

Leviticus 25

Verses 1- 7

The Lord then spoke to Moses at Mount Sinai, saying, ²“Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, ‘When you come into the land which I shall give you, then the land shall have a Sabbath to the Lord. ³Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard and gather in its crop, ⁴but during the seventh year the land shall have a Sabbath rest, a Sabbath to the Lord; you shall not sow your field nor prune your vineyard. ⁵Your harvest’s after growth you shall not reap, and your grapes of untrimmed vines you shall not gather; the land shall have a sabbatical year. ⁶All of you shall have the Sabbath *products* of the land for food; yourself, and your male and female slaves, and your hired man and your foreign resident, those who live as aliens with you. ⁷Even your cattle and the animals that are in your land shall have all its crops to eat.

²“Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, ‘When you come into the land which I shall give you, then the land shall have a Sabbath to the Lord.

This law would not take effect for about 60 years.

See Pic 2505

When the "Sabbath year law" takes Effect

Israel went into the wilderness in 1446
and have been there for 1 year (1445 BC)

Event	Date	Years	
In the Wilderness	1445	- 39	1406
Conquer Canaan	1406	- 7	1399
Divide the land	1399	- 7	1392
Sabbath rest	1392	- 6	1386

The first Sabbath rest will take place around 1386 BC
59 years from the time of this chapter

³ Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard and gather in its crop, ⁴ but during the seventh year the land shall have a Sabbath rest, a Sabbath to the Lord; you shall not sow your field nor prune your vineyard.

The Jews ignored this law more than they obeyed it.

See 2 Chron. 36:20 - 21

²⁰ He took into exile those who had escaped from the sword to Babylon; and they were servants to him and to his sons until the rule of the kingdom of Persia, ²¹ to fulfill the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed its Sabbaths. All the days of its desolation it kept the Sabbath until seventy years were complete.

The Jews were in captivity for 70 years in Babylon and during that time the land in Israel received the 70 years of Sabbath rest that it had been denied over the last 800 years (1386 - 586 = 800). This means the Jews had only kept the Sabbath year of rest 44 times.

⁶ All of you shall have the Sabbath products of the land for food; yourself, and your male and female slaves, and your hired man and your foreign resident, those who live as aliens with you. ⁷ Even your cattle and the animals that are in your land shall have all its crops to eat.

What grew of its own accord could be used for food but no reaping was allowed. This was intended for the Jews, slaves, hired men, the foreign resident and even the cattle and the animals in the land.

Verses 8 - 12

⁸ 'You are also to count off seven Sabbaths of years for yourself, seven times seven years, so that you have the time of the seven Sabbaths of years, *namely*, forty-nine years. ⁹ You shall then sound a ram's horn abroad on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the Day of Atonement you shall sound a horn all through your land. ¹⁰ You shall thus consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim a release through the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you, and each of you shall return to his own property, and each of you shall return to his family. ¹¹ You shall have the fiftieth year as a jubilee; you shall not sow, nor reap its after growth, nor gather in *from* its untrimmed vines. ¹² For it is a jubilee; it shall be holy to you. You shall eat its crops out of the field.

⁸ **‘You are also to count off seven Sabbaths of years for yourself, seven times seven years, so that you have the time of the seven Sabbaths of years, *namely*, forty-nine years.**

The year of Jubilee followed the seventh sabbatical year, so there were back to back sabbatical years (Year 49 and year 50).

⁹ **You shall then sound a ram’s horn abroad on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the Day of Atonement you shall sound a horn all through your land.**

The calendar date would be 7-10

See Pic 2510

Jewish Feasts						
Feast	Scripture	Date Observed	Roman Calendar	Sabbath	Offerings	Commemorates
Day of Atonement	Lev. 23:26-32	Tishri 10	Sept/Oct	Sabbath	Numbers 29:7-11	Forgiveness of sin for the nation

¹⁰ **You shall thus consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim a release through the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you, and each of you shall return to his own property, and each of you shall return to his family.**

Every 50 years was a Jubilee.

The 7 year Sabbath included releasing slaves and allowing the land to rest. The Jubilee added the requirement of returning land to its original family. In this way the Jubilee prevented the building of greater and greater estates.

Engraved on the Liberty Bell are the words:

"Proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all inhabitants thereof."

These words were taken from this verse and they were a powerful motivation in the Revolutionary War.

¹¹ You shall have the fiftieth year as a jubilee; you shall not sow, nor reap its after growth, nor gather in *from* its untrimmed vines. ¹² For it is a jubilee; it shall be holy to you. You shall eat its crops out of the field.

Like the Sabbath year they could eat the crops (what grew naturally) but they could not sow or reap.

Verses 13 - 17

¹³ ‘On this year of jubilee each of you shall return to his own property. ¹⁴ If you make a sale, moreover, to your friend or buy from your friend’s hand, you shall not wrong one another. ¹⁵ Corresponding to the number of years after the jubilee, you shall buy from your friend; he is to sell to you according to the number of years of crops. ¹⁶ In proportion to the extent of the years you shall increase its price, and in proportion to the fewness of the years you shall diminish its price, for *it is* a number of crops he is selling to you. ¹⁷ So you shall not wrong one another, but you shall fear your God; for I am the Lord your God.

¹⁵ Corresponding to the number of years after the jubilee, you shall buy from your friend; he is to sell to you according to the number of years of crops. ¹⁶ In proportion to the extent of the years you shall increase its price, and in proportion to the fewness of the years you shall diminish its price, for *it is* a number of crops he is selling to you.

The Israelites could buy or sell land but the land would always go back to the seller at the Jubilee. So the value of the land was based on the number of years to the next Jubilee which could range from 1 to 49.

Verses 18 - 22

¹⁸ ‘You shall thus observe my statutes and keep my judgments, so as to carry them out, that you may live securely on the land. ¹⁹ Then the land will yield its produce, so that you can eat your fill and live securely on it. ²⁰ But if you say, “What are we going to eat on the seventh year if we do not sow or gather in our crops?” ²¹ then I will so order My blessing for you in the sixth year that it will bring forth the crop for three years. ²² When you are sowing the eighth year, you can still eat old things from the crop, eating *the old* until the ninth year when its crop comes in.

¹⁸ ‘You shall thus observe my statutes and keep my judgments, so as to carry them out, that you may live securely on the land.

Israel would only have a right to the land in Canaan as long as they were obedient to the covenant. Israel may claim that they are the "Sons of Abraham" and insist that they have a divine right to the land of Palestine but that is not what the scriptures say.

²⁰ But if you say, “What are we going to eat on the seventh year if we do not sow or gather in our crops?” ²¹ then I will so order My blessing for you in the sixth year that it will bring forth the crop for three years.

Because of the Jubilee their crops would have to last for three years. Year 49 was a sabbatical year, when crops could not be sown or reaped. Year 50 was the Jubilee and crops could not be sown or reaped. In year 51 the crops would be sown in the spring but would not be harvested until later in the year. So in year 48 (the 6th year of the Sabbath year) God would bless them with 3 years’ worth of crops.

The Jews kept the legal part of the Jubilee “the price of land being determined by how many years were left until the next Jubilee” but it would be interesting to know if they ever kept the command not to sow for two full years (years 49 and 50). We know they very seldom kept the Sabbath year so it seems unlikely they would have kept the command not to sow in the year of Jubilee. To do so would have required some faith in God’s promise. Keeping the law was not just a matter of obeying commands, because certain aspects of it required an element of faith.

Verses 23 - 28

²³ ‘The land, moreover, shall not be sold permanently, for the land is Mine; for you are *but* aliens and sojourners with Me. ²⁴ Thus for every piece of your property, you are to provide for the redemption of the land. ²⁵ ‘If a fellow countryman of yours becomes so poor he has to sell part of his property, then his nearest kinsman is to come and buy back what his relative has sold. ²⁶ Or in case a man has no kinsman, but so recovers his means as to find sufficient for its redemption, ²⁷ then he shall calculate the years since its sale and refund the balance to the man to whom he sold it, and so return to his property. ²⁸ But if he has not found sufficient means to get it back for himself, then what he has sold shall remain in the hands of its purchaser until the year of jubilee; but at the jubilee it shall revert, that he may return to his property.

²³ **‘The land, moreover, shall not be sold permanently, for the land is Mine; for you are *but* aliens and sojourners with Me**

God owned the land of Canaan and the Jews were foreigners and temporary residents. God can and has given this land to various nations since 70 AD.

²⁵ **‘If a fellow countryman of yours becomes so poor he has to sell part of his property, then his nearest kinsman is to come and buy back what his relative has sold.**

There were 3 options if someone had to sell part of their land.

1. His nearest kinsman was to buy it back for his relative.

See Ruth 4:9

⁹ **Then Boaz said to the elders and all the people, “You are witnesses today that I have bought from the hand of Naomi all that belonged to Elimelech and all that belonged to Chilion and Mahlon.**

2. If the poor man has no kinsman, but he recovers his means he can buy back what he sold.

3. Or it would come back to him during the Jubilee.

Verses 29 - 34

²⁹ **‘Likewise, if a man sells a dwelling house in a walled city, then his redemption right remains valid until a full year from its sale; his right of redemption lasts a full year. ³⁰ But if it is not bought back for him within the space of a full year, then the house that is in the walled city passes permanently to its purchaser throughout his generations; it does not revert in the jubilee. ³¹ The houses of the villages, however, which have no surrounding wall shall be considered as open fields; they have redemption rights and revert in the jubilee. ³² As for cities of the Levites, the Levites have a permanent right of redemption for the houses of the cities which are their possession. ³³ What, therefore, belongs to the Levites may be redeemed and a house sale in the city of this possession reverts in the jubilee, for the houses of the cities of the Levites are their possession among the sons of Israel. ³⁴ But pasture fields of their cities shall not be sold, for that is their perpetual possession.**

²⁹ **‘Likewise, if a man sells a dwelling house in a walled city, then his redemption right remains valid until a full year from its sale; his right of redemption lasts a full year. ³⁰ But if it is not bought back for him within the space of a full year, then the house that is in the walled city passes permanently to its purchaser throughout his generations; it does not revert in the jubilee.**

A house in a walled city was not treated like land, it had to be bought back within a year or the sale was permanent.

³¹ **The houses of the villages, however, which have no surrounding wall shall be considered as open fields; they have redemption rights and revert in the jubilee.**

Houses of the villages were treated as part of the field, so they reverted in the jubilee.

³² **As for cities of the Levites, the Levites have a permanent right of redemption for the houses of the cities which are their possession.**

This was stipulated as an exception to the rule about a house in a walled city (verse 30). If it was being sold by a Levite, it would return at the Jubilee.

³⁴ **But pasture fields of their cities shall not be sold, for that is their perpetual possession.**

Any field near the city that belonged to a Levite could not be sold.

Verses 35 - 38

³⁵ **‘Now in case a countryman of yours becomes poor and his means with regard to you falter, then you are to sustain him, like a stranger or a sojourner, that he may live with you. ³⁶ Do not take usurious interest from him, but revere your God, that your countryman may live with you. ³⁷ You shall not give him your silver at interest, nor your food for gain. ³⁸ I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt to give you the land of Canaan and to be your God.**

The Jews were to help their fellow countryman that was in need by letting them borrow without interest. God reminds the Jewish people that if He had not helped them, they would still be slaves in Egypt. God expects people who have been blessed to forward that blessing to others that need help.

Verses 39 - 46

³⁹ 'If a countryman of yours becomes so poor with regard to you that he sells himself to you, you shall not subject him to a slave's service. ⁴⁰ He shall be with you as a hired man, as if he were a sojourner; he shall serve with you until the year of jubilee. ⁴¹ He shall then go out from you, he and his sons with him, and shall go back to his family, that he may return to the property of his forefathers. ⁴² For they are my servants whom I brought out from the land of Egypt; they are not to be sold *in* a slave sale. ⁴³ You shall not rule over him with severity, but are to revere your God. ⁴⁴ As for your male and female slaves whom you may have—you may acquire male and female slaves from the pagan nations that are around you. ⁴⁵ Then, too, *it is* out of the sons of the sojourners who live as aliens among you that you may gain acquisition, and out of their families who are with you, whom they will have produced in your land; they also may become your possession. ⁴⁶ You may even bequeath them to your sons after you, to receive as a possession; you can use them as permanent slaves. But in respect to your countrymen, the sons of Israel, you shall not rule with severity over one another.

³⁹ 'If a countryman of yours becomes so poor with regard to you that he sells himself to you, you shall not subject him to a slave's service. ⁴⁰ He shall be with you as a hired man, as if he were a sojourner; he shall serve with you until the year of jubilee.

A Jew could voluntarily give himself up to his creditors but he was not to be treated as a slave. He would become a hired hand, (working for pay so he could pay off his debt) and at the Jubilee his debt was paid off.

⁴² For they are my servants whom I brought out from the land of Egypt; they are not to be sold *in* a slave sale.

God brought Israel out of Egypt (bondage) so they were not to be sold as a slave to the other nations.

⁴⁴ As for your male and female slaves whom you may have—you may acquire male and female slaves from the pagan nations that are around you.

Slaves from the pagan nations could be bought and the Jubilee did not apply to them.

It's only natural that a Christian should question why God would allow the Jews to own slaves since God had punished Egypt for enslaving them. The same question could be asked about why God permitted man to divorce his wife since God hates divorce.

See Malachi 2:13 - 16

¹³ **And this is another thing you do: you cover the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping and sighing, because He no longer gives attention to the offering or accepts *it with* favor from your hand.** ¹⁴ Yet you say, "For what reason?" Because the Lord has been a witness between you and the wife of your youth, against whom you have dealt treacherously, though she is your marriage companion and your wife by covenant. ¹⁵ But not one has done so who has a remnant of the Spirit. And why the one? He was seeking a godly offspring. Be careful then about your spirit, and see *that none of you* deals treacherously against the wife of your youth. ¹⁶ "For I hate divorce," says the Lord, the God of Israel, "and him who covers his garment with violence," says the Lord of armies. "So be careful about your spirit, that you do not deal treacherously."

Did God want men to divorce their wives? No! Did God want men to enslave their fellow man? No! Then why did God give His stamp of approval to something that He does not approve of (Divorce)?

Jesus said that the problem is not with God or His law but with the hearts of men.

See Matt 19:3 – 9

³ **Some Pharisees came to Jesus, testing Him and asking, "Is it lawful *for a man* to divorce his wife for any reason *at all*?"** ⁴ And He answered and said, "Have you not read that He who created *them* from the beginning made them male and female, ⁵ and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? ⁶ So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, no person is to separate." ⁷ They *said to Him, "Why, then, did Moses command to give *her* a certificate of divorce and send her away?" ⁸ He *said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart Moses permitted you to divorce your wives; but from the beginning it has not been this way. ⁹ And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery."

God wants men and women to stay together for life but mankind is a fallen creature and a heart that is hardened cannot obey the will of God. However, did God reject men who practiced Polygamy? Did God give up on Abraham, Jacob and other believers that had many wives or David who already had 8 wives when he killed a man to have his wife?

See Matt 19:23 - 26

²³ And Jesus said to His disciples, “Truly I say to you, it will be hard for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven. ²⁴ And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.” ²⁵ When the disciples heard *this*, they were very astonished and said, “Then who can be saved?” ²⁶ And looking at *them*, Jesus said to them, “With people this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”

⁴⁵ Then, too, it is out of the sons of the sojourners who live as aliens among you that you may gain acquisition, and out of their families who are with you, whom they will have produced in your land; they also may become your possession.

The Canaanite tribes should have been exterminated but the Israelites failed to do what God had commanded and some remained. These people that remained could also be taken as slaves.

See 1 Kings 9:20-22

²⁰ As for all the people who were left of the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, who were not of the sons of Israel, ²¹ their descendants who were left after them in the land, whom the sons of Israel were unable to completely eliminate, from them Solomon conscripted forced laborers, as they are to this day. ²² But Solomon did not make slaves of the sons of Israel; for they were men of war, his servants, his commanders, his charioteers, his chariot commanders, and his horsemen.

Since this law was given in 1445 BC, 39 years before the conquest of Canaan began; this appears to be a prophecy that Israel would not kill all of the inhabitants of Canaan as they were directed to do.

⁴⁶ You may even bequeath them to your sons after you, to receive as a possession; you can use them as permanent slaves. But in respect to your countrymen, the sons of Israel, you shall not rule with severity over one another.

The descendants of the Canaanites could be taken as slaves and the Jews could keep them as permanent slaves and even leave them to their sons. In this way the slaves and their sons would remain the property of the Israelites.

Again, this may sound like God is for slavery, but that is not the case because the Jews had better laws concerning the treatment of slaves so they were much better off belonging to a Jewish family than serving a master of the surrounding nations.

Verses 47 - 55

⁴⁷ ‘Now if the means of a stranger or of a sojourner with you becomes sufficient, and a countryman of yours becomes so poor with regard to him as to sell himself to a stranger who is sojourning with you, or to the descendants of a stranger’s family, ⁴⁸ then he shall have redemption right after he has been sold. One of his brothers may redeem him, ⁴⁹ or his uncle, or his uncle’s son, may redeem him, or one of his blood relatives from his family may redeem him; or if he prospers, he may redeem himself. ⁵⁰ He then with his purchaser shall calculate from the year when he sold himself to him up to the year of jubilee; and the price of his sale shall correspond to the number of years. *It is like the days of a hired man that* he shall be with him. ⁵¹ If there are still many years, he shall refund part of his purchase price in proportion to them for his own redemption; ⁵² and if few years remain until the year of jubilee, he shall so calculate with him. In proportion to his years he is to refund *the amount for* his redemption. ⁵³ Like a man hired year by year he shall be with him; he shall not rule over him with severity in your sight. ⁵⁴ Even if he is not redeemed by these *means*, he shall still go out in the year of jubilee, he and his sons with him. ⁵⁵ For the sons of Israel are my servants; they are my servants whom I brought out from the land of Egypt. I am the Lord your God.

⁴⁷ ‘Now if the means of a stranger or of a sojourner with you becomes sufficient, and a countryman of yours becomes so poor with regard to him as to sell himself to a stranger who is sojourning with you, or to the descendants of a stranger’s family, ⁴⁸ then he shall have redemption right after he has been sold.

God did not want any Israelite to become a perpetual slave so the person that sold themselves to a stranger had the right of redemption. This was far different than “traditional slavery” where the slave had no hope of regaining his freedom.

One of his brothers may redeem him, ⁴⁹ or his uncle, or his uncle’s son may redeem him, or one of his blood relatives from his family may redeem him; or if he prospers, he may redeem himself.

Family had a responsibility to redeem a Jewish brother from slavery if they had the means to do so. Since the “slave” earned money it was possible for him to redeem himself at some point before the Jubilee.

⁵⁰ **He then with his purchaser shall calculate from the year when he sold himself to him up to the year of jubilee; and the price of his sale shall correspond to the number of years.**

The redemption price was based on how many years were left until the Jubilee.

⁵³ **Like a man hired year by year he shall be with him; he shall not rule over him with severity in your sight.**

This form of slavery was not like the traditional form of slavery because the servant was paid for his labor and he could not be mistreated because a Jewish servant had legal rights against an abusive master.

⁵⁴ **Even if he is not redeemed by these *means*, he shall still go out in the year of jubilee, he and his sons with him.**

If the man was not redeemed by his own labor or a brother, the foreigner still had to follow Jewish law concerning the Jubilee.

⁵⁵ **For the sons of Israel are my servants; they are my servants whom I brought out from the land of Egypt. I am the Lord your God.**

God had redeemed his people from Egyptian slavery so it would be unfitting for an Israelite to become a slave, especially to a foreigner.