

reference to the resurrection and judgement of the saints. There is, however, a reference to these events in Revelation 11:18: "The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that You should reward Your servants the prophets and the saints, and those who fear Your name, small and great, and should destroy those who destroy the earth" (NKJV).

The overall order of events seems to be as follows:

- 1 The revelation of Jesus to Israel and his acceptance by them.
- 2 The judgement.⁵
- 3 Defeating a Catholic crusade.
- 4 Binding the dragon (Gog and Magog).

5. This subject was dealt with in "The Second Advent and the Resurrection", *The Testimony*, Sept. 1982, p. 271.

- 5 Establishing the thousand-year reign of Christ and the saints (Rev. 20:4,6).
- 6 The last rebellion, lasting "a little season".
- 7 The final judgement and the main harvest of immortals.

Conclusion

Returning finally to the promise of Jesus, "Behold, I come as a thief", in the closing stages of the sixth vial, we may not have long to wait for our dearest hopes to be realised. The announcement is brief but it means a great deal to those who have been enlightened by the Word of God. It means that the judgement seat of Christ will soon follow. After that comes the seventh vial, and the fulfilment of this will enable Jesus to become "King of kings, and Lord of lords" (Rev. 19:16) and the saints to reign joyfully with him on earth for a thousand years, to the glory of God.

Jubilee periods re-examined

Tony Benson

IN HIS BOOK *Times and Seasons* (published in 1961) Brother W. H. Carter put forward the view that there would be seventy cycles of forty-nine years each, based on the jubilees of Leviticus 25:8, culminating in the year prior to the beginning of the millennial reign of Christ. He calculated the cycle as ending in 1995/96,¹ the seventieth jubilee year since the occupation of the land, with the Millennium beginning in 1996/97.

Calculating forty-nine-year periods back from 1995/96, the following significant years emerge:

- 1946/47 Britain declares its intention to withdraw from Palestine, leaving the way clear for a Jewish state to be established
- 1897/98 First Zionist Congress
- 1848/49 Brother Thomas visits Britain to preach the Truth and writes *Elpis Israel*.

Whilst this sequence is impressive, it is difficult, looking back to 1995/96, to see what marked out that year as the completion of the sequence.

One possibility is that 1995/96 marked the end of the sixty-ninth cycle, and that the Millennium will begin in 2044/45. This does not place the return of Christ as far off as we might imag-

ine, given that there will be a lot to do before the Kingdom actually commences.

Alternatively, it may be that we should look again at the calculation of the jubilee year. A jubilee year occurred after a period of forty-nine years; it was the fiftieth year (Lev. 25:8,10). Was this fiftieth year the first of the next forty-nine year cycle? If so then jubilee years occur every forty-nine years as per the sequence above. The alternative is that the jubilee year stood on its own; there was a period of forty-nine years, then a jubilee year, then a period of forty-nine years, and so on. If this was the case then jubilee years occur every fifty years.

Let us suppose that jubilee years occur every fifty years. Is there a fifty-year pattern we can identify? The seventy forty-nine-year jubilee periods ending in 1995/96 are calculated from the date when Israel under Joshua had completed the conquest of the land, given as 1435/36 B.C. Seventy fifty-year cycles from that date bring us to 2066/67.² Working back we get the following:

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1. Years are shown this way to correspond to Jewish years, which run from autumn to autumn.
 2. $70 \times 50 = 3,500 + 1$ to compensate for the absence of a year zero.

- 2016/17 Beginning of final jubilee period during which the work to establish the Kingdom takes place
- 1966/67 Six-Day War; Israel takes old Jerusalem
- 1916/17 British conquest of Palestine, Balfour Declaration
- 1866/67 Beginning of the war which ended the temporal power of the papacy.

In terms of the last days, a fifty-year jubilee cycle provides significant dates, therefore.

Both revised schemes present problems with other chronology, however. If either 2044/45 or 2066/67 is the year before the Millennium begins, 6,000 years after Creation, then this makes Creation rather later than normally supposed, and throws out other chronology. We advance the suggestion with great caution, therefore.

How long was the ark at Kirjath-jearim?

Robert Scott Thomson

AND IT CAME to pass, while the ark abode in Kirjath-jearim, that the time was long; for it was twenty years: and all the house of Israel lamented after the LORD" (1 Sam. 7:2). Is this verse saying that the period between the ark going to Kirjath-jearim after it was returned by the Philistines, and the carrying up of the ark to Jerusalem in the time of David, was twenty years? This view has its difficulties, and this short article attempts to resolve the question of how long the ark was at Kirjath-jearim.

When the ark was captured by the Philistines, it was part of an overwhelming defeat of Israel (4:10,11), and Israel suffered additional serious losses at Beth-shemesh before the ark was fetched by the men of Kirjath-jearim (6:19-7:1). Though the Philistines endured manpower losses as well while the ark was in their possession (5:6-6:4), it seems probable that their hegemony continued unbroken.

The phrase "the time was long" (7:2) appears to refer more aptly to a period of twenty years during which Israel was lamenting "after the LORD" under continuing oppression, rather than to the time the ark resided at Kirjath-jearim. While the ark was being kept at Kirjath-jearim during this period, despite their sorrow Israel had not yet rejected the worship of "strange gods", as indicated by Samuel's statement that their idolatry must be forsaken before the only true God would deliver them (v. 3).

The age of Samuel indicates that the ark rested at Kirjath-jearim for much longer than twenty years. Samuel was still referred to as a child when Eli was very old (3:1; 2:22). He was evi-

dently still a young man when the ark was captured, and Eli died at the age of ninety-eight (4:15,18). His speaking to all Israel might have encompassed twenty years of activity before the people were convinced to serve only the Lord (7:2,3).

If this surmise is correct, Samuel was at the height of his physical and mental maturity when he summoned the people to come to Mizpeh and throw off the Philistine yoke (vv. 5,13). Only after this victory is it stated that he "judged Israel all the days of his life" (v. 15), implying independent exercise of political authority for most of this time, as well as being the religious overseer of the nation.

Saul was not chosen to be king till Samuel had grown old himself (8:1). Samuel chose Mizpeh as the place to present Saul to Israel because of its earlier association with God's discomfiting of their enemies (10:17,19). This emphasised Israel's rejection of God as their King, notwithstanding His help, in favour of a mortal monarch like those of the other nations (8:7,19,20). When Samuel anointed David (16:13) he must have been very old, and he died before the death of Saul (25:1).

Following the death of Saul, David was king in Hebron for over seven years (2 Sam. 2:1,11), and it was after this, and the taking of Jerusalem by David, that the ark was removed from Kirjath-jearim and brought up to Jerusalem.

The twenty years of 1 Samuel 7:2 thus cannot refer to the length of time the ark resided at Kirjath-jearim, as this period does not allow nearly enough time for Samuel to grow old, for