

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.

The Lord then spoke to Moses at Mount Sinai

After the tabernacle had been set up, all of the law in the book of Leviticus was given to Moses during a one month period of time.

See Pic 2505

Ch.	Event	Date	Year
Exodus 40:1	Set up the Tabernacle	1-1-02	1445
Leviticus	Law of Offerings	The 1st month	1445
Numbers 1:1	Census	2-1-02	1445

Israel will leave Sinai in about 3 weeks on 2-20-02 after being there for about 11 months.

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 year

See Pic 2510

"Sabbath year law" takes Effect		
Event	Date	Years
In the Wilderness	1446 to 1406	40
Leviticus - 1st month of 2nd year	1445	-1
Conquer Canaan	1406 - 1399	7
Divide the land	1399 - 1392	7
Sabbath rest	1385	7

"Sabbath year law" takes Effect	1445 - 1385	60
---------------------------------	-------------	----

During the seventh year the land shall have a Sabbath rest; 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

The Jews were in captivity for 70 years in Babylon.

The land of Israel got the 7th year Sabbath rest that it was not given during that time.

This means the Jews had neglected this law 70 times over a period of 490 years.

They had been in the Promised Land for roughly 800 years when they were deported.

Do you think they kept this law 44 times during the other 309 years?

Or do you think God in his grace overlooked the other 44 times?

Your harvests after growth you shall not reap, and your grapes of untrimmed vines you shall not gather; the land shall have a sabbatical year.

What grew of its own accord could be used for food.

But no reaping was allowed.

Verses 8-12

⁸You 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. ⁹You 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. ¹⁰You 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. ¹¹You shall have the fiftieth year as a jubilee; you shall not sow, nor reap its after growth, nor gather in *from* its untrimmed vines. ¹²For it is a jubilee; it shall be holy to you. You shall eat its crops out of the field.

You shall thus consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim a release through the land to all its inhabitants

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

On the Day of Atonement you shall sound a horn all through your land

The calendar date would be 7-10

See Pic 2515

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

You shall thus consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim a release through the land to all its inhabitants

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 – Lev. 25:10

These words were a powerful motivation in the Revolutionary War.

It shall be a jubilee for you, and each of you shall return to his own property,

Every 50 years was a Jubilee

Land ownership belonged to the descendants of the original families that were given the land during the time of Joshua

The incidents of Ruth and Naboth prove this continued for many years

See Ruth 4

The time frame for the book of Ruth was around 1140 BC

See 1 Kings 21

The incident with King Ahab and Jezebel happened around 860 BC

The Jubilee prevented the building of greater and greater estates

And each of you shall return to his family.

Slaves were to be emancipated in every sabbatical year

Six years was the maximum time that one could be a slave

This was God's way of preventing the rich from enslaving the poor

You shall eat its crops out of the field

Like the Sabbath year they could eat the crops 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.

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

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.

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 can claim that they are the "Sons of Abraham" and insist that they have a divine right to Palestine but that is not what the scriptures say.

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

Year 51 the crops could be sown but would not be harvested until late fall

So in year 48 (the 6th 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 (year 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.

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

If a fellow countryman of yours becomes so poor he has to sell part of his property

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.
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.

If a man sells a dwelling house in a walled city, then his redemption right remains valid until a full year from its sale. But if it is not bought back for him within the space of a full year, then the house passes permanently to its purchaser

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

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

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

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.

Now in case a countryman of yours becomes poor, then you are to sustain him. You shall not give him your silver at interest, nor your food for gain

The Jews were to help their fellow countryman

If one of them was in need, they could borrow without interest

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.

God reminds the Jewish people that if He had not helped them, they would still be slaves in Egypt.

Based on what God has done for them, they are expected to keep His commandments.

God is saying, I have blessed you, therefore you are to treat others with the same kindness that I have shown you.

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.

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

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.

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.

You may acquire male and female slaves from the pagan nations that are around you. You may even bequeath them to your sons after you, to receive as a possession; you can use them as permanent slaves

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 2:16

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?

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

See Matt 19:3-9

In verse 8 Jesus says, "Because of **your hardness of heart** Moses permitted you to divorce your wives; but from the beginning it has not been this way. God wants men and women to stay together for life but mankind is a fallen creature and in some cases they find it impossible to follow God's law.

Mankind has learned through experience that making laws that forbid certain kinds of behavior doesn't seem to work very well. How did prohibition work out for America? How about the war on drugs? Man's unwillingness to obey even the laws of his own state or country tells us something about man's self-will.

Never the less, God calls people where they are not where He wants them to be. Israel was a stiff necked nation and a law against slavery would have been too difficult for them to accept because of their hardened hearts. This nation of ex-slaves thought taking a day of rest was a burdensome commandment.

If Israel was unwilling to follow the easy commandments (e.g. keeping the Sabbath) does anyone think they would be willing to obey a more difficult commandment (not owning slaves) which made their lives less mundane?

The writer of Hebrews says meat is for the mature but babes require milk. As a whole, this group was very weak in their faith and asking too much of them might have created a bigger problem. Let's not forget that when Moses was gone for 40 days they made a golden calf and worshipped it.

Is this why God allowed them to own slaves? It's a possibility.

One thing we know for sure is that God didn't reveal His reasoning for doing it, so all we can do is make a reasonable guess.

It's disappointing that most commentators remain silent on issues like this.

Then, too, it is out of the sons of the sojourners who live as aliens among you that you may gain acquisition

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

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.

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 a countryman of yours becomes so poor that he sells himself to a stranger who is sojourning with you, then he shall have redemption right after he has been sold.**

God did not want any Israelite to become a perpetual slave.

One of his brothers may redeem him, or his uncle, or his uncle's son, or one of his blood relatives;

Family had a responsibility to redeem a Jewish brother from slavery if they had the means to do so.

Or if he prospers, he may redeem himself.

This form of slavery was not what we might think of as slavery today because it did not preclude the servant from making money.

Like a man hired year by year he shall be with him;

No Hebrew had a right to enslave himself; he could only sell his labor till the Jubilee.

This limit was fixed as a safeguard against involuntary and unlimited slavery.

He shall not rule over him with severity in your sight.

If an Israelite saw his fellow Hebrew abused by a Jew or by a stranger, he could inform the magistrate and it was incumbent on this officer to call the oppressor to account.

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

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.

Therefore, it was unfitting for an Israelite to become a slave, especially to a foreigner.