

# The Tabernacle

## Sabbatical Year and Year of Jubilee

### Lesson Overview

- For the past eight lessons, we have looked the feast days that occur annually.
- In this lesson, we will see look at two observances that only occur on certain years.

### Sabbatical Year

- Reference – Leviticus 25:1-7,18-22; Deuteronomy 15
- It is also called in Hebrew *shmita*, meaning “release”
- Every seventh year the land of Israel was to be left fallow – Leviticus 25:3-5
- God provided sustenance during this time by providing a thrice bountiful crop in the sixth year – Leviticus 25:20-22
- Debts were not to be collected during this year – Deuteronomy 15:2-6
  - Gaebelein: “The debtor was not to be pressed then for what he owed and nothing was to be exacted from him. While the land rested all debts and obligations had also to rest. It does therefore not mean a complete remission of all debts forever. And linked with this merciful institution is the promise of blessing. Obedience to these gracious laws would bring to them great blessing.”
- Many believe Hebrew slaves were released – Deuteronomy 15:12
  - I personally think this refers to the length of time (6 years, see Exodus 21:2) of their service and not the Sabbatical Year.
- Not keeping the Sabbatical Year would bring God’s judgment – Leviticus 26:33-35
  - According to II Chronicles 36:21, there is a connection between the prophesied 70-year captivity and Israel’s failure to keep the Sabbath Years.
  - The 70-year captivity is calculated to be from the destruction of the First Temple in 586 B.C. to the dedication of the Second Temple in 516 B.C.
  - For 70 Sabbatical Years to have been missed, that is a total of 490 years we must look back from 586 B.C.
    - Adding 490 to 586, we arrive at 1076 B.C., which would be about twenty years into the reign of Saul according to Reese’s Chronological Bible.
    - This is assuming no Sabbatical Years were observed at all, which may not be the case (see II Kings 19:29 for an example.).
    - In an alternate scenario where *both* Sabbatical and Jubilee years are counted, it would be roughly 440 years. Counting backwards from 586 B.C gets us to 1026 B.C., roughly the time of Absalom’s revolt against David.
  - Therefore, it may be safely said that the 70-Year Captivity is in part judgment against Israel for failing to observe the Sabbatical Years during the Kingdom Period.

## Year of Jubilee

- Reference – Leviticus 25:8-22
- The word *Jubilee* is believed to be derived from the Hebrew word for ram (*yovel*), referring to the *shofars* blown on this day.
- This year is calculated as the year following the seventh Sabbatical Year.
  - This method of counting days reminds us of the Feast of Pentecost, celebrated on the 50<sup>th</sup> day – Leviticus 23:15-16.
  - It appears that this 50<sup>th</sup> year is not counted outside of the seven-year Sabbatical cycle but is instead regarded as that first year of the new cycle. Thus, we calculate these Jubilee cycles as 49-year periods and not 50.
- This year is signaled by the blowing of *shofars* after the ceremonies of the Day of Atonement – Leviticus 25:9.
- It is another Sabbatical Year for the land – Leviticus 25:11-12
- Purchased land was returned to the families it had originally belonged to – Leviticus 25:10,13
  - Land therefore was never to be purchased indefinitely. The original tracts of land allocated by Joshua should continue to be observed in perpetuity.
  - It was more like leasing the land than actually buying it – Leviticus 25:14-15
  - An exception is made for homes in walled cities, which became perpetual property of the purchasers – Leviticus 25:29-30
- Hebrew slaves were to be freed – Leviticus 25:40-43
  - Non-Hebrew slaves are exempt from this – Leviticus 25:44-46

## Truths From the Tabernacle

- Both the Sabbatical and Jubilee Years taught faith in God to provide.
- The Year of Jubilee highlighted that the land itself belongs, not to men, but to God.
  - We are stewards, not owners, of all that God has given us.
- The Year of Jubilee also highlights that God's people are to be free people, not bound eternally to sin or its penalties.
- GotQuestions.org has this great thought:
  - “The Jubilee presents a beautiful picture of the New Testament themes of redemption and forgiveness. Christ is the Redeemer who came to set free those who are slaves and prisoners to sin (Romans 8:2; Galatians 5:1; 3:22). The debt of sin we owe to God was paid on the cross as Jesus died on our behalf (Colossians 2:13-14), and we are forgiven the debt forever. We are no longer in bondage, no longer slaves to sin, having been freed by Christ, and we can truly enter the rest God provides as we cease laboring to make ourselves acceptable to God by our own works (Hebrews 4:9-10).”
- Prophetically speaking, the Year of Jubilee points to the greatness of the Millennial Kingdom.

