

Sabbatical and Jubilee Instructions

Torah Instructions, Attributes and Stipulations

Part 2 Session 1

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And thou shalt number seven sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years; and the space of the seven sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years. Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubile 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. And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubile unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family.
(Lev 25:8-10 KJV)

This is the first session in the second part. We will discuss primarily the Sabbatical, and Torah instructions.

Agenda

- Part 1 – Background, history, secular record
 - Encyclopedia Judaica and Jewish Encyclopedia
 - Torah Commentary and Josephus
 - Seder Olam and Maimonides
 - Zuckermann vs. Wacholder dating
 - Post exile Sabbatical years
- Part 2 – Torah instructions, attributes and stipulations
 - Sabbatical attributes
 - Release from servitude
 - Land rest
 - Debt release
 - Lending to the poor
 - Sabbatical instructions - Leviticus 25
 - Six year growing cycle
 - Fallow seventh year
 - Jubilee instruction - Leviticus 25
 - 50 year cycle
 - Land redemption
 - Real estate transactions
 - Bankruptcy
- Part 3 – How to count the Sabbatical and Jubilee cycle
 - Counting sevens
 - Agricultural practices
 - Dating systems
 - Jubilee counting alternatives
- Part 4 – OT Jubilee timeline - when is the Sabbatical and Jubilee?
 - 3 sessions
 - Southern Kingdom geo-politics circa 600 BCE
 - 3 Babylonian sieges and 6 deportations
 - Fall of Jerusalem - Temple destroyed in 587 BCE
 - Ezekiel proclaims Jubilee in 574 BCE
- Part 5 – NT Jubilee timeline - when is the Sabbatical and Jubilee?
 - Yahushua's ministry
 - Yahushua proclaims Jubilee in 27 CE

Part One contains the Background, history, and secular record. There are a number of secular sources showing the Sabbatical and Jubilee and I found there is a lot of reference to them in a number of locations such as the Encyclopedia Judaica and the Jewish Encyclopedia. Josephus weighs in along with Maimonides; we looked at all of those sources in Part One.

Now we are in Part Two and will look into the scriptures in depth and the Sabbatical attributes and instructions. Next time we will look at the Jubilee instructions.

We are going to look into how the land rest occurs and how servitude was imposed upon certain Israelites, and how they were released. This part also contains debt release and lending to the poor. There are specific instructions in Leviticus 25 that contain both the Sabbatical and Jubilee but for the sake of time, I have divided that into another session.

Scope of Analysis

- Survey records for Sabbatical and Jubilee year
- Examine scriptures that provide instructions for Sabbatical and Jubilee year
- Establish counting system for Sabbatical and Jubilee cycle
- Examine how Jubilee is reconciled within schedule
- Reconcile Sabbatical cycle with Jubilee year timetable
- Determine if scriptural instructions specify a 49 or 50 year repeating cycle
- Jubilee year included in 49 year of current Sabbatical cycle?
Jubilee year included in 1st year of next 7 year Sabbatical count?
Jubilee year separate intercalated 50th year?

We will run into the counting system, not in detail, but will certainly see it in the scriptures.

Sabbatical Attributes

Brother Purchased as a Servant

The first notice and mention of this you find in Exodus 21, the first mention of a year of release discussing a brother that is purchased as a servant.

If thou buy an Hebrew servant, six years he shall serve: and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing. If he came in by himself, he shall go out by himself: if he were married, then his wife shall go out with him. If his master have given him a wife, and she have born him sons or daughters; the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself. And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my

children; I will not go out free: Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an aul; and he shall serve him for ever. (Exo 21:2-6 KJV)

This is the first instruction that we see early on in the book of Exodus, just after the assembly of Israel arrived at Mt. Sinai. This was on or around the Day of Pentecost after they had been exiled and had left Egypt. They were on the early part of their journeys.

When we look at the instructions from a covenant standpoint, we see this instruction and then another that was a part of the original covenant that YHWH made with Moses and the Israelites. It was the covenant that they ultimately broke by apostatizing and making a golden calf.

What we see is 6 years of serving and being released on the 7th means that this is involuntary servitude and perhaps being put in servitude as a result of some punitive action.

- Likely involuntary servitude
 - Sold as slave labor
 - Purchased from a 3rd party
 - Emancipated 7th year
 - In contrast to voluntary term of 49 years, indentured servitude contract

The scripture in Leviticus 25 doesn't say why a brother is in servitude but I think once we see a little more, we will understand that it's likely a distinction in 6 years of servitude versus 49. In the Exodus account this servitude has the people emancipated in the 7th year. That is in contrast to what we are going to see in Leviticus 25. The term in Leviticus 25 of indentured servant is 49 years.

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 an hired servant, and as a sojourner, he shall be with thee, and shall serve thee unto the year of jubile:
(Lev 25:39-40 KJV)

I don't believe the difference is a scribal error but I think there are two types of servitude. One type is mentioned in Exodus 21 as 6 years, and the other mentioned in Leviticus 25 which talks about 49 years.

- Alternate view
 - Any six contiguous years
 - Not associated with Sabbatical release

There is an alternate view to the scripture in Exodus 21. By the simple instructions that you see, it says that you are to serve 6 years and go free on the 7th.

- Second witness - Deu 15:12
Clarifies Shmita release

When you look at the commentaries that suggest that this is any 6 year period and it doesn't matter when the first year of the 6 years start. In other words, it's not associated with a Sabbatical release. I don't believe that is the case and I will show you why. We will see a second witness in the scriptures to this same type of servitude when we get to Deuteronomy 15. I think that will clarify that it's a Shmita release or a Sabbatical 7th year. It's cyclical.

Sabbatical Attributes

Original Instructions - Land Rest

The next scripture we see in order in Exodus 23, again, this is in the original covenant made with the Israelites.

*And six years thou shalt sow thy land, and shalt gather in the fruits thereof: But the seventh year thou shalt let it **rest** ^{H8058=shamat=let alone, desist, let rest} and lie still ^{let it rest and lie still - LXX}; that the poor of thy people may eat: and what they leave the beasts of the field shall eat. In like manner thou shalt deal with thy vineyard, and with thy oliveyard.
(Exo 23:10-11 KJV)*

We are going to sow the land, and the 7th year we are going to let it rest and this is the first key to knowing that this is a Sabbatical boundary and is a specific calendar date. The phrase "You shall let it rest", rest is the Hebrew word shamat and it means to let alone, desist, and let rest; and "lie still" means to leave it according to the Septuagint.

- 1st mention at Mt. Sinai
6 years sow and harvest
7th year rest
Volunteer crop for the poor and livestock
amplified to include owner in Lev 25:6-7 - owner, servants, strangers and animals
Land preparation on Sabbatical?
Torah Mishnah Shmita 1:8-10
13-14 - watering, weed control, breaking up dry ground
- H8058 = shamat ^{v. let rest (land or debt)}
 - Connects land rest to year of release
 - Deu 15:2-3 ^{coming up}

The first mention about the Sabbatical land rest is in Exodus 23, 6 years you sow and harvest, the 7th year you let it rest. It talks about the volunteer crop for the poor and livestock. Notice that it's for the poor of the people that they may eat and what they leave the beasts of the field shall eat, so it's the poor of the people and the livestock. I think that's a real good entrée into what the purpose of letting the land rest is all about.

When we get to Leviticus 25, the covenant that they took into the Promised Land, part of the covenant that they took into the Promised Land was with Deuteronomy. This statement is expanded, not just to the poor and livestock, but also the owner and servants, strangers and animals. It is expanded when we get to Leviticus 25.

It starts to bring questions as to how we do all of this. What about the land preparation on the Sabbatical. I mentioned a little bit of this last time and as a reminder, there was good commentary available from Maimonides in the Torah Mishnah in the Shmita section about watering, weed control, and breaking up your dry ground and what you should do on the Sabbatical year. Notice that the highlight of this is the word Shamat. It is a verb and it means to let rest and it is going to apply to the land and to debt. I think we will see in Deuteronomy that it connects the land rest to the year of release.

Following are the Sabbath scriptures. Right in the next verse it says:

Six days thou shalt do thy work, and on the seventh day thou shalt rest ^{H7673=shabbath=to}
repose, desist from exertion : *that thine ox and thine ass may rest, and the son of thy handmaid,*
and the stranger, may be refreshed. (Exo 23:12 KJV)

The rest that we see here in this verse is different from what we find regarding the Sabbatical year. This rest is a "shabbath" and is related to Shabbat and it means it to repose, desist from exertion. We rest on the Sabbath day.

I don't believe it is coincidence that YHWH talks about releasing your brother from servitude, taking care of the land and letting it rest and then the weekly Sabbath is the very next scripture that is talked about. There is a relationship between the land rest and the weekly Sabbath.

There are three mentions in the scriptures of Sabbath of rest. Shabbat of Shabbathon as it would be in the Hebrew. The Sabbath of rest that we commonly think of is the weekly Sabbath. Also noted is that the Day of Atonement is a Sabbath of rest, a Shabbat of Shabbathon and the third example is the land rest itself is the Sabbatical year itself including the land rest which is a Shabbat of Shabbathon.

What is important about seeing this is that the Sabbath day rest is a 7 day count pattern just as the Sabbatical is a 7 year counting pattern for both humans and animals, which is an interesting correlation.

That is all that we find in Exodus about this particular topic, the next section to talk about is in Deuteronomy. I understand Leviticus is in between and we will look at Leviticus in detail later.

Sabbatical Attributes

Debt Release

Deuteronomy 15 mentions debt release.

*At the end of every seven years thou shalt make a **release** ^{H8059 shmita=from 8058, remission of debt or suspension of labor}. And this is the manner of the **release** ^{H8059=shmita}: Every creditor that lendeth ought unto his neighbour shall **release it** ^{H8058=shamat=let alone, desist, let rest}; he shall not exact it of his neighbour, or of his brother; because it is called YHWH's **release** ^{H8059=shmita}. Of a foreigner thou mayest exact it again: but that which is thine with thy brother thine hand shall **release** ^{H8058=shamat}; Save when there shall be no poor among you; for the YHWH shall greatly bless thee in the land which YHWH your Elohim giveth thee for an inheritance to possess it: Only if thou carefully hearken unto the voice of YHWH thy Elohim, to observe to do all these commandments which I command thee this day. For YHWH thy Elohim blesseth thee, as he promised thee: and thou shalt lend ^{H5670=lend on security, pawn, entangle} unto many nations, but thou shalt not borrow; and thou shalt reign over many nations, but they shall not reign over thee. (Deu 15:1-6 KJV)*

Remission of debts suspended by fallow year

Debtor cannot work fields during the seventh year

Debtor is unable to make payments

Shamat is the verb form of Shmita, and don't you think this is quite a set of promises that go along with the Shmita. Notice that the remission of debts is suspended by a fallow year and part of why that would be is that the debtor can't work the fields during the seventh year. YHWH put in place two re-sets, the 7th year and the 50th year. The debtor can't work the fields so his debts are suspended by the fallow year. The debtor is unable to make any payments.

- Loan write off
 - End of 7th year
 - Applies to Israelite brother (neighbor)
 - Not applicable to foreigners (Gentiles) - income not affected by 7th year ^{they work}

What this tells us is that there are loan write-offs and it is at the end of the 7th year. Also the loan-write off applies to the Israelite brothers. It is not applicable to foreigners or Gentiles because the foreigners are not letting their land rest. Their income isn't affected by the 7th year land rest. If they work, they might as well pay their debts to the Israelites but there is further legislation that goes along with this that we will come to in Leviticus 26.

Look what YHWH promises.

- Benefits
 - Greatly blessed
 - Known as international creditor
 - Balanced budget
 - No need to borrow
 - AAA credit rating
 - Recognized as a global leader

Unfortunately none of these seem to be applicable today in any country in the world that I can think of. It is what YHWH originally promised for those that would honor this legislation. As we see this page it is noteworthy to remember that the two words, Shmita and Shamat are tied together. When we go on, we see:

- **H8059 = Shmita** noun = release of debt
 - 5 occurrences**
 - Deu 15 - 4 matches**
 - Deu 31 - 1 match**
- **H8058 = Shamat** verb = let rest (land/debt)
 - Connects year of release to land rest (Sabbatical)**

We have several of them right on this page in Deuteronomy 15 there are four matches and in Deuteronomy 31 is the fifth match. You might say that you Shamat (the verb) on Shmita (the noun). That might be a good way to keep these two words associated with one another.

Lending to the Poor

We see how the two words are tied to the 7th year. If we go on in Deuteronomy, in verse 7:

If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren within any of thy gates in thy land which the YHWH your Elohim giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother: But thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend ^{H5670=lend on security, pawn, entangle (in other words, make a loan)} him sufficient for his need, in that which he wanteth. Beware that there be not a thought in thy wicked heart,

saying, The seventh year, the year of **release** ^{H8059=Shmita=remission of debt of suspension of labor}, is at hand; and thine eye be evil against thy poor brother, and thou givest him nought; and he cry unto YHWH against thee, and it be sin unto thee. Thou shalt surely give him, and thine heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him: because that for this thing YHWH your Elohim shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hand unto. For the poor shall never cease out of the land: therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land. (Deu 15:7-11 KJV)

Notice that the 7th year of release is at hand and don't count that 7th year of release ahead of time so that you won't give to your brother. There is the key to it right here in Deuteronomy 15.

- Shmita is 7th year
- Same cycle as Sabbatical
- Don't anticipate accounts receivable write-off especially if the year is close to the 7th.
- Follows the same pattern for debts and servitude
- Give versus get
cf. MSG

When you happen on someone who's in trouble or needs help among your people with whom you live in this land that YHWH, your Elohim, is giving you, don't look the other way pretending you don't see him. Don't keep a tight grip on your purse. No. Look at him, open your purse, lend whatever and as much as he needs. Don't count the cost. Don't listen to that selfish voice saying, "It's almost the seventh year, the year of All-Debts-Are-Canceled," and turn aside and leave your needy neighbor in the lurch, refusing to help him. He'll call YHWH's attention to you and your blatant sin. Give freely and spontaneously. Don't have a stingy heart. The way you handle matters like this triggers YHWH, your Elohim's, blessing in everything you do, all your work and ventures. (Deu 15:7-10 MSG)

The Message hits the nail on the head on some of these points when we use it to see a wider understanding. Going on in Deuteronomy 15 with the thought of lending to people in mind, the next topic in Deuteronomy 15 in verse 12 has to do with a brother that has been purchased as a servant.

Brother Purchased as a Servant

*And if thy brother, an Hebrew man, or an Hebrew woman, be sold unto thee, and serve thee six years; then in the seventh year thou shalt let him go free from thee. And when thou sendest him out free from thee, thou shalt not let him go away empty: Thou shalt furnish him liberally out of thy flock, and out of thy floor^{threshing floor}, and out of thy winepress: of that wherewith YHWH thy Elohim hath blessed thee thou shalt give unto him. And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt, and YHWH thy Elohim redeemed thee: therefore I command thee this thing to day. And it shall be, if he say unto thee, I will not go away from thee; because he loveth thee and thine house, because he is well with thee; Then thou shalt take an aul, and thrust it through his ear unto the door, and he shall be thy servant for ever. And also unto thy maidservant thou shalt do likewise. It shall not seem hard unto thee, when thou sendest him away free from thee; for he hath been worth a double hired servant to thee, in serving thee six years: and YHWH thy Elohim shall bless thee in all that thou doest.
(Deu 15:12-18 KJV)*

- Same as 1st mention at Mt. Sinai - Exo 21:2
- Likely involuntary servitude
Sold as slave labor^{or punitive}
Purchased from 3rd party
In contrast to voluntary term of 49 years

This is similar to what we saw as the first mention in Exodus 21 at Mt. Sinai. Again, I would say this is likely an involuntary servitude situation. It could be someone that was sold as a slave laborer or possibly as a result of a punitive action that wasn't capital crime, or it could be someone that was purchased from a third party. Again, this is in contrast to what I believe to be the difference of a voluntary term in Leviticus 25

*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 an hired servant, and as a sojourner, he shall be with thee, and shall serve thee unto the year of jubile:
(Lev 25:39-40 KJV)*

You can see the difference here and the distinction, the scriptures aren't clear on the distinction by the way, I am only making the likely possibility.

We learned that the seventh year was a release year for debts, and that was right in the line of not anticipating the seventh year and I would submit that it would also apply to the servitude in this particular scripture because it's just a few verses later in Deuteronomy.

The seventh year debt release applies when you don't anticipate a servant in the fifth year of the seven year cycle. In other words, don't accept him because you only have one or two years of use. What it says here is six years, up to six years of service.

- 7th year Shmita release

*Beware that there be not a thought in thy wicked heart, saying, The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand; and thine eye be evil against thy poor brother, and thou givest him nought; and he cry unto YHWH against thee, and it be sin unto thee.
(Deu 15:9 KJV)*

I would also add that you don't take your brother as a servant. At the end of Deuteronomy we see the instruction to read the Torah.

Read the Torah

*And Moses commanded them, saying, At the end of every seven years, in the solemnity of the year of **release** ^{H8059=Shmita=remission of debt or suspension of labor}, in the feast of tabernacles, When all Israel is come to appear before YHWH thy Elohim in the place which he shall choose, thou shalt read this law before all Israel in their hearing. Gather the people together, men, and women, and children, and thy stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear YHWH your Elohim, and observe to do all the words of this law: And that their children, which have not known any thing, may hear, and learn to fear YHWH your Elohim, as long as ye live in the land whither ye go over Jordan to possess it. (Deu 31:10-13 KJV)*

Does going over the Jordan to possess it end the matter since we are not over the Jordan across the Atlantic or Pacific Ocean, does that apply to us today? We think it does, in fact, we will be reading Deuteronomy ourselves because we are just concluding the Sabbatical year.

- Deuteronomy read
 - At the end of every 7 years
 - After debt and servant release
 - All Israelites became equals before YHWH
- Last Shmita mention - 5 of 5
- Possible Sabbaticals - search for FOT and reading the law
 - Jos 8:34-35 Joshua (not likely Sabbatical)
 - 2 Ch 17:7-9 - Jehoshaphat
 - 2 Kg 23:1-2 - Josiah (Likely a Sabbatical)
 - Neh 8:2-3 - Ezra (likely a Sabbatical)

Deuteronomy is read at the end of every seven years. This is after debt and servants are released and at that point all Israelites become equal before YHWH. What a more perfect time would there be? The Law of Moses, the book of Deuteronomy, at the end of the book of Deuteronomy says exactly to do. This is also the last mention of Shmita.

One thing you can realize when you see this is that if indeed the law was read, at this cycle, at the end of the Shmita at or around the Feast of Tabernacles being read to all the people, you start searching the scriptures for events like that to happen, you might come upon when some Sabbatical years were. There are several that I know of and one is in Joshua. Joshua read the law, but I don't believe that was a Sabbatical year for a variety of reasons.

Jehoshaphat is mentioned as reading the law in 2 Chronicles, but I'm not sure about that one either; I haven't researched back that far quite yet. That is a place you can see that the law was read.

2 Kings 23 though, specifically Josiah is mentioned as reading the law and I think that is likely to be a Sabbatical year. Also in Nehemiah 8 reading the law to the Israelites is talked about and I think that is likely a Sabbatical year as well.

With Exodus and Deuteronomy, the remainder of instructions is found in Leviticus chapter 25 and 27. While chapter 27 contains the Jubilee instructions, we will focus on chapter 25. I have taken out the scriptures that apply to the Sabbatical in chapter 25. The scriptures that apply for the Jubilee will be in Session 2 of this series.

Sabbatical Instructions

Leviticus 25

*And YHWH spake unto Moses in mount Sinai, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the land which I give you, then shall the land keep a sabbath ^{H7676=Shabbat of H7677=Shabbathon} unto YHWH. Six years thou shalt sow thy field, and six years thou shalt prune thy vineyard, and gather in the fruit thereof; But in the seventh year shall be a sabbath of rest unto the land, a sabbath for YHWH: thou shalt neither sow thy field, nor prune thy vineyard. That which groweth of its own accord of thy harvest thou shalt not reap ^{H7114=dock off, harvest}, neither gather ^{H1219=clip off} the grapes of thy vine undressed: for it is a year of rest unto the land. The sabbath of the land shall be meat ^{H402=food} for ⁽¹⁾ **you**; for thee, and for thy ⁽²⁾ **servant**, and for thy ⁽³⁾ **maid**, and for thy ⁽⁴⁾ **hired servant**, and for thy ⁽⁵⁾ **stranger** that sojourneth with thee, And for thy ⁽⁶⁾ **cattle**, and for the ⁽⁷⁾ **beast** that are in thy land, shall all the increase ^{H8393=income, revenue} thereof be meat ^{H398=to eat, consume}. (Lev 25:1-7 KJV)*

When you read through this it almost seems contradictory that *you shall not sow nor reap nor gather the grapes of your vine undressed*. In one scripture and then in a couple of scriptures later it says *the Sabbath of the land shall be meat for you*. The food that is produced shall be meat to eat. It seems contradictory, but I don't believe it is in any way, the scripture isn't clear on this so when you look at the body of evidence, what you come up with is the agrarian society that was the mainstay of all of Israel in these days. The crops were a part of a sow and reap cycle and that was income to them. In the Sabbatical year you don't sow nor do you reap but obviously you have to pick the volunteer fruit so it's the same as when you reap. The scripture doesn't clearly identify the distinction. I think the distinction ends up being when something you sow and you end up reaping as part of your income.

- Amplification of Exo 23: 10-11

*But the seventh year thou shalt let it rest and lie still; that the **poor of thy people may eat**: and what they leave **the beasts of the field shall eat**. In like manner thou shalt deal with thy vineyard, and with thy oliveyard.*

This is expanded from the people of the field to include you, your servant, your hired servant, stranger, the cattle and the beast of the land. All of the volunteers that are produced are food for all of the above. I think part of what you get when you study this though, is what it says back in Exodus, the first mention of this that the food is for the poor. The practice that we have here is that we try to find somebody that is in need, but we give this volunteer produce away to anyone that wants it.

- Agricultural best practice and being blessed by YHWH.
- Civil ordinances concurrent with land rest.
 - Debt release
 - Servant purchase
 - Lending to the poor

Debt release, servant purchase, lending to the poor are all simultaneous with the seventh year Sabbatical Shmita.

- Workers idle on the 7th year
 - No ability to repay debt
 - So release the debt

We go on to a new cycle. The next mention that we see of something Sabbatical in Leviticus is in verse 19.

And the land shall yield her fruit, and ye shall eat your fill, and dwell therein in safety. And if ye shall say, What shall we eat the seventh year? behold, we shall not sow, nor gather in ^{H622=gather for any purpose, receive, take away} our increase ^{H8393=income, revenue}. Then I will command my blessing upon you in the sixth year, and it shall bring forth fruit for three years ^{years 6 to 8}. And ye shall sow the eighth year, and eat yet of old fruit until ^{H5704=as far as, even to, up to - BDB} the ninth year; until her fruits come in ye shall eat of the old store.
(Lev 25:19-22 KJV)

To me, “And the land shall yield her fruit, and ye shall eat your fill, and dwell therein in safety”, is an inclusive statement that honoring the Sabbatical gives you ongoing fulfillment and you will eat and dwell in safety, it’s not meant to be just that year but ongoing.

I would say the majority of commentaries want to associate this with the Jubilee because it talks about having increase for three years. I don’t believe it says that at all, I think it’s easy to prove that. If you parse out what this says, “I will command my blessing upon you in the sixth year, and it shall bring forth fruit for three years”, the three year period of the sixth year includes the sixth, seventh and eighth years. “And ye shall sow the eighth year, and eat yet of old fruit until the ninth year”. Part of the key also is the word “until”. The commentaries that make this part of the Jubilee make the word until to include the ninth year.

I will show you later that the word unto means as far as, up to, but it doesn’t include the ninth year, it means up to the ninth year. It’s important to notice that you sow the eighth year. Sowing the eighth year is something that you don’t do on the Jubilee. This is talking about the Sabbatical cycle, not the Jubilee. We compare with the Septuagint:

And if ye should say, What shall we eat in this seventh year, if we do not sow nor gather in our fruits? Then will I send my blessing upon you in the sixth year, and the land shall produce its fruits for three years. And ye shall sow in the eighth year, and eat old fruits till the ninth year: until its fruit come, ye shall eat old fruits of the old.
(Lev 25:20-22 Brenton)

The Septuagint fundamentally agrees, says the same thing. To summarize what this is about:

- 6th year harvest promise
- Rest on the 7th year
- Plant on the 8th year

This can’t be the Jubilee year because of the instructions that say not to plant on the Jubilee.

- Harvest on 8-9th year

- cf. double portion of manna and it is a blessing

And it came to pass on the sixth day, they gathered double what was needed, two homers for one man; and all the chiefs of the synagogue went in and reported it to Moses. (Exo 16:22 Brenton)

Our real life testimony here would be that indeed YHWH honors this promise. On the sixth year, before this Sabbatical year that we just kept we had a bumper crop of virtually everything, especially the fruit trees. They really gave us a huge harvest of apples which would now be the second year before this, the Sabbatical year we are just completing, or the sixth year in the cycle in other words.

Sabbatical Instructions

Leviticus 25

Penalty Clause

When we go on in Leviticus 25, and in the next chapter there is a penalty clause associated as a reminder of keeping the Sabbatical and Jubilee.

- Progression of curses
 1. Plague - sowing in vain

But if ye will not hearken unto me, and will not do all these commandments ^{The} commandments he just talked about in the previous chapter; And if ye shall despise my statutes, or if your soul abhor my judgments, so that ye will not do all my commandments, but that ye break my covenant: I also will do this unto you; I will even appoint over you terror ^{H928=panic, destruction, trouble}, consumption ^{H7829=emaciation (extreme weight loss)}, and the burning ague ^{H6920=inflammation, fever}, that shall consume ^{H3615=end, destroy} the eyes, and cause sorrow ^{H1727=mope, pine (sadness)} of heart: and ye shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it. (Lev 26:14-16 KJV)

It is stunning that this is here in Leviticus 26. Leviticus 26 is the blessings and cursing's chapter parallel, or similar to Deuteronomy 28 which is a lengthier version of it. Leviticus 26 was the 'early version' as I call it by comparison to the Moab version in Deuteronomy 28.

There is a progression of curses associated with sowing seed in vain. The plague is from sowing in vain.

2. Scarcity - famine of bread

And when I have broken the staff of your bread, ten women shall bake your bread in one oven, and they shall deliver you your bread again by weight: and ye shall eat, and not be satisfied. (Lev 26:26 KJV)

Ten women baking in one oven, and delivering it by weight means that there isn't much bread. There is a scarcity that is going to result from this.

3. Desolation - enforced land rest

*And I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you: and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste. Then shall the land enjoy her sabbaths, as long as it lieth desolate, and ye be in your enemies' land; even then shall the land rest, and enjoy her sabbaths. As long as it lieth desolate it shall rest; because it did not rest in **your** sabbaths, when ye dwelt upon it. (Lev 26:33-35 KJV)*

The land will get its rest and it will make up the lost Sabbaths by being laid rest and you won't be in it. The note is **your** Sabbaths. Doing it your way and doing it the way that seems right in your own eyes versus what YHWH has to say and His instructions.

That is the instruction and the attributes that you find about the Sabbatical in the books of Exodus, Leviticus and Deuteronomy. Fundamentally, that is the instruction set. What I've found here though are several real life applications of these scriptures of the Sabbatical and the Sabbatical year. There are other accounts and the first one I want to talk about is Elisha and the widow's oil. This is about repaying creditors and taking bondservants as security for an outstanding debt. This would have been in the time of Jehoshaphat and Jehoram.

- Repaying creditors
Taking bond servants as security for outstanding debt
- Ca. 850 BCE - Jehoram - 2Kg3

*Now there cried a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets unto Elisha, saying, Thy servant my husband is dead; and thou knowest that thy servant did fear YHWH: and **the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondmen** ^{H5650=bond} _{servants}. And Elisha said unto her, What shall I do for thee? tell me, what hast thou in the house? And she said, Thine handmaid hath not any thing in the house, save a pot of oil. Then he said, Go, borrow thee vessels abroad of all thy neighbours, even empty vessels; borrow not a few. And when thou art come in, thou shalt shut the door upon thee and upon thy sons, and shalt pour out into all those vessels, and thou shalt set aside that which is full. So she went from him, and shut the door upon her and upon her sons, who brought the vessels to her; and she poured out. And it came to pass, when the vessels*

were full, that she said unto her son, Bring me yet a vessel. And he said unto her, There is not a vessel more. And the oil stayed. Then she came and told the man of YHWH. And he said, Go, sell the oil, and pay thy debt, and live thou and thy children ^{or from} of the rest ^{of it}. (2Ki 4:1-7 KJV)

You see what has happened here, when Elisha asked the woman what she had in the house. Now that you know about servitude and creditors from the Shmita, you know that people can go into servitude to a creditor, apparently what has happened in 850 BCE period of time, creditors would come to collect on debt. The widowed woman's husband died owing a debt and now the creditors are coming to collect. Because he is no longer alive to pay they are going to collect by taking his two sons as bondservants and will probably sell them to someone else. There are a couple points about this and one to be made is that the Sabbatical regulation that addresses this must have been known about in this period of time.

Often times when you study this subject you find that there was no evidence of people keeping the Sabbatical. There is evidence in 2 Kings 4 that they must have known about the Sabbatical because the creditors were coming to take the sons to pay the debts. Ultimately this would have been forgiven in the year of release which isn't talked about here. It's interesting to see this account and how it applies to what we have just been learning about the instruction set for indentured servants.

The widow woman only has a pot of oil and Elisha is telling her to keep pouring because it is going to be refilled miraculously. She had a lot of oil to sell and was able to pay the debt without losing her sons to being a bondservant.

- Involuntary servitude

And if thy brother, an Hebrew man, or an Hebrew woman, be sold unto thee, and serve thee six years; then in the seventh year thou shalt let him go free from thee. And when thou sendest him out free from thee, thou shalt not let him go away empty: (Deu 15:12 KJV)

This is the application of the part of when he became the bond servant. He became a bond servant because there was a debt owed and the creditors came to collect it.

When we get to the fourth part the series you will see why that conclusion is likely the case, and that this is the Sabbatical year and one that can be identified in the history the North and particularly and in this case the South tribes of Judah.

Sabbatical Application

Zedekiah Proclaims Liberty for Slaves

- Release of Shmita
- Likely 589 -88 BCE Sabbatical

*Therefore the word of YHWH came to Jeremiah from YHWH, saying, Thus saith YHWH the Elohim of Israel; I made a covenant with your fathers in the day that I brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondmen, saying, At the end of seven years let ye go every man his brother an Hebrew, which hath been sold unto thee; and when he hath served thee six years, thou shalt let him go free from thee: but your fathers hearkened not unto me, neither inclined their ear. And ye were now turned, and had done right in my sight, in **proclaiming liberty every man to his neighbour**; and ye had made a covenant before me in the house which is called by my name: (Jer 34:12-15 KJV)*

Jeremiah is talking to Zedekiah in this account telling him that it is a good thing that you did this. Keep in mind what's going on here, just a brief couple of statements about this. The Babylonians were at the doorsteps. Zedekiah was in his 10th year, he only went to his 11th year before Jerusalem fell to Nebuchadnezzar. Zedekiah was likely looking to try to please YHWH so they went through this event to release the servants because it was time to release them on the seventh year Shmita. It turns out though, if you read the rest of the account, they took them right back.

That was probably high displeasure to YHWH, it wasn't much longer, one more year, and the whole place fell apart. The Temple was destroyed, the town raised and all of the Israelites, the tribe of Judah that lived in the area went into captivity along with their brothers from the Northern tribes some 130 -135 years previous.

- Involuntary servitude

And if thy brother, an Hebrew man, or an Hebrew woman, be sold unto thee, and serve thee six years; then in the seventh year thou shalt let him go free from thee. And when thou sendest him out free from thee, thou shalt not let him go away empty: (Deu 15:12-13 KJV)

This is what was going on in Jeremiah chapter 34.

Sabbatical Application

Covenant Reaffirmed by Governor Nehemiah

- Land rest

Later on in the Second Temple period the covenant was reaffirmed by Governor Nehemiah and it is likely on a Sabbatical year.

*They clave to their brethren, their nobles, and entered into a curse, and into an oath, to walk in YHWH's law, which was given by Moses the servant of YHWH, and to observe and do all the commandments of YHWH our Sovereign, and his judgments and his statutes; And that we would not give our daughters unto the people of the land, nor take their daughters for our sons: And if the people of the land bring ware or any victuals on the sabbath day to sell, that we would not buy it of them on the sabbath, or on the holy day: and that **we would leave** ^{H5203=let fall, forsake, lie still} **the seventh year, and the exaction** ^{H4855= interest, usury} **of every debt.** (Neh 10:29-31 KJV)*

The curses and oaths are both in Deuteronomy 28, the blessings and cursing and the promises that YHWH said he was going to do if you obey or disobey. It's interesting to note that there are fifteen verses if you do obey and there are about 45 verses regarding if you don't obey.

Nehemiah is stating that they are going to rest, forsake, and let the land lie still on the seventh year. He is talking about doing all of these things, keeping the Sabbatical when he made this proclamation reaffirming the covenant.

Here is where Nehemiah is coming from in Leviticus 25:

Six years thou shalt sow thy field, and six years thou shalt prune thy vineyard, and gather in the fruit thereof; But in the seventh year shall be a sabbath of rest unto the land, a sabbath for YHWH: thou shalt neither sow thy field, nor prune thy vineyard.
(Lev 25:3-4 KJV)

Nehemiah wanted to get back to the ordinances that YHWH had originally put in place.

A little earlier, this goes back to the First Temple period, Josiah's reforms took place and started on what would be a Sabbatical and the Jubilee year. This all started with Hilkiah finding the book of the law.

Sabbatical Application

Josiah's Reformation

- Hilkiah finds the book of the law

- Likely 624 BCE
End of Sabbatical 625 - 24 BCE
Beginning of Jubilee 624 - 23 BCE
Josiah's 18th year - 2Kg 22:3

And Hilkiyah the high priest said unto Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of YHWH. And Hilkiyah gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it...And the king sent, and they gathered unto him all the elders of Judah and of Jerusalem. And the king went up into the house of YHWH, and all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with him, and the priests, and the prophets, and all the people, both small and great: and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant which was found in the house of YHWH. And the king stood by a pillar, and made a covenant before YHWH, to walk after YHWH, and to keep his commandments and his testimonies and his statutes with all their heart and all their soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people stood to the covenant. (2Ki 22:8 - 23:1-3 KJV)

They found a copy of Deuteronomy, and when the king read it, the people agreed to it. So when Hilkiyah finds this book, and I will say this is likely 624 BCE. When we get to the fourth part of this series you will see when the Sabbatical and Jubilee dates really figured out to be as a result of a prophecy and a series. The end of the Sabbatical year would have been the year 625 - 624 BCE, the beginning of the Jubilee would have been 624 - 623. If you read 2 Kings 22 you find out that it's Josiah's 18th year and that would have been in 624 because he started in 641 BCE. His first year would be counted inclusive so 18 years from 641 would take you to 624. It turns out that 624 is the end of a Sabbatical and the beginning of a Jubilee. And, it turns out that this is a likely match for not only a Sabbatical and a Jubilee and it has to do with Josiah's reforms.

Sabbatical Application

Ezra Reads Deuteronomy

- Rosh HaShanah event
- ca. 445 BCE

*And all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street that was before the water gate; and they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which YHWH had commanded to Israel. And Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding, upon the first day of the seventh month. And he **read therein before the***

street that was before the water gate from the morning until midday, before the men and the women, and those that could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law... So they read in the book in the law of YHWH distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.
(Neh 8:1-3, 8 KJV)

This is possibly approximately 445 BCE but I haven't zeroed in on an exact date for this, I'm not sure all of the evidence provides it. 445 would have been a Sabbatical according to the original accounting that we will establish with Ezekiel in Part 4 of the Presentation Series.

It was a Rosh HaShanah event because it says it was on the first day of the seventh month. There might be some evidence included in this that this was the transition from the Sabbatical, the end of the planting year into a Sabbatical year because they did it on the first of the seventh month. The Jubilee day is specified to be the tenth day of the seventh month. The Sabbatical day isn't specified anywhere, you can only make the conclusion that if the Jubilee starts on the tenth day or on Atonement that the Sabbatical would also. This scripture may show us that it actually starts on the first day or Rosh Hashana or the Memorial of Trumpets today.

This was taken from the instruction in Deuteronomy 31.

- Book of the Law read

And Moses commanded them, saying, At the end of every seven years, in the solemnity of the year of release, in the feast of tabernacles, When all Israel is come to appear before YHWH your Elohim in the place which he shall choose, thou shalt read this law before all Israel in their hearing. (Deu 31:10-11 KJV)

That is what Ezra was doing. The evidence is strong that this is a Sabbatical year and that is why Ezra was reading it.

When we look at what we have gone through, the Sabbatical year has four primary components to it.

Sabbatical Summary

- Rest for the land - the land rest is significant and the part that is the remnant of what we understand today might be useful. We don't have servants and slaves, debts don't get cancelled and so forth. The land rest is the first of the four components.
- Freedom for Hebrew servants/slaves - is the second after the six years of servitude.
- Cancellation of debts for the poor - are mentioned in the instructions

- Reading the Book of the Law

This is what we have gleaned from looking at the Sabbatical instructions and attributes and we will go on to the Jubilee next.

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