

## The acceptable year of the Lord

by Douglas Cox

At the synagogue in Nazareth, where he had been brought up, Jesus read from the book of Isaiah a prophecy that refers to "the acceptable year of the Lord," which Jesus said was fulfilled on *that very day*.

Luke 4:17-22

And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written,  
The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,  
To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

What was special about that particular year? The "acceptable year of the Lord" was the year that Jesus began his ministry. It has to do with the beginning of the last of the four periods of *seven times* in Leviticus 26, when God would be *reconciled* to Israel.

Luke 4:20-21

And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him.  
And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.

The occasion was during the first year of his ministry, soon after his baptism by John. It was after the first two sections of the prophecy of Daniel about the 70 weeks had been fulfilled.

In his prayer of confession, Daniel referred to the covenant.

Daniel 9:4

And I prayed unto the LORD my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments;

At the end of the first two sections of seven weeks and sixty-two weeks, the Messiah would appear.

Daniel 9:25

Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks:

During the 70th week, Daniel said, Christ would "confirm the covenant with many for one week." [vs. 27]

The word "covenant" refers to all the revelations and promises of God. Examples are:

- the "everlasting covenant" which is represented by a rainbow; [Genesis 9:16]
- God's covenant with Abraham represented by circumcision, [Genesis 17:4-10] which was to be established with Isaac; [Genesis 17:18-19]
- the Sabbath; [Exodus 31:16]
- the Mosaic legislation; [Jeremiah 34:13-14]
- the "sure mercies of David;" [Isaiah 55:3]
- the regular succession of day and night; [Jeremiah 33:20-22]
- etc.

The covenant includes the promises; the promise of the land, which Abraham did not receive in his lifetime, was the basis for his confidence in a resurrection. Paul said the covenant had been *confirmed* to Abraham. [Galatians 3:17] He used this as the basis of his argument about the role of the law which was given centuries later.

All the promises of God are included in the *covenant* that Christ *confirms* with the saints in the 70th week; and it includes his righteous life, that was offered up as a sacrifice to take away the sin of the world.

Daniel said:

Daniel 9:27

And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease . . .

The "midst of the week" includes the death of Jesus on the cross, and the end of the sacrificial system, when the city and temple were destroyed.

Jesus was baptized during the ministry of John the Baptist. The date for the beginning of John's ministry was given by Luke.

Luke 3:1-3

Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judaea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Ituraea and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene, Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness.

And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins;

The first year of Tiberius was 14 AD. So we have:

1st year of Tiberius 14 AD  
2nd year of Tiberius 15 AD  
3rd year of Tiberius 16 AD  
4th year of Tiberius 17 AD  
5th year of Tiberius 18 AD  
6th year of Tiberius 19 AD  
7th year of Tiberius 20 AD  
8th year of Tiberius 21 AD  
9th year of Tiberius 22 AD  
10th year of Tiberius 23 AD  
11th year of Tiberius 24 AD  
12th year of Tiberius 25 AD  
13th year of Tiberius 26 AD  
14th year of Tiberius 27 AD  
15th year of Tiberius 28 AD

The year 28 AD was the start of the 70th week of Daniel's prophecy. It also began a new sabbatical cycle. It was when Jesus read from Isaiah's prophecy in the synagogue at Nazareth on a sabbath day. Jesus said:

Luke 16:16

The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.

The year 28 AD marked the beginning of a new era, the *seven times* of the reconciliation of God with his people, when God remembers his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Leviticus 26:42

Then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember; and I will remember the land.

The 70th week is the week when Jesus *confirms the covenant*. It began in 28 AD.

Beginning with the decree of Cyrus, the first two sections of the 70 weeks work out correctly to 28 AD, when the first 7 weeks are 49 leap years having an extra month. Seven weeks of leap years would span 131, 132, or 133 years. The second section is  $62 \times 7 = 434$  years, and together the first two sections are 567 years, the time span from the decree of Cyrus in 538 BC, to the beginning of the ministry of Jesus in 28 AD.

Dispensationalists claim that the fulfillment of the first 69 weeks occurred at the *end* of the ministry of Jesus, rather than the *beginning* of it, but their interpretations require one or more *gaps*, and require dubious manipulations of historical dates, and spurious contrived dating schemes to get the dates to work out to the year of the crucifixion, which probably occurred in 30 AD.

Daniel said, of the 70th week, "In the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering." [vs. 27, NIV]

This seems to mean the Mosaic temple sacrifices, which ended when the temple was destroyed, in 70 AD. So that must be the middle of the *seven*. There is a change in the units of time in the midst of the 70th week. The first three and a half years were *natural*, but the last three and a half years apply to the *heavenly* Jerusalem, and so the units are not natural but symbolic. Earth days, earth months, earth years do not apply to things divine and spiritual. Rather, they are symbols, or types.

The 69th week ended in 28 AD, if one counts from the decree of Cyrus, 538 BC, and if leap years are used in the first section, of 7 weeks. This avoids invoking a gap between the end of the 70 years of Jeremiah, and the beginning of the 70 weeks. In fact, Daniel said the "curse" written in the Law of Moses had been poured out. [Daniel 9:11] This refers to the curse outlined in Leviticus 26, which consisted of four periods of seven times. In the last of the four periods of seven times, God will be reconciled to his people.

The beginning of the last of the four periods of *seven times*, the one during which God would be reconciled to his people, was the "acceptable year of the Lord," that Jesus referred to.

If the captivity in Babylon was the first of these four periods of "seven times," the three sections of the 70 weeks correspond to the remaining three periods of seven times. There can be no gap in the curse, as that would imply that God was temporarily reconciled to Israel. The curse does not lapse, and resume again. Any reconciliation with God is a permanent one.

The 70 years of Jeremiah, plus the three sections of the 70 weeks, are the four periods of *seven times* described in Leviticus 26, and they are continuous, right to the end of the age, and "the times of restitution of all things."

Acts 3:20

And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you:

Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.