

THE JUBILEE

The land was so central to the existence of Israel as God's people that it could not be apportioned as a whole. It had to be divided by tribes, clans, and families in order to prevent it from becoming the possession of a few leading elites.

1. The Year of Liberty and Restoration:

"And you shall consecrate the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you; and each of you shall return to his possession, and each of you shall return to his family." (Leviticus 25:10)

- This represents God's provision for economic reset and family restoration, where people could return to their ancestral lands and family ties were renewed.

2. Release from Debt and Slavery:

"If one of your brethren becomes poor, and has sold some of his possession, and if his redeeming relative comes to redeem it, then he may redeem what his brother sold... But if he is not able to have it restored to himself, then what was sold shall remain in the hand of him who bought it until the Year of Jubilee." (Leviticus 25:25-28)

- The Jubilee provided freedom from debt bondage and enslavement, showing God's heart for economic justice and human dignity.

3. Land Rest and Environmental Stewardship:

"The land shall not be sold permanently, for the land is Mine; for you are strangers and sojourners with Me." (Leviticus 25:23)

- This teaches that the land ultimately belongs to God and humans are stewards who must care for it, including letting it rest during Jubilee years.

4. Prophetic Picture of Redemption:

"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because the Lord has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor... To proclaim liberty to the captives... To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." (Isaiah 61:1-2, later quoted by Jesus in Luke 4:18-19)

- The Jubilee foreshadowed Christ's ministry of spiritual liberation and restoration, pointing to ultimate redemption and freedom in Him.

The **Jubilee and Pentecost** are connected in several significant ways:

Timing and Calculation

- The word "Pentecost" means "fiftieth" in Greek
- Pentecost occurs 50 days after Passover
- Similarly, the Jubilee year was the 50th year after seven cycles of seven years (49 years)
- This parallel of "50" is not coincidental but shows a divine pattern.

Spiritual Liberation

- The Jubilee represented freedom from debt and bondage
- At Pentecost (Acts 2), the Holy Spirit was poured out, bringing spiritual freedom
- Both events signify release: one physical/economic, the other spiritual
- Both demonstrate God's restorative power

Harvest Connection

- Pentecost was also called the Feast of Weeks or First Fruits
- The Jubilee year involved agricultural rest and God's provision
- Both celebrations acknowledge God's provision and abundance
- Both involve gathering: one of crops, the other of souls (3,000 saved at Pentecost)

Prophetic Fulfillment

- The Jubilee was a type and shadow of greater spiritual freedom
- Pentecost fulfilled this by inaugurating the age of the Spirit
- Jesus referenced both in His ministry (Luke 4:18-19)
- Both point to God's plan of redemption and restoration.

In the Bible, there are **several distinct types or aspects of Jubilee**:

1. **Agricultural Jubilee** (Leviticus 25:11-12)
 - The land rests completely
 - No sowing or reaping
 - Only eating what grows naturally
 - Complete agricultural sabbath
2. **Economic Jubilee** (Leviticus 25:13-17)
 - Property returns to original owners
 - Debts are cancelled
 - Land prices were calculated based on years until Jubilee
 - Economic reset and restoration
3. **Social Jubilee** (Leviticus 25:39-55)
 - Hebrew slaves are freed
 - Families reunited
 - Return to ancestral property
 - Social restoration and equality

4. **Prophetic/Messianic Jubilee** (Isaiah 61:1-2, Luke 4:18-19)

- Spiritual liberation
- Proclaimed by Jesus as fulfilled in His ministry
- Ultimate freedom from sin
- Eternal restoration

5. **Sabbatical Jubilee** (Leviticus 25:8-10)

- Every 50th year ($7 \times 7 + 1$)
- Announced on Day of Atonement
- Connected to sabbatical system
- Complete rest and restoration

Numbers 34:13-18 (NKJV) “Then Moses commanded the children of Israel, saying: “This is the land which you shall inherit by lot, which the LORD has commanded to give to the nine tribes and to the half-tribe. (14) For the tribe of the children of Reuben according to the house of their fathers, and the tribe of the children of Gad according to the house of their fathers, have received their inheritance; and the half-tribe of Manasseh has received its inheritance. (15) The two tribes and the half-tribe have received their inheritance on this side of the Jordan, across from Jericho eastward, toward the sunrise.” (16) And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, (17) “These are the names of the men who shall divide the land among you as an inheritance: Eleazar the priest and Joshua the son of Nun. (18) And you shall take one leader of every tribe to divide the land for the inheritance.”

What was the purpose of the Sabbatical year and of the Year of Jubilee?

Leviticus 25:1-5, 8-13 (NKJV) “And the LORD spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai, saying, (2) “Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘When you come into the land which I give you, then the land shall keep a sabbath to the LORD. (3) Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard, and gather its fruit; (4) but in the seventh year there shall be a sabbath of solemn rest for the land, a sabbath to the LORD. You shall neither sow your field nor prune your vineyard. (5) What grows of its own accord of your harvest you shall not reap, nor gather the grapes of your untended vine, for it is a year of rest for the land.

**The Jubilee was as time allotted for the land to rest and not be planted.
If anything grew it was not to be harvested, it was a “year” of rest.**

Leviticus 25:8-13 “And you shall count seven sabbaths of years for yourself, seven times seven years; and the time of the seven sabbaths of years shall be to you forty-nine years. (9) Then you shall cause the trumpet of the Jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the Day of Atonement you shall make the trumpet to sound throughout all your land. (10) And you shall consecrate the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a Jubilee for you; and each of you shall return to his possession, and each of you shall return to his family. (11) That fiftieth year shall be a Jubilee to you; in it you shall neither sow nor reap what grows of its own accord, nor gather the grapes of your untended vine. (12) For it is the Jubilee; it shall be holy to you; you shall eat its produce from the field. (13) “In this Year of Jubilee, each of you shall return to his possession.”

By contrast with Egypt, where citizens regularly lost their land and became Pharaoh’s serfs, the purpose of God for the Israelites was that they would never become indefinitely disenfranchised.

Nobody, outside the clan and family to whom it had been originally allotted, could own the land. In fact, according to God's plan, the land could literally never be sold; it could only be leased according to its value established by the number of years left until the next Jubilee.

Therefore, the relatives of a person who was obliged to "sell" his ancestral land had the duty to redeem it even before the Jubilee.

Leviticus 25:25 (NKJV) "If one of your brethren becomes poor, and has sold some of his possession, and if his redeeming relative comes to redeem it, then he may redeem what his brother sold."

The allotment of the land becomes a window into God's heart.

As our heavenly Father, He wants His children to be generous with those who are less fortunate and to allow their lands to feed them every seventh year.

The **Sabbatical year** applied the **principle of the Sabbath commandment on a larger scale**. Besides valuing and encouraging hard work, ownership of the land also calls for respect and kindness to those facing financial challenges.

The Jubilee had special significance:

1. The Jubilee Trumpets were sounded on the Day of Atonement:

- a. **Leviticus 25:9 (NKJV) "Then you shall cause the trumpet of the Jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the Day of Atonement you shall make the trumpet to sound throughout all your land."**

2. The Jubilee also occurred on the 50th Year (a Pentecost Parallel)

- a. **Leviticus 25:10-12 (NKJV) "(10) And you shall consecrate the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout *all* the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a Jubilee for you; and each of you shall return to his possession, and each of you shall return to his family. (11) That fiftieth year shall be a Jubilee to you; in it you shall neither sow nor reap what grows of its own accord, nor gather *the grapes* of your untended vine. (12) For it *is* the Jubilee; it shall be holy to you; you shall eat its produce from the field."**

3. In the year of Jubilee a hired servant was released:

- a. **Leviticus 25:40-41 (NKJV) "(40) As a hired servant *and* a sojourner he shall be with you, *and* shall serve you until the Year of Jubilee. (41) And *then* he shall depart from you—he and his children with him—and shall return to his own family. He shall return to the possession of his fathers."**

4. In the year of Jubilee a home purchased from a Levite was to be returned:

- a. **Leviticus 25:40-41 (NKJV) "(40) As a hired servant *and* a sojourner he shall be with you, *and* shall serve you until the Year of Jubilee. (41) And *then* he shall depart from you—he and his children with him—and shall return to his own family. He shall return to the possession of his fathers."**

5. In the year of Jubilee a home purchased from a Levite was to be returned:

- a. **Leviticus 25:47** “Now if a sojourner or stranger close to you becomes rich, and *one of your brethren who dwells* by him becomes poor, and sells himself to the stranger or sojourner close to you, or to a member of the stranger’s family, 48 after he is sold he may be redeemed again. One of his brothers may redeem him; 49 or his uncle or his uncle’s son may redeem him; or *anyone* who is near of kin to him in his family may redeem him; or if he is able he may redeem himself. 50 Thus he shall reckon with him who bought him: The price of his release shall be according to the number of years, from the year that he was sold to him until the Year of Jubilee; *it shall be* according to the time of a hired servant for him. 51 If *there are* still many years *remaining*, according to them he shall repay the price of his redemption from the money with which he was bought. 52 And if there remain but a few years until the Year of Jubilee, then he shall reckon with him, *and* according to his years he shall repay him the price of his redemption. 53 He shall be with him as a yearly hired servant, and he shall not rule with rigor over him in your sight. 54 And if he is not redeemed in these *years*, then he shall be released in the Year of Jubilee—he and his children with him. 55 For the children of Israel *are* servants to Me; they *are* My servants whom I brought out of the land of Egypt: I *am* the LORD your God.

How can the principles of the Israelite land allotment and the Sabbath remind us that, in God’s eyes, we are all equal? How can the Sabbath help us say “no” to the exploitive, vicious cycles of consumerism that plague many societies?