

## A Sabbath Rest

Leviticus 25:1-22

Leviticus 25:1 The LORD spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai, saying,

Leviticus 25:2 “Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, When you come into the land that I give you, the land shall keep a Sabbath to the LORD.

The provision of the Sabbath Year was intended to provide the Israelites with the hope of a future time of prolonged rest and release from debts. People may have labored year in and year out, but they knew that a time of relief was coming. Without such a prospect, the people would have despaired.

One purpose of the laws concerning the Sabbath Year (and the Jubilee Year) was to prevent the formation of a class of rich landowners and the ruin of their debtors (Wenham, 317). These times were designed to give people a time of refreshment, a periodic fresh start, to wipe the slate clean at least once in a person’s lifetime.

Ross, Allen P. 2002. [\*Holiness to the Lord: A Guide to the Exposition of the Book of Leviticus\*](#). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

### *God is Generous*

Leviticus 25:3 For six years you shall sow your field, and for six years you shall prune your vineyard and gather in its fruits,

Exodus 20:9–10 Six days you shall labor, and do all your work,<sup>10</sup> but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates.

Leviticus 25:4–5 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.<sup>5</sup> You shall not reap what grows of itself in your harvest, or gather the grapes of your undressed vine. It shall be a year of solemn rest for the land.

The Sabbath year enabled the varying members of society, whether rich or poor, to enjoy the produce of the land on equal standing

Mathews, Kenneth A. 2009. [\*Leviticus: Holy God, Holy People\*](#). Preaching the Word. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books.

Exodus 23:10–11 “For six years you shall sow your land and gather in its yield, <sup>11</sup>but the seventh year you shall let it rest and lie fallow, that the poor of your people may eat; and what they leave the beasts of the field may eat. You shall do likewise with your vineyard, and with your olive orchard.

Leviticus 25:6–7 The Sabbath of the land shall provide food for you, for yourself and for your male and female slaves and for your hired worker and the sojourner who lives with you, <sup>7</sup>and for your cattle and for the wild animals that are in your land: all its yield shall be for food.

The Sabbath Year reminded them that the land was not their land but God’s and that they had the responsibility to ensure that all people shared in his bounty. It taught the people that they had to trust the LORD’s provisions during the year in which they could not work the fields. And it gave them the opportunity to pursue spiritual, social, and civic obligations more fully.

Ross, Allen P. 2002. [Holiness to the Lord: A Guide to the Exposition of the Book of Leviticus](#). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

Leviticus 26:33–35 And I will scatter you among the nations, and I will unsheathe the sword after you, and your land shall be a desolation, and your cities shall be a waste. <sup>34</sup>“Then the land shall enjoy its Sabbaths as long as it lies desolate, while you are in your enemies’ land; then the land shall rest, and enjoy its Sabbaths. <sup>35</sup>As long as it lies desolate it shall have rest, the rest that it did not have on your Sabbaths when you were dwelling in it.

2 Chronicles 36:21 to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed its Sabbaths. All the days that it lay desolate it kept Sabbath, to fulfill seventy years.

Nehemiah 10:31 And if the peoples of the land bring in goods or any grain on the Sabbath day to sell, we will not buy from them on the Sabbath or on a holy day. And we will forego the crops of the seventh year and the exaction of every debt.

*God gives hope now and for the future*

Jubilee (yo-bel); Trumpet; ram’s horn

But the Jubilee Year was the crowning point of all the festive occasions because of its length and its impact. It was a time of release from bondage of all that were oppressed, enslaved, or bound. Thus, it was another festival of freedom—not one that commemorated any historical deliverance in the past but one that looked forward to the future.

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Leviticus 25:8 “You shall count seven weeks of years, seven times seven years, so that the time of the seven weeks of years shall give you forty-nine years.

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 And you shall **consecrate** the fiftieth year, and **proclaim liberty** throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you, when each of **you shall return to his property** and each of **you shall return to his clan**.

Leviticus 25:11 That fiftieth year shall be a jubilee for you; in it you shall neither sow nor reap what grows of itself nor gather the grapes from the undressed vines.

Leviticus 25:12-13 For it is a jubilee. **It shall be holy to you**. You may eat the produce of the field. <sup>13</sup> “In this year of jubilee each of you shall return to his property.

*God cares about the attitude of our hearts*

Leviticus 25:14-17 And if you make a sale to your neighbor or buy from your neighbor, you shall not wrong one another. <sup>15</sup> You shall pay your neighbor according to the number of years after the jubilee, and he shall sell to you according to the number of years for crops. <sup>16</sup> If the years are many, you shall increase the price, and if the years are few, you shall reduce the price, for it is the number of the crops that he is selling to you. <sup>17</sup> You shall not wrong one another, but you shall fear your God, for I am the LORD your God.

*God Blesses obedience*

Leviticus 25:18-19 “Therefore you shall do my statutes and keep my rules and perform them, and then you will dwell in the land securely. <sup>19</sup> The land will yield its fruit, and you will eat your fill and dwell in it securely.

*God reassures His people*

Leviticus 25:20-22 And if you say, ‘What shall we eat in the seventh year, if we may not sow or gather in our crop?’ <sup>21</sup> I will command my blessing on you in the sixth year, so that it will produce a crop sufficient for three years. <sup>22</sup> When you sow in the eighth year, you will be eating some of the old crop; you shall eat the old until the ninth year, when its crop arrives.

Hebrews 4:11–13 Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience. <sup>12</sup>For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. <sup>13</sup>And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.