

Nuggets and Gems from the Bible

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JUBILEE—

ITS
DEFINITION

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THE JUBILEE—ITS DEFINITION

In Luke 4:14-30 we see that the Man-Savior began His ministry by proclaiming the jubilee of grace. On the Sabbath day in the synagogue at Nazareth, He read from the book of Isaiah and proclaimed the acceptable year of the Lord (Luke 4:16-21). This acceptable year is the New Testament age of grace typified by the year of jubilee (Lev. 25:8-17), the fiftieth year in which all the slaves were liberated and every man's inheritance was restored to him.

THE PROCLAMATION OF GOD'S REDEMPTION

The word “jubilee” is anglicized from the Hebrew word *yobel*. This Hebrew word denotes the blast of a horn, specifically the signal of a silver trumpet. Hence, the word came to signify the instrument itself and the festival thus introduced. Concerning this, Leviticus 25:9 says, “Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land.”

We have seen that *yobel* refers specifically to the blasting of a silver trumpet. In typology silver signifies redemption. Hence, the blasting of a silver trumpet indicates the trumpeting of God's redemption.

The basic thought concerning the jubilee is that it is the sounding out of God's redemption. The blasting of the silver trumpet was a proclamation of redemption. It was a proclamation based on God's redemption and also a sounding out of this redemption.

THE RELEASE OF PEOPLE AND POSSESSIONS

This sounding out, this proclamation, of God's redemption was not the proclaiming of any commandment or requirement. On the contrary, it was a proclamation of freedom, of release. [Leviticus 25:10](#) says, "And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubilee unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family." Here we see that the proclamation of release or liberty was related to people and to their possessions.

THE BASIC CONCERN IN THE JUBILEE

In the jubilee portrayed in Leviticus 25 the main thought is how to take care of people's living. In other words, the basic concern is man's enjoyment. The primary enjoyment in human life is to be filled with good food. A person whose stomach is empty will not appreciate money or material riches.

God ordained that His people be given the good land of Canaan. This land was allotted to the twelve tribes of Israel. Eventually, each family received an allotment of land as a possession. The land was not mainly to be for their living or their lodging; the land was primarily for their eating. This is the reason the Bible refers to this land as "a land flowing with milk and honey."

Milk and honey signify that the good land is rich in food. Some countries may have wheat and corn but no milk and honey. The good land is a land flowing with milk and honey.

THE LOSS AND RETURN OF THE LAND

Because God brought His people into the good land and allotted a portion of the land to

every family, each family was rich in its possession of the land. But suppose the members of a particular family did not labor on the land. Because they did not work on the land, they became very poor. Little by little they sold the land until their entire allotment was sold. In this way they lost their portion of the good land.

When land was sold in a country other than Israel, the land was sold forever. But God's ordination did not allow the land in Israel to be sold permanently. At most, the land could be sold only for fifty years. [Leviticus 25:23 and 24](#) say, "The land shall not be sold for ever: for the land is mine; for ye are strangers and sojourners with me. And in all the land of your possession ye shall grant a redemption for the land." Here we see that the land was not sold forever; land that had been sold could be redeemed. The one who bought the land did not have the right to keep it indefinitely. After fifty years at the latest, the land could be redeemed.

In [Leviticus 25](#) we are told not that the land was returned to its original owner, but that the person returned to the land. Concerning this, [verse 28](#) says, "In the jubilee it shall go out, and he shall return unto his possession." Actually, one did not sell the land—he sold himself.

Eventually, it was not the land that was returned to the seller; it was the seller that returned to the land, to his possession.

THE RELEASE OF THOSE WHO SOLD THEMSELVES

Some of the children of Israel became so poor that they even sold themselves: “And if thy brother that dwelleth by thee be waxen poor, and be sold unto thee; thou shalt not compel him to serve as a bondservant: but as a hired servant, and as a sojourner, he shall be with thee, and shall serve thee unto the year of jubilee: and then shall he depart from thee, both he and his children with him, and shall return unto his own family, and unto the possession of his fathers shall he return” ([Lev. 25:39-41](#)). These verses indicate that in the year of jubilee one who had sold himself to serve another would be released. Therefore, in the fiftieth year there was no one without land and no one in slavery. Everyone had his freedom and his own possession. This means that both the land and those who had sold themselves were released. The proclamation of the jubilee was a proclamation of the release of people’s possessions and of the people themselves. This is the jubilee.

FALLEN MAN'S NEED OF THE JUBILEE

When man was created, he received a possession. Man's possession by creation was actually God Himself. God created man to be His vessel for His expression. Thus, God intended to give Himself to man as his possession. But man became fallen, and in the fall man lost God as his possession.

Through the fall man also sold himself. In [Romans 7:14](#) Paul says, “I am fleshly, sold under sin.” To be sold in this way is to be held in slavery. Anyone who sells himself to be a slave enters into a condition of slavery. Today all of mankind is in slavery, mainly the slavery of sin. Man has sold himself into the slavery of sin, Satan, and the world. Therefore, fallen man has lost both God and himself.

Before we were saved, we were those who had lost God as our possession and who had also lost ourselves. [Ephesians 2:12](#) indicates that fallen man is without God. Instead of God as his possession, man has sin and has sold himself into the slavery of sin.

Apart from God's preserving grace, even Christians may lose God as their possession in a practical way and may also sell themselves into

the slavery of sin. In their daily living some Christians have sin instead of God. Like unbelievers, they have lost God as their possession, and they have sold themselves to sin, pleasures, and worldly amusements. All such believers, as well as all unbelievers, need a jubilee.

When the Lord Jesus was on earth, the entire human race had lost God as their possession and had sold themselves into the slavery of sin. This was true of Jews as well as Gentiles. The Lord Jesus did not live in the Gentile world; He lived in the Jewish land among God's chosen people. According to the four Gospels, not even those in the Jewish land, the so-called holy land, had God as their possession. Furthermore, all the Jews, including the Pharisees and rabbis, had sold themselves into sin. This was the reason the Lord Jesus rebuked the Pharisees so strongly in [Matthew 23](#). Because they were in the slavery of sin, He pronounced woes upon them.

A WONDERFUL RELEASE

In [Luke 4](#) the Lord Jesus read a portion from Isaiah that was a prophecy not of the jubilee in type, but of the actual jubilee: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent Me to

proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to send away in release those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord” ([Luke 4:18-19](#)). Then He declared, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your ears” ([v. 21](#)). By reading that portion of the Scripture the Lord sounded the trumpet; He proclaimed the jubilee.

Do you know what the preaching of the gospel is? The preaching of the gospel is the sounding of the jubilee, the trumpeting of the jubilee. The preaching of the gospel is the proclamation of our release. Actually, this release is not the release of our possession to us; it is the release of us to our possession and to our family. Once we were in the wrong family, the family of slavery. The sounding of the jubilee tells us to return to our own family, to the family of God.

Now we can understand what the jubilee is. The jubilee is the proclaiming of a wonderful release—a release of our possession to us and the release of ourselves so that we may return to God, to our family, and to our possession.

THE SOUNDING OF THE TRUMPET ON THE DAY OF ATONEMENT

According to [Leviticus 25:8-10](#), the jubilee

was sounded in the forty-ninth year on the day of atonement, which was on the tenth day of the seventh month. It was necessary for the trumpet of the jubilee to be sounded on the day of atonement because the jubilee is based on redemption. Without redemption there cannot be the jubilee. Therefore, the proclamation of the jubilee must be from the time of redemption.

The day of atonement typifies the time of redemption. The fact that the trumpet of the jubilee was sounded on the day of atonement and that the fiftieth year was sanctified and liberty was proclaimed throughout the land indicates that it was necessary first for Christ to die and then for there to be the proclamation of the release of the people. In other words, first Christ died, and then there was the genuine preaching of the gospel. The gospel could not be preached unless Christ had already died. Therefore, the proclamation, the preaching, of the gospel is based on the death of Christ. The sounding out of the gospel depends on Christ's redemption. Without the redemption of Christ, there would be no basis for the proclamation of the jubilee.

According to [Leviticus 25](#), the sounding of the trumpet of the jubilee took place six months before the actual beginning of the year of jubilee.

The jubilee began from the first month of the fiftieth year, but the sounding of the trumpet of the jubilee was in the middle of the forty-ninth year, six months earlier. When applied to our spiritual experience, this indicates that the preaching of the gospel comes first and the jubilee follows. Many of us can testify that in our experience of salvation we heard the preaching of the gospel long before we were saved. The preaching of the gospel came to us a considerable time before we entered into the jubilee.

ON THE FIFTIETH YEAR

The jubilee was, of course, on the fiftieth year. “A jubilee shall that fiftieth year be unto you” ([Lev. 25:11a](#)). The fiftieth year was after seven sabbaths of years, that is, after seven times seven years. In typology the sabbath refers to rest. Hence, seven sabbaths of years signify seven times seven rests.

The year of jubilee was to be on the first of a new period of seven years, or on an eighth year. Just as the day of Pentecost was on the fiftieth day, the first day after seven weeks, so the jubilee was on the fiftieth year, the first year after seven weeks, or sabbaths, of years. In the Scriptures the eighth day signifies resurrection. The

Lord Jesus was resurrected on the eighth day, which was the first day of the week. The fact that the jubilee took place on the fiftieth year indicates rest upon rest ending in resurrection. Now in the New Testament jubilee we have entered into rest upon rest ending in resurrection.

**NO SOWING, REAPING,
OR GATHERING,
BUT EATING OF THE INCREASE
OF THE LAND**

Concerning the year of jubilee, [Leviticus 25:11b-12](#) says, “Ye shall not sow, neither reap that which groweth of itself in it, nor gather the grapes in it of thy vine undressed. For it is the jubilee; it shall be holy unto you: ye shall eat the increase thereof out of the field.” Here we have the rather unusual requirement that in the year of jubilee the people were not to sow, reap, or gather, but eat the increase of the land.

In any religion people are encouraged to exercise their effort to behave themselves, to improve, and to do good. This is to “sow,” to “reap,” and to “gather.” But according to God’s ordination, in the New Testament jubilee we are to cease from our labor and not trust in it with respect to the enjoyment of Christ. Instead of

laboring in a natural way by our own sowing, reaping, and gathering, we should simply enjoy the riches of Christ.

THE YEAR OF JUBILEE

[Leviticus 25:10](#) speaks of hallowing the fiftieth year. Here we see that the jubilee was a holy year, a year hallowed to God and also to us. Elsewhere, the year of jubilee is called the acceptable year of the Lord ([Luke 4:18-19](#); [Isa. 61:1-2](#)). The acceptable year was the year in which the Lord accepted His people who were lost and who came back to Him. Therefore, on the Lord's side the year of jubilee was the year of acceptance.

The year of jubilee was a holy year and also an acceptable year. It was a year of proclaiming freedom to all people, and it was a time of freedom, rest, enjoyment, and satisfaction. The proclamation of the jubilee by the Lord Jesus in [Luke 4](#) governs the whole Gospel of Luke. Actually the entire New Testament age is the jubilee. The New Testament age is a time of proclaiming release to all those who have lost their possessions and who have sold themselves into slavery. Today the proclaiming of the gospel is to bring these people back to their possession and to their

family—back to God and to the family, the house, of God.

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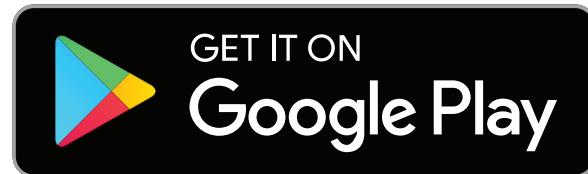
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