

10. Trusting the *Seder Olam* Over and Above Eyewitnesses ... and Scripture

As I mentioned previously, I anticipated that Glenn would question my findings pertaining to his conclusion that the year 68/69 CE is a “known Sabbatical year,” and it didn’t take him long to respond on his website. Here is his response to the above *Jewish Bible Quarterly* article:

Now let me get to the point quickly so we can continue. This article (when read in full) takes the position that the destruction of the temple had to have happened in a Sabbatical year based upon the usage and meaning of the word *motsae*, which is translated as either "after" or "at the end of." The author of that article favors the meaning of "at the end of." But instead of arguing over linguistics here, I think it is best to simply bypass this issue for now and instead focus on the actual calendar dates used by Sedar [sic] Olam. Please remember, according to several reliable sources the actual destruction of the temple took place on the ninth of Av--so any **verifiable calendar evidence** will certainly override any linguistic uncertainties.¹

As noted above, Glenn uses his understanding, or as he puts it, “verifiable calendar evidence” over and above what he considers “linguistic uncertainties.” Please bear in mind that the “linguistic uncertainties” referenced above by Glenn include intense scholarly research proving that the Hebrew word *motsae* means “at the end of” and not “after.” This includes *twenty-seven* verifiable instances in Scripture in which *motsae* cannot possibly be construed so as to mean “after.” Here again, is a pertinent quote from the *Jewish Bible Quarterly* article:

We first look in the Scripture, where the word *motsa* occurs twenty-seven times. In Psalm 19:7 (19:6, English Bible) it refers to the "going forth" of the sun. In Psalm 107:33,35 and II Kings 2:21 it is translated as "watersprings" or "spring of the waters." **All of the usages in Scripture can immediately be associated with the idea of going forth or going out. None can be associated with any idea of "after" or "the thing after."**

Apparently, to Glenn, the fact that in all of those 27 verifiable instances in which *motsae* cannot possibly mean “after” is of no consequence. He prefers to stake his belief on what he terms “verifiable calendar evidence,” which, as we have already shown, is “*un*verifiable calendar evidence.” Nevertheless, Glenn believes he has verifiable calendar evidence to present to his reading audience, so let’s take a look at what he has to offer:

The chronology of Sedar Olam is not always accurate, for it leaves only 34 year for the rule of the Persians. However, this is thought to be an attempt to make the prophecy of Daniel 9 somehow apply to Bar Kochba. It is very likely that the rest of the Sedar Olam dating of events is correct. With all of this in mind, take note of seven important points which will help us identify the exact date of the destruction of both Solomon's and Herod's Temple:

1. The author of Sedar Olam believed that the prophecy of Daniel 9 was based upon the Sabbatical years--which would make them continuous Sabbatical years (490 years is divisible by 49, not 50), with no allowance for an additional 50th year.

¹ Taken from Glenn Moore’s website page entitled “Answers to Objections,” located at http://www.itsaboutthattime.net/answer_objections.htm. This particular objection was added sometime between March 1st and March 6, 2009.

2. The author of Sedar Olam believed that both temples were destroyed on the 9th of Av in the Hebrew Calendar.
3. The author of Sedar Olam believed both temples were destroyed either on or after the Sabbath day, depending upon which translation you accept.
4. The author of Sedar Olam believed both temples were destroyed either on or after a Sabbatical year, depending upon which translation you accept.
5. Since we know the temple was destroyed in the year 70 CE, it is simply a matter of determining when the 9th of Av was in that year and also 490 years earlier. If we can discover the actual date, we can also discover the day of the week that it happened on.
6. If we can determine which day the 9th of Av that year was on (either a Sabbath or a Sunday), then we can also deduce how *motsae* was intended to be translated as it relates to the Sabbatical years.
7. Since the Sedar Olam also taught that the first temple was destroyed exactly 490 years prior to the destruction of the second (both on the 9th of Av), we also have a means of comparing the two dates (August 5, 70 CE and August 22, 421 BCE [i.e., the presumed (not actual) date of the first temple's destruction]).²

Okay, now that we see Glenn's seven points in their full context, let's review a couple of them before proceeding. Glenn's first point is, "The author of Sedar Olam believed that the prophecy of Daniel 9 was based upon the Sabbatical years--which would make them continuous Sabbatical years (490 years is divisible by 49, not 50), with no allowance for an additional 50th year." I suppose Glenn feels this is an important point because perhaps the fact that this ancient author agreed with Glenn's position adds weight to Glenn's argument. However, it is no secret that, even in the second century CE, the length of the Jubilee cycle was debated within the ranks of Judaism. As we read earlier in this study, 2nd century rabbi Judah haNasi supported the 49-year cycle belief, even though the majority of Jews regarded the Jubilee cycle to consist of 50 years. Thus, citing the fact that the author of the *Seder Olam* agrees with Glenn's view regarding the length of the Jubilee cycle hardly adds any weight to Glenn's position.

Glenn's second point is, "The author of Sedar Olam believed that both temples were destroyed on the 9th of Av³ in the Hebrew Calendar." This would be a great place for me to remind you that June and I do not necessarily put any stock in the date on which various writers, including the author of the *Seder Olam*, believe the Temple was destroyed. Indeed, it appears that the *Seder Olam* forms the nucleus around which Glenn bases his dating methods.

As we wrote at the conclusion of our previous chapter, "Of course, with whichever year we conclude was the Sabbatical year at or near the year the Temple was destroyed, we are left to *presume* that Judaism was correctly reckoning Sabbatical years at that time. June and I personally remain opposed to relying on man's attempts to date ancient historical events for validating one's understanding with regard to when a

² Ibid.

³ "Av" (Also spelled "Ab") is the name given to the fifth month on the Scriptural Hebrew calendar.

Sabbatical year or Jubilee year was observed.” This same reasoning can be applied to the calendar date on which the Temple was destroyed. Glenn appears to take the *Seder Olam* author’s statements as “gospel.” In fact, he wrote, “Please remember, according to several reliable sources the actual destruction of the temple took place on the ninth of Av.” By now, we know that one of Glenn’s “reliable sources” is the *Seder Olam*. As we are about to see, Glenn does not (and cannot) use *Scripture* as one his “reliable sources.”

Now would be a great place to bring up a point that I should have made earlier, but didn’t think of it. Bear in mind that, according to the *Seder Olam*, the Temple was destroyed on Av 9. This is what Glenn accepts, but this is *not* what is presented in Scripture. Of course, I’m referring to the first Temple. If we can believe Scripture, the Temple was *still standing* on Av 9:

¹² In the fifth month, on the tenth *day* of the month, which *was* the nineteenth year of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, came Nebuzar-adan, captain of the guard, *which* served the king of Babylon, into Jerusalem,

¹³ And burned the house of Yahweh, and the king’s house; and all the houses of Jerusalem, and all the houses of the great *men*, burned he with fire: (*Jeremiah 52:12-13*)

Again, if we can believe what the Prophet Jeremiah wrote, the Temple was still standing on Av 9, untouched by fire. It wasn’t until the 10th day of Av that Nebuzaradan came into Jerusalem and burned the Temple. For anyone to suggest that the Temple was destroyed a day earlier than the 10th is nothing short of a blatant disregard of the Scriptural account. Moreover, although it is extremely vital to Glenn’s position that the Temple was destroyed the day following the weekly Sabbath, the word “Sabbath” is mysteriously missing from any of the Scriptural accounts describing the destruction of the Temple.

Let’s Allow Glenn Moore to Break In With His Reaction ...

Upon reading the above in the original version of this chapter, Glenn Moore responded with an attempt to “turn the tables on me,” pointing out that I am the one exhibiting a “blatant disregard of the Scriptural account” by omitting what he feels is a key passage of Scripture from the 25th chapter of II Kings. In this chapter, we read that Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon came against Jerusalem, and his army built forts all around the city. This was in the tenth month of the ninth year of King Zedekiah’s reign. As time progressed, the inhabitants of Jerusalem experienced a famine, which grew to severe limits by the fourth month of the eleventh year of his reign. Then, we read that in the fifth month (Av), on the *seventh day of the month*, the captain of king Nebuchadnezzar’s guard, Nebuzar-adan, came “unto Jerusalem.” In the next verse, we read that he burnt the house of Yahweh, the king’s house, and all the houses of Jerusalem.

With this backdrop, Glenn’s explanation is that, to properly reconcile the account from Jeremiah 52:12-13, we must believe that Nebuzar-adan entered Jerusalem on the seventh day of the month, but didn’t get around to burning the temple until late in the day on the ninth of Av, just as the 10th was about to begin. Let’s read Glenn Moore’s commentary/rebuttal to our position that the temple was still untouched by fire all day on Av 9. The following is taken from his updated “Answers to Objections”:

QUESTION: There is a text in Jeremiah 52:12-13 that plainly states that the Babylonians led by Nebuzar-adan destroyed the temple on the 10th day of Av, not

the 9th of Av as you have asserted. As someone has said, "For anyone to suggest that the Temple was destroyed a day earlier than the 10th is nothing short of a blatant disregard of the Scriptural account." What is your response?

ANSWER: That is not the only text which talks of this issue. The other text which speaks about that event is found in II Kings 25:8-9. Here, let's quote them both:

Now in the fifth month, in the tenth day of the month, which was the nineteenth year of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, came Nebuzaradan, captain of the guard, which served the king of Babylon, into Jerusalem, And burned the house of Yahweh, and the king's house; and all the houses of Jerusalem, and all the houses of the great men, burned he with fire: (Jeremiah 52:12-13)

And in the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month, which is the nineteenth year of king Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, came Nebuzaradan, captain of the guard, a servant of the king of Babylon, unto Jerusalem: And he burnt the house of Yahweh, and the king's house, and all the houses of Jerusalem, and every great man's house burnt he with fire. (2 Kings 25:8-9)

How do we reconcile these two apparently conflicting texts? The most logical answer is that the siege itself began on the 7th day of the 5th month, and ended on the 10th day of the 5th month. If the temple was set ablaze toward the end of the 9th day, it could have continued on into the 10th day. While there are those who may wish to assert that the temple could not have been destroyed on the 9th of Av (because of the text in Jeremiah 52), this would seem to be a premature conclusion. Regarding this issue, it would appear that the rabbinic answer to this apparent contradiction (in *Judaism 101*) is worthy of our highest consideration:

"How then are these dates to be reconciled? On the seventh the heathens entered the Temple and ate therein and desecrated it throughout the seventh and eighth and towards dusk of the ninth they set fire to it and it continued to burn the whole of that day. ... How will the Rabbis then [explain the choice of the 9th as the date]? The beginning of any misfortune [when the fire was set] is of greater moment. -*Talmud Ta'anit 29a* [<http://www.jewfaq.org/holidayd.htm>]

Now I would like to ask a question of my own: How is it that the author who said my study was a "blatant disregard of the Scriptural account," simultaneously ignored the other parallel account in II Kings 25 which says it happened on the 7th day of the 5th month? Obviously, the author of that quote has failed in the very area in which he has accused me--a blatant disregard of both of these Scriptural accounts. Regardless, these conflicting dates require us to reconcile them and not assume that either one is the actual date that the destruction of the temple began.

CONCLUSION: It is entirely plausible that the actual burning of the temple began on the 9th of Av, and none of these Scriptural accounts can be used to prove otherwise.⁴

I don't really enjoy doing a "point/counterpoint" with anyone, but sometimes it seems like we have no choice, and this is one of those instances. In response to Glenn's "counterpoint," I would like to think he knows better than to believe I never considered the account from II Kings 25:1-10 when composing my response. Quite frankly, as we are about to see, this passage changes nothing, but for the sake of responding to Glenn's argument, I will explain *why* it changes nothing.

I should point out that I never really intended to author a study on the Jubilee Cycle in the first place, but when put in the position of needing to explain why I believe as I do, I expressed my reasoning in written form, understanding that I would probably not cover items that are of minor significance to me, even though they may be of immense importance to someone else. Secondly, I certainly never intended for this study to balloon to over 200 pages. As it currently stands, it is the longest study on the Jubilee Cycle that I have ever encountered. Nevertheless, in spite of its length, there will always be someone to say, "You left out that part!" or "You didn't answer all of my questions!" Glenn is currently fulfilling that role. The question, then, is whether or not there was any need for me to include the passage from II Kings 25. I do not believe there was, but since Glenn addresses the information provided in that chapter, I will respond here.

As we examine Glenn's commentary above, it doesn't take long to expose his first mistake. He wrote, "How do we reconcile these two apparently conflicting texts? The most logical answer is that the siege itself began on the 7th day of the 5th month, and ended on the 10th day of the 5th month." This comment is simply not correct. The word "siege" is defined as "The surrounding and blockading of a city, town, or fortress by an army attempting to capture it." According to II Kings 25:1-3, the siege (i.e., surrounding and blockading Jerusalem) began during the 10th month of the 9th year of King Zedekiah's reign, and was *still going on* during the fourth month of the 11th year of his reign:

¹And it came to pass in the ninth year of his [Zedekiah's] reign, in the tenth month, in the tenth day of the month, that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came, he, and all his host, against Jerusalem, and pitched against it; and they built forts against it round about.

²And the city was besieged unto the eleventh year of king Zedekiah.

³And on the ninth day of the fourth month the famine prevailed in the city, and there was no bread for the people of the land.

Again, contrary to Glenn's understanding that the siege began on the 7th day of the 5th month (which was the eleventh year of King Zedekiah's reign), according to the Scriptural record, the siege actually began during the 10th month of the ninth year of King Zedekiah's reign. This, then, is the first mistake that Glenn makes in his attempt to reconcile the II Kings 25 account with the Jeremiah 52 record.

⁴ From the "Answers to Objections" page of Glenn Moore's web site. This particular question/answer was updated between March 9th and March 13, 2009. This page may be read in its entirety by accessing the following URL: http://www.itsaboutthattime.net/answer_objections.htm.

Glenn's second mistake is to contradict the clear record given by the prophet Jeremiah. Jeremiah states that the captain of king Nebuchadrezzar's guard came into Jerusalem on the 10th day of the fifth month, whereas the author of II Kings indicates that he came into Jerusalem on the 7th day of that month. If we're going to properly reconcile the two accounts, we *cannot* believe that anything was done to the temple prior to the 10th day of the month! Otherwise, we've just contradicted Jeremiah's account, which is precisely what Glenn Moore does in his attempt to reconcile the two accounts. This is simply a mistake on his part ... the second one he makes in attempting to build his case. To put this in layman's terms, if we are going to accept Jeremiah's account as correct (and inspired by the Almighty), then we *must* understand that the temple was untouched by fire prior to Av 10.

Glenn's third mistake is to offer "highest consideration" to a writing other than Scripture. He writes:

Regarding this issue, it would appear that the rabbinic answer to this apparent contradiction (in *Judaism 101*) is worthy of our highest consideration.

Giving his highest consideration to a non-Biblical text may explain why Glenn is unable to properly understand that Scripture does not support believing that the Temple could have been destroyed a moment sooner than the beginning of Av 10. According to Jeremiah's account, on the 10th day of the fifth month (Av) Nebuzar-adan (1) came to Jerusalem **AND** (2) burned the house of Yahweh. Unless Glenn is able to devise a way wherein it would have been possible for Nebuzar-adan to have physically set fire to the Temple before entering Jerusalem, I am left to believe that he is indeed giving his "highest consideration" to rabbinic commentary instead of the plain sequence provided by Scripture. If we were to accept Glenn's model, we would be compelled to believe that, as Nebuzar-adan was about to enter Jerusalem, the Temple was *already* engulfed in flames. This is because, according to Glenn, the Temple was already on fire *before* the tenth of Av.

Let's take a brief look at the above rabbinic explanation that Glenn suggests merits "our highest consideration":

How will the Rabbis then [explain the choice of the 9th as the date]? The beginning of any misfortune [when the fire was set] is of greater moment. - *Talmud Ta'anit 29a* [<http://www.jewfaq.org/holidayd.htm>]

Our reply: This explanation is worthy of our "lowest consideration" because it begs the following question: "If the beginning of the misfortune is the 'greater moment,' then please explain why Yahweh Himself didn't choose to mention this 'greater date' in any Scriptural account?" If Av 9 is the "greater date," then shouldn't that be the date that we read about in Scripture? How's come Jeremiah narrows it down to Av 10, and how's come Josephus (as we are about to see) agrees with that date instead of the "rabbinic choice" of Av 9? It appears that Glenn's response would be that the "rabbinic answer" should be given our "highest consideration" over and above Scripture ... and over and above the words of Josephus, who was an eyewitness to the Temple's destruction.

How, then, do we reconcile II Kings 25:8-9 with Jeremiah 52:12-13? It is very simple. According to the account in II Kings, Nebuzar-adan came to Jerusalem on the 7th day of the month. I believe this is accurate. During the next three days, his armed forces rounded up the people of the city who were to be exiled to Babylon. Not only that, but we read in verses 13-17 that the Chaldees also plundered the temple of all its furnishings, including the bronze sea, the immense bronze pillars, the pots, shovels, snuffers,

dishes for incense, and all the bronze vessels. Of course, there were also vessels of gold and silver. If we think this through logically, we can understand that this scenario didn't unfold over the course of only one day.

For one, I believe it should be obvious that the inhabitants of Jerusalem weren't just "rounded up." They were most likely divided into groups, where they were identified and catalogued. The same may well have been true of the temple furnishings. I am persuaded that Nebuzar-adan and a sizable remnant of his army remained stationed outside of Jerusalem, prepared for any attacks that the now-depleted Judeans may have wished to attempt in the face of their certain demise. Once the orders to remove the inhabitants from the city were completed, and once all the valuables, including the Temple furnishings, were carted outside of Jerusalem, Nebuzar-adan entered the nearly deserted city and gave the horrified onlookers a final, lasting, memory of their beloved city and the prized Temple. This lasting memory was watching the immense bonfire created by the burning of the Temple, as well as the other impressive structures, including the king's palace. As I have just explained, this chain of events would not have transpired over the course of only one day. We thus see that there is no conflict between II Kings 25:8-9 and Jeremiah 52:12. The author of a study entitled "Alleged Bible Contradictions," in his comparison of II Kings 25:8 and Jeremiah 52:12, agrees with my understanding and offers the following commentary:

2 Kings 25:8

Why does 2 Kings 25:8 say that it was on the 7th day of the fifth month that Nebuzaradan came to Jerusalem when Jeremiah 52:12 tells us it was the 10th day of this month?

Second Kings 25:8 says that it was on the seventh day of Ab (fifth month) that Nebuzaradan, the servant of the king of Babylon, "came to Jerusalem." However, Jeremiah 52:12 tells us that it was on the tenth day of this month that Nebuzaradan "came into Jerusalem." The *Soncino Books of the Bible* comments on this, saying: "The interval of three days may be accounted for as representing the date of Nebuzaradan's arrival on the scene and the commencement of operations." (Edited by A. Cohen, London, 1949) It would appear, then, that Nebuzaradan arrived at Jerusalem on the seventh day, made his survey from his camp outside the city walls, and gave directions for the demolition of the city fortifications and the plundering of its treasures; finally, on the tenth day of the month, he entered the city and its holy temple. According to Josephus (*The Jewish War*, VI, 250, 268 [iv, 5, 8]), Herod's temple was burned by the Romans on the tenth day of the fifth month (70 C.E.), and Josephus makes note of the precise correspondency of this date with the burning of the first temple on the same day by the Babylonians.⁵

Of course, as I mentioned when I introduced the above commentary, I agree with the author's reconciliation of II Kings 25:8 and Jeremiah 52:12. We both agree that Nebuzar-adan came to Jerusalem (at least to the outskirts) on Av 7. He entered the city itself on Av 10, the day of the tragic destruction of the Temple, as well as all the other major structures within the city. Glenn Moore is certainly free to believe however he chooses with regard to the day on which the Temple was destroyed ... or even the day on which the flames *first* began to consume the Temple; however, according to Jeremiah, the Temple

⁵ Taken from "Alleged Bible Contradictions," author unknown. The entire article can be read online by accessing the following website: <http://www.scribd.com/doc/12363029/Alleged-Bible-Contradictions>. Although I am uncertain of the author's identity, his argument is sound and concise.

could not have been set on fire a moment before the 10th day of the month. I thus continue to maintain, as expressed previously, that for anyone to suggest that the Temple was destroyed a day earlier than the 10th is nothing short of a blatant disregard of the Scriptural account, and anyone claiming that the Temple was destroyed the day before the weekly Sabbath is adding to the Word (since the word “Sabbath” is nowhere mentioned in the Scriptural accounts of the Temple’s destruction).

The author of the “Alleged Bible Contradictions” article also addresses a point that I had mentioned in the original version of this chapter — the fact that Josephus describes a Temple that was *untouched by fire on Av 9*. In fact, if you follow along with Josephus’ account, you will find that the Temple wasn’t set on fire until at least the second hour of the day on Av 10 (i.e., between 7:00 - 8:00 AM). Thus, not only is the Scriptural account at variance with the author of the *Seder Olam*, but so is the account authored by first-century Jewish historian Josephus. We have already seen from Scripture that the first Temple was still standing on the 9th of Av. According to Josephus, the *second* Temple was *also* still standing on the 9th of Av! For us to fully present this fact, we would need to devote several pages to quoting Josephus’ account. In the interest of conserving space, we will spare you the complete details, and instead quote only from the pertinent portions of Josephus’ record, which is found in *The Wars of the Jews*, Book VI, chapter IV. In section 1 of chapter IV, we read that two of the Roman legions completed their banks against the wall of Jerusalem on the 8th day of the month:

1. And now two of the legions had completed their banks on the **eighth day of the month Lous [Ab]**.⁶

According to Glenn, the day on which the Romans completed their banks, the 8th day, was a weekly Sabbath, and the following day the Temple was destroyed. Is this how Josephus remembered it? No, according to Josephus the Temple was *not* destroyed the next day. We should keep in mind that Josephus was present when these events occurred, so he should have known! How do we know that Josephus didn’t record the Temple’s destruction as being on the 9th of Av? Well, if we continue reading Josephus’ account, we learn that eventually the Romans set fire to the gates of Jerusalem. If we presume that the gates were set on fire on the 8th day of the month, we need to bear in mind that these gates continued burning “during that day and the next also.”⁷ Thus, according to Josephus, the gates burned on the 8th and 9th days of the month, yet the Temple was *still standing*.

We then read, in the very next section of this chapter, “But then, on the next day, Titus commanded part of his army to quench the fire, and to make a road for the more easy marching up of the legions, while he himself gathered the commanders together.” Was this “next day” the 9th or the 10th? Josephus doesn’t say, but we can presume that it was still the 9th day of Av. Was the Temple destroyed later that day? No, it wasn’t. As we continue reading, we come to section 4 of this chapter, where Josephus writes, “Now it is true, that on this day the Jews were so weary, and under such consternation, that they refrained from any attacks: but on the next day [Av 10] they gathered their whole force together, and ran upon those that guarded the outward court of the temple, very boldly, through the east gate, and this about the second hour of the day.”

⁶ *The Works of Flavius Josephus*, Volume I, Translated by William Whiston, A. M., *The Wars of the Jews*, Book VI, Ch. IV, sec. 1, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1992, p. 445.

⁷ *Ibid*, sec. 2, p. 446.

This brings us to section five of this chapter. It is in this section that Josephus plainly records the destruction of the first Temple as having occurred on the 10th day of the month (just as recorded by the Prophet Jeremiah):

5. So Titus retired into the tower of Antonia, and resolved to storm the temple the next day, early in the morning, with his whole army, and to encamp round about the holy house. But as for that house, the Almighty had, for certain, long ago doomed it to the fire; and now that fatal day was come, according to the revolution of ages; **it was the tenth day of the month Lous, [Ab,] upon which it was formerly burnt by the king of Babylon;** although these flames took their rise from the Jews themselves, and were occasioned by them; for upon Titus's retiring, the seditious lay still for a little while, and then attacked the Romans again, when those that guarded the holy house fought with those that quenched the fire that was burning the inner [court of the] temple; but these Romans put the Jews to flight, and proceeded as far as the holy house itself. At which time one of the soldiers, without staying for any orders, and without any concern or dread upon him at so great an undertaking, and being hurried on by a certain divine fury, snatched somewhat out of the materials that were on fire, and being lifted up by another soldier, he set fire to a golden window, through which there was a passage to the rooms that were round about the holy house, on the north side of it. As the flames went upward, the Jews made a great clamor, such as so mighty an affliction required, and ran together to prevent it; and now they spared not their lives any longer, nor suffered any thing to restrain their force, since that holy house was perishing, for whose sake it was that they kept such a guard about it.⁸

Thus, we see that both Jeremiah and Josephus regarded the destruction of the first Temple as having occurred on the 10th day of the fifth month, not the 9th, as favored by Glenn Moore, who bases his conclusion on the *Seder Olam*. Moreover, as we read in the above account by Josephus, the second Temple was *also* destroyed on the 10th day of the month, and it wasn't set on fire until sometime after the second hour of the day. In fact, whatever fires had been previously burning had been quenched by that time, and the soldier who set the Temple on fire lit his torch from "materials" that had been burning – not from an already-burning Temple. Josephus affirms his understanding that both Temples were destroyed on the same day (**Av 10**) in the next section of his *Wars* account:

8. Now although any one would justly lament the destruction of such a work as this was, since it was the most admirable of all the works that we have seen or heard of, both for its curious structure and its magnitude, and also for the vast wealth bestowed upon it, as well as for the glorious reputation it had for its holiness; yet might such a one comfort himself with this thought, that it was fate that decreed it so to be, which is inevitable, both as to living creatures, and as to works and places also. However, one cannot but wonder at the accuracy of **this period thereto relating; for the same month and day were now observed, as I said before, wherein the holy house was burnt formerly by the Babylonians.**⁹

Josephus has already explained to his reading audience that the first Temple was destroyed on Av 10, and here he is telling us that the second Temple was destroyed on that same "month and day." We thus see that, contrary to Glenn's expressed belief, which is based upon the trust he puts in the writings of the *Seder Olam*, both Scripture and the Jewish historian Josephus attribute the date of both Temples'

⁸ Ibid, sec. 5, pp. 448-449.

⁹ Ibid, sec. 8, p. 450.

destructions to the 10th day of Av, not the 9th day of Av. Needless to say, since we cannot rely on the *Seder Olam* for the day of the month on which the Temple was destroyed, how can we trust it for affirming either the day of the Sabbath or whether or not that year was a Sabbatical year? Obviously, the *Seder Olam* is hardly a document that any of us should use to declare *any* year as a “known Sabbatical year,” but at the same time, since this *is* a work that Glenn Moore trusts for promoting the year 68/69 CE as a “known Sabbatical year,” it is worth noting that the scholarly community has demonstrated that the Hebrew word *motsae* was incorrectly translated by Benedict Zuckermann, the man in whose translation Glenn has placed his trust.

What I find especially interesting is Glenn’s open display of “selective scholarship” as it relates to his use of Josephus’ writings. On the one hand, Glenn makes extensive use of Josephus in coming up with what Glenn terms “known Sabbatical years.” For example, note the following excerpt from Glenn’s “Answers to Objections,” in which he claims to produce evidence that the Temple was destroyed in a post-Sabbatical year:

✕177 (136/35 BCE) is a known Sabbatical Year based upon Josephus, Antiquities, xiii, 8, 1. (See A Treatise on the Sabbatical Cycle and the Jubilee, p. 46-48, Benedict Zuckermann, Hermon Press, NY., 1866 (Reprinted in 1974).

^275 (38/37 BCE) is a known Sabbatical Year based upon Josephus, Antiquities, xiv., 16, 2.; Antiquities xv., 1, 2.; and Clinton, Fasti Hellenici, iii, 220. (See A Treatise on the Sabbatical Cycle and the Jubilee, p. 45-46, Benedict Zuckermann, Hermon Press, NY., 1866 (Reprinted in 1974). In this year Herod attacks and takes Jerusalem.¹⁰

A trademark of selective scholarship is to call upon a scholar (or someone whom an author may *consider* to be a scholar) when something that scholar wrote may seem to validate a certain belief that we hold dear, but then ignore (or even disparage) that same scholar when he testifies against another equally precious conviction. Glenn calls upon Josephus for support in validating his notion pertaining to “known Sabbatical years,” but *completely ignores* Josephus’ testimony that it was well into the 10th day of the fifth month when the second Temple was set on fire.¹¹

I have only commented on two of Glenn Moore’s seven “points,” but by now it should be clear to anyone who re-reads his “points” that there is really no need for me to comment any further. My previous paragraph pretty much sums up the dilemma faced by Glenn: The *Seder Olam* is at variance with both Scripture and the men who actually witnessed the destruction of both Temples: Jeremiah and Josephus. Both of these men were there; the author of the *Seder Olam* was not. Whose writings would *you* trust? Those of the eyewitnesses or those of a man who wrote about it nearly a century later?

Glenn goes on to explain why, in this instance, he trusts the writings found in the Talmud:

¹⁰ From the “Answers to Objections” page of Glenn Moore’s web site. This question/answer was updated between March 16th and March 20, 2009, and the page may be read in its entirety by accessing the following URL:

http://www.itsaboutthattime.net/answer_objections.htm.

¹¹ To be fair, Glenn eventually responded to this charge, but surprisingly, he concludes that Josephus describes that the destruction of the 2nd Temple began on Av 9, not Av 10. For a more in-depth treatment of Glenn’s rebuttal, please see Part II, chapter 11, entitled “[Glenn Defends His Use of Josephus’ Writings](#).”

Counting the days from the first possible sighting of the crescent moon until the 9th of Av, 421 BCE (which is 490 years prior to 70 CE) we find a strange coincidence--the 9th of Av falls on a Sunday, just as it did in 70 CE. Now we know that the first temple was destroyed about 586 or 587 BCE. The Talmud is not always a reliable source of historical information. However, it is likely that these are not coincidences, but instead show the actual calendar date for the destruction of these two temples *did indeed* take place on the 9th of Av. And since we know that the 9th of Av in both of these dates was most likely a Sunday, that would indicate the translation of Seder Olam is more likely to be "after the Sabbath" instead of "at the end of the Sabbath."--for the astronomical observation shows it to be "after the Sabbath!"¹²

I find it fascinating that Glenn, albeit in clandestine fashion, reveals that he isn't *certain* of any of the information he provides above. He uses the words "likely," "most likely" and "more likely," respectively, while promoting his perspective of truth. When we say something is *likely*, this effectively means that we aren't *certain* of its veracity. The reader is left, then, with a less-than-confident promotion of Glenn's *theory*. Glenn dubs his theory as being a "likely" possibility, then concludes that since his theory is "likely true," it must be an established fact. In the final analysis of Glenn's commentary above, he puts the date found in the Talmud (the 9th of Av) over and above the date given by Scripture (the 10th of Av).

Karaite Jew Nehemia Gordon recognizes that the Talmud is *not* the best resource to turn to when validating one's belief pertaining to the Jubilee Cycle. After all, as he points out, the rabbis admit in the Talmud that they *abolished* the Jubilee after the destruction of the Second Temple:

In the Torah, the Jubilee year is the fiftieth year following seven Sabbatical cycles. The fifty-first year is then the beginning of the next Sabbatical cycle after the Jubilee. All of the rival rabbinical traditions about the timing of the Sabbatical year disregard the Jubilee, creating a perpetual count of seven-year cycles. The result is a non-Torah system of counting the Sabbatical and Jubilee years. The rabbis themselves admit in the Talmud that they *abolished the Jubilee after the destruction of the Second Temple*. As a result the perpetual cycle of Sabbatical years observed by many Jews in Israel today is actually one of the Takanot or rabbinical enactments.¹³

Based on what we have just demonstrated, we can see that Glenn Moore's misplaced trust in the *Seder Olam* and the Talmud leads him to reach the following dogmatic conclusion:

Regardless of the linguistic arguments surrounding the meaning of the word *motsae*, the second temple (based upon that text) *could not* have been destroyed in a Sabbatical year, anymore than it could have been destroyed on the Sabbath day--for the direct astronomical evidence shows that the day of the week it was actually destroyed on was a Sunday, the day "after the Sabbath." That means also that the year it was destroyed was a *post-sabbatical* year.

Again, for those of us who prefer to go by the dates offered by Scripture (dates which were corroborated by eyewitnesses), we don't need to worry about having to redefine a Hebrew word (as Glenn does with the word *motsae*) in order to make it fit our doctrinal stand.

¹² Taken from Glenn Moore's website page entitled "Answers to Objections," located at http://www.itsaboutthattime.net/answer_objections.htm. This particular objection was added sometime between March 1st and March 6, 2009.

¹³ Nehemia Gordon, from Karaite Korner Newsletter #369, "Sabbatical Year and Aviv," 03/06/2009.

I find it interesting that Glenn, who has been following along with the progress of this study, remains steadfastly adamant over my abject failure to cover II Kings 25 in the original version of this chapter, yet chooses to ignore the above testimony of Josephus, whom Glenn must certainly regard as a confused eyewitness or, worse yet, a lying eyewitness.¹⁴ Instead, Glenn focuses on the fact that I failed to include a commentary regarding II Kings 25 in our original chapter. Here is Glenn's latest revised paragraph:

Now I would like to ask a question of my own: How is it that the previously cited author would state that my study regarding this was a "blatant disregard of the Scriptural account," while simultaneously ignoring the other parallel account in 2 Kings 25, which says it happened on the 7th day of the 5th month? Obviously, the author of that quote has failed in the very area in which he has accused me--a blatant disregard of both of these Scriptural accounts. His response is that he does "not believe . . . there was any need for [himself] to include the passage from II Kings." However, it is apparent that he failed to include the other text in his original analysis. But it is clear from reading these two texts that they are both parallel texts that directly address this issue! Therefore, the inclusion of both in this study is of vital importance. Regardless of which date we believe is of premier importance regarding the destruction of the first temple (the 7th or the 10th), these conflicting texts naturally require us to reconcile them and not just assume that one or the other is the actual date that the destruction of the temple began.¹⁵

My response to Glenn: First of all, if you wish to say that it is "apparent" that I failed to include the other text (II Kings 25:8-9) in my original analysis, that is your prerogative based upon your perception of my "analysis." Your judgment is wrong, but thankfully the only One Who needs to know for sure is our Heavenly Father. If you wish to try to "get into my mind" and determine how my reasoning/analytical process works, and that I failed to even *consider* II Kings 25:8-9 in my original commentary, then go right ahead! From my perspective, your assessment about my analytical process is about as accurate as your judgment that it would ("apparently") not be possible for me to produce a table containing exactly 70 Sabbatical/Jubilee years within a period of only 430 years (using 50 year cycles in place of 49 year cycles). We both know how *that* one ended (yes, you broke your vow to "heartily embrace the 50 year cycles and abandon the 49 year cycles."¹⁶ Thus, Glenn, you're just going to have to believe me when I say that, indeed, I deliberated over whether or not to incorporate II Kings 25:8-9 into my original commentary pertaining to the date on which the first Temple was destroyed. In the end, I concluded (*as I still maintain*) that the testimony of Jeremiah is sufficient to prove that the first Temple was still standing

¹⁴ Although for several weeks Glenn remained silent regarding Josephus' testimony about the date on which the Temple was destroyed, he eventually produced an explanation ... but an explanation that defies all logic: Even though Josephus plainly wrote that both Temples were destroyed on Av 10, and that the torch which served as the catalyst of the second Temple's fire wasn't lit until the second hour of that 10th day, Glenn maintains that the fire *actually began* on the 9th ... and strangest of all, Glenn believes that this is what Josephus actually wrote. Thus, I was mistaken in presuming that Glenn "must" regard Josephus as being either a liar or a confused eyewitness. I had not considered the possibility that Glenn might reinterpret or otherwise subvert Josephus' writings. For more details, please read Part II, chapter 11 "Should We Be Alarmed Regarding Glenn's 'Selective Scholarship'?", the section entitled "[Selective Scholarship and Glenn's Use of Josephus' Writings.](#)"

¹⁵ Taken from Glenn Moore's website page entitled "Answers to Objections," located at http://www.itsaboutthattime.net/answer_objections.htm. This particular objection was added on March 16, 2009, and as of August 2009, it is still there.

¹⁶ See Part I, Chapter 7 "The Prophecy of Daniel 9," specifically the section entitled "[Glenn Moore's Response to Our Interpretation of Daniel 9... And His Rash Vow \(Which He Chose to Break\).](#)"

on Av 9. Thus, in the final analysis, your argument is with Jeremiah, not with me. Nevertheless, in order to accommodate your need that I *also* address II Kings 25:8-9, I have now done so. If my incorporating a commentary on this passage will allow us to move on, then wonderful. If it's important to you, then it's worthy of my consideration, so I have now accommodated your need.¹⁷

As I move on, I can only wonder why Glenn, in his commentary above, writes that II Kings 25:8-9 and Jeremiah 52:12-13 are “conflicting texts”? Indeed, I believe I have succeeded in demonstrating that they are *not* conflicting texts at all. As I have shown, II Kings 25:8-9 reveals the date when Nebuzar-adan came unto Jerusalem (Av 7). It doesn't say he “came into” Jerusalem on that date. Jeremiah 52:12-13 explains when he “came into” Jerusalem (Av 10) and what he did upon entering the city. I have never regarded the two texts as “conflicting texts.” As alluded to earlier, when we give “highest consideration” to a text other than Scripture, as Glenn does to the Talmud, it follows that certain texts of Scripture that are at variance with any such text will be regarded as “conflicting texts.”¹⁸

The bottom line is this: If we had no Scriptural text other than II Kings 25:8-9 to refer to with regard to the date of the first Temple's destruction, it would not be considered unreasonable (*though certainly not conclusive*) to regard the Talmud's date of Av 9 as a possible candidate. Of course, since that passage only references Av 7, the date Av 7 or even Av 8 would *also* be possible candidates! However, the fact of the matter is, we *do* have another Scriptural text that addresses the general time frame of the first Temple's destruction, and that text is the account provided by the Prophet Jeremiah, who validates that the Temple was still standing, untouched by fire, on Av 9. Since Nebuzar-adan didn't come into Jerusalem until Av 10, and since he didn't burn the House of Yahweh until *after* he came into Jerusalem, it is plain that Jeremiah intended for his readers to understand that the Temple was still fully intact throughout the day of Av 9.

¹⁷ Apparently, my decision to accommodate Glenn by addressing II Kings 25:8-9 didn't satisfy him. On his web site, he continues to berate me (I'm now known as the “*loyal opposition*”) for “failing” to address II Kings 25:8-9 in my original commentary pertaining to the destruction of the first Temple. As of July 26, 2009, Glenn still proclaims his original criticism, but with an additional charge (underlined): “... the author of that quote has failed in the very area in which he has accused me—a blatant disregard of *both* of these Scriptural accounts. His response is that he does ‘not believe . . . there was any need for [himself] to include the passage from II Kings.’ However, it is apparent that he failed to include the other text in his original analysis. But it is clear from reading these two texts that they are *both direct parallel texts* that directly address this issue! Therefore, the inclusion of *both* in this study is of vital importance. Regardless of *which* date we believe is of premier importance regarding the destruction of the first temple (the 7th or the 10th), these *apparently conflicting texts naturally require us to reconcile them and not just assume that one or the other is the actual date that the destruction of the temple began.*”

¹⁸ Glenn later modified his commentary so as to read “*apparently conflicting texts.*” While this modification may appease some of his readers, it certainly does not satisfy us. As we have already explained in this chapter, we do not regard II Kings 25:8-9 and Jeremiah 52:12-13 as being conflicting texts *at all*, nor do we regard them as being “apparently” conflicting. They are easily reconciled without any need to perceive a “conflict” ... unless one wants to attempt to make a case for an Av 9 destruction of the Temple.