

Leviticus 23-25

Bible Study

Review

Chapter 21—Regulations concerning only the priesthood

- Priests not to touch a dead body, except for a close family member
 - High standards for marriage of a priest
 - High priest—high standards of holiness
- No physical defect for priest who serves at the altar

Chapter 22—instructions about the care of the offerings

- Priests who were ceremonially unclean could not touch the sacrificial food
 - Was unclean until evening and had to bathe
 - Instructions about the priestly portion of the sacrifices
- Reminder that the sacrificial animals were to be without blemish

Leviticus 23 Introduction

Leviticus 23 is a **complete** list of God's appointed Feast days—special worship events

The Feast Days had already been described in Exodus 23: 14-17; 34: 17-26...

➤ Numbers 28-29 and Deuteronomy 16: 1-17 also treat the festivals

United Church of God Fundamental Beliefs statement: 'The Festivals of God'

"We believe in the commanded observance of the seven annual festivals that were given to ancient Israel by God; were kept by Jesus Christ, the apostles and New Testament Church; and will be observed during Christ's millennial reign.

These festivals reveal God's plan of salvation."

Leviticus 23
Introduction

Leviticus 23 lists **seven festivals** and **seven annual Holy Days**

Passover

Feast of Unleavened Bread
Feast of Pentecost
Feast of Trumpets
Day of Atonement
Feast of Tabernacles
Eighth Day [Last Great Day]

1st and last Day of Unleavened Bread
Pentecost
Trumpets
Atonement
1st day of Tabernacles
Eighth Day

Seven: (Companion Bible, appendix)

“Denotes spiritual perfection. It is the number or hall-mark of the Holy Spirit’s work”

Lev. 23 Introduction continued

Phrase: “an offering made by fire to the Lord”—seven times in chapter 23

➤ Numbers 28-29 explains the offerings to be made on all of the Feast days

▪[Example]: Trumpets (Lev. 23: 24-25) specific offering not mentioned—Numbers 29: 1-6

“a holy convocation”

(New Int. Com. OT) “The recurring refrains in this chapter about ‘holy conventions’ and ‘rest days’ show that this chapter is dealing with how the laity should celebrate these ‘holy days’. This is a calendar for laymen, not priests.”

v.6 “**Feast** of Unleavened Bread”... v. 34 “**Feast** of Tabernacles”

“Feast” (Heb. *chag*)= ‘festival’— “includes the idea of a pilgrimage and can aptly be translated, ‘pilgrim feast’” (BKC)

Leviticus 23

The 1st full listing of God's feasts

Leviticus 23:1-3

repeated: v.4

¹And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,
²“Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘The *feasts of the Lord*, which you shall proclaim *to be* holy convocations, these *are My feasts*.’”

v. 2 “**feasts**” (Heb. *Moed*) = appointed time; a fixed time or season; appointed time of meeting; set feast

“**My feasts**”—ordained by God...God never gave up ownership of the Holy Days; no place in scripture where they were changed

v.2 (middle part) “proclaim”
(Companion) “Cause to be publicly heard”

v. 2 “holy **convocation**”—(Heb. *Miqra*) occurs eleven times—literally means calling together, assembly....The result of proclaiming
(Theological Wordbook OT) “One should compare its synonym *moed*, an appointed time therefore an appointed gathering”

³“Six days shall work be done, but the **seventh** day *is* a Sabbath of solemn rest, a holy convocation. You shall do no work *on it*; *it is* the Sabbath of the Lord **in all your dwellings**.”

(NIV Application Com.) “Because Leviticus 23 is about holy occasions, it logically begins with the foundation of all sacred time: the weekly Sabbath”

v. 3 (Last part) “in all your dwellings”
(NIV) “You are not to do any work; **wherever you live**, it is a Sabbath to the Lord.”

(Understand the Bible Com.) “**Wherever you live** indicates that the Sabbath is not only a tabernacle observance, but is relevant in any location. And the Sabbath is dedicated to God.”

Seven is associated with the Sabbath and conveys the idea of holiness

Genesis 2: 3 “Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it”

Means 'fixed'
➤ by God himself

⁴'These *are* the *feasts of the Lord*, holy convocations which you shall proclaim at their appointed times.

v. 4 [middle part] 'holy convocations'
(NIV) 'sacred assemblies'....appointed times to meet with God...times holding **special significance**

v. 4 [last part] “appointed times” (OKJ) ‘proclaim in their seasons’)

(Heb. *miqra'ey qodes*)—literally ‘proclamations of holiness’

The spring festivals—v. 5-22

❖ Connection between Passover, Unleavened Bread and Feast of the First fruits

v. 5-8 Passover and Unleavened Bread

⁵On the fourteenth *day* of the first month at twilight *is* the Lord'S Passover.

⁶And on the fifteenth day of the same month *is* the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the Lord; seven days you must eat unleavened bread.

⁷On the first day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall do no customary work on it.

⁸But you shall offer an offering made by fire to the Lord for seven days. The seventh day *shall be* a holy convocation; you shall do no customary work *on it.*”

Numbers 28: 17-25

v.5 “**first** month”

(Word) “Dates were set in ancient Israel by the month, not the week. The months were numbered. In neighboring countries the months and the days had names, the names of the various gods.”

v. 9-14 Offering of the first fruits—[starts the counting for the next feast]

⁹And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,

¹⁰“Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘When you come into the land which I give to you, and reap its harvest, then you shall bring a sheaf of the first fruits of your harvest to the priest.

¹¹He shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted on your behalf; on the day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it.

¹²And you shall offer on that day, when you wave the sheaf, a male lamb of the first year, without blemish, as a burnt offering to the Lord.

(UCG, God’s Holy Day Plan) “A special offering of the 1st ripe grain during the Days of Unleavened Bread called the wave sheaf offering, marked the beginning of these harvests, which continued during the next 50 days and led up to Pentecost”

¹³Its **grain offering** shall be two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil, an offering made by fire to the Lord, for a sweet aroma; and its **drink offering** shall be of wine, one-fourth of a hin.

¹⁴You shall eat neither bread nor parched grain nor fresh grain until the same day that you have brought an offering to your God; *it shall be* a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.

v., 13 “drink offering...of wine”—1st time mentioned in Leviticus, possibly because along with bread and meat= staples of the Israelite diet

v. 15-22 Feast of weeks (Pentecost [Gr.] NT)

Seven weeks

¹⁵'And you shall count for yourselves from the day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering: **seven** Sabbaths shall be completed.

¹⁶ **Count fifty** days to the day after the seventh Sabbath; then you shall offer a **new grain offering** to the Lord.

¹⁷You shall bring from your dwellings two wave *loaves* of two-tenths *of an ephah*. They shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven. *They are* the first fruits to the Lord.

The grain offering is the central act, but all these other offerings accompany it:

¹⁸And you shall offer with the bread seven lambs of the first year, without blemish, one young bull, and two rams. They shall be *as* a **burnt offering** to the Lord, with their grain offering and their drink offerings, an offering made by fire for a sweet aroma to the Lord.

¹⁹Then you shall sacrifice one kid of the goats as a **sin offering**, and two male lambs of the first year as a sacrifice of a **peace offering**.

²⁰The priest shall wave them with the bread of the first fruits *as* a wave offering before the Lord, with the two lambs. They shall be holy to the Lord **for the priest**.

The two lambs and the bread are offered with the waving motion

²¹And you shall proclaim on the same day *that* it is a holy convocation to you. You shall do no customary work *on it*. *It shall be* a statute forever in all your dwellings throughout your generations.

²²“When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field when you reap, nor shall you gather any gleaning from your harvest. You shall leave them for the poor and for the stranger: *I am* the Lord your God.”

v. 21 (Last part, NIV) “This is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come, wherever you live”

(Understanding the Bible Com.) “The Feast is not just an event in the tabernacle, but is to be observed in all locations, throughout the generations.”

v. 22 “leave them for the poor”

➤ Instructions previously found in chapter 19: the poor and the alien are cared for by leaving the gleanings and ripe crops near the edge for them

Fall festivals—v. 23-43
Three of God's festivals

²³Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,
²⁴“Speak to the children of Israel, saying: ‘In the **seventh** month, on the first *day* of the month, you shall have a Sabbath-rest, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, a holy convocation.
²⁵You shall do no customary work *on it*; and you shall offer an offering made by fire to the Lord.’”

(NIV Application Com.) “As the first day of the seventh month, this is the seventh of the twelve new moon days”

v. 24 “a memorial of blowing or trumpets”

Keil and Delitzch) “the significant **character** of the seventh month was indicated by the trumpet blast...”

➤ 1st day of the month: A special sacred assembly (Holy convocation).... with trumpet blasts

²⁶And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying:

²⁷“Also the tenth *day* of this seventh month *shall be* the Day of Atonement. It shall be a holy convocation for you; you shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire to the Lord.

²⁸And you shall do no work on that same day, for it *is* the Day of Atonement, to make atonement for you before the Lord your God.

²⁹For any person who is not afflicted *in soul* on that same day shall be cut off from his people.

³⁰And any person who does any work on that same day, that person I will destroy from among his people.

³¹You shall do no manner of work; *it shall be* a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.

³²It *shall be* to you a sabbath of *solemn* rest, and you shall afflict your souls; on the ninth *day* of the month at evening, from evening to evening, you shall celebrate your sabbath.”

v. 27 “Day of Atonement”

Nelson Study Bible) "Literally, it is the Day of Atonements--that is, *the day above all days*, when complete atonement was made for all Israel" ...in ancient Israel it "was regarded as the **most Holy day of all**"

v. 32 (Last part) “celebrate your Sabbath” elsewhere: ‘a Sabbath of rest’ (Heb. ‘a Sabbath of Sabbaths’)

Occurs seven times, four times of the weekly Sabbath [16:23; 31:15; 35:2; 23:3], twice of the day of Atonement [16:31; 23:32], once of the Sabbath of years [25:4]

³³Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,

³⁴“Speak to the children of Israel, saying: ‘The fifteenth day of this seventh month *shall be* the Feast of Tabernacles *for* seven days to the Lord.

³⁵On the first day *there shall be* a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work *on it*.

³⁶*For* seven days you shall offer an offering made by fire to the Lord. On the **eighth** day you shall have a holy convocation, and you shall offer an offering made by fire to the Lord. *It is* a sacred assembly, *and* you shall do no customary work *on it*.

v. 35-36 [Last part] “you shall do no customary work”

On the 1st day of the Feast of Tabernacles and the 8th day there was to be not occupational work and a sacred assembly was to take place

v. 36 “eighth day”

(Companion, Appendix 10 The Spiritual Significance of Numbers)

Eight: “Denotes resurrection, regeneration; a new beginning or commencement”

³⁶*For seven days you shall offer an offering made by fire to the Lord. On the eighth day you shall have a holy convocation, and you shall offer an offering made by fire to the Lord. It is a sacred assembly, and you shall do no customary work on it.*

v. 36 'For seven days you shall offer an offering made by fire'

▪ The **offerings** presented were the most elaborate and impressive of the year [Num. 29: 12-38]

Burnt offering [Numbers 29]

1st day—thirteen bulls, two rams, fourteen lambs

2nd day—twelve bulls, two rams, fourteen lambs

3rd day—eleven bulls, two rams, fourteen lambs

4th day—ten bulls, two rams, fourteen lambs

5th day—nine bulls, two rams, fourteen lambs

6th day—eight bulls, two rams, fourteen lambs

7th day—seven bulls, two rams, fourteen lambs

When all the totals are added, they are all divisible by seven

³⁷‘These *are* the feasts of the Lord which you shall proclaim *to be* holy convocations, to offer an offering made by fire to the Lord, a burnt offering and a grain offering, a sacrifice and drink offerings, everything on its day—

³⁸besides the Sabbaths of the Lord, besides your gifts, besides all your vows, and besides all your freewill offerings which you give to the Lord.

v. 37-38 Stresses that the offering for the various Feast days were **in addition** to all of the other weekly Sabbath offerings, gifts, vows and freewill offerings

(Word) “This instruction particularly guards against any Israelite attempting to get double value from an offering, i.e., making a festive offering and claiming it as one of his other gifts or obligations”

³⁹Also on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the fruit of the land, you shall keep the feast of the Lord *for* seven days; on the first day *there shall be* a Sabbath-rest, and on the eighth day a Sabbath-rest.

⁴⁰And you shall take for yourselves on the first day the fruit of beautiful trees, branches of palm trees, the boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook; and you shall rejoice before the Lord your God for seven days.

⁴¹You shall keep it as a feast to the Lord for seven days in the year. *It shall be* a statute forever in your generations. You shall celebrate it in the seventh month.

v. 40 “you shall rejoice before the Lord your God for seven days”

(Tyndale) “The feast of ingathering was an opportunity for joyous celebration, which in the later post-exilic period took on something of a carnival atmosphere”

v.40 “you shall take”

(JSB, Tanakh) “The taking of the four species of branches and boughs is evidently a ritual of joyous acknowledgement of the current year’s agricultural abundance”

⁴²You shall dwell in booths for seven days. All who are native Israelites shall dwell in booths,
⁴³that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I *am* the Lord your God.”

⁴⁴So Moses declared to the children of Israel the feasts of the Lord.

v. 42 “In booths” (Heb. *Cukkah, Sukka*) “Designates a temporary abode” (Theol. Wordbook OT)

(Companion Bible) “In Heb. The verse begins and ends with these words for emphasis”

v. 42 “You shall dwell in booths”

(Word) “Booths came to symbolize the temporary shelters the people lived in during the wilderness journey....

These shelters, however, are not to recall the hardship of the wilderness, but the grace of God in providing for his people in so many ways in such an austere environment.”

Chapter 24

Shifts from the special Feasts to daily worship at the Tabernacle

The instructions for the lamp stand had been given in Ex. 27:20-21... and it is repeated here with the emphasis that Aaron was to tend the lamps in the sanctuary regularly

¹Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying:

²“Command the children of Israel that they bring to you pure oil of pressed olives for the light, to make the lamps burn continually.

v. 2 It was important that the lamps burn continually—symbolic of God’s spirit and His laws

Psalms 119:105

¹⁰⁵ Your word *is* a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.

Proverbs 6:23

²³ For the commandment *is* a lamp, And the law a light; Reproofs of instruction *are* the way of life,

³Outside the veil of the Testimony, in the tabernacle of meeting, Aaron shall be in charge of it from evening until morning before the Lord continually; *it shall be* a statute forever in your generations.

⁴He shall be in charge of the lamps on the pure *gold* lamp stand before the Lord continually.

v. 3 “from evening until morning” — “Indicates tending the lamps twice a day, not tending them throughout the night.” (NSB)

v. 4 “the pure gold lamp stand”

Moses described its design [Ex. 25: 31-39]; its construction [Ex. 37: 17-24]; , and its placement in [Ex. 40: 24-25]

Further instructions regarding the table of showbread located in the holy place of the tabernacle [v. 5-9]

⁵“And you shall take fine flour and bake twelve cakes with it. Two-tenths *of an ephah* shall be in each cake.

⁶You shall set them in two rows, six in a row, on the pure *gold* table before the Lord.

⁷And you shall put pure frankincense on *each* row, that it may be on the bread for a memorial, an offering made by fire to the Lord.

⁸Every Sabbath he shall set it in order before the Lord continually, *being taken* from the children of Israel by an everlasting covenant.

⁹And it shall be for Aaron and his sons, and they shall eat it in a holy place; for it *is* most holy to him from the offerings of the Lord made by fire, by a perpetual statute.”

The twelve loaves represented the twelve tribes of Israel before God’s presence [v.6]

Aaron was responsible to set out the bread every Sabbath [v.8]

The bread was to be eaten by the priests but only in the tabernacle [v.9]

The frankincense [v.7] reminded the people of their commitment to God and also reminded God of commitments to the people

An incident that leads to legislation concerning blasphemy [v.10-16]

¹⁰Now the son of an Israelite woman, whose father *was* an Egyptian, went out among the children of Israel; and this Israelite *woman's* son and a man of Israel fought each other in the camp.

¹¹And the Israelite woman's son blasphemed the name *of the Lord* and cursed; and so they brought him to Moses. (His mother's name *was* Shelomith the daughter of Dibri, of the tribe of Dan.)

¹²Then they put him in custody, that the mind of the Lord might be shown to them.

v. 11 “blasphemed the name of the Lord and cursed”

(Holman OT Comm.) “He may have used the name of the Lord to invoke a curse on his opponent. Because this man was a foreigner or at least a resident alien, Moses sought the Lord's will about how to deal with the situation.”

¹³And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,

¹⁴“Take outside the camp him who has cursed; then let all who heard *him* lay their hands on his head, and let all the congregation stone him.

¹⁵“Then you shall speak to the children of Israel, saying: ‘Whoever curses his God shall bear his sin.

¹⁶And whoever blasphemes the name of the Lord shall surely be put to death. All the congregation shall certainly stone him, the stranger as well as him who is born in the land. When he blasphemes the name *of the Lord*, he shall be put to death.

v. 14 Take him outside the camp

(Tyndale) “The sentence ultimately made known was death by stoning outside the camp, so that the ritual purity of the tabernacle and congregation would not be violated”

(Holman OT Com.) “In this way the entire congregation participated in the judgment and penalty and also witnessed the consequences of committing such a sin. The name of the Lord was to be revered and held in high esteem.”

v. 16 ‘The stranger as well as him who is born in the land’

▪ This law applicable to the alien and native born

Other crimes that require capital punishment [v.17-23]

¹⁷Whoever kills any man shall surely be put to death.

¹⁸Whoever kills an animal shall make it good, animal for animal.

¹⁹If a man causes disfigurement of his neighbor, as he has done, so shall it be done to him—
²⁰fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; as he has caused disfigurement of a man, so shall it be done to him.

²¹And whoever kills an animal shall restore it; but whoever kills a man shall be put to death.

²²You shall have the same law for the stranger and for one from your own country; for I *am* the Lord your God.”

²³Then Moses spoke to the children of Israel; and they took outside the camp him who had cursed, and stoned him with stones. So the children of Israel did as the Lord commanded Moses.

v. 18 If a person killed an animal he was responsible for making restitution for the loss

v. 20 “eye for an eye” [Ex. 21: 23-25]—The rule made the punishment to fit the crime, but no go beyond it

(LASB) “The ‘eye for eye’ rule was instituted **as a guide** for judges, not as a rule for personal relationships or to justify revenge.

(NSB) “Its purpose was not to require the injured party to inflict equal bodily harm on the one who had injured him, but to forbid him from inflicting greater bodily harm”

Chapter 25

Sabbath principle applied to the land

v. 1-7 The Sabbatical year

¹ And the Lord spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai, saying,

²“Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘When you come into the land which I give you, then the land shall keep a sabbath to the Lord.

v. 1 “on Mount Sinai”

(JSB, Tanakh) “Here the words ‘*behar sinay*’ mean ‘at (not on) Mount Sinai’, i.e. [in the tabernacle which stood] at [the foot of] Mount Sinai”

v. 2 “keep a Sabbath”

(Companion) “(Heb.) Sabbath a sabbatizing;
Fig. for emphasis= keep a sacred Sabbath”

³Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard, and gather its fruit;
⁴but in the **seventh** year there shall be a sabbath of solemn rest for the land, a sabbath to the Lord. You shall neither sow your field nor prune your vineyard.

v. 3 “six years you shall sow”

(Exodus 23:10-11)

[3rd section of the book of the covenant]

¹⁰“Six years you shall sow your land and gather in its produce,
¹¹but the seventh *year* you shall let it rest and lie fallow, that the poor of your people may eat; and what they leave, the beasts of the field may eat. In like manner you shall do with your vineyard *and* your olive grove.

The land Sabbath purposes:

- 1) “to rest and lie fallow” —to regenerate nutrients in the soil
- 2) To allow the poor and animals to glean whatever grew on its own during the year that nothing was planted

v. 4 ‘a sabbath of solemn rest’

(JSB, Tanakh) “similarly with regard to the weekly Sabbath and the Day of Atonement”

⁵What grows of its own accord of your harvest you shall not reap, nor gather the grapes of your untended vine, *for* it is a year of rest for the land.

⁶And the sabbath *produce* of the land shall be food for you: for you, your male and female servants, your hired man, and the stranger who dwells with you,
⁷for your livestock and the beasts that *are* in your land—all its produce shall be for food.

v. 5-7 (NSB) “Reaping and gathering for storage and selling were not permitted in the Sabbath year. However, harvesting for daily needs was permitted.

Of course, Israel’s main provision during this time was the bumper crop produced the year before the Sabbath year [v.21-22]”

(BKC) “No sowing, pruning, reaping, or harvesting was to be done during that seventh year [v.4-5].

Any spontaneous yield of the land could be consumed for food by anyone (not just the owner), but there was to be no organized harvest and no selling produce to others [v.6-7]

7th year—a year of **release**

[economic principles]

Exodus 21:2

²If you buy a Hebrew servant, he shall serve six years; and in the seventh he shall go out free and pay nothing.

Deuteronomy 15:1-2

¹“At the end of *every* seven years you shall grant a release *of debts*.

²And this *is* the form of the release: Every creditor who has lent *anything* to his neighbor shall release *it*; he shall not require *it* of his neighbor or his brother, because it is called the Lord’s release.

The 7th year allows a restructuring of the economic order in the society...people who sold themselves as servant were freed....debts were forgiven

v. 8-55 Jubilee year [v. 10]—heart of the Jubilee year

⁸And you shall count seven Sabbaths of years for yourself, seven times seven years; and the time of the seven Sabbaths of years shall be to you forty-nine years.

⁹Then you shall cause the trumpet of the Jubilee to sound on the tenth *day* of the seventh month; on the Day of Atonement you shall make the trumpet to sound throughout all your land.

¹⁰And you shall consecrate the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout *all* the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a Jubilee for you; and each of you shall return to his possession, and each of you shall return to his family.

The Jubilee year, the 50th year—the land returns to its original owner

- After 49 years, on the Day of Atonement a trumpet sounded to proclaim liberty throughout the land [v.10]
- ...liberation from slavery and debt and the return of property to its original owners

(Holman Com) “As the land Sabbath afforded the earth rest from cultivation, so the Jubilee granted those who fell upon hard times a fresh start.

The passage assumes the main reason for selling the land in the first place was that people had been compelled through poverty to do so.”

¹⁰And you shall consecrate the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout *all* the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a Jubilee for you; and each of you shall return to his possession, and each of you shall return to his family.

Isaiah 61:1-2

- ¹ “The Spirit of the Lord GOD *is* upon Me, Because the Lord has anointed Me To preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To **proclaim liberty** to the captives, And the opening of the prison to *those who are* bound;
- ² To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, And the day of vengeance of our God; To comfort all who mourn,

Christ quoted these verses in Isaiah when he began his ministry explaining that he was fulfilling them [Luke 4: 16-21]

- Christ came to release us from our sins, to free us from the bondage of slavery to sin
- Proclaiming liberty to the captives—those who are in ‘the snare of the devil’, having been taken captive by him to do his will [2 Tim. 2: 26]

¹¹That fiftieth year shall be a Jubilee to you; in it you shall neither sow nor reap what grows of its own accord, nor gather *the grapes* of your untended vine.

¹²For it *is* the Jubilee; it shall be holy to you; you shall eat its produce from the field.

v. 11-12 The Jubilee year was a Sabbath year, the land would lie fallow and food would be gathered from day to day from the kernels spilled during the previous harvest

v.12 (Last part) (TEV) “you shall eat only what the fields produce of themselves”

(Expositors) “The word ‘Jubilee’ means ‘blowing the ram’s horn’ which was done in announcing the year.

From this word the idea of celebration has come into English, especially the celebration of a fiftieth anniversary”

¹³In this Year of Jubilee, each of you shall return to his possession.

¹⁴And if you sell anything to your neighbor or buy from your neighbor's hand, you shall not oppress one another.

v. 13 Jubilee year—prevents permanent destitution of the family

v. 14 'you shall not oppress one another—loving your neighbor as yourself

¹⁵According to the number of years after the Jubilee you shall buy from your neighbor, and according to the number of years of crops he shall sell to you.

¹⁶According to the multitude of years you shall increase its price, and according to the fewer number of years you shall diminish its price; for he sells to you *according* to the number of *the years* of the crops.

¹⁷Therefore you shall not oppress one another, but you shall fear your God; for I *am* the Lord your God.

v. 15-16

(BKC) “While selling land was not ideal, it was sometimes necessary. Then it was to be done fairly, the price computed on the basis of the number of years since the Jubilee, that is, computing the number of years left for harvesting crops until the next Jubilee would return the land to its original owner.

In other words what one was really selling was the number of crops, a limited lease in the land paid in full in advance.”

¹⁸So you shall observe My statutes and keep My judgments, and perform them; and you will dwell in the land in safety.

¹⁹Then the land will yield its fruit, and you will eat your fill, and dwell there in safety.

God reassures the people to follow his instructions and they will be blessed and taken care of

²⁰And if you say, “What shall we eat in the seventh year, since we shall not sow nor gather in our produce?”

Doubts that might be expressed for following God’s instructions of the land Sabbath and jubilee year

²¹Then I will command My blessing on you in the sixth year, and it will bring forth produce enough for three years.

²²And you shall sow in the eighth year, and eat old produce until the ninth year; until its produce comes in, you shall eat *of* the old *harvest*.

God's response [v.21] is that the sixth year will be so abundant it will supply enough for three years.

They will plant in the eighth year [v.22] but the harvest will provide primarily for the ninth year

²³The land shall not be sold permanently, for the land *is* Mine; for you *are* strangers and sojourners with Me.

²⁴And in all the land of your possession you shall grant redemption of the land.

v. 23-24 (Understanding the Bible Com)

“Provision is made for land to return to Hebrews who may have sold it. Redemption [v.24] is the buying back of land by the next of kin.

The land is God’s and a gift to the people. In a sense they are renting it or managing it on behalf of the divine owner, and the Sabbath and Jubilee customs give practical shape to that view.”

²⁵If one of your brethren becomes poor, and has sold *some* of his possession, and if his redeeming relative comes to redeem it, then he may redeem what his brother sold.

²⁶Or if the man has no one to redeem it, but he himself becomes able to redeem it,
²⁷then let him count the years since its sale, and restore the remainder to the man to whom he sold it, that he may return to his possession.

²⁸But if he is not able to have *it* restored to himself, then what was sold shall remain in the hand of him who bought it until the Year of Jubilee; and in the Jubilee it shall be released, and he shall return to his possession.

v. 25 “redeeming relative”

(Holman) “Those who sold off their land did not have to wait until the Jubilee year celebration to regain their property. Assuming they or a close relative had the means or a willing heart, they could redeem or buy back their land from the new owners.

They would determine the redemption price by calculating how many years remained until the Jubilee.”

v. 26-27 If there was no relative to redeem the land, and one could save enough, the purchase price would be prorated to the number of years left to 50

v. 28 Or else he waits until the Jubilee year to reclaim his land

²⁹If a man sells a house in a walled city, then he may redeem it within a whole year after it is sold; *within* a full year he may redeem it.

³⁰But if it is not redeemed within the space of a full year, then the house in the walled city shall belong permanently to him who bought it, throughout his generations. It shall not be released in the Jubilee.

³¹However the houses of villages which have no wall around them shall be counted as the fields of the country. They may be redeemed, and they shall be released in the Jubilee.

(Und. Bible Com.) “Houses in an urban setting are essentially excepted from the Jubilee practice.

When the house is sold, the seller retains the right of redemption for one year. When that year passes and the seller has not reclaimed the house, it permanently moves to the buyer and family. It is not subject to return in the year of Jubilee.

In contrast, houses in villages without walls are considered as the fields or open country and thus are subject to the redemption and jubilee customs.”

³²Nevertheless the cities of the Levites, *and* the houses in the cities of their possession, the Levites may redeem at any time.

³³And if a man purchases a house from the Levites, then the house that was sold in the city of his possession shall be released in the Jubilee; for the houses in the cities of the Levites *are* their possession among the children of Israel.

³⁴But the field of the common-land of their cities may not be sold, for it *is* their perpetual possession.

(Und. Bible Com) “Levites live in Levitical towns and always have the right of redemption there; the Jubilee custom also applies.

So the Levites could sell their houses in any city or village, and the rights of redemption and Jubilee will always apply.

Their land, however is never to be sold but is their permanent possession.”

³⁵If one of your brethren becomes poor, and falls into poverty among you, then you shall help him, like a stranger or a sojourner, that he may live with you.

³⁶Take no usury or interest from him; but fear your God, that your brother may live with you.

³⁷You shall not lend him your money for usury, nor lend him your food at a profit.

³⁸I *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.

(Holman) “The final effect of the Jubilee year related to the person who became poor and was unable to support himself. The Israelites were to provide him assistance by not charging him exorbitant interest.”

v. 39-55 The rest of the chapter deals with the release of indentured persons

³⁹And if *one of* your brethren *who dwells* by you becomes poor, and sells himself to you, you shall not compel him to serve as a slave.

and a sojourner he shall be with you, *and* shall serve you until the Year of Jubilee.

⁴¹And *then* he shall depart from you—he and his children with him—and shall return to his own family. He shall return to the possession of his fathers.

⁴²For they *are* My servants, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt; they shall not be sold as slaves.

⁴³You shall not rule over him with rigor, but you shall fear your God.

v. 39-40 (Word) “Beset by poor harvests, plagues, personal illness, marauding bands or other difficult circumstances, a brother may become so poor, that he has to sell himself in servitude to another person.

When an Israelite put himself in the service of another Israelite, his master may put him to work, but not to those low menial tasks done by a slave. [hired servant]

They work until the year of Jubilee, afterwards they return to their clan or ancestral possession

(JSB, Tanakh) “Israelites, like landholding in Canaan, are divine property; thus they are released in Jubilee. Israelites are servants of God alone”

⁴⁴And as for your male and female slaves whom you may have—from the nations that are around you, from them you may buy male and female slaves.

⁴⁵Moreover you may buy the children of the strangers who dwell among you, and their families who are with you, which they beget in your land; and they shall become your property.

⁴⁶And you may take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit *them as a possession*; they shall be your permanent slaves. But regarding your brethren, the children of Israel, you shall not rule over one another with rigor.

v. 44 “male and female slaves” (OKJ) ““Bondmen and bondmaids”
Bondservants were allowed of those from other nations...

(Und. Bible Com.) “This principle means that temporary residents and their offspring born in their country can also become slaves to Israelites in perpetuity, but not so with fellow Israelites.

Slaves from other nations do not have benefit of the release at Jubilee.”

(LASB) “Under Hebrew laws, slaves were treated differently from slaves in other nations. They were seen as human beings with dignity, and not as animals. Hebrew slaves, for example, took part in the religious festivals and rested on the Sabbath”

⁴⁷Now if a sojourner or stranger close to you becomes rich, and *one of your brethren who dwells* by him becomes poor, and sells himself to the stranger *or sojourner* close to you, or to a member of the stranger's family,

⁴⁸after he is sold he may be redeemed again. One of his brothers may redeem him;
⁴⁹or his uncle or his uncle's son may redeem him; or *anyone* who is near of kin to him in his family may redeem him; or if he is able he may redeem himself.

(Holman) "If a foreigner should become rich while an Israelite became poor, and the former obtained the latter as a slave, the Israelite could redeem himself from slavery at any time, provided he had the means to do so."

⁵⁰Thus he shall reckon with him who bought him: The price of his release shall be according to the number of years, from the year that he was sold to him until the Year of Jubilee; *it shall be* according to the time of a hired servant for him.

⁵¹If *there are* still many years *remaining*, according to them he shall repay the price of his redemption from the money with which he was bought.

⁵²And if there remain but a few years until the Year of Jubilee, then he shall reckon with him, *and* according to his years he shall repay him the price of his redemption.

⁵³He shall be with him as a yearly hired servant, and he shall not rule with rigor over him in your sight.

(Holman) “The terms specified that they count the remaining years up to the Jubilee and then determine the price according to the going price of a hired man.”

⁵⁴And if he is not redeemed in these *years*, then he shall be released in the Year of Jubilee—he and his children with him.

⁵⁵For the children of Israel *are* servants to Me; they *are* My servants whom I brought out of the land of Egypt: I *am* the Lord your God.

(Word) “If a debtor slave has not been ‘redeemed’ by any of the ways provided for him to gain his freedom, he ‘goes out’ in the year of Jubilee...the use of the verb “released’ is significant...the language means that the release at the year of Jubilee possesses the same quality as the exodus from Egypt.

Each Jubilee, Yahweh acts again as Israel’s great redeemer.”

Lessons

[Ch. 23] The world will be unified in the kingdom by keeping the Holy Days

Isaiah 66:23

²³ And it shall come to pass *That* from one New Moon to another, And from one Sabbath to another, All flesh shall come to worship before Me,” says the Lord.

Zechariah 14:16

¹⁶ And it shall come to pass *that* everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.

[Ch. 24] The lamps in the tabernacle were to be kept burning every day

- We must have the light of God’s word burning in us every day and living by it through his spirit

Lessons

[Ch. 25] The law of redemption and the Jubilee year are symbols of what Christ did for all of us

Ephesians 1:7

⁷In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace

In the year of Jubilee we will return to our inheritance, living with Christ in the kingdom, a glorious redemption

Revelation 2:7

⁷“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.””