



JUSTICE for ALL

JUSTICE & THE ECONOMY: JUBILEE

LEVITICUS IS IMPORTANT FOR 4 REASONS

1. Doctrine of holiness
2. Love your neighbor as yourself Lev19:18
3. Substitutionary atonement
4. Blood sacrifice

LEVITICUS OUTLINE

- 1-12—Laws about Sacrifices
- 13-15—Laws about clean and unclean
- 16—Day of Atonement
- 17-27—Holiness Code

3 PERSPECTIVES OF JUBILEE

1. Economic—radical process of economy to curb normal economic policies
2. Social—rooted in land ownership not by a person, but a family inheritance loaned by God.
3. Theological—G's command to protect weak from strong as part of Justice and Righteousness

SABBATH YEAR—LEV 25:1-7

¹ The LORD said to Moses on Mount Sinai, ² "Say to the people of Israel, When you come into the land which I give you, the land shall keep a sabbath to the LORD. ³ Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard, and gather in its fruits; ⁴ but in the seventh year there shall be a sabbath of solemn rest for the land, a sabbath to the LORD; you shall not sow your field or prune your vineyard. ⁵ What grows of itself in your harvest you shall not reap, and the grapes of your undressed vine you shall not gather; it shall be a year of solemn rest for the land. ⁶ The sabbath of the land shall provide food for you, for yourself and for your male and female slaves and for your hired servant and the sojourner who lives with you; ⁷ for your cattle also and for the beasts that are in your land all its yield shall be for food.

YEAR OF JUBILEE—LEV 25:8-23

⁸ "And you shall count seven weeks of years, seven times seven years, so that the time of the seven weeks of years shall be to you forty-nine years. ⁹ Then you shall send abroad the loud trumpet on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the day of atonement you shall send abroad the trumpet throughout all your land.

¹⁰ And you shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants; it shall be a jubilee for you, when each of you shall return to his property and each of you shall return to his family. ¹¹ A jubilee shall that fiftieth year be to you; in it you shall neither sow, nor reap what grows of itself, nor gather the grapes from the undressed vines. ¹² For it is a jubilee; it shall be holy to you; you shall eat what it yields out of the field. ¹³ In this year of jubilee each of you shall return to his property. ¹⁴ And if you sell to your neighbor or buy from your neighbor, you shall not wrong one another. ¹⁵ According to the number of years after the jubilee, you shall buy from your neighbor, and according to the number of years for crops he shall sell to you. ¹⁶ If the years are many you shall increase the price, and if the years are few you shall diminish the price, for it is the number of the crops that he is selling to you. ¹⁷ You shall not wrong one another, but you shall fear your God; for I am the LORD your God. ¹⁸ Therefore you shall do my statutes, and keep my ordinances and perform them; so you will dwell in the land securely. ¹⁹ The land will yield its fruit, and you will eat your fill, and dwell in it securely. ²⁰ And if you say, `What shall we eat in the seventh year, if we may not sow or gather in our crop?` ²¹ I will command my blessing upon you in the sixth year, so that it will bring forth fruit for three years. ²² When you sow in the eighth year, you will be eating old produce; until the ninth year, when its produce comes in, you shall eat the old. ²³ The land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is mine; for you are strangers and sojourners with me. ²⁴ And in all the country you possess, you shall grant a redemption of the land.

DATES

1. Jubilee announced on Day of Atonement
2. Hoenig, *Jewish Quarterly Review*, 1969: Jubilee was like leap year.
3. Robert. North, *Sociology of Biblical Jubilee* (1954): Sabbath year was staggered by field
4. Hartley, *Word Biblical Commentary on Leviticus*, the Sabbatical and Year of Jubilee overlapped, same year
5. Crops from 6th year fed people in 6, 7, 8 years (manna)
6. V10: Jubilee: *yobel ram, ram's horn* (a wind instrument)

PURPOSE OF JUBILEE

1. 2 purposes: **liberty** to enslaved; **restoration** of land to original owners including those in bondage
2. Land could be redeemed at any time, but had to be restored twice a century

FOUNDATION OF JUBILEE

1. *Ancient Near East: Misnarum* & land owned by king
2. Israel changed that in conquest & gave to tribes, clan, household. Judges 6:15 He said to Him, "O Lord, how shall I deliver Israel? Behold, my family (CLAN) is the least in Manasseh (TRIBE), and I am the youngest in my father's house (HOUSEHOLD)."
3. 3 purposes regarding land in OT: equitable distribution (Josh13-21); inalienability; dependance on God—manna economy

THEOLOGY OF JUBILEE

1. Land at center of OT theology: **Election**—resulted in land; **Redemption** from Egypt—resulted in land; **Disobey** God—loss of land; keep **Commandments**—stay on land; **Return** from Exile—back to land; **Future**—new heavens/earth (land)
2. Land belonged to God: 25:13; People belonged to God 25:42; Land was a gift
3. Just as there were sojourners who lived in Israel; so Israel was sojourner who lived on God's land.

RULES ABOUT JUBILEE

1. All Israelites had equal access to land; No use of land during the year; Land values determined by Jubilee; Jubilee is an extension of TC#10; Give the poor a fair opportunity to be self-supporting again (development/structure)

JUBILEE & 3 LEVELS OF POVERTY--LEV 25:25-55

²⁵ *"If your brother becomes poor, and sells part of his property, then his next of kin shall come and redeem what his brother has sold. ²⁶ If a man has no one to redeem it, and then himself becomes prosperous and finds sufficient means to redeem it,*

³⁵ *"And if your brother becomes poor, and cannot maintain himself with you, you shall maintain him; as a stranger and a sojourner he shall live with you. ³⁶ Take no interest from him or increase, but fear your God; that your brother may live beside you. ³⁷ You shall not lend him your money at interest, nor give him your food for profit. ³⁸ I am the LORD your God, who brought you forth out of the land of Egypt to give you the land of Canaan, and to be your God.*

³⁹ *And if your brother becomes poor beside you, and sells himself to you, you shall not make him serve as a slave: ⁴⁰ he shall be with you as a hired servant and as a sojourner. He shall serve with you until the year of the jubilee; ⁴¹ then he shall go out from you, he and his children with him, and go back to his own family, and return to the possession of his fathers.*

⁴⁷ *If a stranger or sojourner with you becomes rich, and your brother beside him becomes poor and sells himself to the stranger or sojourner with you, or to a member of the stranger's family, ⁴⁸ then after he is sold he may be redeemed; one of his brothers may redeem him, ⁴⁹ or his uncle, or his cousin may redeem him, or a near kinsman belonging to his family may redeem him; or if he grows rich he may redeem himself. ⁵⁰ He shall reckon with him who bought him from the year when he sold himself to him until the year of jubilee, and the price of his release shall be according to the number of years; the time he was with his owner shall be rated as the time of a hired servant.*

5 STAGES OF POVERTY

1. 25-34 Hard times force farmer to sell land, next of kin can redeem or wait till Jubilee to get it back (see exceptions 29-34)
2. 35-38 After selling land poverty remains, next of kin supports him, no interest, no profit
3. 39-43 No improvement, sells self/family into service of wealthy, but not treated as a slave.
4. 47-55 Poor man sells himself outside the clan, the clan must prevent the loss of a whole family, starts w/ brother, the uncle, cousin, further relatives. Clan was to preserve the families and land within the clan

5. Other provisions: Third year tithe, gleaning, Deut. 15

EXCEPTIONS TO JUBILEE—25:29-34

1. House in town—sell is permanent after 1 year, economy based on farms, not houses
2. House in country—Jubilee rules
3. Levitical cities & houses can be sold, subject to Jubilee; Levitical land cannot be sold because of “perpetual possession”

HISTORICAL REFERENCES TO SABBATH YEAR AND BEYOND: WAS IT PRACTICED?

1. One of most often asked questions in OT studies: challenges us
2. References in OT
 - a. Lev27:16-2—offering land as a vow & year of Jubilee.
 - b. Num36:4 Zelophehad daughters marry outside tribe; in year of Jubilee which tribe gets land
 - c. 1Sam8:14 He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive orchards and give them to his servants.
 - d. Isa61:1-4: *Year of Lord's favor* = Jubilee (When God looked with favor on poor)
 - e. Solomon's demand for wealth put yoke on people:1Kings4:1-34; 12:1-33
 - f. Jeremiah34:8-11 Zedekiah proclaimed release to slaves, people released them; then took them back.
 - g. 1Kings21 Naboth's vineyard (below)
 - h. Isa 1-5: adding house to house, field to field
 - i. 2Chron. 36:21--Land would keep its Sabbath during exile.
 - j. Neh 5; farmers mortgaging fields b/c of famine, then hard times forced them to sell children as servants; complained to Neh.
3. NT
 - a. Luke4:18, 19—year of Lord's favor: Sharon Ringe *Jesus, Liberation, and the Biblical Jubilee: Images for Ethics and Christology* 2004
 - b. Acts: “all things in common”
 - c. Isa & Rev: new heavens and new earth where all live in peace & prosperity
4. 1 Mac 6: ⁴⁹He made peace with the men of Bethzur, and they evacuated the city, because they had no provisions there to withstand a siege, since it was a sabbatical year for the land.
5. Alexander & Julius Caesar recognized and granted remission of tribute during the years and called for abstaining from offensive wars. *Antiquities* 11.8.5; 3.12.3
6. Mishnah Torah, *Sabbatical Year and the Jubilee* 10.3—Jubilee abolished after exile
7. *Book of Jubilees*—100 BC in Palestine
8. Jonathan Cahn wrote a book *The Oracle* claims that God will force a Jubilee on us about every fifty years
9. Thomas Picketty *Capitalism for the 20th Century*, economic reset

1 Kings 21:1 - Now Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard in Jezreel, beside the palace of Ahab king of Samaria. ² And after this Ahab said to Naboth, "Give me your vineyard, that I may have it for a vegetable garden, because it is near my house; and I will give you a better vineyard for it; or, if it seems good to you, I will give you its value in money." ³ But Naboth said to Ahab, "The LORD forbid that I should give you the inheritance of my fathers."

1. SOCIAL angle
2. JUSTICE angle
3. ECONOMIC Angle

⁴ And Ahab went into his house vexed and sullen because of what Naboth the Jezreelite had said to him; for he had said, "I will not give you the inheritance of my fathers." And he lay down on his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no food. ⁵ But Jezebel his wife came to him, and said to him, "Why is your spirit so vexed that you eat no food?" ⁶ And he said to her, "Because I spoke to Naboth the Jezreelite, and said to him, 'Give me your vineyard for money; or else, if it please you, I will give you another vineyard for it;' and he answered, 'I will not give you my vineyard.'" ⁷ And Jezebel his wife said to him, "Do you now govern Israel? Arise, and eat bread, and let your heart be cheerful; I will give you the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite." ⁸ So she wrote letters in Ahab's name and sealed them with his seal, and she sent the letters to the elders and the nobles who dwelt with Naboth in his city. ⁹ And she wrote in the letters, "Proclaim a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people; ¹⁰ and set two base fellows opposite him, and let them bring a charge against him, saying, 'You have cursed God and the king.' Then take him out, and stone him to death." ¹¹ And the men of his city, the elders and the nobles who dwelt in his city, did as Jezebel had sent word to them. As it was written in the letters which she had sent to them, ¹² they proclaimed a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people. ¹³ And the two base fellows came in and sat opposite him; and the base fellows brought a charge against Naboth, in the presence of the people, saying, "Naboth cursed God and the king." So they took him outside the city, and stoned him to death with stones. ¹⁴ Then they sent to Jezebel, saying, "Naboth has been stoned; he is dead." ¹⁵ As soon as Jezebel heard that Naboth had been stoned and was dead, Jezebel said to Ahab, "Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, which he refused to give you for money; for Naboth is not alive, but dead." ¹⁶ And as soon as Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, Ahab arose to go down to the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, to take possession of it.

ROYAL MISUSE OF POWER

1. Jezebel takes vineyard, kills Naboth, covers it up
2. Fasting was usually a time of repentance, Jezebel made it occasion of sin
3. She used law Ex22:28; Lev24:15-16 anybody who cursed God should die