

# CHAPTER 25

## INTRODUCTION TO LEVITICUS 25

In this chapter the Israelites are directed, when come into the land of Canaan, to observe every seventh year as a sabbatical year, in which there was to be no tillage of the land, and yet there would be a sufficiency for man and beast, (<sup><R251></sup>Leviticus 25:1-7); and every fiftieth year as a year of jubilee, in which also there was to be no tillage of the land, and every man was to return to his possession or estate, which had been sold to another any time before this, (<sup><R258></sup>Leviticus 25:8-17); and a promise of safety and plenty in the seventh year is made to encourage the observance of it, (<sup><R258></sup>Leviticus 25:18-22); and several laws and rules are delivered out concerning the sale of lands, the redemption of them, and their return to their original owner in the year of jubilee, (<sup><R253></sup>Leviticus 25:23-28); and the sale of houses, and the redemption of them, and the difference between those in walled cities and those in villages, with respect thereunto, (<sup><R259></sup>Leviticus 25:29-31); and also concerning the houses of the cities of the Levites, and the fields of the suburbs of them, (<sup><R259></sup>Leviticus 25:32-34); to which are added some instructions about relieving decayed, persons, and lending and giving to them, without taking usury of them, (<sup><R254></sup>Leviticus 25:34-38); and other laws concerning the release of such Israelites as had sold themselves for servants to the Israelites, in the year of jubilee, since none but Heathens were to be bondmen and bondmaids for ever, (<sup><R259></sup>Leviticus 25:39-46); and of such who were sold to proselytes, (<sup><R259></sup>Leviticus 25:47-55).

**Ver. 1.** *And the Lord spake unto Moses in Mount Sinai*, etc.] Not when Moses was with the Lord on that mount forty days, but after he came down from thence, even after the tabernacle was set up, while the children of Israel where encamped about that mountain, and before they took their journey from thence; for they continued some time in the wilderness of Sinai, and here it was the Lord spoke to Moses; for the words may be rendered “by” or “near Mount Sinai”<sup>f853</sup>; and so Josephus<sup>f854</sup> says, the following laws were delivered to Moses, when Israel was encamped under Mount Sinai:

*saying*; as follows.

**Ver. 2.** *Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them*, etc.] What follows, being what the whole body of the people would be under obligation to observe, and therefore must be delivered to them all, at least to the heads and elders of the people, and by them to the rest:

*when ye come into the land which I give you*; the land of Canaan, and until they came thither, the following law concerning the sabbatical year could not take place; and as Maimonides <sup>f855</sup> says, it was only used in the land of Israel, and no where else, according to this text, and that both before and after the temple was built:

*then shall the land keep a sabbath unto the Lord*; a rest from tillage, as it is afterwards explained; and this being according to the will of God, when observed would be to his honour and glory, and show that he was the proprietor of the land; and that the Israelites held it under him by this tenure, that every seventh year they should let it rest, which would be for the benefit of the land, and preserve it from being impoverished by continual usage and hereby they might learn to depend on the providence of God, and to observe that all increase is from him; and to consider the straits and difficulties the poor live in continually, as they in this seventh year; and by this means they would be at leisure to have an opportunity of reading the law, as they did at this time, (<sup>f810</sup>Deuteronomy 31:10-13); and of meditating upon it, and of giving themselves up to religious exercises, as well as by it they might be led to the typical use of to look for and expect that sabbatism or rest, which remains for the people of God. And now this law did not take place as soon as they came into the land, for it was to be sown six years, and then was the year of rest; and indeed not till after Joshua had subdued the whole land, which was seven years a doing; nor till they were quite settled, and it was divided among them, and every man had his field and vineyard apart, which this law supposes; wherefore the Jewish writers <sup>f856</sup> say, they were not bound to tithes until the fourteenth year, and from thence they began to reckon the sabbatical year; and the twenty first year they made a sabbatical year, and the sixty fourth a jubilee, which they make to be the first that were kept: and they reckoned this year to commence, not on the first of Nisan or March, which was the beginning of the year for ecclesiastical things, but on the first of Tisri or September, when the harvest and all the fruits of the earth were gathered in; and when on other years they used to proceed to sowing the next month, but were

forbid on this; and so it is said in the Misnah <sup>f857</sup>, the first of Tisri is the beginning of the year for the sabbatical and jubilee years.

**Ver. 3.** *Six years thou shalt sow thy field*, etc.] Under which is comprehended everything relating to agriculture, both before and after sowing, as dunging the land, ploughing and harrowing it, treading the corn, reaping and gathering it in; (see <sup><0230></sup>Exodus 23:10);

*and six years thou shall prune thy vineyard, and gather in the fruit thereof*; which is not to be restrained to vineyards only, but to be extended to oliveyards, orchards and gardens, and to the planting and cultivating of them, and gathering in the fruits of them.

**Ver. 4.** *But in the seventh year shall be a sabbath of rest unto the land*, etc.] From all tillage of it, from planting and cultivating any sort of trees in it; and even from digging pits, ditches; and caves, as say the Jewish writers <sup>f858</sup>: and this was typical of that rest which believers enter into under the Gospel dispensation, and of the rest in the new Jerusalem state, and especially in the ultimate glory; not only from the labours of the body, but of the mind, through sin, Satan, doubts and fears, and through conflicts with various enemies, and when even all spiritual labours and services will be at an end but that of praise:

*a sabbath for the Lord*; for his honour and glory, to ascertain his property in the land, to show the power of his providence, and display his goodness in his care of all creatures, without any means used by them:

*thou shalt neither sow thy field nor prune thy vineyard*; under which are comprehended all acts of agriculture, which respect the cultivation of vines, olives, figs, and, according to the Misnah <sup>f859</sup>, there were some instruments which it was not lawful to sell to an artificer in the seventh year, such as a plough, with all belonging to it, a yoke, a fan, a spade, but he may sell him a scythe, or a sickle, or a cart, and all its instruments; and which the commentators <sup>f860</sup> interpret of one that is suspected of working in that year; the house of Shammai say, an heifer that ploughed might not be sold that year.

**Ver. 5.** *That which groweth of its own accord of thy harvest thou shalt not reap*, etc.] That which sprung up of itself from grains of corn, shed in the harvest of the preceding year, without any ploughing or sowing; he might reap it, but not as at other times, the whole of it, and gather it as his own

property, but only somewhat of it in common with others for his, present use:

*neither gather the grapes of thy vine undressed*; which was on this year forbid to be dressed; the grapes of which he might gather in common with others, but not as in other years, all of them, and as peculiarly his own: the words may be rendered, “the grapes of thy separations”<sup>f861</sup>; either such as in other years he used to separate for himself, and forbid others gathering them, but now made them common; or which he did not labour in the cultivation of, but abstained from it:

[*for*] *it is a year of rest unto the land*; which is repeated, that it may be observed.

**Ver. 6.** *And the sabbath of the land shall be meat for you*, etc.], That is, that which grew up of itself but of the land, or on trees, vines, olives, etc. undressed, should be the meat or food on which they should live that year: and this comprehends everything that is fit for food, and also for drink, and for anointing, and even for the lighting of lamps, as in the Misnah<sup>f862</sup>:

*for thee, and for thy servant, and for thy maid*; the owner of the fields and vineyards, he and his family, wife, children, and servants, might eat of the fruits of them in common with others; for whereas it is elsewhere said, (<sup><12311></sup>Exodus 23:11), “that the poor of thy people may eat”, this is observed here, lest anyone should think the rich are forbid eating them, as Jarchi remarks:

*and for thy hired servant, and for the stranger that sojourneth with thee*: which the same writer interprets of Gentiles; the food of this year was common to masters and servants, to rich and poor, to Israelites and Gentiles; all had an equal right unto, and share therein; which might be an emblem of the first times of the Gospel, in which all things were had in common, (<sup><4062></sup>Acts 4:32), and typical of the communion of saints in things spiritual; in salvation by Jesus Christ, common to Jews and Gentiles, high and low, bond and free; in the free and full forgiveness of sins by his blood; and in justification by his righteousness, which is unto all, and upon all them that believe, for there is no difference; in the participation of faith, and other graces, which are alike precious, and in the enjoyment of promises, privileges, and ordinances, and even of eternal life itself.

**Ver. 7.** *And for thy cattle, and for the beasts that [are] in thy land,* etc.]

The former signifies tame cattle, such as were kept at home, or in fields, or were used in service, and the latter the wild beasts of the field:

*shall all the increase thereof be meat;* for the one, and for the other; Jarchi remarks, that all the time a wild beast eats of the increase of the field, the cattle may be fed at home; but when it ceaseth to the wild beast of the field, then it ceaseth to the cattle at home; nay, the Jews are so strict in this matter, that they say that when there is no food for the beasts in the field, men are obliged to bring out what they have in their houses <sup>f863</sup>, (see <sup>2316</sup>Isaiah 11:6,7).

**Ver. 8.** *And thou shalt number seven sabbaths of years unto thee,* etc.] Or weeks of years; and there being seven days in a week, and a day being put for a year, seven weeks of years made forty nine years; the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan, and Jarchi, interpret it seven “shemittas”, or sabbatical years; and a sabbatical year being every seventh year, made the same number;

*seven times seven years:* or forty nine years, as follows;

*and the space of the seven sabbaths of years shall be forty and nine years;* just such a space of years there was between each jubilee, which, as afterwards said, was the fiftieth year; so as there were a seventh day sabbath, and a fiftieth day sabbath, the day of Pentecost, so there were a seventh year sabbath, or sabbatical year, and a fiftieth year sabbath.

**Ver. 9.** *Then shall thou cause the trumpet of the jubilee to sound,* etc.] At the end of forty nine years, or at the beginning of the fiftieth; or “the trumpet of a loud sound”; for here the word “jubilee” is not, which, according to some, was so called from the peculiar sound of the trumpet on this day, different from all others; though others, as Ben Melech, think, and the Jews commonly, that it had its name from the trumpet itself, which they suppose was made of a ram’s horn, “jobel”, in the Arabic language, signifying a ram; but the former reason is best; though perhaps it is best of all to derive it from **l ybwh**, “to bring back, restore, return”, because at this time men were returned to their liberty, estates, and families, as hereafter expressed:

*on the tenth [day] of the seventh month;* the month Tisri or September, the first day of which was the beginning of the year for “jubilees” <sup>f864</sup>; for the

computation of the jubilee year was made from the first day of the month, though the trumpet was not blown, and the rights of the year did not begin till the tenth, as Maimonides <sup>f865</sup> observes:

*in the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land*; which day of atonement was on the tenth day of the said month, and a very proper time it was to sound the trumpet, that after they had been afflicting themselves, then to have joy and comfort; and when atonement was made for all their sins, then to hear the joyful sound; and when it might be presumed they were in a good disposition to release their servants, and restore the poor to their possessions, when they themselves were favoured with the forgiveness of all their sins. This sounding was made throughout all the land of Israel; throughout all the highways, as Aben Ezra, that all might know the year of jubilee was come; and this was done by the order of the sanhedrim, as Maimonides <sup>f866</sup> says, and who, also observes, that from the beginning of the year, to the day of atonement, servants were not released to their own houses, but did not serve their masters, nor were fields returned to their owners; but servants ate, and drank, and rejoiced, and wore garlands on their heads; and when the day of atonement came, the sanhedrim blew the trumpet, and the servants were dismissed to their houses, and fields returned to their owners.

**Ver. 10.** *And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year*, etc.] The year following the seven sabbaths of years, or forty nine years; and which they were to sanctify by separating it from all others, and devoting it to the uses it was to be put to, and the services done on it, and by abstaining from the tillage of the land, sowing or reaping, and from the cultivation of vines, olives, etc.

*and proclaim liberty throughout [all] the land*; to servants, both to those whose ears were bored, and were to serve for ever, even unto the year of jubilee, and then be released; and to those whose six years were not ended, from the time that they were bought; for the jubilee year put an end to their servitude, let the time they had served be what it would; for this year was a general release of servants, excepting bondmen and bondmaids, who were never discharged; hence called the “year of liberty”, (<sup><3467></sup>Ezekiel 46:17); and Josephus <sup>f867</sup> says, the word “jobel” or “jubilee” signifies “liberty”:

*unto all the inhabitants thereof*; that were in servitude or poverty, excepting the above mentioned; from hence the Jews gather, than when the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, went into

captivity, the jubilees ceased <sup>f868</sup>, since all the inhabitants were not then in it; but that is a mistake, for the jubilees were continued unto the coming of the Messiah, and perhaps never omitted but once, in the time of the Babylonish captivity:

*it shall be a jubilee unto you*; to the Israelites, and to them only, as Aben Ezra observes; it was a time of joy and gladness to them, especially to servants, who were now free, and to the poor, who enjoyed their estates again:

*and ye shall return every man unto his possession*; which had been sold or mortgaged to another, but now reverted to its original owner:

*and ye shall return every man unto his family*; who through poverty had sold himself for a servant, and had lived in another family. The general design of this law was to preserve the rights of freeborn Israelites, as to person and property, to prevent perpetual servitude, and perpetual alienation of their estates; to continue families and estates as they were originally, that some might not become too rich, and others too poor; nor be blended, but the tribes and families might be kept distinct until the coming of the Messiah, to whom the jubilee had a particular respect, and in whom it ceased. The liberty proclaimed on this day was typical of that liberty from the bondage of sin, Satan, and the law, which Christ is the author of, and is proclaimed by him in the Gospel, (~~881~~ Galatians 5:1 ~~2301~~ Isaiah 61:1); a liberty of grace and glory, or the glorious liberty of the children of God: returning to possessions and inheritances may be an emblem of the enjoyment of the heavenly inheritance by the saints; though man by sin lost an earthly paradise, and came short of the glory of God, yet through Christ his people are restored to a better inheritance, an incorruptible one; to which they are begotten by his Spirit, have a right to it through his righteousness, and a meetness for it by his grace, and of which the Holy Spirit is the earnest and pledge, and into which Christ himself will introduce them. And the returning of them to their families may signify the return of God's elect through Christ to the family that is named of him; these were secretly of the family of God from all eternity, being taken into it in the covenant of grace, as well as predestinated to the adoption of children: but by the fall, and through a state of nature by it, they became children of wrath, even as others; yet through redemption by Christ, and faith in him, they receive the adoption of children, and openly appear to be of the family of God, (~~4068~~ 2 Corinthians 6:18 ~~4006~~ Ephesians 1:5 1:3

<sup><R015></sup>Galatians 4:5,6 3:26 <sup><R012></sup>John 1:12); and all this is proclaimed by the sound of the Gospel trumpet, which being a sound of liberty, peace, pardon, righteousness, salvation, and eternal life by Christ, is a joyful one, (<sup><R015></sup>Psalm 89:15); where the allusion seems to be to the jubilee trumpet.

**Ver. 11.** *A jubilee shall that fiftieth year be unto you*, etc.] Which, clearly shows, that not the forty ninth year was the year of jubilee, as many learned men have asserted, chiefly induced by this reason, because two years would come together in which were no sowing reaping; but that God, that could cause the earth to forth fruit for three years, (<sup><R251></sup>Leviticus 25:21); could make it bring forth enough for four years; and in order to make their sentiment agree with this passage, they are obliged to make the foregoing jubilee one of the fifty, and begin their account from thence; but this could not be done in the first account of the jubilee; of the name, (see Gill on <sup><R251></sup>Leviticus 25:9”);

*ye shall not sow*; in the year of jubilee, which shows also that this could not be the forty ninth year, which of course being a sabbatical year, there would be no sowing, reaping, etc. and so this law or instruction would be quite needless:

*neither reap that which groweth of itself in it, nor gather the [grapes] in it of thy vine undressed*; as in the sabbatical year, (see Gill on <sup><R251></sup>Leviticus 25:5”); the same with respect to these things being to be observed in the year of jubilee, as in that; and so Jarchi observes that the same that is said of the sabbatical year is said of the jubilee, two holy years being found next to one another, the forty ninth year the sabbatical year, and the fiftieth year the jubilee.

**Ver. 12.** *For it is the jubilee, it shall be holy*, etc.] Men being restored to their liberty, possessions, and families, it must be matter of joy to them, and therefore this year was to be separated from all others, and devoted to the ends and uses before mentioned; and men were to live upon the spontaneous productions of the earth, without any tillage of land, or cultivation of vines, etc.

*ye shall eat the increase thereof out of the field*; they were not to reap corn, and gather grapes and olives, and bring them into their barns and storehouses, as in other years; but were to go out every day into their fields, and gather for present use, and all were common to all sorts of men, and to cattle, as in the sabbatical year; (see Gill on <sup><R251></sup>Leviticus 25:7”).



**Ver. 13.** *In the year of this jubilee*, etc.] In the beginning of it, as Aben Ezra, though not on the first day of Tisri, but the tenth day, the day of atonement, when the trumpet was blown:

*ye shall return every man unto his possession*; which is repeated from (<sup>f850</sup>Leviticus 25:10); the reason of which, the Jews say, is to include gifts, and which, according to them, are like sales, and returned in the year of “jubilee”; that is, if a man gave his estate in possession to another, he returned to it, in the year of jubilee, equally as if he had sold it; and therefore they observe the same phrase is twice used by Moses, to include gifts <sup>f869</sup>: but perhaps the truer reason is, because this was a special business done at this time, and of great importance; the word “return” being so often used, may serve to confirm the sense of the word “jubilee”, given previously, (see Gill on “<sup>f820</sup>Leviticus 25:9”).

**Ver. 14.** *And if thou sell ought unto thy neighbour*, etc.] Any estate or possession, house or land, at any time before the year of jubilee:

*or buyest [ought] of thy neighbour's hand*; of movable goods, as the Targum of Jonathan interprets it; and so other Jewish writers <sup>f870</sup> restrain this to goods which are bought by hand, and delivered from hand to hand; and so they think that fields, and servants, which they say are like to fields, are excluded hereby; but it seems to refer to anything saleable, and chiefly to fields and vineyards, as the following verses show; wherefore Diodorus Siculus, as quoted by Grotius, must be mistaken, when he says, it was not counted lawful by the Jews to sell their inheritance, unless he means for ever, so indeed they could not:

*ye shall not oppress one another*; the buyer giving too little, or the seller requiring too much; no advantage was to be taken, either of the necessity of the one, or the ignorance of the other, but a fair bargain was to be made, and the full value given, neither too much nor too little. The Jews by “neighbour” understand an Israelite, and not a Gentile <sup>f871</sup>; not that there might be no buying and selling at all between Jews and Gentiles, or that the former might oppress and defraud the latter, though not an Israelite; but lands and inheritances might not be sold at all to Gentiles, only to Israelites.

**Ver. 15.** *According to the number of years after the jubilee thou shalt buy of thy neighbour*, etc.] That is, reckoning how many years had past since

the last jubilee, and how many there were to come to the next, and so give as many years' purchase as were yet to come:

*[and] according to the number of years of the fruits he shall sell unto thee;* only care was to be taken, that as many years as were sabbatical ones, which were not years of fruit, should be deducted out of the account by the seller; since these were years the buyer could have no profit by the estate, and therefore it was not reasonable that such years should be reckoned into the purchase; and hence the Jewish writers gather, that when a man had sold his field, he could not redeem it in less than two years, because a number of years cannot be less than two, and that if even the buyer agreed to it, it might not be done <sup>f872</sup>.

**Ver. 16.** *According to the multitude of years thou shalt increase the price thereof,* etc.] More was to be asked and required, and should be given for an estate, when, for instance, there were thirty years to the year of jubilee, than when there were but twenty;

*and according to the fewness of years thou shalt diminish the price of it;* if it wanted but five, or six, or ten years unto it, then, in proportion, less was to be insisted upon and given:

*for [according] to the number [of the years] of the fruits doth he sell unto thee;* which also must be considered, how many years of tillage of land, and cultivation of vineyards, etc. there were in the account, and how many sabbatical years to be deducted; for only according to the number of fruit years was the estate to be valued and sold.

**Ver. 17.** *Ye shall not therefore oppress one another,* etc.] By over or underrating estates:

*but thou shalt fear thy God;* and the fear of God being before their eyes, and on their hearts, would preserve both buyer and seller from doing an ill thing, when it was in the power of either, through the necessity of the one, or the ignorance of the other, (see <sup><44515></sup> Nehemiah 5:15):

*for I [am] the Lord your God;* omniscient, and knows all that is done in the most private and artful manner; and omnipotent and able to punish both, which of them either should oppress or defraud, (see <sup><3346></sup> 1 Thessalonians 4:6).

**Ver. 18.** *Wherefore ye shall do my statutes, and keep my judgments, and do them*, etc.] These and all others he enjoined; by which tenure, even obedience to all his commands, moral, ritual, and judicial, they were to hold the land of Canaan, and their possessions in it, which is intended in the next clause:

*and ye shall dwell in the land in safety*; without any fear of enemies, or of the neighbouring nations about them seizing upon them, and distressing them; and Jarchi observes, that it was for transgressing the sabbatical year that Israel was carried captive, which he thinks is intimated in (~~1482~~ 2 Chronicles 36:21); and that the seventy years' captivity in Babylon were for the seventy sabbatical years that had been neglected.

**Ver. 19.** *And the land shall yield her fruit*, etc.] That is, continually, and even in the seventh year, the sabbath of rest; for the land, though not manured, ploughed, and sowed, nor the vines, olives, and fig trees pruned, yet shall yield fruit as in other years, the Israelites observing the statutes and judgments of God:

*and ye shall eat your fill*; feel no want of provisions, but have fulness of everything as at other times, and never make a scanty meal, having sufficiency and plenty of all things:

*and dwell therein in safety*; not fearing enemies, nor being disturbed by them, nor carried captive.

**Ver. 20.** *And ye shall say, what shall ye eat the seventh year?* etc.] Such as are of little faith, disbelieve the promise, and distrust the providence of God, and take thought for tomorrow, and indulge an anxiety of mind how they shall be provided with food in the sabbatical year ordered to be observed, in which there were to be no tillage of land, nor pruning of trees:

*behold, we shall not sow*; that being forbidden:

*nor gather in our increase*; neither the barley, nor the wheat, nor the grapes, nor olives, nor figs, into their houses and barns, to lay up for stores, as in other years; though they might go out and gather in for present use in common with others: now if any should put the above question, as it was very likely some would, in such a view of things, the answer to it follows.

**Ver. 21.** *Then I will command my blessing upon you in the sixth year,* etc.] Upon their fields, vineyards, and oliveyards, and make them exceeding fruitful, more than in other years; all fruitfulness at any time depends upon the blessing of God, and follows upon it, but is more visible and observable when there is an exceeding great plenty:

*and it shall bring forth fruit for three years;* and thus God blessed the sixth year with such a plentiful increase as was sufficient for time to come, until a new crop was gathered in; as he had blessed the sixth day with a double portion of manna, for the supply of the seventh.

**Ver. 22.** *And ye shall sow the eighth year,* etc.] Sow the land in the eighth year, and likewise dress their vines, olives, etc.

*and eat [yet] of the old fruit;* even in the eighth year, of the old fruit of the sixth year, as the Targum of Jonathan adds:

*until the ninth year;* that is, as Jarchi explains it, until the feast of tabernacles of the ninth, which was the time that the increase of the eighth came into the house; for all summer it was in the field, and in Tisri or September was the time of gathering it into the house; and sometimes it was necessary to provide for four years on the sixth, which was before the sabbatical year, the seventh, for they ceased from tilling the ground two years running, the seventh and the jubilee year; but this Scripture is said concerning all the rest of the sabbatical years: these encouraging promises, one would have thought, would have been placed more naturally after the account of the sabbatical year that followed, (<sup><REPT></sup>Leviticus 25:7); but the reason of their being inserted here seems to be, because in the year of jubilee they were neither to sow nor reap, nor gather in the grapes of the undressed vine, as in the sabbatical year, (<sup><REPT></sup>Leviticus 25:11); wherefore those things are said for encouragement at the one time as at the other; since it might easily be concluded, that he that could provide for them every sixth year for three years to come, could once in fifty years provide for four:

*until her fruits come in, ye shall eat [of] the old [store];* some of which came in in March, as barley, others in May, as the wheat, and others in August and September, as the grapes, olives, etc. which was the time of ingathering several fruits of the earth, and of finishing the whole.

**Ver. 23.** *The land shall not be sold for ever,* etc.] That is, the land of Israel; the meaning is, any part of it, for that the whole might be sold or

disposed of at once is not to be supposed, but anyone part of it, which was the property of a single man, or belonged to a family; though it might be sold in case of necessity, yet not for ever, so as never to return to the owner, or his heirs; for if it was sold for ever it returned in the year of the jubilee: the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan render the word “absolutely”, simply, properly; a proper absolute sale was not to be made, but a conditional one, or for so many years, or with a view to its reversion in the year of jubilee, and so the agreement to be made according to the number of years, as before directed: the word, as Aben Ezra observes, signifies “cutting off”, and the sense is, that no land should be sold entirely, so as that the proprietor or his heirs should be wholly cut off from it, or that the entail of it upon the family should be cut off:

*for the land [is] mine*; as indeed the whole earth is, but the land of Canaan was peculiarly his, which he had chosen above all other lands for the inheritance of his people; out of which he drove the old inhabitants of it for their sins, and put in his own people to possess it under him; where he himself had his dwelling place, and where he was served and worshipped, and where the Messiah was to be born, and was born, and therefore called Immanuel’s land; and which was a figure of the better country, or the heavenly glory and happiness, which is of God’s preparing and giving, and will never be alienated from those whose right it is:

*for ye [are] strangers and sojourners with me*; as the Gentiles that lived among them were strangers and sojourners with them, so they were with the Lord; he was the original proprietor, they were but tenants at will; though it was both an honour and happiness to be with him, under any character, to board, and lodge, and dwell with him; and they might well be content to be reckoned not proprietors but strangers and sojourners, and especially such as had faith and hope in a better inheritance, of which this was only a figure; however, this being their present case, it was a reason good, why they could not for ever dispose of their lands and possessions, any more than a sojourner or inmate can of a house of which he has only a part.

**Ver. 24.** *And in all the land of your possession*, etc.] Which they should possess in the land of Canaan, whatever part of it any of them should enjoy:

*ye shall grant a redemption for the land*; that is, whenever any estate in it was sold through necessity, the buyer was obliged to grant a liberty to the

seller to redeem it, when it was in his power to do it, or any or his relations, especially after two years; so Jarchi observes, he that sells his possession may redeem it after two years, either he himself or he that is near akin to him, nor can the buyer hinder it; (see Gill on “<sup>40851</sup>Leviticus 25:15”).

**Ver. 25.** *If thy brother be waxen poor*, etc.] Is brought very low, greatly reduced, and is in mean circumstances; hence Jarchi says, we learn, that no man may sell his field, unless his distress presses him and forces him to it; for, as Maimonides <sup>f873</sup> observes, a man might not sell his estate to put money into his purse, or to trade with, or to purchase goods, servants, and cattle, only food:

*and hath sold away [some] of his possession*; not all of it, as Jarchi remarks; for the way of the earth or custom of the world teaches, that a man should reserve a field (or a part) for himself:

*and if any of his kin come to redeem it*; come to the buyer and propose to redeem it, by giving what it was sold for, or in proportion to the time he had enjoyed it:

*then shall he redeem that which his brother sold*; nor was it in the power of the purchaser to hinder him, or at his option whether he would suffer him to redeem it or not: such an one was an emblem of our “goel”, our near kinsman and Redeemer the Lord Jesus Christ, who came in our nature into this world to redeem us, and put us into the possession of the heavenly inheritance; nor was it in the power of any to hinder his performance of it, for he is the mighty God, the Lord of Hosts is his name.

**Ver. 26.** *And if the man have none to redeem it*, etc.] That is, none of kin that was able or willing to redeem it; otherwise no doubt there were persons in the land able to do it at any time, but none he was in connection with, or from whom he could expect such a favour:

*and himself be able to redeem it*; or if his hand has got, and he has found a sufficiency for his redemption, as the Targum of Jonathan; not that he has found anything that was lost, as Chaskuni glosses it, but by one providence or another, by the blessing of God on his trade and business, is become rich, and it is in the power of his hand to redeem the possession he had sold, he might do it; but, as the same writer observes, he might not borrow and redeem, but must do it with what he had got of his own since the time of sale, and which is also the sense of others <sup>f874</sup>.

**Ver. 27.** *Then let him count the years of the sale thereof*, etc.] How many years had passed since it was sold, how many it had been in the hands of the purchaser, and how many were yet to come to the year of the jubilee, by which means the price of redemption might easily be settled; thus, for instance, if the years were alike and there was just half the time gone, then half of the price it was sold at was repaid to the purchaser; and if not alike, then in proportion to what had passed and were to come:

*and restore the overplus unto the man to whom he sold it*; for the years that were yet to come; if, as Jarchi says, he has eaten of or enjoyed the fruit of the field three or four years, deduct the price of them from the account, and take the rest; this is the meaning, “and restore the overplus”, out of the price of the sale, according to what is eaten, and give it to the buyer: Maimonides<sup>f875</sup> explains it thus; that if there were ten years to the year of the jubilee, and the field was sold for an hundred pieces, if he that bought it has eaten of it three years, then the seller that redeems it must give him seventy pieces, and he must restore his field; if he has eaten of it six years, he is to give forty pieces, and the other restores him the field: in the Misnah it is put thus; if he sell it (his field) to the first for an hundred pence, and the first sells it to a second for two hundred, he must not reckon but with the first, as it is said, “unto the man to whom he sold it”; if he sold it to the first for two hundred, and the first sells it to a second for an hundred, he shall not count but with the last, as it is said, “to a man”, i.e. to the man which is in the midst of it, or is possessed of it; nor may he sell it for a distant time, that he may redeem it near, nor when in a bad condition, that he may redeem it when in a good one; nor may he borrow to redeem it, nor redeem it by halves<sup>f876</sup>:

*that he may return to his possession*; and enjoy it again.

**Ver. 28.** *But if he be not able to restore it to him*, etc.] The overplus, or give him what is in proportion to the time he has had it, and yet to come:

*then that which is sold shall remain in the hand of him that bought it until the year of the jubilee*; continue in his possession, and he shall enjoy all the benefit of it till that year comes:

*and in the jubilee it shall go out*: out of his hands or possession; or “he shall go out”<sup>f877</sup>, the purchaser shall go out of what he has bought, and shall have no more possession of it, but it shall come into the hands of the seller, and that without money, as the Targum of Jonathan adds:

*and he shall return unto his possession*; the seller, and enter upon it and enjoy it as his own property, as before he sold it.

**Ver. 29.** *And if a man sell a dwelling house in a walled city*, etc.] Which was so from the days of Joshua the son of Nun, as Jarchi:

*then he may redeem it within a whole year after it is sold*: any time within the year he pleased, either he or any near of kin to him; and if they would, on the day it was sold, or any time after within the compass of the year, even on the day in which the year ended; in this such an house differed from fields, which could not be redeemed under two years, (see Gill on “<sup>(825)</sup>Leviticus 25:15”);

*[within] a full year may he redeem it*; from the time it was sold, paying what it was sold for: this is to be understood, Maimonides <sup>f878</sup> says, of a solar year, which consists of three hundred sixty five days, and within this space of time such an house might be redeemed.

**Ver. 30.** *And if it be not redeemed within the space of a full year*, etc.] Either by the seller or any man of kin to him:

*then the house that [is] in the walled city shall be established for ever to him that bought it, throughout his generation*; after twelve months were elapsed it was not redeemable by any, but to be held by the purchaser and his heirs for ever:

*it shall not go out in the jubilee*; from the purchaser or his heirs, to the seller or his heirs; for houses were not like lands, the gift of God, and held under him, but were built by men, and were their absolute property, and therefore they could dispose of them, and they that bought them could hold them after the above mentioned time; nor was there any danger of confounding tribes and families by retaining them: this law was made to encourage persons to settle in walled towns, to make and keep them populous, and to make owners of them careful not to sell them: the Jewish canon is this; when the day of the twelfth month is come, and it (the house) is not redeemed, it is absolutely his, whether he bought it or whether it was given him, as it is said, (<sup>(823)</sup>Leviticus 25:30); and if in the beginning of the day of the twelfth month he (the purchaser) hides himself, that it may be confirmed to him or be his absolutely; Hillel, the elder, ordered that he (the seller) should put his money in the chamber (belonging to the sanhedrim) and break open the door, and go in; and when he would, he (the purchaser) might come, and take his money <sup>f879</sup>; but otherwise, if he suffers this time to



pass it is irredeemable, nor will the year of jubilee help him: the Jews except the city of Jerusalem from this law, because, they say, that does not belong to any tribe<sup>f880</sup>.

**Ver. 31.** *But the houses of the villages, which have no walls round about them*, etc.] As there were many in the days of Joshua, the Scripture speaks of: the Jews suppose that such are meant, even though they were afterwards walled:

*shall be counted as the fields of the country*; and subject to the same law as they:

*they may be redeemed*; at any time before the year of jubilee, and if not, then

*they shall go out in the jubilee*; to the original owners of them, freely, as Jarchi says, without paying anything for them.

**Ver. 32.** *Notwithstanding, the cities of the Levites*, etc.] The six cities of refuge, and forty two others; these and the houses in them are excepted from the above law, and only they; not such as they might purchase elsewhere; wherefore it follows,

*[and] the houses of the cities of their possession*; which were in cities possessed by them, and which was their possession, and given them as such:

*may the Levites redeem at any time*; they were not restrained to a year, as houses in walled towns, but they might redeem them as they pleased or could; and if they did not redeem them within the year, they might redeem them afterwards, even years after, and any time before the year of jubilee; so it is said in the Misnah<sup>f881</sup> the priests and the Levites sell always, and they redeem always, as it is said, (~~(R52)~~ Leviticus 25:32); on which one of the commentators says<sup>f882</sup> “they sell always”, not as the Israelites, who cannot sell less than two years before the jubilee; but the Levites can sell near the jubilee: “and they redeem always”; if they sell houses in walled cities, they are not confirmed at the end of the year, as the houses of Israelites; and if they sell fields, it is not necessary they should remain in the hands of the buyer two years, but they may redeem them immediately if they will: this redemption was peculiar to the Levites; for if an Israelite has an inheritance from his father’s mother, a Levite, he might not redeem according to the manner Levites did, but according to Israelites; and so a Levite that

inherited from his father's mother, an Israelite, was obliged to redeem as an Israelite and not as a Levite <sup>f883</sup>; for this perpetual redemption respected only houses that were in the cities of the Levites.

**Ver. 33.** *And if a man purchase of the Levites*, etc.] An house or city, as Jarchi, and which the following clause confirms, that is, if a common Israelite made such a purchase, then it was redeemable, but if a Levite purchased of a Levite, then, as the same writer observes, it was absolutely irredeemable:

*then the house that was sold, and the city of his possession, shall go out in [the year of] jubilee*; to the original owner of it, as fields and houses in villages sold by the Israelites

*for the houses of the cities of the Levites [are] their possession among the children of Israel*; and their only possession, and therefore if those, when sold, were irredeemable, they would entirely be without any; and hence care is taken they should not; so Jarchi observes, that the Levites had no possession of fields and vineyards, only cities to dwell in, and their suburbs; wherefore cities were to them instead of fields, and their redemption was as that of fields, that so their inheritance might not be broken off from them.

**Ver. 34.** *But the field of the suburbs of their cities may not be sold*, etc.] The suburbs to the cities of the Levites reached two thousand cubits on every side of their cities, (<sup>f883</sup>Numbers 35:5); in which they had fields to keep their cattle in, and these belonged to them in common; every Levite had not a particular field to himself as his own property, and which is the reason why it might not be sold, nor might they agree together to sell it, for then they would have nothing to keep their cattle in: the Jewish writers generally understand this of changing their fields, suburbs, and cities: hence they say, in the Misnah, they do not make a field a suburb, nor a suburb a field, nor a suburb a city, nor a city a suburb; upon which Maimonides <sup>f884</sup> says, all agree that the Levites may not change a city, or suburb, or field which are theirs, because of what is said, (<sup>f884</sup>Leviticus 25:34); and the wise men, of blessed memory, say, the meaning of it is, it shall not be changed, for they do not change anything from what it was before:

*for it [is] their perpetual possession*: and therefore never to be alienated from them, or be sold to another, or changed and put to another use; such care was taken of the ministers of the sanctuary, and of their maintenance and support, under the former dispensation; and suggests that they should

continue in their stations without any alteration, as ministers of the Gospel should, who ought to give up themselves to the ministry of the word, and prayer, and not entangle themselves with the affairs of life.

**Ver. 35.** *And if thy brother be waxen poor*, etc.] An Israelite, as Aben Ezra, be reduced to a low estate, through afflictions in body, or in family, or through losses in trade, or want of business, or through one providence or another:

*and fallen in decay with thee*; in his worldly substance: or “his hand wavers”, or “fails”<sup>f885</sup>; so that he cannot support himself and his family, has not a sufficiency, or it is not in the power of his hands to do it; and it is not owing to sloth and negligence, but to unavoidable want and necessity:

*then thou shalt relieve him*; not merely by sympathizing with him, but by communicating to him, and distributing to his necessities; holding him up that he may not utterly fall, and strengthening his hands, that he may have a supply for his present wants:

*[yea, though he be] a stranger or a sojourner*; whether a proselyte of righteousness, who is circumcised, and in all things conforms to the true religion; or a proselyte of the gate, who takes it upon him not to worship idols, and eat things that die of themselves, as Jarchi notes:

*that he may live with thee*; continue in the land of Canaan, and not be obliged to quit it, and be laid under temptations of apostatizing from the true religion professed by him, and so far as he is come into it, which would bring a worse death than corporeal upon him; or that he may have a livelihood in some tolerable manner at least, and even live comfortably and cheerfully.

**Ver. 36.** *Take thou no usury of him, or increase*, etc.] Not only give him somewhat for his present relief, but lend him money to put him in a way of business, to get his living for the future, without requiring any interest for it; (see Gill on “<sup>(1225)</sup>Exodus 22:25”);

*but fear thy God*; who has given this command, and expects to be obeyed; and who is good, and does good, and should be feared for his goodness’ sake; and is omniscient, and knows what is secretly exacted, and will not suffer any exorbitance of this kind to pass unpunished:

*that thy brother may live with thee*; which it would be still more difficult for him to do, should usury and increase be taken of him.

**Ver. 37.** *Thou shalt not give him thy money upon usury*, etc.] Lend him money, expecting and insisting upon a large interest for it; this is to be understood of persons in poor and necessitous circumstances, of which the text only speaks; otherwise, if persons borrow money to gain by it, to carry on a greater trade, or to make purchase with it, it is but reasonable that the lender should have a share of profit arising from thence:

*nor lend him thy victuals for increase*; by which it should seem that those two words, used in (<sup>48256</sup>Leviticus 25:36), though in the main they signify the same thing, yet may be distinguished, the one as concerning money, the other food; and which latter is not to be given by way of loan to a person in want of it, but freely; as for instance, if a man gives a poor man a bushel of wheat, on condition he gives him two for it hereafter, this is lending or giving his victuals for increase.

**Ver. 38.** *I [am] the Lord your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt*, etc.] Where they had been strangers and sojourners, and therefore should be kind to such in necessitous circumstances, and relieve them, and especially their brethren; and where God had given them favour in the eyes of the Egyptians, and they had lent them jewels of gold and silver, and raiment, and therefore they should lend freely to persons in distress; and who had brought them out from thence, that they might take upon them his commandments, though they might be grievous, as Jarchi observes; and this, it may be remarked, is the preface to the ten commandments:

*to give you the land of Canaan*; freely, a land flowing with milk and honey; and therefore, since he had dealt so bountifully with them, and had given them plenty of good things, they need not grudge giving to their poor brethren, and others in necessitous circumstances:

*[and] to be your God*; their covenant God, to bless and prosper them, protect and defend them.

**Ver. 39.** *And if thy brother [that dwelleth] by thee be waxen poor*, etc.] The above laws and instructions seem designed to prevent such extreme poverty as obliged to what follows, namely, a brother being sold either to an Israelite or to a stranger, by relieving his wants or lending him money; but when these were insufficient to support him, and keep him from sinking

into the lowest state of distress and misery, then he was obliged to be sold, as follows:

*and be sold unto thee*; either by himself, being ready to starve and perish, or by the sanhedrim, having stolen something, as Aben Ezra observes; in such a case the civil magistrate had a power of selling a man, (<sup><0218></sup>Exodus 22:3);

*thou shall not compel him to serve as a bondservant*; such as were Heathens, and bought of them, or taken in war and made slaves of; but an Israelite sold was not to serve as they, either with respect to matter or manner, or time of service; such as were bondmen were put to the hardest service, the greatest drudgery, as well as what was mean and reproachful, and were used in the most rigorous and despotic manner, and were obliged to serve for ever, and were never released; but a brother, an Israelite, sold to another through extreme poverty, was not to be put to any low, mean, base, and disgraceful service, by which it would be known that he was a servant, as Jarchi notes; such as to carry his master's vessels or instruments after him to the bath, or to unloose his shoes; but, as the same writer observes, he was to be employed in the business of the farm, or in some handicraft work, and was to be kindly and gently used, rather as a brother than a servant, and to be freed in the year of jubilee.

**Ver. 40.** [*But*] *as an hired servant*, etc.] Who is hired by the day, or month, or year; and, when his time is up, receives his wages and goes where he pleases, and while a servant is not under such despotic power and government as a slave is:

[*and*] *as a sojourner*; an inmate, one that dwells in part of a man's house, or boards and lodges with him, and whom he treats in a kind and familiar manner, rather like one of his own family than otherwise:

*he shall be with thee*; as under the above characters, and used as such: this the Jews refer to food and drink, and other things, as they do, (<sup><0156></sup>Deuteronomy 15:16); and say <sup>f886</sup> that a master might not eat fine bread, and his servant bread of bran; nor drink old wine, and his servant new; nor sleep on soft pillows and bedding, and his servant on straw: hence, they say <sup>f887</sup>, he that gets himself an Hebrew servant is as if he got himself a master:

[*and*] *shall serve thee unto the year of the jubilee*; and no longer; for if the year of jubilee came before the six years were expired for which he sold

himself, the jubilee set him free, as Jarchi observes; nay, if he sold himself for ten or twenty years, and that but one year before the jubilee, it set him free, as Maimonides says <sup>f888</sup>.

**Ver. 41.** *And [then] shall he depart from thee, [both] he and his children with him*, etc.] His sons and daughters, and his wife also, who is included in himself: if a man had a wife and children when he sold himself, or married afterwards, with his master's consent, he was obliged to maintain them <sup>f889</sup>; though they were not sold to him, nor properly his servants, and so had a right to go out with him:

*and shall return unto his own family*; his father's family, and that of his near relations, having been out of it during his time of servitude, and which the year of jubilee restored him to, (<sup><R250></sup>Leviticus 25:10);

*and unto the possession of his fathers shall he return*; the estate his father left him by inheritance, and which he was obliged to sell in the time of his poverty, or which fell to him since by the death of his father; to this also he was restored in the year of jubilee, as is expressed in the text referred to.

**Ver. 42.** *For they [are] my servants, which I brought forth out of the land of Egypt*, etc.] The Lord redeemed them out of Egypt, made a purchase of them, and had a prior right unto them, and being his servants first, they cannot be the servants of others; his right unto them as such antecedes and prevents any other claim upon them:

*they shall not be sold as bondmen*; or, "with", or, "according to the sale of a bondman" <sup>f890</sup>; in the manner they are sold, or according to the laws of selling of servants; not in such a public manner as they are sold in markets, nor for such purposes to be used as slaves in a rigorous manner, nor so as to be retained for ever in servitude; not to be sold by proclamation, as Jarchi observes, saying, here is a servant to be sold; nor shall they set him upon the stone of sale; for it seems in public places in markets, where slaves were sold, there was a stone on which they were placed, which showed that they were to be sold; but now an Israelite was not to be sold in such a manner, so Maimonides <sup>f891</sup> says, but privately, in an honourable way.

**Ver. 43.** *Thou shalt not rule over him with rigour*, etc.] As the Egyptians ruled over the Israelites, and made them to serve, (<sup><R113></sup>Exodus 1:13); where the same word is used as here, and seems designed to put them in mind of it, that so they might abstain from such usage of their brethren, which they

had met with from their most cruel enemies; it signifies tyranny and oppression, treating them with great severity, laying hard and heavy tasks and burdens upon them they could not bear; enjoining them things they could not perform, and ordering them to do what were unnecessary, and without any limitation with respect to time:

*but shalt fear thy God*; that has been good to thee, and has brought thee out of hard and rigorous bondage in Egypt; and which should be remembered with thankfulness, and they should fear to offend so good a God by using a brother cruelly.

**Ver. 44.** *Both thy bondmen, and thy bondmaids, which thou shalt have*, etc.] Such it seems were allowed them, if they had need of them; but if they had them, they were to be not of the nation of Israel, but of other nations; this is an anticipation of an objection, as Jarchi observes; if so, who shall I have to minister to me? The answer follows, they

*[shall be] of the heathen that are round about thee, of them shall ye buy bondmen and bondmaids*; that is, of the Ammonites, Moabites, Edomites, and Syrians, as Aben Ezra, that were their neighbours, that lived round about them, of any but the seven nations, which they were ordered utterly to destroy; wherefore Jarchi observes it is said, “that are round about thee”; not in the midst of the border of your land, for them they were not to save alive, (<sup>f8916</sup>Deuteronomy 20:16).

**Ver. 45.** *Moreover, of the children of the strangers, that do sojourn among you*, etc.] The uncircumcised sojourners as they are called in the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan, proselytes of the gate, such of the nations round about who came and sojourned among them, being subject to the precepts given to the sons of Noah respecting idolatry, etc. but were not circumcised, and did not embrace the Jewish religion:

*of them shall ye buy*; for bondmen and bondmaids:

*and of their families that [are] with you, which they begat in your land*; but, as the Targum of Jonathan adds, are not of the Canaanites; though the Jewish writers <sup>f892</sup> say, that one of the nations that lies with a Canaanitish woman, and begets a son of her, he may be bought for a servant; and so if a Canaanitish man lies with one of the nations, and begets a son of her, he may also be bought for a servant:

*and they shall be your possession*; as servants, as bondmen and bondmaids, and be so for ever to them and their heirs, as follows.

**Ver. 46.** *And ye shall take them as an inheritance for your children after you*, etc.] Which they might leave them at their death to inherit, as they did their estates and lands; for such servants are, with the Jews <sup>f893</sup>, said to be like immovable goods, as fields, vineyards,

*to inherit [them for] a possession*; as their property, as anything else that was bequeathed to hem, as negroes now are in our plantations abroad:

*thy shall be your bondmen for ever*; and not be released at the year jubilee, nor before nor after; unless they obtained their liberty, either by purchase, which they might make themselves, or by the means of others, or else by a writing under their master's hand dismissing them from his service <sup>f894</sup>; or in case they were maimed by him, then he was obliged to let them go free, (<sup>4226</sup>Exodus 21:26,27);

*but over your brethren, the children of Israel, ye shall not rule one over another with rigour*; which repeated for the confirmation of it, and for the fuller explanation and description of the person not to be ruled over with rigour; and that it might be the more taken notice of, and to make them the more careful in the observance of it and though this peculiarly respects masters' treatment of their servants, yet Jarchi thinks it comprehends a prince over his people, and a king over his ministers, whom he may not rule with rigour.

**Ver. 47.** *And if a sojourner or stranger wax rich by thee*, etc.] An uncircumcised one, as the Targums, a proselyte of the gate, who by living among and trading with the Israelites, might grow rich and wealthy in money, at least so as to be able to purchase an Hebrew servant, though not his lands, which he might not buy:

*and thy brother [that dwelleth] by him wax poor*; comes into low circumstances, and is reduced to great poverty, even extreme poverty; for only in such a case might he sell himself to an Israelite, and much less to a stranger, if this was not the case. Jarchi suggests, as in the phrase, "by thee", points at the cause or occasion of the sojourner or stranger becoming rich, his nearness unto, or cleaving to all Israelite; and so here the phrase, "by him", directs to the cause or occasion of the Israelite's becoming poor, his being near and cleaving to the sojourner or stranger: but they seem rather to be used, to show the reason of the poor Israelite



falling into the hands of a rich sojourner; they being near neighbours to one another, and having a familiarity, the following bargain is struck between them:

*and sell himself unto the stranger or sojourner thee*; the uncircumcised sojourner, as the Targum of Jonathan:

*or to the stock of a stranger's family*; or "root"<sup>f895</sup>, one that sprung from a family, originally proselytes; which some understand of one, who though he be descended from such a family, was now rooted among the people of God, and incorporated into the commonwealth of Israel; and yet such an one could not detain an Hebrew servant longer than the year of jubilee: but the Jewish writers generally interpret it of an idolater<sup>f896</sup>.

**Ver. 48.** *After that he is sold he may be redeemed again*, etc.] Though an Heathen, sold to an Israelite, was to be a bondman for ever, and could not be released by the year of jubilee, yet an Israelite sold to an Heathen might be redeemed before, and if not, he was freed then. The Jewish writers understand this of an obligation upon the man, or his friends, or the congregation, to redeem him, and that immediately, as the Targum of Jonathan, and Jarchi, because of the danger he was in by being in the family of an idolater, lest he be polluted<sup>f897</sup>, that is, with idolatry; or be swallowed up among the Heathens, as Maimonides<sup>f898</sup>; but it is plain from (~~1254~~ Leviticus 25:54), that there was no obligation for an immediate redemption; nor was the person sold in such danger as suggested, since the sojourner, to whom he is supposed to be sold, was no idolater, whether a proselyte either of righteousness, or of the gate

*one of his brethren may redeem him*; which may be taken in a strict and proper sense, for any of his brethren who were in circumstances sufficient to redeem him, or for any near akin to him, as the following words seem to explain it. No mention is made of his father: the reason of which Abarbinel<sup>f899</sup> says, because it cannot be thought that a father would suffer his son to be sold, if it was in his power to redeem him, since a father is pitiful to his son.

**Ver. 49.** *Either his uncle, or his uncle's son, may redeem him*, etc.] it is father's brother or his father's brother's son, as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan:

*or [any] that is nigh kin unto him of his family may redeem him*; from whence it appears, that it must be a near kinsman that has to be the

redeemer, as in another case, the redemption of inheritances; hence the same word “goel” signifies both a redeemer and a near kinsman:

*or if he be able he may redeem himself*; who either has found something lost, or inherits the substance of anyone deceased, of his family, as Aben Ezra observes; that is, since he sold himself, which puts him into a capacity to redeem himself; the Targum of Jonathan adds,

“or the land of the congregation;”

for such a redemption was sometimes made at the expense of the public; (see <sup>488</sup>Nehemiah 5:8). Baal Hatturim observes, that the words “Ben Dodo”, translated “his uncle’s son”, wanting the letter “tau” as usual, as the same letters with Ben David, which is a known name of the Messiah with the Jews, and which that author seems to have in view; and another Jewish writer <sup>900</sup> expressly says,

“this Redeemer is the Messiah, the son of David, of the tribe of Judah:”

and indeed the whole of this case is applicable to the spiritual and eternal redemption of the people of God by Christ: they through the fall, and in a state of nature, are become poor and helpless, and in a spiritual sense have neither bread to eat, nor clothes to wear, nor money to buy either; and are in debt, owe ten thousand talents, and have nothing to pay, and so are brought into bondage to sin, Satan, and the law; nor can they redeem themselves from these by power or price; nor can a brother, or the nearest relation redeem them, or give to God a ransom for them; none but Christ could do this for them, who through his incarnation, whereby he became of the same nature, of the same flesh and blood with them, and in all things like unto them, is their “goel”, and so their Redeemer, and has obtained eternal redemption for them, not with silver and gold, but by his own precious blood.

**Ver. 50.** *And he shall reckon with him that bought him*, etc.] That is, either the man himself should reckon with him, or whoever undertook to redeem him:

*from the year that he was sold to him unto the year of jubilee*; and so count how many years he had served, and how many were yet to come; and by this it appears, that one thus sold was not released at the end of six years, or the sabbatical year did not free him:

*and the price of his sale shall be according to the number of years;* whether more or fewer, as after explained:

*according to the time of an hired servant shall it be with him;* the time of service he had served his master shall be reckoned, as if he had been hired for so much a year; and according to the number of years he had been with him, so much per annum was to be deducted from the original purchase, and the rest to be made for his redemption to him that bought him.

**Ver. 51.** *If [there be] yet many years behind,* etc.] To the year of jubilee, and more than he had served:

*according unto them he shall give again the price of his redemption, out of the money that he was bought for;* suppose, for instance, when a man sold himself, there were twenty years to the year of jubilee, and he sold himself for twenty pieces of money, gold or silver, be the value what it will; and when he comes to treat with his master about his redemption, or a relation for him, and he has served just as many years as there are to the year of jubilee, ten years, then his master must be paid for the price of his redemption ten pieces of money; but if he has served but five years, and there are fifteen to come, he must give him fifteen pieces; and so in proportion, be the years more or fewer, as follows.

**Ver. 52.** *And if there remain but few years unto the year of jubilee,* etc.] Fewer than what he has served, then the less is given for his redemption: thus, for instance, in the above supposed case, if he has served fifteen years, and there remain but five to the year of jubilee:

*then he shall count with him, [and] according unto his years shall he give him again the price of his redemption;* as in the fore mentioned case, he shall give him five pieces of money; and thus the law of justice and equity was maintained between the buyer and seller, the purchaser and the redeemer: in a like righteous manner the people of God are redeemed by Christ.

**Ver. 53.** *[And] as a yearly hired servant shall he be with him,* etc.] Being redeemable every year, and upon his redemption might quit his master's service, as an hireling may; and the price of his redemption to be valued according to the years he served, and as if he had been hired for so much a year; as well as he was to be treated in a kind and gentle manner, not as a bondman, but as if he was an hired servant, as follows:

*[and the other] shall not rule with rigour over him in thy sight;* the person he is sold unto, his master, a sojourner or stranger, he might not use an Hebrew he had bought with any severity; for if an Hebrew master might not use an Hebrew servant with rigour, it was not by any means to be admitted in the commonwealth of Israel for a proselyte to use one in such a manner, and that openly, in the sight of an Israelite his neighbour; he looking on and not remonstrating against it, or acquainting the civil magistrate with it, who had it in his power to redress such a grievance, and ought to do it.

**Ver. 54.** *And if he be not redeemed in these [years],* etc.] The Targum of Jonathan supplies the text as we do, in any of the years from the time of his sale to the year of jubilee; and so Aben Ezra interprets it, in the years that remain to the jubilee; but he observes there are others that say, by the means of those above mentioned, that is, by his nearest of kin, or by himself; for the word “years” is not in the text, which may be supplied, either with “years” or “relations”; and so the Vulgate Latin, Septuagint, and Oriental versions read, “by these” means, things or persons:

*then he shall go out on the year of jubilee:* out of the house and service of him that bought him, he shall go out free and freely, without paying anything for his freedom, having served his full time unto which he was bought:

*[both] he and his children with him;* and his wife too, if he had any, who, was comprehended in himself, and whom, both wife and children, his master was obliged to maintain during his servitude.

**Ver. 55.** *For unto me the children of Israel [are] servants,* etc.] And therefore not to be perpetual servants to men, as those who are bought and redeemed by the blood of Christ should not be, (<sup><4173></sup>1 Corinthians 7:23); The Targum of Jonathan is, servants to my law; (see <sup><4175></sup>Romans 7:25); those that are redeemed by Christ are also servants to his Gospel, and obey from their heart the form and doctrine delivered to them;

*they [are] my servants, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt:* where they were in cruel bondage, and made to serve with rigour, but now, being delivered from thence, were laid under obligation to serve the Lord; nor was it his will that others should rule over them with rigour, whether of their own nation or strangers, or that they should be bondmen and bondmaids, or perpetual servants to any:

*I [am] the Lord your God*; their covenant God, who had been kind to them, particularly in the instance mentioned, and would take care that they should not be ill used by others, and therefore ought to serve him readily and cheerfully.