

THE YEAR OF JUBILEE

BIBLE TEXT : Leviticus 25:1-46

LESSON 89 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "The LORD knoweth the days of the upright: and their inheritance shall be for ever" (Psalm 37:18).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Leviticus 25:1-46 (KJV)

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.

BIBLE REFERENCES:

NOTES:

Canaan Promised

God had promised Abraham, hundreds of years before the Israelites left Egypt, that He would give Abraham's children a wonderful land to live in. The houses would already be built for them, the grapes would already be planted, the trees would be bearing fruit (**Deuteronomy 6:10-11 (KJV)** ¹⁰ And it shall be, when the LORD thy God shall have brought thee into the land which he swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee great and goodly cities, which thou buildedst not, ¹¹ And houses full of all good things, which thou filledst not, and wells digged, which thou diggedst not, vineyards and olive trees, which thou plantedst not; when thou shalt have eaten and be full). All they would have to do would be to move in — if they obeyed God. Of course they would have to drive out the heathen people who lived there — and some of them were giants — but God had promised to go ahead and fight their battles for them if they obeyed Him.

The Israelites were the children of Abraham, several generations later. When they came out of Egypt they started for Canaan to take the land God had promised. But they had many lessons to learn before they reached there.

One lesson God wanted to teach the Children of Israel was to *be* kind and thoughtful of one another. He did not want some people to be rich and own all the land, and others to be poor and have to be slaves of the rich. If the people became poor and had to work for someone else, the men they worked for must be kind to them and remember that they had once all been slaves in Egypt. If God had not had mercy on them and delivered them out of captivity they would still all have been slaves. God wanted them to be grateful for their freedom and treat one another as free children of the Lord.

Land Divided

When the Children of Israel came into Canaan God divided the land so that each tribe would get a suitable inheritance. He wanted them to keep that section of the country in the possession of the tribe to which He had given it. They had not earned that land; they had had no money to pay for it; it was a gift of God.

All that we have comes from God, and we must thank Him for it. When we sit down to eat our meals we must first thank the Lord that He has given us food to eat. When we go to bed at night we thank Him for a home and for a bed to sleep in. When we get up in the morning we thank Him for the rest He gave us, and for the clothes we have to wear. We ask Him again to give us food for the day, and He does. When we show Him that we appreciate what He gives us, He is pleased to give us more.

Sabbath

When the Children of Israel started their journey to Canaan God told them to rest every seventh day. That day was called the Sabbath. God fed the people by sending manna which they gathered off the ground every morning except the Sabbath. On the sixth day there was enough manna on the ground so they could gather enough for two days — and it would not spoil as it

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.

¹³ In the year of this jubile ye shall return every man unto his possession.

¹⁴ And if thou sell ought unto thy neighbour, or buyest *ought* of thy neighbour's hand, ye shall not oppress one another:

¹⁵ According to the number of years after the jubile thou shalt buy of thy neighbour, *and* according unto the number of years of the fruits he shall sell unto thee:

¹⁶ According to the multitude of years thou shalt increase the price thereof, and according to the fewness of years thou shalt diminish the price of it: for *according* to the number *of the years* of the fruits doth he sell unto thee.

¹⁷ Ye shall not therefore oppress one another; but thou shalt fear thy God: for I *am* the LORD your God.

¹⁸ Wherefore ye shall do my statutes, and keep my judgments, and do them; and ye shall dwell in the land in safety.

¹⁹ And the land shall yield her fruit, and ye shall eat your fill, and dwell therein in safety.

²⁰ And if ye shall say, What shall we eat the seventh year? behold, we shall not sow, nor gather in our increase:

²¹ Then I will command my blessing upon you in the sixth year, and it shall bring forth fruit for three years.

²² And ye shall sow the eighth year, and eat *yet* of old fruit until the ninth year; until her fruits come in ye shall eat *of* the old *store*.

²³ The land shall not be sold for ever: for the land *is* mine; for ye *are* strangers and sojourners with me.

²⁴ And in all the land of your possession ye shall grant a redemption for the land.

²⁵ If thy brother be waxen poor, and hath sold away *some* of his possession, and if any of his kin come to redeem it, then shall he redeem

did any other day when they gathered more than they needed for that day. God had told the people they must keep the Sabbath Day holy, and He insisted that no work be done on that day.

When they came into Canaan there was to be a Sabbath of the land. It was a very good land, and God wanted them to take care of it. Every seventh ^{year} they were to plant no crops so that the land could rest. The soil does not get tired like people do, but when crops are sown year by year the plants take so much food from the ground that after a while it is said to be "worn out." When people do not have fertilizer to put upon the ground, it will renew itself if allowed to lie Idle for a year.

Besides taking care of the ground, God wanted to further teach the lesson that He would feed His children. He promised that in the sixth year their crops would be so great that there would be plenty of food for the Sabbath year. The things that grew that year without being planted were to be left for the poor and the animals (**Exodus 23:11 (KJV)** ¹¹ But the seventh *year* thou shalt let it rest and lie still; that the poor of thy people may eat: and what they leave the beasts of the field shall eat. In like manner thou shalt deal with thy vineyard, *and* with thy oliveyard).

God will not let His children starve. His promise to the righteous **is**: "He shall dwell on high: his place of defence shall be the munitions **of** rooks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure" (Isaiah 33:16). David wrote in one of his Psalms: "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread" (Psalm 37:25). All through the 40 years that the Children of Israel spent in the wilderness God gave them manna to eat. They should have always believed that God would take good care of them and not let them go hungry.

God wants His people today to trust Him, and not worry about what they are going to eat nor what they are going to wear. Jesus told His disciples when He was on earth, "Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God?" (Luke 12:6). If God takes care of the little birds, will He not also take care of His children?

Year of Jubilee

After seven such periods of seven years each, or after 49 years, came another year of rest. This was called the year of Jubilee, or the year of liberty or release. It came right after a Sabbath year, which made two years in succession when they planted no crops. But God takes care of everything, and He promised them that they would raise so much grain and vegetables and fruit in the sixth year that it would last through the seventh and eighth years and until the harvest of the ninth year,

On the Day of Atonement of the year of Jubilee, a great blast of the trumpet sounded. That day was a solemn time when the people remembered their sins. But after all the sacrifices had been made as God had commanded, the people were very happy. And then when they heard the trumpet, which according to tradition was the particular time of release of servants and restoration of property, they rejoiced indeed.

In this year of release, everyone who had sold some of his land during the previous 49 years could take it back for nothing. If anyone had become so poor that he had had to sell himself to work for someone else, he could now go back home free. Think how happy all the people were when their debts were forgotten and they could enjoy their inheritance as they had before they became poor!

God did not want the poor people to be mistreated by the rich, but neither did He want the poor to cheat the rich. If they

that which his brother sold.

²⁶ And if the man have none to redeem it, and himself be able to redeem it;

²⁷ Then let him count the years of the sale thereof, and restore the overplus unto the man to whom he sold it; that he may return unto his possession.

²⁸ But if he be not able to restore *it* to him, then that which is sold shall remain in the hand of him that hath bought it until the year of jubile: and in the jubile it shall go out, and he shall return unto his possession.

²⁹ And if a man sell a dwelling house in a walled city, then he may redeem it within a whole year after it is sold; *within* a full year may he redeem it.

³⁰ And if it be not redeemed within the space of a full year, then the house that *is* in the walled city shall be established for ever to him that bought it throughout his generations: it shall not go out in the jubile.

³¹ But the houses of the villages which have no wall round about them shall be counted as the fields of the country: they may be redeemed, and they shall go out in the jubile.

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

³³ And if a man purchase of the Levites, then the house that was sold, and the city of his possession, shall go out in *the year of jubile*: for the houses of the cities of the Levites *are* their possession among the children of Israel.

³⁴ But the field of the suburbs of their cities may not be sold; for it *is* their perpetual possession.

³⁵ And if thy brother be waxen poor, and fallen in decay with thee; then thou shalt relieve him: *yea, though he be* a stranger, or a sojourner; that he may live with thee.

³⁶ Take thou no usury of him, or increase: but fear thy God; that thy brother may live with thee.

³⁷ Thou shalt not give him thy money upon usury, nor lend him thy victuals for increase.

³⁸ I *am* the LORD your God, which

sold their land many years before the year of Jubilee, they could charge a big price, but if it were only two or three years until the Jubilee they could charge only what the use of the land would be worth for that length of time. It was more like a lease than an actual sale, because everyone had to give up the land he had bought, at the fiftieth year.

Redeemed Before Jubilee

Whenever land was sold, two deeds were made out. One, containing the purchase price, was sealed and put into a safe place. The other one was open and went with the property every time it changed hands. If someone from the same family as the original owner wished to buy back the land for his people, he could open the sealed deed, and find out the price, and buy it before the year of Jubilee. This was called redeeming the land, and the person who bought it was the redeemer.

We find in the book of Ruth an illustration of a relative redeeming the land. Naomi, her husband Elimelech, and her two sons became very poor because of a famine in the land of Judah, and they went to another country to live. Many years later, after her sons had married and had both died, and her husband had died also, Naomi decided to return to her own country. Ruth, one of her daughters-in-law, went back with her. They were still very poor, and they wondered if there would be some relative who could redeem their land for them. Ruth went to see Boaz, a wealthy man who belonged to the family of Elimelech, and told him about their condition, to see if he would buy back their land. Boaz promised to perform the "part of a kinsman" (or a relative), if another man who was a closer relative did not want to do it. The other man gave up his right to redeem the land by giving his shoe to Boaz, which was the custom at that time. So Boaz bought the land which had belonged to Elimelech, and he married Ruth. Their great-grandson was King David, who wrote many of the Psalms in the Bible. Many generations later Jesus was born into their family.

Our Redeemer

'Jesus is our Redeemer. As sinners we sold ourselves to Satan and had nothing with which we could buy our freedom. Jesus came to wash away all our sins and break the power of the enemy from our lives and make us free again. He performed for us the "part of a kinsman." He was the only One who could buy our redemption, and He paid for it with His own Blood.

The Acceptable Year of the Lord

In one of the first sermons that Jesus preached, He read some verses from a prophecy Isaiah had made about Him hundreds of years before. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord" (Luke 4:18, 19). The "acceptable year of the Lord" was the spiritual year of jubilee that would assure repentant sinners of release from the bondage of sin, that would make sick people well again, that would make everyone happy who believed upon Jesus. When Jesus had read those verses, He sat down and said, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears" (Luke 4:21). The bringing of forgiveness for sins, peace for troubled hearts, sight for blinded eyes, was much more important than the return of a piece of ground that had been sold. We can still receive that freedom through Jesus if we come to Him in repentance and ask Him to forgive our sins. We can enjoy our "year of release" today through the Blood of Jesus.

brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, to give you the land of Canaan, *and* to be your God.

³⁹ And if thy brother *that dwelleth* by thee be waxen poor, and be sold unto thee; thou shalt not compel him to serve as a bondservant:

⁴⁰ *But* as an hired servant, *and* as a sojourner, he shall be with thee, *and* shall serve thee unto the year of jubile:

⁴¹ And *then* shall he depart from thee, *both* he and his children with him, and shall return unto his own family, and unto the possession of his fathers shall he return.

⁴² For they *are* my servants, which I brought forth out of the land of Egypt: they shall not be sold as bondmen.

⁴³ Thou shalt not rule over him with rigour; but shalt fear thy God.

⁴⁴ Both thy bondmen, and thy bondmaids, which thou shalt have, *shall be* of the heathen that are round about you; of them shall ye buy bondmen and bondmaids.

⁴⁵ Moreover of the children of the strangers that do sojourn among you, of them shall ye buy, and of their families that *are* with you, which they begat in your land: and they shall be your possession.

⁴⁶ And ye shall take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit *them for* a possession; they shall be your bondmen for ever: but over your brethren the children of Israel, ye shall not rule one over another with rigour.

As the trumpet blew on the Day of Atonement of the year of Jubilee, so John the Baptist came proclaiming the coming of Jesus to earth. A part of his message was, "Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth" (Luke 3:5). That did not mean that the mountains would really slide down into the valley to make the land level; it meant that Jesus was going to make everything equal again as in the year of Jubilee when every man returned to his inheritance. Only this was not speaking of a parcel of ground that each man should own, but that everyone could have a spiritual inheritance in Jesus. The rich and poor can all be saved in the same way.

The Next Great Jubilee

There is going to be still another Jubilee when Jesus "shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" (Matthew 24:31). Then will begin a thousand years of peace when Jesus will be King. Those of us who make ourselves ready now for the time when Jesus will rapture His people from the earth, will have the great privilege of reigning with Him.

QUESTIONS

- 1 What was the year of Jubilee?
- 2 What were the Children of Israel to eat during that year?
- 3 What did God want to teach the Israelites through the Sabbatical year and the year of Jubilee?
- 4 Who could buy back the land that had been sold before the Jubilee?
- 5 Who is our Redeemer?
- 6 What is the "acceptable year of the Lord"?