

בְּהַר

Behar/*In the Mount* Vayikra (Leviticus) 25:1-26:2

Last week we focused on the **appointments of the Almighty** which He gave us to begin to teach us of the **entire plan of redemption and restoration** to be accomplished through the Messiah. These appointments all occurred within the span of a **year**, with their cycles being repeated year after year. This week our Parsha deals primarily with the **Shemittah** (the 7th year in a cycle) and the **Year of Jubilee/Yovel** (the 50th year). These are the cycles of **7 and 50 years** that **יהוה** (Yahwey) has established so that **the land of Israel might rest**. The instructions for these years were to take effect when **they entered the Promised Land**:

Vayikra 25:2 "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: '**When you come into the land** which I give you, then **the land shall keep a Sabbath** to **יהוה**'.

The **Shemittah** (7th year) and the **Jubilee** (50th year) are both based on the number **seven**. The **Shemittah** cycle **parallels the seven day creation week**, in that the **7th year** is a year of **rest**. It also corresponds to the idea that **the earth will exist** (the way we know it today) for **six thousand years**, followed by **one thousand years of rest** known as the **7th millennium**. The **Jubilee** year follows **seven sets of seven years**. The **Year of Jubilee** is an **8th year**, following the **last set of seven years**. The **Year of Jubilee** can also be identified with **Shavuot** which is the **50th day in the counting of the omer**. Shavuot and the Year of Jubilee both have to do with **freedom**. As an **8th day**, the Year of Jubilee is also identified with the **8th day of Sukkot** in the fall and finds its connection in the concept of **eternity**.

So what is this all about? If I had to choose one word it would be this: **ownership**.

Psalm 24:1 A Psalm of David. **The earth is יהוה's**, and all its fullness, **the world and those who dwell therein**.

The rest of Vayikra will explain the **conditions** that **יהוה** has set in order for His people to be given the treasure of the **land**. The land is given, however, with a **deed of trust which is the Torah**. If men breach the deed of trust (**disobey Torah**), then the **rightful Owner of the Land** will send them away into **exile** until **His appointed time of restoration**. **Exile** is exactly what ended up happening to the Israelites. Today, however, we find ourselves in the midst of His plan of **restoration**.

In this week's Parsha we begin with the instructions for **six years of labor** where independent farmers will work the land. They will be required during those years **to give of their tithes** to the priests and Levites, plus special **gifts to the poor**. Then in the **7th year** "**their**" **land becomes "everyone's" land** in order that all may have an **equal share** of the fruit of the land. During the 7th year, **no one declares ownership**. Even the animals have an **equal share** in the fruits of the land. The Shemittah cycle is an essential **rhythm in time** designed to help all constantly keep in mind that **יהוה** is **the true Owner of the land and of His people**.

Why is it necessary for us **to constantly be reminded** that **יהוה** is the true owner of everything? We have already seen a couple reminders of **ownership** in the Torah. The first reminder was given to Pharaoh during the plagues and was meant to teach Him that **the earth was יהוה's**:

Exodus 9:29 So Moses said to him, "As soon as I have gone out of the city, I will spread out my hands to יהוה; the thunder will cease, and there will be no more hail, **that you may know that the earth is יהוה's**.

The second time was when the Israelites had first reached Mount Sinai and יהוה gave Moses this loving message to pass on to the people:

Exodus 19:4 'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and *how* I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself.⁵ 'Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all **the earth is Mine**.⁶ 'And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These *are* the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel."

Again the Israelites were reminded that they must **obey and love יהוה** because **He owns them** and **knows what is best for them**:

Deuteronomy 10:12 " And now, Israel, what does יהוה your Elohim require of you, but to fear יהוה your Elohim, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve יהוה your Elohim with all your heart and with all your soul,¹³ *and* to **keep the commandments** of יהוה and His statutes which I command you today **for your good**?¹⁴ "Indeed heaven and the highest heavens **belong to יהוה** your Elohim, *also* the **earth** with all that *is* in it.

Thus note the **generosity** with which the **Owner of the universe** opens this week's Parsha:

Vayikra 25:2 "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'When you come into **the land which I give you**....

Now there is a **reason** that יהוה commands that we **give the land a Sabbath**. It is true that **physically** the land may **benefit** from a **year of lying fallow**, but there is an even **greater** reason. Man inherently possesses a **strong sentiment of ownership**. The idea of "**mine**" is fraught with **danger**. A verse in Deuteronomy conveys this thought:

Deuteronomy 8:17 "then you say in your heart, '**My power and the might of my hand have gained me this wealth**.'¹⁸ "And you shall remember יהוה your Elohim, for *it is* He who gives you power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as *it is* this day.

The Shemittah promotes **unity and peace**. Since no sowing and planting is allowed, **the poor and the wealthy together ate** of the abundance of **the prior year's harvest**. No one was allowed to store produce and treat it as their own. Thus there would be **no strife** that originated from the attitude of "**this is mine**". In the seventh year, **all were equal**.

Because there was a suspension of work in the 7th year, the sages have said that this was to facilitate the **study of Torah**. Today it is wonderful to study Torah on Sabbath, but imagine **a whole year of freedom**

to study! There is great danger for those who **continually work without limits** (such as Shabbat) and have no time for matters of **spiritual interest**. יהוה wanted the Israelites to learn that their mission on earth was not to be **slaves to the soil**, addicted to tilling it, gathering in the crops and **enriching themselves** as did the other nations. They had a much higher and **more noble purpose**. They were **to reflect the nature of the Creator** who because of their **obedience** would **provide them** with the **land and their sustenance**.

Matthew 6:31 "Therefore **do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?'** or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'"³² "For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things."³³ **"But seek first the kingdom of Elohim and His righteousness,** and all these things shall be added to you.

Therefore, the Shemittah year should lift man out of his **greediness and his materialism**. He would have **to forego profit and ownership** in order to gain the **right spiritual values**. Can you imagine how much **bonding** would have occurred within the community if the Israelites **would have obeyed** these commands? And how much **spiritual growth** would have taken place? יהוה knows that the **individual** needs **time to recover from the influence of the world** at frequent intervals...thus He gave man the **Sabbath**. What the Sabbath is meant to achieve for the **individual**, the Shemittah is meant to achieve for the **nation as a whole**. No rivalries, no competitions...just sharing, equality, and community trust as the Creator lovingly sustains His people.

So the pattern is...**6 units** (days, years, thousands of years) **of struggle and toil**, with the **7th** being a **taste of the Kingdom**, for it is in fact a picture of the **7th millennium when the Messiah rules**.

Six days, six years are for sowing:

Vayikra 25:3 'Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard, and gather its fruit;

Look who else **sowed** in the parable of the sower:

Matthew 13:37 He answered and said to them: "**He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man.**"³⁸ "The field is the world, **the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom**, but the tares are the sons of the wicked *one*.

Therefore, **for six (6,000) years**, Yeshua has been **sowing sons of the kingdom** into the field (which is the world). Jeremiah relates sowing to the **Renewed Covenant**:

Jeremiah 31:27 "Behold, the days are coming, says יהוה, that **I will sow the house of Israel and the house of Judah with the seed of man** and the seed of beast."²⁸ "And it shall come to pass, *that* as I have watched over them to pluck up, to break down, to throw down, to destroy, and to afflict, so **I will watch over them to build and to plant**, says יהוה ..."³¹ " Behold, the days are coming, says יהוה, when **I will make a (re)new covenant** with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah –

Vayikra 25:3 also refers to **6 (6,000) years of pruning**. John tells us that **the Father has been pruning**:

John 15:1 "I am the true vine, and **My Father is the vinedresser**.² "Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every *branch* that bears fruit **He prunes, that it may bear more fruit**.³ "You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.⁴ "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.⁵ "I am the vine, you *are* the branches. **He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit**; for without Me you can do nothing.

After seven complete Shemittah cycles (7 x 7 years), came the **Year of Jubilee** (also called **Yovel**). For the **2nd year in a row**, active farming was forbidden and the Israelites were **fully dependent on יהוה** to **provide**. Another facet of the Year of Jubilee was that **any land that had been sold was returned** to its original possessor. This was another reminder that although the land could be bought and sold by the Israelite caretakers, **they still didn't really own it**. It belonged to יהוה, and He had specifically divided it up among them for an **inheritance**.

Vayikra 25:8 ' And you shall count seven sabbaths of years for yourself, seven times seven years; and the time of the **seven sabbaths of years** shall be to you **forty-nine years**.⁹ 'Then you shall cause the trumpet of the Jubilee to sound on the tenth *day* of the seventh month; on the Day of Atonement you shall make the trumpet to sound throughout all your land.¹⁰ 'And you shall consecrate the fiftieth year, and **proclaim liberty throughout all the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a Jubilee for you; and each of you shall return to his possession, and each of you shall return to his family**.

During Jubilee years, **Israelite slaves were to be set free**. Why must an Israelite slave be set free? Because just like the land, יהוה owned them. Remember **He redeemed the Israelites from Egypt**, therefore they were His and did not have the right to act **independently**:

Deuteronomy 15:15 "You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and **יהוה your Elohim redeemed you.....**

Okay...with this knowledge of the **Torah**, see if this story in Luke takes **on new meaning** for you:

Luke 4:16 So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read.¹⁷ And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written:¹⁸ "The Spirit of יהוה *is* upon Me, because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to *the* poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, **To proclaim liberty to the captives**, and recovery of sight to *the* blind, **To set at liberty those who are oppressed**;¹⁹ **To proclaim the acceptable year of יהוה**."²⁰ Then He closed the book, and gave *it* back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him.²¹ And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

The context of this story was that Yeshua was reading the Haftarah (from the Prophets and the writings) portion (Isaiah 61:1-2a) in the synagogue in Nazareth on the Sabbath. It is taught that in the first century, the Torah and the accompanying Haftarah readings were read through in **three to three and a half years**. Since Yeshua was quoting **verses in Isaiah that referenced the Jubilee and claiming to fulfill them**, He was probably speaking in a **Jubilee year**.

In the first century, Yeshua became the fulfillment of this prophecy. The good news of the Kingdom and **the salvation that He was able to offer** because of His death and resurrection brought **freedom** to all who accepted Him. **Every man has sold himself to sin and needs a redeemer** to release him from His **bondage**. This was the “**liberty to the captives**” that Yeshua claimed to **fulfill**. And the “**acceptable year of יהוה**” was a direct reference to a **Year of Jubilee**.

Yeshua was meticulous about how much of the quote from Isaiah He would read. What He stopped short of was **the rest of Isaiah 61:2**:

Isaiah 61:2....and the day of vengeance of our Elohim; to comfort all who mourn,

This part of the prophecy will be fulfilled by Yeshua when He returns as a mighty and powerful **warrior**. Who will He take **vengeance** on? There are **two main aspects** to the Year of Jubilee:

- Freedom from slavery
- Return of the land to its original holder

We already saw that **Yeshua accomplished freedom** for those who were in **bondage to the slavery of sin in His first coming**. Will **His 2nd coming bring vengeance** on those who **refuse to return the land to its rightful owners**? We can certainly see the birth pains of this future battle over the land occurring today.

His 2nd coming ushers in the **seventh millennium**, and this will be **another Jubilee year**.

Off and on I read **timelines of the return of Messiah**. Some of these are extremely complex and hard to follow. When I first learned of my Hebrew roots, the year 2007 was pinpointed as a pivotal year. It came and went without much to speak of. A couple of days ago I noticed some interesting parallels. I'm really not promoting this...just mentioning it because it came to me and I felt I could share it with you.

All of my calculations will be based on **cycles of Jubilee years (50)**. Let's just assume Yeshua's first coming (**specifically His resurrection**) which brought **freedom to those in bondage to sin** coincided with a **Year of Jubilee**. We do not know **EXACTLY what year this was from creation**, but let's say it was **4,000 years after creation**. That would mean it was **80 times 50**.

Now let's assume that **Yeshua will return a certain number of Jubilee's later**. Let's assume 2,000 years worth or **40 times 50**. That brings us to a total of **120 times 50 years (6,000) since creation**. With those details in mind, let's factor in this verse:

Genesis 6:3 And יהוה said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he *is* indeed flesh; yet **his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.**"

We know that man did not settle into an average lifespan of **120 years**, so let's assume this verse is speaking of **120 Jubilee years**. That would be **6,000 years**.

So, now this is what we have for Yeshua:

- 1st Jubilee** where He brings freedom from sin: **80 times 50** (Years from creation)
- 2nd Jubilee** where He brings freedom from this world: **120 times 50** (Years from creation)

The significant numbers seem to be **80 and 120**. Here's what else I wanted to throw in. We know that **Yeshua is the living Torah** and everything in the Scriptures points to Him. **Moses is synonymous with the written Torah** and look at how these **significant numbers (80 & 120)** come into play in Moses' life:

We know that Moses was **40 years old** when he killed the Egyptian and fled to Midian:

Acts 7:23 "Now when he was **forty years old**, it came into his heart to visit his brethren, the children of Israel.²⁴ "And seeing one of *them* suffer wrong, he defended and avenged him who was oppressed, and struck down the Egyptian..." **Moses fled and became a dweller in the land of Midian**, where he had two sons.

We also know that Moses was **80 years old** when the Exodus began:

Exodus 7:7 And **Moses was eighty years old** and Aaron eighty-three years old when they spoke to Pharaoh.

Now, the Exodus was 40 years, which **would make Moses 120 years** when he died and **when the children of Israel were on the very brink of the Promised Land**. It would not be Moses, but **Joshua** (type of Yeshua) who **would bring them into the Land**:

Deuteronomy 31:2 And he said to them: "**I am one hundred and twenty years old today**. I can no longer go out and come in. Also יהוה has said to me, 'You shall not cross over this Jordan.'

Notice the same significant numbers of 80 and 120 for **Moses**:

- Freedom from bondage to slavery – **80 years old**
- Freedom in the Promised Land – **120 years old**

Another little interesting tidbit here is that **the recorded event that preceded Yeshua** reading from the scroll of Isaiah in Luke 4 (concerning the Year of Jubilee) was **the 40 days where He was tempted by the devil**. This was **a time of trial and testing, which is what the number 40 represents**. This **correlates with the 40 years that Moses spent in Midian** before he came to announce their freedom from slavery. If you're a bottom line person, this theory would put Yeshua's return somewhere around 2030-2033 with the tribulation starting 7 years earlier. I am NOT dogmatically setting a date. I just felt I could share with you my thoughts because these numbers and comparisons just popped into my head and I thought they were interesting. Personally, I hope He comes much sooner. What do **you** think?

Vayikra 25 also speaks of how we are to treat someone who has become **impoverished because of debt**. We are not to deal with him harshly, but we are to see to his **welfare and his restoration**.

Vayikra 25:25 "If one of your countrymen becomes poor and sells some of his property, his nearest relative is to come and redeem what his countryman has sold.

Vayikra 25:35 "If one of your countrymen becomes poor and is unable to support himself among you, help him as you would an alien or a temporary resident, so he can continue to live among you.

This right of redemption is an important concept because it will set the stage for our Redeemer Yeshua buying us back after we've sold ourselves into **the slavery of sin and the false security system of the world**. A kinsman-redeemer should buy back the land or the family member who has sold himself into slavery because he is not able to pay a debt. This was **the DUTY of a family member**, not an option.

The **kinsman redeemer paid the price** for the land or the person, but **the family member who was "bailed out" got the benefit**. Notice that **the kinsman redeemer did not realize ANY personal benefit** from his act of **grace and mercy**. It was a total act of **self-sacrifice**. Also notice that **ONLY Israelites** could be **redeemed**:

Vayikra 25:44 'And as for your male and female slaves whom you may have -- **from the nations that are around you, from them you may buy male and female slaves.** ⁴⁵ 'Moreover you may buy the children of the strangers who dwell among you, and their families who are with you, which they beget in your land; and they shall become your property. ⁴⁶ 'And you may take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit *them as* a possession; **they shall be your permanent slaves. But regarding your brethren, the children of Israel, you shall not rule over one another with rigor.**

It is through faith in Yeshua that we become part of Israel...part of His family and eligible for redemption. The new/renewed covenant is **the crowning glory of a series of covenants** that יהוה began with Abraham and his descendents. There is **NO covenant made with Gentile Christians**. This is a contradiction of terms. When people accept Yeshua, they are **no longer Gentiles**. According to Romans 11 and Ephesians 2, they are **grafted into Israel so that they might be under the covenants of Israel:**

Romans 11:17 And if some of the branches were broken off, and **you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them**, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree,

Ephesians 2:11 Therefore remember that you, **once Gentiles** in the flesh -- who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands -- ¹² that at that time you were without Messiah, **being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise**, having no hope and without Messiah in the world. ¹³ **But now in Messiah Yeshua you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Messiah.**

Being grafted into Israel and being under the covenants of Israel (that is Torah) is **freedom in its fullness**.

Galatians 5:1 Stand fast **therefore in the liberty by which Messiah has made us free**, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of **bondage** (this is not speaking of Torah).

The Sabbath Millennium is the time when Yeshua will reign. **He will provide for all of our needs**, just like during the **Shemittah year**. After all, He has declared Himself to be **Adonai of the Sabbath**.

Matthew 12:8 "For **the Son of Man is Adonai even of the Sabbath.**"

After the Millennium, the earth will enter into its **eternal Jubilee**. The heavens and the earth will be restored and He will again completely provide for us. No one will **be enslaved to sin** and everyone will be **returned to the ancestral Land of Inheritance**. We call that time period when the **New Jerusalem, the bride**, will come down from heaven: **the 8th day or eternity**. Praise the Name of יהוה, this is the time of **complete restoration back to the Garden where once again we will be able to eat of the tree of life!** There will be no more **curse**. And the best part is...**we will be there with the Lamb!**

Revelation 22:1 And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of Yah and of the Lamb.² In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, *was* **the tree of life**, which bore twelve fruits, each *tree* yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree *were* for the healing of the nations.³ And **there shall be no more curse, but the throne of Yah and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him.**

Baruch HaShem יהוה!

Shabbat Shalom!

Ardelle