
LEVITICUS 25:1 The LORD said to Moses in Mount Sinai,

The law concerning the Sabbatical or seventh year repeated, Lev 25:1-7. The law relative to the jubilee, or fiftieth year, and the hallowing of the fiftieth, Lev 25:8-12. In the year of jubilee every one to return unto his possessions, Lev 25:13. None to oppress another in buying and selling, Lev 25:14. Purchases to be rated from jubilee to jubilee, according to the number of years unexpired, Lev 25:15-17. Promises to obedience, Lev 25:18, Lev 25:19. Promises relative to the Sabbatical year, Lev 25:20-22. No inheritance must be finally alienated, Lev 25:23, Lev 25:24. No advantage to be taken of a man's poverty in buying his land, Lev 25:25-28. Ordinances relative to the selling of a house in a walled city, Lev 25:29, Lev 25:30; in a village, Lev 25:31. Houses of the Levites may be redeemed at any time, Lev 25:32, Lev 25:33. The fields of the Levites in the suburbs must not be sold, Lev 25:34. No usury to be taken from a poor brother, Lev 25:35-38. If an Israelite be sold to an Israelite, he must not be obliged to serve as a slave, Lev 25:39, but be as a hired servant or as a sojourner, till the year of jubilee, Lev 25:40, when he and his family shall have liberty to depart, Lev 25:41; because God claims all Israelites as his servants, having redeemed them from bondage in Egypt, Lev 25:42, Lev 25:43. The Israelites are permitted to have bond-men and bond-women of the heathens, who, being bought with their money, shall be considered as their property, Lev 25:44-46. If an Israelite, grown poor, be sold to a sojourner who has waxed rich, he may be redeemed by one of his relatives, an uncle or uncle's son, Lev 25:47-49. In the interim between the jubilees, he may be redeemed; but if not redeemed, he shall go free in the jubilee, Lev 25:50-54. Obedience enforced by God's right over them as his servants, Lev 25:55.

LEVITICUS 25:2 "Speak to the children of Israel, and tell them, 'When you come into the land which I give you, then the land shall keep a Sabbath to the LORD.

Verse 2

The land keep a Sabbath - See this ordinance explained, Exo 23:11 (note). It may be asked here: if it required all the annual produce of the field to support the inhabitants, how could the people be nourished the seventh year, when no produce was received from the fields? To this it may be answered, that God sent his blessing in an especial manner on the sixth year, (see Lev 25:21, Lev 25:22), and it brought forth fruit for three years. How astonishing and convincing was this miracle! Could there possibly be any deception here? No! The miracle speaks for itself, proves the Divine authenticity of the law, and takes every prop and stay from the system that wishes to convict the Mosaic ordinances of imposture. See Exo 23:11. It is evident from this that the Mosaic law must have had a Divine origin, as no man in his senses, without God's authority, could have made such an ordinance as this; for the sixth year, from its promulgation, would have amply refuted his pretensions to a Divine mission.

LEVITICUS 25:3 You shall sow your field six years, and you shall prune your vineyard six years, and gather in its fruits;

LEVITICUS 25:4 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.

LEVITICUS 25:5 What grows of itself in your harvest you shall not reap, and you shall not gather the grapes of your undressed vine. It shall be a year of solemn rest for the land.

LEVITICUS 25:6 The Sabbath of the land shall be for food for you; for yourself, for your servant, for your maid, for your hired servant, and for your stranger, who lives as a foreigner with you.

LEVITICUS 25:7 For your livestock also, and for the animals that are in your land, shall all its increase be for food.

LEVITICUS 25:8 "You shall count off seven Sabbaths of years, seven times seven years; and there shall be to you the days of seven Sabbaths of years, even forty-nine years.

Verse 8

Thou shalt number seven Sabbaths of years - This seems to state that the jubilee was to be celebrated on the forty-ninth year; but in Lev 25:10 and Lev 25:11 it is said, Ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and, A jubilee shall this fiftieth year be. Probably in this verse Moses either includes the preceding jubilee, and thus with the forty-ninth makes up the number fifty; or he speaks of proclaiming the jubilee on the forty-ninth, and celebrating it on the fiftieth year current. Some think it was celebrated on the forty-ninth year, as is stated in Lev 25:8; and this prevented the Sabbatical year, or seventh year of rest, from being confounded with the jubilee, which it must otherwise have been, had the celebration of this great solemnity taken place on the fiftieth year; but it is most likely that the fiftieth was the real jubilee.

LEVITICUS 25:9 Then you shall sound the loud trumpet on the tenth day of the seventh month. On the Day of Atonement you shall sound the trumpet throughout all your land.

LEVITICUS 25:10 You shall make the fiftieth year holy, and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee to you; and each of you shall return to his own property, and each of you shall return to his family.

LEVITICUS 25:11 That fiftieth year shall be a jubilee to you. In it you shall not sow, neither reap that which grows of itself, nor gather from the undressed vines.

Verse 11

A jubilee shall that fiftieth year be - The literal meaning of the word jubilee, יובל yobel in Hebrew, and יוביל yobil in the Samaritan, has not been well ascertained. Josephus and the rabbins have caused many to err; the former says the word signifies liberty; Ελευθεριαν δε σημαίνει τουνομα, Antiq., l. 3, cap. 12, edit. Haverc., vol. 1, p. 184; but the word liberty signifies rather the intention of the institution, than the meaning of the Hebrew term. The rabbins say it signifies a ram's horn, because the trumpets which were used in proclaiming this solemnity were made out of ram's horns. This meaning is adopted in a few places in our translation, but none of the ancient versions acknowledge this sense of the term, the Chaldee excepted. Some derive it from יביל yabal, to bring, carry away, because the Israelites at this time carried away the right of repossessing their

inheritances which had been forfeited or alienated. The most natural derivation is from הוביל hobil, to cause to bring back, or recall, because estates, etc., which had been alienated, were then brought back to their primitive owners. This was a wise and excellent institution, but appears to have been little regarded by the Jews after the Babylonish captivity. Indeed, it is not mentioned under the second temple, and the observance must have ceased among the Jews when they were brought under a foreign yoke. The jubilee seems to have been typical,

1. Of the great time of release, the Gospel dispensation, when all who believe in Christ Jesus are redeemed from the bondage of sin - repossess the favor and image of God, the only inheritance of the human soul, having all debts cancelled, and the right of inheritance restored. To this the prophet Isaiah seems to allude, Isa 26:13, and particularly Isa 61:1-3.

2. Of the general resurrection. "It is," says Mr. Parkhurst, "a lively prefiguration of the grand consummation of time, which will be introduced in like manner by the trump of God, 1Cor 15:52, when the children and heirs of God shall be delivered from all their forfeitures, and restored to the eternal inheritance allotted to them by their Father; and thenceforth rest from their labors, and be supported in life and happiness by what the field of God shall supply."

It is worthy of remark that the jubilee was not proclaimed till the tenth day of the seventh month, on the very day when the great annual atonement was made for the sins of the people; and does not this prove that the great liberty or redemption from thralldom, published under the Gospel, could not take place till the great Atonement, the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus, had been offered up? See Lev 25:9.

LEVITICUS 25:12 For it is a jubilee; it shall be holy to you. You shall eat of its increase out of the field.

LEVITICUS 25:13 "In this Year of Jubilee each of you shall return to his property.

LEVITICUS 25:14 "If you sell anything to your neighbour, or buy from your neighbour, you shall not wrong one another.

Verse 14

Ye shall not oppress one another - Ye shall take no advantage of each other's ignorance either in buying or selling; for he that buys an article at less than it is worth, or sells one for more than it is worth, taking advantage in both cases of the ignorance of the vender or buyer, is no better than a thief, as he actually robs his neighbor of as much property as he has bought the article at below or sold it above its current value.

LEVITICUS 25:15 According to the number of years after the Jubilee you shall buy from your neighbour. According to the number of years of the crops he shall sell to you.

Verse 15

According to the number of years - The purchases that were to be made of lands were to be regulated by the number of years unelapsed of the current jubilee. This was something like buying

the unexpired term of a lease among us; the purchase is always regulated by the number of years between the time of purchase and the expiration of the term.

LEVITICUS 25:16 According to the length of the years you shall increase its price, and according to the shortness of the years you shall diminish its price; for he is selling the number of the crops to you.

LEVITICUS 25:17 You shall not wrong one another; but you shall fear your God: for I am the LORD your God.

LEVITICUS 25:18 “Therefore you shall do my statutes, and keep my ordinances and do them; and you shall dwell in the land in safety.

LEVITICUS 25:19 The land shall yield its fruit, and you shall eat your fill, and dwell therein in safety.

LEVITICUS 25:20 If you said, “What shall we eat the seventh year? Behold, we shall not sow, nor gather in our increase”;

Verse 20

What shall we eat the seventh year? - A very natural question, which could only be laid at rest by the sovereign promise in the next verse:

I will Command my Blessing upon you in the sixth year, and it shall bring forth fruit for Three Years. See on Lev 25:2 (note).

LEVITICUS 25:21 then I will command my blessing on you in the sixth year, and it shall bear fruit for the three years.

LEVITICUS 25:22 You shall sow the eighth year, and eat of the fruits, the old store; until the ninth year, until its fruits come in, you shall eat the old store.

LEVITICUS 25:23 “The land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is mine; for you are strangers and live as foreigners with me.

Verse 23

The land shall not be sold for ever - the land is mine - As God in a miraculous manner gave them possession of this land, they were therefore to consider themselves merely as tenants to him; and on this ground he, as the great landholder or lord of the soil, prescribes to them all the conditions on which they shall hold it. This one circumstance was peculiarly favorable to their advancement in religion, in righteousness, and true holiness; for feeling that they had nothing which they could call their own upon earth, they must frequently, by this, be put in mind of the necessity of having a permanent dwelling in the heavenly inheritance, and of that preparation without which it could not be possessed.

LEVITICUS 25:24 In all the land of your possession you shall grant a redemption for the land.

LEVITICUS 25:25 “If your brother becomes poor, and sells some of his possessions, then his kinsman who is next to him shall come, and redeem that which his brother has sold.

Verse 25

Any of his kin come to redeem it - The land that was sold might be redeemed, in the interim between jubilee and jubilee, by the former owner or by one of his kinsmen or relatives. This kinsman is called in the text גאל goel or redeemer; and was not this a lively emblem of the redemption of man by Christ Jesus? That he might have a right to redeem man, he took upon him human nature, and thus became a kinsman of the great family of the human race, and thereby possessed the right of redeeming that fallen nature of which he took part, and of buying back to man that inheritance which had been forfeited by transgression.

LEVITICUS 25:26 If a man has no one to redeem it, and he becomes prosperous and finds sufficient means to redeem it;

LEVITICUS 25:27 then let him reckon the years since its sale, and restore the surplus to the man to whom he sold it; and he shall return to his property.

LEVITICUS 25:28 But if he isn't able to get it back for himself, then what he has sold shall remain in the hand of him who has bought it until the Year of Jubilee: and in the Jubilee it shall be released, and he shall return to his property.

LEVITICUS 25:29 “If a man sells a dwelling house in a walled city, then he may redeem it within a whole year after it has been sold. For a full year he shall have the right of redemption.

Verse 29

Sell a dwelling house in a walled city - A very proper difference is put between houses in a city and houses in the country. If a man sold his house in the city, he might redeem it any time in the course of a year; but if it were not redeemed within that time, it could no more be redeemed, nor did it go out even in the jubilee. It was not so with a house in the country; such a house might be redeemed during any part of the interim; and if not redeemed, must go out at the jubilee. The reason in both cases is sufficiently evident; the house in the city might be built for purposes of trade or traffic merely, the house in the country was built on or attached to the inheritance which God had divided to the respective families, and it was therefore absolutely necessary that the same law should apply to the house as to the inheritance. But the same necessity did not hold good with respect to the house in the city: and as we may presume the house in the city was merely for the purpose of trade, when a man bought such a house, and got his business established there, it would have been very inconvenient for him to have removed; but as it was possible that the former owner might have sold the house rashly, or through the pressure of some very urgent necessity, a year was allowed him, that during that time he might have leisure to reconsider his rash act, or so to get through his pressing necessity as to be able to get back his dwelling. This time was sufficiently long in either of the above cases; and as such occurrences might have been the cause of his selling his house, it was necessary that he might have the opportunity of redeeming his pledge. Again, as the purchaser,

having bought the house merely for the purpose of trade, manufacture, etc., must have been at great pains and expense to fit the place for his work, and establish his business, in which himself, his children, and his children's children, were to labor and get their bread; hence it was necessary that he should have some certainty of permanent possession, without which, we may naturally conjecture, no such purchases ever would be made. This seems to be the simple reason of the law in both cases.

LEVITICUS 25:30 If it isn't redeemed within the space of a full year, then the house that is in the walled city shall be made sure in perpetuity to him who bought it, throughout his generations. It shall not be released in the Jubilee.

LEVITICUS 25:31 But the houses of the villages which have no wall around them shall be reckoned with the fields of the country: they may be redeemed, and they shall be released in the Jubilee.

LEVITICUS 25:32 "Nevertheless the cities of the Levites, the houses in the cities of their possession, the Levites may redeem at any time.

Verse 32

The cities of the Levites - The law in this and the following verses was also a very wise one. A Levite could not ultimately sell his house: if sold he could redeem it at any time in the interim between the two jubilees; but if not redeemed, it must go out at the following jubilee. And why? "Because Moses framed his laws so much in favor of the priesthood, that they had peculiar privileges?" etc. Just the reverse: they were so far from being peculiarly favored that they had no inheritance in Israel, only their cities, to dwell in: and because their houses in these cities were the whole that they could call their own, therefore these houses could not be ultimately alienated. All that they had to live on besides was from that most precarious source of support, the freewill-offerings of the people, which depended on the prevalence of pure religion in the land.

LEVITICUS 25:33 The Levites may redeem the house that was sold, and the city of his possession, and it shall be released in the Jubilee; for the houses of the cities of the Levites are their possession among the children of Israel.

LEVITICUS 25:34 But the field of the suburbs of their cities may not be sold; for it is their perpetual possession.

LEVITICUS 25:35 "If your brother has become poor, and his hand can't support himself among you; then you shall uphold him. He shall live with you like an alien and a temporary resident.

LEVITICUS 25:36 Take no interest from him or profit, but fear your God; that your brother may live among you.

Verse 36

Take thou no usury of him - Usury, at present, signifies unlawful interest for money. Properly, it means the reward or compensation given for the use of a thing, but is principally spoken of money. For the definition of the original term, See the note on Exo 22:25.

LEVITICUS 25:37 You shall not lend him your money at interest, nor give him your food for profit.

LEVITICUS 25:38 I 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.

LEVITICUS 25:39 "If your brother has grown poor among you, and sells himself to you; you shall not make him to serve as a slave.

LEVITICUS 25:40 As a hired servant, and as a temporary resident, he shall be with you; he shall serve with you until the Year of Jubilee:

LEVITICUS 25:41 then he shall go out from you, he and his children with him, and shall return to his own family, and to the possession of his fathers.

LEVITICUS 25:42 For they are my servants, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt. They shall not be sold as slaves.

Verse 42

For they are my servants - As God redeemed every Israelite out of Egyptian bondage, they were therefore to consider themselves as his property, and that consequently they should not alienate themselves from him. It was in being his servants, and devoted to his work, that both their religious and political service consisted. And although their political liberty might be lost, they knew that their spiritual liberty never could be forfeited except by an utter alienation from God. God therefore claims the same right to their persons which he does to their lands; See the note on Lev 25:23.

LEVITICUS 25:43 You shall not rule over him with harshness, but shall fear your God.

Verse 43

Thou shalt not rule over him with rigor - What is rigorous service? "Service which is not determined, and service whereof there is no need." This is the definition given by the Jews; but much more is implied in this command than is expressed here. Labour beyond the person's strength, or labor too long continued, or in unhealthy or uncomfortable places and circumstances, or without sufficient food, etc., is labor exacted with rigour, and consequently inhuman; and this law is made, not for the Mosaic dispensation and the Jewish people, but for every dispensation and for every people under heaven.

LEVITICUS 25:44 "As for your male and your female slaves, whom you may have; of the nations that are around you, from them you may buy male and female slaves.

LEVITICUS 25:45 Moreover of the children of the aliens who live among you, of them you may buy, and of their families who are with you, which they have conceived in your land; and they will be your property.

LEVITICUS 25:46 You may make them an inheritance for your children after you, to hold for a possession; of them may you take your slaves forever; but over your brothers the children of Israel you shall not rule, one over another, with harshness.

LEVITICUS 25:47 "If an alien or temporary resident with you becomes rich, and your brother beside him has grown poor, and sells himself to the stranger or foreigner living among you, or to a member of the stranger's family;

LEVITICUS 25:48 after he is sold he may be redeemed. One of his brothers may redeem him;

LEVITICUS 25:49 or his uncle, or his uncle's son, may redeem him, or any who is a close relative to him of his family may redeem him; or if he has grown rich, he may redeem himself.

LEVITICUS 25:50 He shall reckon with him who bought him from the year that he sold himself to him to the Year of Jubilee. The price of his sale shall be according to the number of years; he shall be with him according to the time of a hired servant.

Verse 50

The price of his sale shall be, etc. - This was a very equitable law, both for the sojourner to whom the man was sold, and to the Israelite who had been thus sold. The Israelite might redeem himself, or one of his kindred might redeem him; but this must not be done to the prejudice of his master, the sojourner. They were therefore to reckon the years he must have served from that time till the jubilee; and then, taking the current wages of a servant per year at that time, multiply the remaining years by that sum, and the aggregate was the sum to be given to his master for his redemption. The Jews hold that the kindred of such a person were bound, if in their power, to redeem him, lest he should be swallowed up among the heathen; and we find, from Neh 5:8, that this was done by the Jews on their return from the Babylonish captivity: We, after our ability, have redeemed our brethren the Jews, who were sold unto the heathen.

LEVITICUS 25:51 If there are yet many years, according to them he shall give back the price of his redemption out of the money that he was bought for.

LEVITICUS 25:52 If there remain but a few years to the year of jubilee, then he shall reckon with him; according to his years of service he shall give back the price of his redemption.

LEVITICUS 25:53 As a servant hired year by year shall he be with him. He shall not rule with harshness over him in your sight.

LEVITICUS 25:54 If he isn't redeemed by these means, then he shall be released in the Year of Jubilee, he, and his children with him.

LEVITICUS 25:55 For to me the children of Israel are servants; they are my servants whom I brought out of the land of Egypt. I am the LORD your God.

Verse 55

For unto me the children of Israel are servants - The reason of this law we have already seen, (See on Lev 25:42 (note)), but we must look farther to see the great end of it. The Israelites were a typical people; they represented those under the Gospel dispensation who are children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. But these last have a peculiarity of blessing: they are not merely servants, but they are Sons; though they also serve God, yet it is in the newness of the spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter. And to this difference of state the apostle seems evidently to allude, Gal 4:6, etc.: And because ye are Sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a Servant, but a Son; and if a Son, then an Heir of God through Christ; genuine believers in Christ not being heirs of an earthly inheritance, nor merely of a heavenly one, for they are heirs of God. God himself therefore is their portion, without whom even heaven itself would not be a state of consummate blessedness to an immortal spirit. The jubilee was a wonderful institution, and was of very great service to the religion, freedom, and independence of the Jewish people. "The motive of this law," says Calmet, "was to prevent the rich from oppressing the poor, and reducing them to perpetual slavery; and that they should not get possession of all the lands by way of purchase, mortgage, or, lastly, usurpation. That debts should not be multiplied too much, lest thereby the poor should be entirely ruined; and that slaves should not continue always, they, their wives and children, in servitude. Besides, Moses intended to preserve, as much as possible, personal liberty, an equality of property, and the regular order of families, among the Hebrews. Lastly, he designed that the people should be strongly attached to their country, lands, and inheritances; that they should have an affection for them, and consider them as estates which descended to them from their ancestors which they were to leave to their posterity, without any fear of their going ultimately out of their families." But this institution especially pointed out the redemption of man by Christ Jesus:

1. Through him, he who was in debt to God's justice had his debt discharged, and his sin forgiven.
2. He who sold himself for naught, who was a bondslave of sin and Satan, regains his liberty and becomes a son of God through faith in his blood.
3. He who by transgression had forfeited all right and title to the kingdom of God, becomes an heir of God, and a joint heir with Christ. Heaven, his forfeited inheritance, is restored, for the kingdom of heaven is open to all believers; and thus, redeemed from his debt, restored to his liberty, united to the heavenly family, and re-entitled to his inheritance, he goes on his way rejoicing, till he enters the paradise of his Maker, and is for ever with the Lord.

Reader, hast thou applied for this redemption? Does not the trumpet of the jubilee, the glad tidings of salvation by Christ Jesus, sound in the land? Surely it does. Why then continue a bond-slave of sin, a child of wrath, and an heir of hell, when such a salvation is offered unto thee without money and without price? O suffer not this provision to be made ultimately in vain for thee! For what art thou advantaged if thou gain the whole world and lose thy soul?