



## Sunday, November 27, 2022

**Lesson Text:** Leviticus 25:1-12; **Time of Action:** 1445 B.C.;  
**Place of Action:** Mount Sinai

**Golden Text:** "And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubile unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family" (Leviticus 25:10).

**I. INTRODUCTION.** Regularly allowing one's land to rest was a practice God prescribed for the people of Israel when they entered the Promised Land. Ancient Israel was primarily an agricultural economy. God instituted two laws concerning land management to teach His people that all the land was His and that they were only tenants who used it during their sojourn here on earth (see Leviticus 25:23). Unlike many of the feasts or festivals prescribed by God for Israel to observe, the Year of Jubilee was a time to refrain from doing certain things, restoring lands, and releasing people from debts and servitude. It was also a time of rejoicing for God's provision for His people. It was really a special kind of Sabbath, not for resting from work on the seventh day, but for giving the land rest during the seventh year, and then a special jubilee rest on the fiftieth year after "*seven times seven years*" (see Leviticus 25:8). Like the laws concerning the firstfruits (see Leviticus 23:9-14), the laws for the Sabbatical Year and the Year of Jubilee were intended to



be times of joy and remembrance of God for His mercy and provision.

**II. BACKGROUND FOR THE LESSON.** Three months after the children of Israel left Egypt, they arrived at Mount Sinai (see Exodus 19:1-2). They were there about a year (see Numbers 1:1) receiving instructions for the tabernacle, the priests, and the various laws from God that we have in Exodus and Leviticus. Included in the laws God gave to Moses to give to His people were seven different feasts or celebrations that Israel was to observe (see Leviticus 23:4-44). In Leviticus chapter 24, God gave Moses instructions for oil for the lamp in the tabernacle (see Leviticus 24:1-4) and for making the showbread (see Leviticus 24:5-9). Then God gave instructions on dealing with blasphemy and the penalty for it (see Leviticus 24:10-16, 23), and the penalty for killing someone (see Leviticus 24:17-22). Our lesson text begins with chapter 25.

### **III. KEEPING A SABBATH FOR THE LAND (Leviticus 25:1-7)**

#### **A. God commands Israel to observe the Sabbath Year (Leviticus 25:1-2).**

**1. (vs. 1).** Our first verse says "**And the LORD**



**spake unto Moses in mount Sinai, saying."** This verse introduces the instructions God is about to give to "**Moses**" concerning the Sabbatical Year and the Year of Jubilee.

**2. (vs. 2).** In this verse God commands Moses to "**Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the land which I give you, then shall the land keep a sabbath unto the LORD.**" The instructions God was about to give to Moses were intended for the people of Israel. When Moses spoke to them, he was to tell the people that when they entered the "**land**" of Canaan which "**the LORD**" had given them, "**the land**" itself was supposed to "**keep a sabbath unto the LORD.**" In other words, the people were supposed to let the land rest without any planting. The Sabbath day was primarily a day of rest for the Jews. The word "**Sabbath**" comes from the Hebrew word *shabbath*, and it means "*to cease from labor, or to rest.*" It does not mean "*seventh*" as some have claimed.

**Note:** *While on Mount Sinai, God had earlier given Moses the Ten Commandments which included "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it" (see Exodus 20:8-11). Since the LORD rested from His work on the seventh day or the Sabbath (see Genesis 2:2-3),*



***He also intended for His people to rest on the Sabbath. Now it was God's intent for this command to include the land itself.***

**B. The six years of work (Leviticus 25:3).** This verse, goes on to say **"Six years thou shalt sow thy field, and six years thou shalt prune thy vineyard, and gather in the fruit thereof."** The LORD commanded that once the people occupied the land of Canaan, they were to **"sow"** or plant their **"fields and...prune"** their **"vineyards"** and **"gather in the fruit thereof"** meaning they were to take in the produce from the **"vineyards"** and the **"fields."** They were supposed to do this for **"six years."**

### **C. The seventh year of rest (Leviticus 25:4-5).**

1. (vs. 4). This verse says, **"But in the seventh year shall be a sabbath of rest unto the land, a sabbath for the LORD: thou shalt neither sow thy field, nor prune thy vineyard."** God then says **"But in the seventh year"** of planting and pruning, the people were to observe **"a sabbath of rest unto the land, a sabbath for the LORD."** In other words, the people were to allow the **"land"** to **"rest"** by not planting crops or caring for their vineyards in that **"seventh year."** The fact that it was **"a sabbath for the LORD"** means that it was to honor God. **Note:**

***Allowing "the land" to lay fallow or rest during the sabbatical year or "the seventh year" was a sound agricultural practice. It permitted the land to replenish its nutrients for the next six year planting cycle. The Sabbatical Year was also a year set apart to***



***the LORD to remind the people to take these Sabbath Year cycles seriously and trust Him for provisions in the year they couldn't plant any crops.***

2. (vs. 5). The LORD continued to say in this verse, **"That which groweth of its own accord of thy harvest thou shalt not reap, neither gather the grapes of thy vine undressed: for it is a year of rest unto the land."** God knew that during the seventh year, some crops and vineyards would **"groweth of its own accord"** meaning that **"the land"** would still produce on its own from previous plantings, so He gave the people instructions on what to do in that case. God said **"That which groweth of its own accord of thy harvest thou shalt not reap, neither gather the grapes of thy vine undressed."** They could not harvest or store away any crops that came up on their own during that seventh year, nor could they process any **"grapes"** that appeared on the un-pruned vines. God said the reason was **"for it is a year of rest unto the land."** They were to let **"the land... rest"** for **"a year."**

#### **D. Food in the seventh year (Leviticus 25:6-7).**

1. (vs. 6). This verse says **"And the sabbath of the land shall be meat for you; for thee, and for thy servant, and for thy maid, and for thy hired servant, and for thy stranger that sojourneth with thee."** Although the people couldn't formally harvest any crops or prune vineyards that produced on their own, God said that what came up on its own during the seventh year or **"the sabbath of the land shall be meat for you; for thee, and**



**for thy servant, and for thy maid, and for thy hired servant, and for thy stranger that sojourneth with thee."** In other words, the people were allowed to pick and eat the edibles that grew on its own from the fields and vineyards. However, they were not to harvest it or store it away. This food was also for any servants, hired workers, or foreigners who lived in the land. It was to be available for everybody. **Note:** *The people were told that any produce they found growing on its own during the seventh year would be their "meat" or food, but since they couldn't plant during the seventh year, we might wonder where they would get food during the next or eighth year. God also provided for that. The LORD promised His people abundance if they obeyed His instructions saying "Wherefore ye shall do my statutes, and keep my judgments, and do them; and ye shall dwell in the land in safety. And the land shall yield her fruit, and ye shall eat your fill, and dwell therein in safety. And if ye shall say, What shall we eat the seventh year? behold, we shall not sow, nor gather in our increase: Then I will command my blessing upon you in the sixth year, and it shall bring forth fruit for three years. And ye shall sow the eighth year, and eat yet of old fruit until the ninth year; until her fruits come in ye shall eat of the old store" (see Leviticus 25:18-22). The crops they harvested in the sixth year would be so much that it would be enough for that year and two more years. The law of the Sabbatical Year first appears in Exodus, indicating that it was established to help the poor (see Exodus 23:10-12). During the Sabbatical Year, people were to be released from any debts (see Deuteronomy 15:1-6) and the Law was supposed to be read to all the*



*people (see Deuteronomy 31:10-13). Another interesting thing we should take note of concerning the Sabbatical or seventh Year is that God used it to determine how long the Babylonian Captivity would last. The number of times the people failed to observe the seventh year would determine their length of time in captivity. Apparently, the Israelites failed to keep or observe the Sabbath Years for 490 years, or 70 Sabbath Years ( $70 \times 7 = 490$ ). Therefore, God put His people in Babylonia Captivity for 70 years. This time period would allow the land to lay desolate and get the rest from cultivation that it should have (see Leviticus 26:31-34; II Chronicles 36:19-21). There's no doubt that God intended the Sabbath Year to be a very important time in the lives of the Israelites.*

2. (vs. 7). This verse says **"And for thy cattle, and for the beast that are in thy land, shall all the increase thereof be meat."** Not only was any food produced by the uncultivated land be for every person, the LORD said that it was also food **"for thy cattle, and for the beast that are in thy land"** meaning all the animals in Israel. The phrase **"all the increase thereof be meat"** means that whatever the land produces on its own during the seventh or sabbatical year shall **"be meat"** or food.

#### IV. OBSERVING THE YEAR OF JUBILEE (Leviticus 25:8-12)



**A. Calculating the Year of Jubilee (Leviticus 25:8).** This verse says **"And thou shalt number seven sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years; and the space of the seven sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years."** In addition to the Sabbath Year, the people were also to celebrate the Year of Jubilee. This year would be determined when the people would count or **"number seven sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years."** As already noted, a Sabbath year was the seventh year. The people were to count seven sabbatical years or **"seven times seven years."** This would equal 49 years, or as this verse says **"the space of the seven sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years."**

**B. Announcing the Year of Jubilee (Leviticus 25:9).** This verse goes on to say **"Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubile to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the Day of Atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land.** In the 49th year, **"on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the day of atonement** the people were to blow the **"trumpet of the jubilee"** throughout the whole land of Israel. The Hebrew **"trumpet"** was actually a ram's horn or a *"shofar."* Blowing this instrument would announce the beginning of the Year of Jubilee. The **"seventh month"** on the Hebrew calendar is Tishri which is comparable to our September-November. **"The day of atonement"** was the greatest day of the year for Israel. The Hebrew word for *"atone"* means *"to cover."* Old Testament sacrifices could not actually remove sins, only cover them. On the **"day of**





**atonement**" which fell on the **"tenth day of the seventh month,"** the people confessed their sins as a nation and the high priest went into the Holy of Holies (Most Holy Place) in the tabernacle to make **"atonement"** for them. Sacrifices were made and animal blood was shed so that the people's sins could be *"covered"* (see Psalms 32:1; Romans 4:6-7) in anticipation of Christ's sacrifice which finally put away their sins forever (see Leviticus chapter 16; Hebrews 10:4). No matter what day of the week the **"day of atonement"** fell on it was a holy convocation or a sabbath day because no work could be done on that day (see Leviticus 23:26-32).

**C. Restoration during the Year of Jubilee (Leviticus 25:10).** This verse says **"And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubile unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family."** The Year of Jubilee would be the **"fiftieth year"** after the people counted 7 seven year periods (see verse 8). The next **"year"** was the **"fiftieth year."** Because of the importance of this particular **"year,"** God said the people **"shall hallow"** or set it apart unto the LORD. The general purpose of the **"Year of Jubilee"** was to **"proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof."** Everyone was included; there were no exceptions. This time of **"liberty"** was to be a time of celebration and restoration of property and family. God said **"ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family."** In other words, all property purchased from another in the previous 49 years



had to be returned to the original owner in the **"fiftieth year."** This **"Jubilee"** Year was a nationwide release of people from their debts and servitude or slavery. If a person had to sell his property because of poverty, that land had to be returned to them. And anyone who may have had to sell themselves into slavery because of poverty had to be released to return to their families. **Note: *Each tribe and family of Israel received a permanent land allotment when they entered Canaan (see Numbers 26:1-56). The people could sell their land and their homes, but the sale was like a long-term lease. Every "fiftieth year," land and homes outside walled cities, except homes belonging to Levites (see Leviticus 25:32-33) had to be returned to the original owners or to their descendants. Sometimes an Israelite would become an indentured servant to pay off a debt (see Leviticus 25:39-40). Whenever that happened, in the "Jubilee Year," that servant was to be released and returned to his family (see Leviticus 25:41). This was a reminder that all Israelites were God's servants (see Leviticus 25:42), and this prevented them from taking advantage of their fellow countrymen (see Leviticus 25:43). There was one exception to the provision that all property had to be returned to its original owner in the Year of "Jubilee." The exception was for houses inside walled cities. If someone sold his house that was inside a walled city, he could redeem it or buy it back after one year. But if he does not buy it back after a year, the house becomes the property of the one who bought it throughout their generations (see Leviticus 25:29-30). The provision of the "Jubilee" Year recognized God as the real owner the land (see Psalms 24:1), and***



*prevented wealthier Jews from exploiting, or oppressing their poor brethren (see Leviticus 25:14, 17). The LORD wanted to prevent the establishment of a permanent underclass of homeless, poverty-stricken citizens in Israel. The truth is that if God didn't establish the Year of "Jubilee" many people would never be able to work their way out of debt or servitude. God didn't want a permanent slave class to develop among His people. Nor did He want families to permanently lose their inheritance of land that He had given them when the nation entered the Promised Land (see I Kings 21:1-24). "Jubilee" was God's prescribed way of preventing those evils. The Year of Jubilee guaranteed families would never permanently lose their original land allotments from God. In the Year of "Jubilee" families that had lost homes and lands because of poverty regained their property and could start over.*

#### **D. Agriculture during the Year of Jubilee (Leviticus 25:11-12).**

**1. (vs. 11).** This verse says "A jubile shall that fiftieth year be unto you: ye shall not sow, neither reap that which groweth of itself in it, nor gather the grapes in it of thy vine undressed." Like the Sabbath year (every seven years), God said that the Year of "Jubilee" or every "fiftieth year" the people could not "sow" or plant; nor could they "reap" or harvest anything that grows "by itself." In addition, they could not "gather the grapes in it of thy vine undressed" meaning uncultivated. Since the



Year of "**Jubilee**" was the "**fiftieth year,**" that means it was the second straight "**year**" of rest for the land. Remember, the 49<sup>th</sup> year was also a "**year**" to let the land rest or lay fallow. This means that the LORD would supply enough food from the crops of the 48<sup>th</sup> year to last for four years until a new crop was ready for harvesting.

**2. (vs. 12).** Our final verse says "**For it is the jubile; it shall be holy unto you: ye shall eat the increase thereof out of the field.**" Again (see verse 10), God reminded the people that "**the jubile; it shall be holy unto you.**" It was to be set aside as a "**holy**" event set apart unto God as the people concentrated on what He had done for them. **Note: *Both the Sabbatical Years and the Year of "Jubilee" were joyous times for the people as they remembered God's care and provision for them even when they didn't plant any crops. They would be joyful when land that had been sold was returned to the original owners so that they would not be forever in poverty. They would be joyful when hired servants were returned to their families and not continue in servitude. These events would be both a joyous and "holy" time for God's people.***

**V. Conclusion.** As New Testament believers we are not bound by the requirements of the Sabbatical Year or the Year of Jubilee. But we may ask, do the requirements of these two celebrations have any practical benefit for us? Yes they do! First, both celebrations remind us of the seven-day work and



rest cycle the LORD intended for everyone. Of course, we aren't bound to obey the Sabbath Day regulations, but one day of rest out of seven is a very good pattern for people to follow. Second, both celebrations remind us that the LORD provides for our needs. The Israelites had to trust God for food during the years they didn't plant crops. Likewise, we might not see where the money will come from when we are hit with an unexpected bill, but the LORD promised that if we are *obedient* to Him, He will meet our needs (see Matthew 6:30-33; Philippians 4:19). Third, both celebrations remind us that we should care for others, especially believers (see Galatians 6:10; James 2:15-16). Fourth, both celebrations remind us that every day events should be holy for us. We should not separate our lives into secular and sacred times. All matters of the Christian's life, even how we spend money or what we do for entertainment should be in our sacred category. The Holy Scriptures should direct everything we do—everything! Last but not least, both celebrations remind us that obedience to God brings joy. There's a difference between joy and happiness. In Jesus Christ, we can experience joy regardless of our circumstances, but happiness depends on our circumstances (see Romans 5:10-12; 15:13; II Corinthians 7:4; I Thessalonians 1:6; James 1:1-3). For New Testament believers, or Christians, the Israelite Year of Jubilee can be a profound reminder that God does not want any of us to live in spiritual servitude. In Christ, He has set us free from slavery to sin under which we were held in darkness. And we don't have to wait until a fiftieth year comes by to experience our freedom (see John 8:32, 36). Our freedom begins now; it will be complete when we see Him. That will truly be a time of great celebration!



Sunday, November 27, 2022: "Obedience in Celebration"  
Commentary (The UGP Curriculum)

**\*\*\*The Sunday School Lesson; Union Gospel Press  
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