

The Year of Jubilee

Leviticus 25:8-19

December 7, 2008

Intro

As we near the end of the book of Leviticus we see that the Lord reminds Israel of how to be distinct people from all other people. What made them different was that God Himself was dwelling in their midst and that they therefore lived differently than other people lived.

They were to live by the judgments and statutes of God. These statutes and judgments were good for them; good for their health, their cleanliness, their character and heart and for their relationship with God.

Here in Chapter 25, the Lord begins by describing the importance of the Sabbath year which they were to observe every seven years. This gave their land rest, which made it much more productive and it was a demonstration of their believing God. When they took God at His Word and trusted that He would bless them if they only live in agreement with God's desires for them, they would see abundance and prosperity and would live securely in the land.

But then he tells them about another Sabbath year that they were to remember after seven Sabbath years. In other words, the Year of Jubilee, was to be remembered every fiftieth year.

There are a lot of personal applications for us in these verses because, though we are not Jewish and therefore these Sabbaths are not required of us, these are prophetic of the ministry of Jesus Christ in our lives.

I. God Wants You to be Free

- 1 The year of Jubilee was unique among the nations.
- 2 But it required faith; it required trust that God was going to do what God said he was going to do.
- 3 Unfortunately, we don't have any evidence that Israel ever took God at His Word and honored these verses, thus they missed the opportunity to revere and sanctify God in their hearts.

A. Jubilee is for releasing

- 1 Vs 10 – there was to be a release to every inhabitant in the land. In other words, if a Jew was to become so poor that he had to sell himself as a slave, he was to be released in the year of jubilee.

Leviticus 25:39-41 Serve until the year of Jubilee

- 2 Literally, verse 10 says, “You shall proclaim liberty throughout the land.” Hopefully, that should ring a bell for you.
- 3 For in fact, those very words were written on the Liberty Bell which rang out over Independence Hall in the city of Philadelphia to summon people to hear the first reading of the Declaration of Independence by Colonel John Nixon.
- 4 The idea was setting captives free by releasing their debt. It was an opportunity to start over.
- 5 Of course, it is therefore easy to understand why it would be called, “Jubilee.”
- 6 Of course, there were two sides to this aspect of the year of jubilee. There were those who were in bondage, for them, the jubilee was indeed a manifestation of liberty and freedom.
- 7 But then there were those who must be willing to forgive the debts that they held.

App – there are two applications for us as well in this verse. There is an understanding that in Christ our debts have been forgiven. But there is also the understanding that we need to forgive those who trespass against us. As we have been forgiven, should we not also forgive?

Luke 11:4, “And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indebted to us...”

App – the wonderful truth is that when we forgive others it actually sets us free, because bitterness and hurt can keep us in bondage as well.

Illus – When I was a student at Multnomah, a professor embarrassed me and I was the one carrying a burden...

B. Jubilee is for resting

- 8 Vs 11 - the jubilee year was also to be a year of rest. The land was to have an additional year to rest, but also the people were to rest and do no work that year.

Illus – Today, many companies provide a sabbatical rest for their employees. They are usually not one year in duration, but the idea is very similar to the year of Jubilee and the Sabbath year. The employees will perform better and have much better attitudes if they rest.

- 9 Without rest we can become completely worn down. There is difficulty that comes from a lack of physical rest, but there is a much heavier burden when the soul has no rest.

10 The land that God promised to Israel was called the place of rest, because it was the place where God would take their feeble nation and make it great by his strength, not theirs.

Hebrews 4:1-2, Therefore, let us fear if, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you may seem to have come short of it. For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard.

11 Rest comes when we truly believe that God is the strength of our lives.

12 One of the best scriptures that speaks to this truth so powerfully is Psalm 46...

Psalm 46:9-11, He makes wars to cease to the end of the earth; He breaks the bow and cuts the spear in two; He burns the chariots with fire. “Cease striving and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.”

13 Jubilee was to be a year of resting. There is a great Hymn that captures this so beautifully. “Jesus I am Resting.”

C. Jubilee is for restoring

14 Vs 13-16 The Year of Jubilee was also to be a year of restoring the land.

15 When Israel enters the land of Palestine, each family will be given a portion of the land as a perpetual inheritance of the Lord.

16 If, for any reason, that land was to be sold, it would revert back to the original family in the year of Jubilee.

17 In other words, the land could never actually be sold. The land could be the leased for up to 50 years and the price would be determined by how many years remained until the year of jubilee.

18 The reason for this is given later in the chapter where God says that the land belongs to him. But he also says something else amazing...

Leviticus 25:23, “The land, moreover, shall not be sold permanently, for the land is Mine; for you are but aliens and sojourners with Me.”

19 In other words, this land is not the end and this earth is not the end, we are only passing through. Don't wrap yourselves up in material things and accumulating as

much as you can for yourself. You are sojourning with God and He is your life and your future.

- 20 This provision was also an opportunity for those who sold their land because of their poverty to have an opportunity to start over, to be restored, to have what was lost be returned and life started over.

Illus – If someone’s parents sold the land because of poverty, then the children could have the opportunity to be restored; to start over.

- 1 In the same way, God restores what is lost when in our sinful state we lose so much spiritually.
- 2 What does sin cost? Relationships are broken, lives destroyed, souls are sickened...
- 3 But in Christ Jesus there is a restoring...

Isaiah 38:16-17, O Lord, by these things men live, and in all these is the life of my spirit; O restore me to health and let me live. Lo, for my own welfare I had great bitterness; it is You who has kept my soul from the pit of nothingness, for You have cast all my sins behind Your back.

Lamentations 5:21, Turn us back to You, O Lord, and we will be restored; renew our days as of old... NKJV

Joel 2:25-26, So I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten, the crawling locust, the consuming locust, and the chewing locust, my great army which I sent among you. You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, and praise the name of the Lord your God, who has dealt wondrously with you; and My people shall never be put to shame.

Illus – at the men’s Christmas dinner we were talking about the fact that we are called to rebuild. God restored Israel and they rebuilt the walls. God wants to rebuild your life; this time on a better foundation.

II. Jesus is Our Jubilee

- 1 Leviticus 25 was never fulfilled by the Jews. They never honored this instruction.
- 2 But God fulfilled the year of Jubilee in Christ Jesus. It was prophetic of Christ and he is the great fulfillment of it.

A. Jubilee begins on the Day of Atonement

- 1 Verse 9 – on the tenth day of the seventh month, the Day of Atonement was the day they were to proclaim liberty throughout the land.

- 1 The Day of Atonement is the day which speaks of the crucifixion of Christ, the day when our sins were forgiven. That is the day of liberty.
- 2 When Jesus began his public ministry, he began by reading from Isaiah 61:1-2...

Luke 4:14-21 The Spirit of the Lord is upon Christ

- 3 It is Christ who gives beauty for ashes and the oil of gladness instead of mourning.
- 4 Jesus said that he came that we might have life and life abundantly.

John 10:10, The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.

- 1 The Year of Jubilee, however, only came once every 50 years; we are called to experience the good news, the jubilee of the Lord, every day.

B. Christ will return and set things right

- 2 The year of Jubilee, then, is a picture also of the return of Christ. And when he returns he will set everything right.
- 3 Isaiah 61 has a double fulfillment. There was the fulfillment of Christ's coming to earth to die for our sins and to proclaim liberty to those who are captive.
- 4 But Jesus stopped short of reading that entire chapter. Many believe this is because this will be fulfilled in the second coming of Christ.

Isaiah 61:1-11 He will rebuild

- 5 Then when you see the book of Revelation and the description of when Christ returns, you can see that He will come to set things right on the earth!!

Revelation 19:11-16 He will come to set things right