes to the throne in first year, it begins in 597, then he is in a year that in the autumn to autumn reckoning would have begun 598 to the end of summer 597.

And we know that this is a year that is called the fourth year.

Now the fourth year of what? Well, what is interesting, of course, is that if the year of the seeds, beginning in 588, has a sabbatical year beginning in the autumn of 588 to 587, then let's look what would happen.

A sabbatical year would have ended in 587.

Another one would have ended in 594.

Another one would have ended in 601, seven years earlier.

Now if the sabbatical year ends in 601, four from 601 is 597.

Therefore we know what Jeremiah is saying here, is clearly that the beginning of the reign of the king was the fourth year of such a cycle, and that confirms, of course, the pattern that the 18th year of Josiah was a Jubilee.

Just so you have that down, it's in the Bible.

You can look it up if you want to.

It is not fundamental to the practice today, but I think it important that we can say the evidence is there if you wish to look.

Now the problem is, if a Jubilee was in a year BC, 623 to 622, and then 573 to 572, when did the Jubilees stop to be observed? Because there is a Jewish tradition, that the Jubilee was not observed after these Jews returned to the land, after the Babylonian captivity.

But it was observed on a 50-year pattern, let me say that, the Jubilee on a 50-year pattern was observed all through the time, even if it was always properly enforced, but the counting continued through the entire time, from the beginning of the settlement in the land, all the way to the Epsom.

But when they returned, the Jewish tradition is that no formal, sabbatical, sorry, no formal Jubilee in numberings of fifty and a hundred, a hundred and fifty, two hundred that way, was observed.

Now, this leads to a question.

I've given you the actual date that can be confirmed for the King, but in Jewish traditions, they have not started the sabbatical chronology where it ought to be in creation week, near 4,000, I'm only giving a round figure near 4,000 cc.

It starts the story of Adam and Eve with the year 3760 cc, at the beginning of the Hebrew calendar, and they made a false assumption long, long ago that the Hebrew calendar commemorates the events of creation week, but in fact, the date of the Hebrew calendar reflects the reality that it took man ten to eleven, nineteen-year cycles to determine by calculation the average length of the month, and it couldn't have been determined for sure much earlier than that.

All right, the Jewish tradition is not that Zedekiah was oversold by Nebuchadnezzar in the date that I have given you approximately here.

I didn't give you the date of the fall, I gave you the date of the year in which the sabbatical year began during the Feast, but the Jewish tradition would say that the textiles to Babylonia took place, interestingly, seventy years before the return, and they would have the last sabbatical year observed in the year 422 BC, 23 to 22, 423 to 22, and then they said you add seven years of exile that year 423 to 422 they associated with events in Ezekiel chapter 40.

We don't need to turn to that now.

They said that Jews were 40 years of exile, 70 years in exile, 422 minus 70 was 352, and so they allow only 20 years from 352 to 332 for the arrival of Alexander in Palestine and Jerusalem, I'll use the Arabic term, it was in Israel in that day, in Judea, but historically we tend to use in the Christian world the non-violence term.

And so the Jews completely compressed the Persian period into 20 years because they started creation weeks with the beginning of the Hebrew calendar instead of where it should be, because the calendar did not begin with creation weeks, the calendar began when man learned how to determine the average length of a month, and that took 10 to 11 cycles in order to be sure.

But now they're pleased to an interesting question.

On the one hand the Jews said there was no cycle of 50 years after the exile, and when the Jews returned 70 years later and thereafter there was no further keeping of a jubilee making the count 50 to 100 to 150.

Sometimes the Jews would formally say the year after year 49 is an unimported jubilee just to have what we would call a plaque to remember it, but it was never an important account, it was only a series of seven.

Now look what happened.

When we get the picture, we have a situation if it was AD 68 to 69, then there was a sabbatical year in AD 26 to 27.

37 from 69 is 42, 6 times 7, you can figure that out.

So there was one in the year 38 to 37.

37 and 27 would be 64.

Now year 0 is track 163, that's 9 times 7, so you know that's correct.

38 to 37, then there was another one in 136 to 135, 98 years earlier, that is you go 100 and drop down 2.

So 136 to 135, then you would have had 234 to 233 being seen.

And then 332 to 331, that year began that Alexander came and met the High Priest in Jerusalem.

Opened up the sabbatical year, the Jews brought up the question to him.

We implore that you would let us recognize the law that we regularly observed and let the land rest.

332 to 331, and then you would have 430 to 429.

Then what you have would be 423 to 422, that's the next sabbatical year, 7 years coming down in our direction.

That's not a problem, because the Jews said that 423 to 422 was the end of a jubilee.

That could be a problem, but at least you start numbering 7 from there.

But if you were to go back from the year 572, 7372 B.C., described actually in the book of Ezekiel chapter 40, and to come down to 423 to 422, then look what happens, you are actually counting by jubilee.

But if you were to go back from 423 to 422 to 521 to 520, 520 from 572 to 552, and that's not a multiple of 7, so there is some problem in the general understanding, but there really is.

Because people have overlooked the fact that on the one hand the Jews said the last jubilee ended in 422 B.C., but they associated that date with the events of Ezekiel 40, 50 years after the 18th year of Josiah.

The Bible was describing the year 573 to 572, and the Jews associated that with the year 543 to 542.

And between there is no cycle of 7, so we have a problem of how the count continued after the story of the exile began, till it was picked up, that has become the present cycle.

So let me show you what the evidence of the Bible is, because there is no way to link up the cycle of 7 with the cycle of the jubilee of the Old Testament, unless there is some evidence in the Bible as to when the last jubilee was actually observed.

Let us now look at the book of Nehemiah.

How did the Jews get the idea that the last jubilee, which if they went to Ezekiel was clearly in the 570s, how did they come to the conclusion that the last jubilee was the year 423 to 422? Well now if you look in the book of Nehemiah, you discover something.

You know, sometimes these books that we seldom read have some very interesting answers.

And we start out in Nehemiah to make an established fact.

In the month east-west in the 20th year, Nehemiah 1-1, Nehemiah 2-1, in the month Nisan in the 20th year, the King Arthur III, same year that you move from east-west in the area of November-December to Nisan, March-April, and that's the first month, as distinct from the ninth month, and yet you're in the same year.

That means the year here did not begin in the spring.

It is an autumn, the autumn reckoning, that is, the new fiscal calendar of the Jews.

Now we move along. In the 20th year, Nehemiah comes up.

He describes the events of Chapter 5.

From the time that I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, from the 20th year to the 32nd, there were 12 years there I was.

I came up and I saw all the things that had to be done until he got them working on the wall.

And the wall was finished.

On the 25th day of the month Elul, Chapter 6 verse 15, now you come up in the 20th year, and in the month Elul, they have been able, after concentrated effort, to finish this in 52 days.

What a remarkable feat.

Now the wall was filled.

So let's determine when this is.

First of all, we have to recognize when the King came to the throne, because this is reckoned on the basis of the reign of King Arthur Xerxes.

King Arthur Xerxes came to the throne in such a year that his 20th year would be by autumn to autumn reckoning, as the Jews were doing here, 445 to 444.

In the autumn of 445 to the end of summer, 30 autumn of 444.

And since he came up in the period of spring to summer, and until Elul just occurred at the close of his 20th year, the King, which was 444.

That means that his reign began in 464.

Actually, he came to the throne at the very end of 465.

And he was reckoned as having the rest of that spring, or sorry, the rest of that winter as his accession here, and the person reckoned spring to spring, and began with a month of Nisan in 464, and the Jew was the autumn of 464, and 20 years was complete in 444.

Now, he finds a record, the genealogy in chapter 5.

He writes them up so that everybody knows who could be dwelling in this Jerusalem.

And he goes right on, he's the governor, and everybody is now appointed through various responsibilities.

Some were assigned to live in Jerusalem.

Now, when the seventh month came, Elul had just been finished, the sixth month in chapter 6, verse 15.

And now, when the seventh month came, the beginning of a new year, on the basis of autumn to autumn reckoning, all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street, and they spoke as he described to bring the book of the law of motion, which the Lord had commanded through Israel.

And as he abrupted this law before the congregation, and he began to read to make them know what they should know, and he read the book of the law distinctly, verse 8.

They discovered there the story of the festival of trumpet and the story of the peace of tabernacle.

They found written in the law about the booze, verse 14.

All of chapter 8 is very interesting.

They had a remarkable solemn occasion and a time of great joy.

Now, in this case, they were reading the law.

The reading of the law occurred, according to the book of Deuteronomy, at the end of seven years.

You tied for the poor at the end of three years, and then at the end of six years, and then at the end of seven years, verse 10 of book of Deuteronomy, chapter 31, Deuteronomy 31-10, at the end of every seven years, in the solemnity of the year of release, in the peace of tabernacle, that follows, in a sense, the close of the seventh year.

That follows the close of the seventh year.

The Jewish statement is very clear in the Hebrew.

At the end of seven years, you release people.

You're not released at the beginning, but at the end of that year, some debtor obligations do.

Up to that time.

At the end of three years, when you finish the harvest, you bring in the tithe.

So at the end of a seventh year, the law was expected regularly to be read.

Now, think about that fact.

Because we are dealing here, therefore, with a year beginning new in the seventh month.

And at the end of a sabbatical year, or a seventh year, they read the law.

Therefore, the twentieth year of our deserties was a sabbatical year.

At the end of which, they read the law.

Four, forty-five to four, forty-four.

The reason the governor could do what he did is the people, in fact, were free to devote their time to this emergency need to build the walls of the city.

Four, forty-three to four, forty-four.

Thirty-eight to thirty-seven.

Thirty-one to thirty.

They're moving down seven years.

Twenty-four to twenty-three.

Four, twenty-four to four, twenty-three.

Another seventh year.

But our count begins today and goes backwards, beginning with the year four, twenty-two.

Whereas the book of Nehemiah says it was a sabbatical year that ended in four, twenty-three.

And the answer to the question is very clear.

Under the prophet, under Ezra and under Nehemiah, the last jubilee was observed in the year four, twenty-three to four, twenty-two, just as Jewish physicians have, even if they misunderstood that that has nothing to do with the book of Ezekiel chapter forty, that they remembered correctly.

In other words, you can take a cycle of seven all the way back to the year beginning in the autumn of 422 B.C. till now, an exact cycle of seven years.

And you can continue the earlier fifty-year cycle through the story of Jeremiah, all the way through the events that I just read to you here in the book of Nehemiah, and you come up with that illogical problem that those cycles would have ended a sabbatical year with the year four, twenty-four to four, twenty-three, just like you had one in 445 to 444, twenty-one years earlier.

And the fact that you have one year in between, after a sabbatical year before the next cycle begins to count one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, confirms the fact, which is therefore in the Bible, that the last sabbatical year was not observed when the Jews were taken by Nebuchadnezzar away from Jerusalem.

It continues to be counted on the basis of the last jubilee, to what I meant to say.

The jubilees continue to be counted after the captivity, in the days of the Rubberbell, in the days of Ezra, to the days of Nehemiah and Malachi, all the way as the Jews themselves say, to the year four, twenty-three to four, twenty-two.

Even though they fall, that was the story of Ezekiel chapter 40, in fact, that is not at all.

That's the area described in the Bible.

That is something that took place after the twentieth year of our desertity.

So we can say today that the cycle of fifty years was to count it was observed from old times through Josiah's day and through the last of the prophets.

And by the Jews' old tradition, it ended in the year four, twenty-three to four, twenty-two D.C.

And after that time till now, in preserving the pattern of just a cycle of seven years, the Jews have kept it counted all the way through today.

And this year happens to be the first of the next cycle of seven years, five, eighty, seven, ninety, eighty-seven to nineteen eighty-eight, the first year of the next cycle.

Anyway, it is interesting to see how I thought I could address this question and to explain what it is that we can know.

Some of you might never realize that right there in the book of Nehemiah, when you get the evidence, you have a problem that needs a solution.

And the solution is that the Jews had the answer all along and didn't realize it.

They understood what year it was that they made the mistake of associating it with the end of the captivity, that period, the end of the captivity, rather than in the days of Nehemiah, the governor and Malachi.

That was a mistake. I used to wonder, where was the error? Was the error in the dating or was the error in the association of the dated and the date? And now we know the error was in association.