

Leviticus 25 **by Philip Thompson**

The Jubilee

There are three major background points that you should be aware of:

- 1. This passage takes place after the Israelites were released from a lifetime of slavery in Egypt. Both their personal experiences as slaves and God's character shown through his redemption of the people are underlying themes of this passage.**
- 2. The only real economic system at this time is agriculture. If people were to survive, it had to happen based on the land. Land was life. Thus you see that Jubilee was not simply a matter of where your home was, but whether or not you could survive.**
- 3. Every Israelite was given land by God. Fathers were to divide it among their sons (daughters were cared for by fathers or husbands). Therefore, every Israelite always had land on which to grow food necessary for survival. Only through losing the land did an Israelite become destitute. Then comes Jubilee, returning to every Israelite the land they needed to survive.**

Read Leviticus 25: 8-24, 35-43

Verses 8-12.

Why seven? What is important about 50 years?—so that every generation experiences the Jubilee.

What insights does this give into God's character and desires?—He knows experience is important in understanding what God is doing.

How does God display these characteristics today?

What is the Day of Atonement? Why does Jubilee happen on the Day of Atonement? What point is God driving at by linking Jubilee with Atonement?—Freedom is a gift to sinful people, not a right to the deserving.

How does this help us view God and His work? Freedom for whom and for what?—people, land, all creation!

Freedom from what? Today, how would we understand God's message of freedom?—from sin.

Freedom to what? How can thinking only of "freedom from" and not "freedom to" lead to a shallow understanding of freedom? In what ways does the Church need to experience freedom? How does this Bible study display a lack of freedom?

Why does God use the term "Jubilee"?—it's a celebration!

Which of the Israelites would have looked forward to the Jubilee? Who would have dreaded it?—the rich and slave-owning land barons.

Who today would benefit from a true Jubilee? Would there be rejoicing? Who today would fear a year of Jubilee? What mindset would a wealthy landowner need to have in order to understand the Jubilee as a celebration even for him?

Why in verses 11 b-12 is no work tied with the Jubilee? Must I not work to be experiencing freedom or celebration? What attitude toward work, rest, God, my role vs. God's role, should I be developing?

Verses 13-24.

How can it be fair for God to take land from people who own it and have bought it justly and give it away to others? What is the point of God stressing that you are selling crops and not land (vs. 16)?—God owns the land! Not the people.

What difference should this make in how we view everything around us? Is it evident that the Church views the world as God's and not ours? How would this affect the way we farm? Build? Use resources? Explore the sea? Explore space? Think about knowledge? Communicate?

Explain how part a of verse 17 (do not take advantage of others) fits in with part b (fear God) and part c (I am the Lord your God). How does this speak to us today?

Look at verse 21. God provides crops enough for three years, not just two. What does this tell you of God's blessings? Has God ever blessed you in this way? How? How does this illuminate the depth of God's heart? How does this speak to trust and faith? Would a wise man "stock up" in the sixth year—just in case? How can you exercise more faith and trust in God's desire to abundantly bless you?

Verses 35-43.

Why is God so emphatic about no Israelites being slaves to others? After all, He allowed aliens to be slaves? Why not Israelites?—we are God's slaves! no one else's.

How should this influence our relationship to our employer?—avoid "workaholic" slavery to your job, etc.

How do verses 38 and 42 provide a reason for Jubilee? Notice how everything revolves around God. Ultimately, it is His work which is central, not ours. What does God's work in freeing the Israelites from Egypt have to do with setting the captives free, returning land to original owners, and resting from work?

Picture yourself as a successful businessperson (in whatever field you are studying). How can the Spirit of Jubilee be practiced today? What areas of life would change? How? Be specific.