

# Scripture Lesson Text

**LEV. 25:1** And the LORD spake unto Moses in mount Sinai, saying,

**2** 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.

**3** Six years thou shalt sow thy field, and six years thou shalt prune thy vineyard, and gather in the fruit thereof;

**4** 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.

**5** 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.

**6** 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,

**7** And for thy cattle, and for the beast that *are* in thy land, shall all

the increase thereof be meat.

**8** 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.

**9** 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.

**10** 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.

**11** 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.

**12** For it *is* the jubile; it shall be holy unto you: ye shall eat the increase thereof out of the field.

## NOTES

# Obedience in Celebration

Lesson Text: Leviticus 25:1-12

Related Scriptures: *Deuteronomy 15:1-15; Isaiah 61:1-4; Jeremiah 34:8-22; Leviticus 26:32-35*

TIME: 1445 B.C.

PLACE: Mount Sinai

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**GOLDEN TEXT**—"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).

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## *Lesson Exposition*

### **REMEMBER THE SABBATH YEAR WITH JOY—Lev. 25:1-7**

The command for the **Sabbath Year (Lev. 25:1-2)**. On Mount Sinai, the Lord gave Moses the command concerning the Sabbath Day: "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy" (Exod. 20:8).

In Leviticus 25, we find another special occasion for the Israelites that God gave to Moses on Mount Sinai—the Sabbath Year. The Sabbath Day was primarily a day for the Hebrews to rest and worship. When they entered the Promised Land, they were to observe the Sabbath Year, which was a time for the land to rest for a year in the Israelites' agricultural cycle.

**The six years of work (Lev. 25:3)**. Based on the Sabbath Day cycle established at Creation, the Lord wanted His people to plant their fields, prune their vineyards, and take in the produce for six years.

**The seventh year of rest (Lev. 25:4-5)**. In the seventh year of the cycle, the Israelites were not to plant their fields or take care of their vineyards.

**Food in the seventh year (Lev. 25:6-7)**. The question then arises about what to do with the produce that came up on its own during the seventh year. This food was available for them, their servants, the hired workers, the aliens in the land, and their animals. They were not to harvest it or store it away, but it was available to be eaten as needed by everybody.

Why did God command such a practice? We have come to learn that it was a sound agricultural practice. The seventh year let the land lie fallow so that it could replenish its nutrients for the next six-year cycle of planting.

The Sabbath Year, however, was more than an agricultural issue. It was a year set apart to the Lord. The Sabbath Year undoubtedly was a reminder to the Israelites to take God's Sabbath cycles seriously and to trust Him for food in the year they did not plant.

So what would the people eat in the seventh year? Later in Leviticus 25, the Lord promised abundance in obedience to His instruction. The crop of the sixth year would be so abundant that it would be sufficient for that year and for the next two years.

## REMEMBER THE JUBILEE YEAR WITH JOY—Lev. 25:8-12

**Calculating the Jubilee Year (Lev. 25:8).** God considered the land of Israel to be His land, and His people were in essence tenants (Lev. 25:23; Ps. 24:1). So the Sabbath Year of Leviticus 25:1-7 was the basis for another important celebration in Israel's life—the Jubilee Year. At the end of seven cycles (the number of perfection) of the Sabbath Year (forty-nine years), the people were to set aside the entire next year, the fiftieth year, as the Jubilee Year.

**Announcing the Jubilee Year (Lev. 25:9).** The Jubilee Year started with a trumpet blast during the Day of Atonement observance.

**Restoration during the Jubilee Year (Lev. 25:10).** One purpose of the Jubilee was to proclaim liberty. This liberty encompassed two areas of the people's lives—restoring family property and restoring the family itself. First, the Jubilee Year provided liberty, or restoration, for family property.

During the Jubilee Year, all property purchased in the past forty-nine years was to be returned to its original owners. This prevented wealthier Israelites from exploiting their poorer fellow citizens.

Second, the Jubilee Year provided liberty, or restoration, for the families themselves: Every individual who had been sold into servitude was to be returned to his family.

**Agriculture during the Jubilee Year (Lev. 25:11-12).** The agricultural practices during the Jubilee Year were similar to those in the Sabbath Years. They were not to plant crops and were not to harvest anything that grew on its own. The fiftieth year would have been a second straight year of rest for the land.

Let us take a step back to see how the Sabbath Years and the Jubilee Years were a source of joy to the people. The people would be joyful as they

remembered God's provision for them. They would be joyful as land that had been sold was returned to the owners. They would be joyful as hired servants were returned to their families and not continue in servitude.

Do these requirements have any practical benefit for us? Certainly!

First, both celebrations remind us of the seven-day cycle of work and rest the Lord intended. Second, both celebrations remind us of the Lord's provisions for our needs. Third, both celebrations remind us that everyday events should be holy events for us. Fourth, both celebrations remind us that obedience to God brings joy.

—Don Anderson.

## QUESTIONS

1. How did Israel's agricultural cycle reflect the pattern of the work week and Sabbath Day?
2. What were the Israelites to do every seven years?
3. What were the Israelites to do with the produce that grew on its own every seventh year?
4. Why were they to observe the Sabbath Year?
5. What did God promise to do in the sixth year?
6. What relationship did God have to the land and its people?
7. When was the Jubilee Year to take place?
8. In what way was the Jubilee Year a year of liberty?
9. How were the Sabbath Year and the Jubilee Year to be occasions for joy?
10. What are some practical values of these two events for us?

—Don Anderson.

## PRACTICAL POINTS

1. God prepares His people to receive His blessings (Lev. 25:1-2).
2. There is a time to work and a time to rest. They are both important (vss. 3-5).
3. We show appreciation to God by being good stewards over what we have (vss. 6-10).
4. We cannot allow possessions to become more important to us than people.
5. Resting and reflecting on the blessings of God brings joy (vss. 11-12).

—Valante M. Grant.

## RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION

1. Why is it important to always remember the things that God has done for you?
2. How does gratitude to God for what He has given us impact the way that we care for it?
3. Why is it important to take time to rest and enjoy the things that we have worked for?
4. How can we prioritize the value of people and the importance of possessions in our lives (Lev. 25:10)?
5. How can we apply the concept of the Year of Jubilee to our lives today?
6. What does the Year of Jubilee indicate about forgiveness and God's love for His people?

—Valante M. Grant.

## Golden Text Illuminated

**“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).**

Students of American history quickly recognize the first part of this week's golden text. It forms the well-known inscription on the Liberty Bell. Its meaning in the Bible is a little bit different, having to do with the Israelite Year of Jubilee.

The Jubilee was intended to be a time of joy and celebration. The liberty that was to be proclaimed at the start of each fiftieth year was a nationwide release from debts and servitude. One of the harsh facts of life in the ancient world was that people could fall into debt to the extent that the only way out of it was to sell off their inherited property. If that did not suffice, they could be forced to sell themselves or their children into servitude.

Many people would never be able to work their way out of debt servitude. But God did not want slavery among His people. Nor did He want families to permanently lose their inheritance. Jubilee was intended to prevent these evils.

This release was to have no exceptions; it was to be proclaimed to “all the inhabitants” of the land. Even if someone had gone into servitude or lost his property only a short time before the Jubilee Year, the release was to be applied. Creditors might not like it, but the Jubilee was to be a complete cleaning of the slate.

—Kenneth A. Sponsler.