

# HEBREW YEAR OF JUBILEE — Le.25:8-55

Prior to the Exodus, Israelites were slaves in the land of Egypt without freedom or possessions. By the time they got to Canaan, Joshua divided the land among the tribes so each had their own inheritance. Every adult male became a land owner. This land was a permanent possession to that family. If a man became poor he could sell (more like a lease) his land temporarily. This land would always revert back to him or his descendants at the year of Jubilee. If he became even poorer and unable to pay his debts, he could sell himself into slavery to work and pay off his debt. Even this slavery was temporary. In the Year of Jubilee, at the Day of Atonement he would become a free man, and repossessed his inheritance. At the year of Jubilee all Israelites who sold themselves into slavery were set free, and all land that had been sold reverted to its original owner. This meant that no Israelite could be a permanent slave. Plus they could not lose their land inheritance forever. (God's Law liberated all male slaves during their 7th year of service, Exodus 21:7-8). The price of land was proportional to how many years remained before the Jubilee. Land would be cheaper the closer it is to the Jubilee. For most people the Jubilee celebration occurred only once in their lifetime as it occurred once every 50 years. The pattern for the 50th is found in the Feast of Pentecost which is the 50th day following the Passover. That is the day following the 7 weeks from the Passover (49+1=50). The Jubilee existed because the land was the possession of YHWH. The current occupiers were mere tenants. Land should not be sold forever. Thus, Jubilee preserves the original division of the land among the original Hebrew tribes. In the context of servants, no man should have two masters. That is, no one should serve YHWH and be servants of man. Therefore slaves were freed at the Jubilee. The Jubilee was a cycle of redemption.

“<sup>8</sup>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. <sup>9</sup>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. <sup>10</sup>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.... (Le.25:8-10)”

## SUMMARY

1. All Hebrew slaves were set free.
2. All land returned to original family tribe owners.
3. All debts (monetary obligations) between Israelites annulled (Du.15).
4. Rest for the land (soil).

- The Jubilee year is a Sabbath of Sabbaths.
- The climax was the great Day of Atonement.
- The Jubilee is a special year of remission of sins and universal pardon.
- Jubilee was announced by a blast of a ram's horn (Le.25:9).
- The Civil New Year actually starts on the 1st day of Tishri.
- Jubilee started on the Day of Atonement, in the 49th year.

