

MARCH 2

Leviticus 25:47-27:13

Although the subjects of these remaining chapters in Leviticus seem kind of random, you'll notice that the year of jubilee ties them together. These are rules of redemption of persons from servitude, and the redemption of vowed people or property is explained now in terms of the special condition of the year of jubilee. Chapter 26 might seem out of place, until you notice the references to the Sabbatical year. This year is very connected to the year of jubilee. Not only was the Sabbatical year the way to determine the year of jubilee (7 Sabbatical years + 1), but it was the basis for gauging the faith and obedience of the people.

The weekly Sabbath and the Sabbatical year were an incredible way to see if the leaders and people truly understood the love and power of God. If you didn't have faith in the Lord and understand His love, you didn't have the freedom of heart to rest on the Sabbath and celebrate Him. If you didn't have faith in the Lord and understand His love, thereby having the freedom of heart to rest on the Sabbath and celebrate Him, there was no way you would celebrate the Sabbatical year. How could you depend on God and celebrate Him for an entire year? If you didn't have this kind of faith and love and joy in God, the year of jubilee would make no sense whatsoever. This required incredible faith in God and dependence on Him. We know that Israel never celebrated a Sabbatical year, and we have no mention of them ever celebrating the year of jubilee.

I was thinking yesterday how hard it is to convince people to read their Bibles every day. It is even harder to make a requirement for people in a church to hold to a set of standards. For example, what if every leader in a church (besides having to maintain the standards in 1 Tim. 3) had to read their Bible every day and pray, if they had to be doing something to reach out to their neighbors, if they had to be in a home group, if they had to be in a discipleship cell where they were mentored and they had to lead a discipleship cell where they were making disciples? Some of these are really personal things for the Lord, having nothing to do with the church per se, and three of these are "church" things. If you had these as requirements, you probably wouldn't have any leaders. Even if you could justify these in terms of what disciples should be doing in a church or following the Lord in the harvest, there would be an outcry regarding forcing people to follow these. Who has the time for all of this? Who has the right to make this a requirement? No leader or pastor would be so silly as to *require* people to do these. (See Luke 14:25-35.)

Now imagine that you are a king in Israel, even King David, and you're coming up to a Sabbatical year where you will legislate and enforce allowing the land, the nation, to rest for an entire year. Even though it was written in the Word, no one had the guts to require it. There would have been abuse and rebellion. Yet, the entire nation drifted into disobedience, and the warning given in chapter 26 came to pass. There is a cost to following Christ as a disciple in the harvest, but no one wants to require it. I was reading this morning, *If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.* (Luke 16:31)

Leviticus 25:47-55

Vs. 47-54 If a man had to "sell" himself to serve another because of poverty, he could be redeemed or ransomed by others or by himself. The basis of this ransom price would be calculated according to the year of jubilee. This law was a benefit to those in debt or who were very poor.

V. 55 The basis for the redemption and freedom of the people was that all of the people belonged to God and were to have been His servants.

Think about Jesus being our Redeemer, saving us from our slavery to sin and judgment. He Himself is our Redeemer and our ransom price. Oddly enough, we'll see this in the NT today.

Leviticus 26

Leviticus 26 is a very interesting chapter. The book is almost at an end. Much has been laid out as a foundation to understanding what is "holy and common" and "clean and unclean." There will be many more laws to come, to govern different situations; but God is saying in Leviticus that the people should behave differently because they know God's care and love and power.

Now the Lord is giving them the positives of walking as they have been told to walk and then the consequences of not obeying.

In terms of Bible study, a guy named Traina came up with a "law of proportion." What he means is that it is good to notice the proportion of text given to something. For example, in Genesis, in the last words to his sons, Jacob gives much longer blessings to Judah and Joseph. You notice the size or proportion of text given to them in comparison to the other brothers. (In Numbers, you will see a surprising event that you can link back to Jacob's words to Judah and Joseph.) In this case, in chapter 26, we have the blessings given for obedience and curses given for disobedience. Notice the proportion.

Vs. 1-2 This might seem random, but these commands focus on the nature of God and the people's worship and dependence on Him. Since He saved them out of Egypt with such might, feeding them in the desert, this shouldn't inspire fear, but rather faith and love.

Vs. 3-13 These verses are the promises of blessing if they obeyed. The covenant God made with them with Moses was conditioned on their obedience. Notice the promise of vs. 11-13.

Vs. 14-33 These verses are the promise of judgment if they disobeyed. Notice that God will bring judgment in degrees, hoping they will repent, and then if they don't He will increase the judgment. Look for this structure throughout this section. Verse 18 is the first of these increases. Notice the *if...you...sevenfold* scheme of this. God is really trying to show the people mercy. This judgment of the people in the land ends with their exile.

Vs. 34-39 Now the importance of the Sabbatical years comes to light. God is telling them how important this faith and obedience (or lack of it) will be. The Sabbath and the Sabbatical year were a gauge to measure their true faith and love. Even after the exile, God would pursue and chasten them. In fact, the 70 years of exile were because of the number of Sabbatical years they had missed in the 490 years they were in the land, organized under a king.

Vs. 40-46 God is already making provision for Israel to return from exile. Read Daniel's prayer in Daniel 9, and it is obvious, for a couple of reasons, that he had read v. 40 and the rest of this section. We'll talk about this verse when we get to Daniel's prayer.

V. 42 Even though Israel would break the Mosaic Covenant, God was still bound to them by the covenant He made with Abraham. The true object of faith in God, even under the Mosaic Covenant, was God's promise of redemption as given in the promise to Abraham. Paul says this in Romans, chapter 4. It is because of God's promise to Abe that Israel will be restored and will fulfill their destiny as a witness to the nations.

V. 43 Notice again how important the Sabbatical year was as a gauge of the peoples' hearts toward God.

V. 45 This again is the promise to Abraham.

Leviticus 27:1-13

Vs. 1-8 I don't know if we want to try this in church, but who knows, it could be a hit. People could dedicate other people or animals to the service of the temple. For example, Samuel's mother dedicated him to the Lord. People could be given to the Lord for service. This is also how some of us try to get Jephthah off the hook in Judges 11, when he says he will dedicate or sacrifice the first person who runs out to meet him when he comes home. He was hoping it

would be a servant, but it was his only child, his daughter. Since human sacrifice was forbidden, it is hard to imagine he sacrificed his daughter. But in this chapter, it is saying that those "given" to the Lord could be redeemed, bought back. He could have gotten his daughter back for a mere 10 shekels, pocket change. If she wasn't sacrificed, it means that the strength of his vow was, in his own eyes, irrevocable.

Vs. 9-13 Regarding the animals, the Levites still needed to eat something more than the sacrifices. The Levites also farmed the land around the cities they lived in and needed animals, like donkeys or horses, to bear burdens and plow fields. People could donate or vow an animal to their use. If it was vowed, they could "redeem" it, unless it was for sacrifice. When this continues tomorrow, we'll see that this redemption price was also geared to the year of jubilee.

The symbolism that God was building into Israel with all of these laws, regarding the year of jubilee and redemption, is all pointing to Jesus.

Mark 10:32-52

Vs. 32-34 The threats against Jesus were so real that the Twelve feared every step toward Jerusalem and were amazed at Jesus' resolve. Note that Jesus was always aware of His disciples and ready to give them His time. When He saw they were terrified about what was waiting for them in Jerusalem, He took them aside and told them again of His coming death and resurrection.

Vs. 35-40 In the request of James and John, notice that Mark fails to mention that their mother, Salome, was with them when this request was made. Tradition has it that Jesus' mother and the mother of James and John were sisters. They might have thought they had an "in" because they were related. Notice that Jesus mentioned suffering and that James and John were ready to suffer. James would be the first of the Twelve who would die and John, according to tradition, was the last.

Vs. 41-45 Notice here that when Jesus sees that the other disciples are upset, He teaches the disciples. There is no rebuke, but positive, forward teaching. And out of this we get one of the greatest verses in the NT for the disciple in Mark 10:45, *For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.*

The model for discipleship was Jesus, in His serving, in His suffering, and in giving His life as a ransom for others.

What Jesus is saying here is directly connected to what we read in Leviticus today. Jesus is that redeemer, that ransom price and that substitute, all rolled into one.

Vs. 46-52 Here we have the story of Bartimaeus again. Remember that there was an old and new Jericho connected by a two-mile road filled with beggars and merchants.

V. 47 Whenever you hear someone calling Jesus the *Son of David*, it means they had great faith.

V. 50 Notice that the blind man throws off his cloak. A cloak was a very important possession to a beggar. In fact, in Deuteronomy, God will give official legislation regarding the cloak of a poor man. For Bartimaeus to cast off his cloak was risky business, unless he fully believed he was about to talk with the Son of David, who would rule Israel and heal its blind.

Psalm 45

I've got to admit that I do better with "crying out" psalms than I do with this one. Is this one of David's marriages or is it one of Solomon's? No clue.

If you are given to typology, that is, an event or person in the past, suggesting another event or person in the future, you could imagine this might have something to do with Christ and His bride, the church. I say this because if you read the first chapter of Hebrews, where the Son is being described as the ultimate message from God, right in the middle of this, you find Psalm

45:6. (Heb 1:8). I don't know how many lines of correspondence you can draw, but I do know that when we disciples are done with our work in the harvest, there will be this huge party called the marriage supper of the Lamb. This is where the church, the bride of Christ, will be eternally joined to Christ. It'll be a great party and feast, and I'll be off my diet on that day.

V. 1 Apparently the king and queen were married and were taking their thrones for the first time.

Vs. 2-9 The description of the king grows from a human king, perhaps David, to the Son of Man, the eternal, human son of David. Notice that both vs. 6 and 7 apply to Jesus.

Vs. 10-17 This bride would be the church, but as typology goes, it could apply to Israel or to all the redeemed. Notice that in v. 17 the name of this bride is honored by all peoples through all generations. Israel will certainly be honored forever for how God has used them as a tool, an object lesson, and a vehicle for bringing salvation to all mankind. On the other hand, it is the church right now that is being used to hold back the night and work in the harvest until Israel is ready to fulfill their destiny. If I had to vote, I'd say the bride is the church.

Proverbs 10:22

There seems to be something bad or stressful to be found in everything. I think the idea here is learning to be totally immersed in God as our love and our life. In those brief moments I've had where I've understood this, there was no sorrow and I felt rich. I think our closeness to the Lord is the goal, not the absence of irritants.

Now just for fun, the German Bible has a variant reading, hinted at in the ESV. In German it says,

Der Segen des HERRN allein macht reich, und nichts tut eigene Mühe hinzu. (LUT Proverbs 10:22)

Isn't that interesting? Oh, sorry, *The blessing of the Lord alone makes one rich, and nothing you do yourself brings this or adds to it.*