

The Year of Jubilee

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Preacher: Rev. Murdo M Campbell

[0 : 0 0] But if we could, with the Lord's help and the Lord's enabling, if we could turn back to that portion of Scripture that we read, the book of Leviticus and chapter 25.

Leviticus chapter 25, and if we read again at verse 13. So it's on page 124 in the Pew Bible.

Leviticus 25 and verse 13. Where it says, In this year of jubilee, each of you shall return to his property.

In this year of jubilee, each of you shall return to his property. Okay. As you know, and as we've been saying throughout our service this morning, this weekend it marks the platinum jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II.

And to commemorate and celebrate such an occasion, there are many platinum jubilee tea parties and garden parties taking place the length and breadth of our country and Commonwealth.

[1 : 1 0] Because never before in the history of Great Britain and the Commonwealth has a monarch ever reigned for 70 years. Queen Victoria, she reigned for 64 years.

But Queen Elizabeth II has exceeded her by six years and counting. Which is a remarkable achievement and certainly one worth commemorating and also celebrating.

And for everyone under the age of 70, Queen Elizabeth II is the only monarch we've ever known to sit upon the throne of our United Kingdom and Commonwealth.

Because when her father, King George VI, when he passed away on the 6th of February 1952, Princess Elizabeth, immediately she acceded the throne and she was pronounced and proclaimed Queen Elizabeth II at the age of only 25.

But her royal coronation, it didn't take place until the following year, the 2nd of June 1953 at Westminster Abbey. And the reason for the delay, the reason that there was a delay was to allow a suitable period of mourning after the death of her father, but also the months of preparation that were required to prepare for the coronation ceremony.

[2 : 3 1] And as you know, for the past 70 years, the Queen has faithfully and also fearlessly served her country and her Commonwealth. And to mark this special occasion in the life of our nation, I'm sure you've seen it, there's been lots of Platinum Jubilee memorabilia that have been produced, where you can buy Platinum Jubilee pens, pencils, plates, cups and coins, badges and bags and brooches, and even Bibles.

There's even a Platinum Jubilee Bible to commemorate and celebrate the year of Jubilee. But you know, the Bible also speaks about the year of Jubilee.

And that's what I'd like us to consider this morning, where we find in Leviticus chapter 25, we see here it's speaking about the year of Jubilee. And I want us to look at this under three headings.

Rest and renewal, release and return, redemption and restoration. Rest and renewal, release and return, redemption and restoration.

So there are our three headings. So first of all, rest and renewal. Rest and renewal. Now look at verse 1 of chapter 25. The Lord spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai saying, Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, When you come into the land that I give you, the land shall keep a Sabbath to the Lord.

[4 : 05] The land shall keep a Sabbath to the Lord. Now for many of us, myself included, the book of Leviticus is a very closed book, simply because it's a world of animal sacrifices and religious rituals and feasts and festivals and purity laws.

They all seem very alien to us, especially in comparison to our experience of church in the 21st century. And yet the book of Leviticus, the amazing thing about Leviticus is that it points us and it proclaims to us what Jesus did for us on the cross.

In fact, it's said that if you understand the book of Leviticus, you'll understand the work that Jesus Christ did on the cross at Calvary. And that's because the book of Leviticus, it's actually a manual.

It's a manual on how to live a holy life. How to live a holy life. And I say that because in the book of Leviticus, the word holiness, it's repeated over 150 times.

So the book of Leviticus is asking us the question, well, how do you live a holy life? And the book of Leviticus says to us, you can only live a holy life through sacrifice, surrender, and submission.

[5 : 26] You can only live a holy life through sacrifice, surrender, and submission. There must be sacrifice, a substitutionary sacrifice in your place.

Someone must die in your place because without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sin. But there must also be surrender and submission.

You must surrender your life and you must submit your life under God's law and God's will. So you can only live a holy life when there is substitution or sacrifice, surrender, and submission.

In fact, the key verse in the book of Leviticus is, you shall be holy, for I, the Lord your God, am holy. You shall be holy, for I, the Lord your God, am holy.

And so when we come to chapter 25 in the book of Leviticus, holiness is still the theme because the chapter begins with the role of the Sabbath in the lives of the Lord's people.

[6 : 36] And as you know, the Sabbath was that one day in the week that was holy. It was the one holy day. It was the seventh and the last day in the week of creation where God had created the world in the space of six days and he saw that it was all very good.

But on the seventh day, he rested. He rested from his creative work. He had a Sabbath. That's what the word Sabbath means. It means rest.

And God, on that day, he set apart and he sanctified the Sabbath day. He hallowed the Sabbath day. He made it holy so that it's a holy day.

You know, the amazing thing is that's where we get the word holiday from. We all love our holidays. Everybody loves a holiday. And when we go on holiday, we call it a holiday because it's a day that's, or days that are different to and distinct from all our working days or our routine days.

It's a holiday. It's a holy day. It's separate and set apart. And that's what the Sabbath was. It was a day that was separate and set apart from all the other days of the week.

[7 : 49] It was a holy day issued and instituted at creation. That's why it's a creation ordinance. Which means that everything or everything to do with the Sabbath, it's relevant to everyone in every generation.

The Sabbath is relevant to everyone in every generation. That's why the fourth commandment, it doesn't begin with the generic statement, thou shalt not.

Instead, it begins with the statement, remember. Remember. So going back to creation, remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.

Remember that the Sabbath day is relevant to everyone in every generation. But as Jesus explained and emphasized to the religious police of the New Testament, He said that He is the Lord of the Sabbath.

And that the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath. Therefore, the Sabbath, the Christian Sabbath, the Lord's day, today, it's not about legalism.

[8 : 59] It's about liberty. It's not about chains and fetters. No, the Sabbath is about church and freedom in Christ. And you know, we should enjoy the Sabbath.

We should embrace the Sabbath and we should see it as a gift, not a grudge. A delight, not a dread. A benefit, not a bind.

A blessing, not a burden. We should enjoy and embrace the Sabbath as a day of rest. Not a day of restraint. We should see it as a day of reflection upon God and God's Word.

Not a day of restriction where we can't do what we want to do. And you know, as Christians, you know, we have to be very careful that we're not in danger of acting just like the religious police of the first century by inventing and implementing Sabbath laws without any scriptural warrant to do so.

But at the same time, we must never forget that the Sabbath is a holy day. It's a holy day. It's a day that's set apart. It's sanctified by the Lord.

[10 : 06] But you know, when it came to the year of Jubilee, the Sabbath was to have this special place. Because it wasn't just the people who were to take Sabbath rest on the Sabbath day.

As we read in Leviticus 25, the land was to take Sabbath rest on the seventh year. The land was to take a Sabbath rest on the seventh year.

Look at verse 3. It says, For six years you shall sow your field, and for six years you shall prune your vineyard and gather in its fruits. But in the seventh year there shall be a Sabbath of solemn rest for the land, a Sabbath to the Lord.

You shall not sow your field or prune your vineyard. So for six years the Israelites were to farm their fields, they were to sow their seed, and they were to reap their harvest.

But on the seventh year, the seventh year was to be a Sabbath year to the Lord where they didn't, where they didn't farm their fields or sow their seed or reap their harvest. Instead, they were to allow the land to lie fallow.

[11 : 11] They were to let the land lie fallow for a whole year in order to maintain the fertility of the land. And you know, the purpose of this was to remind the people that the land also needed a Sabbath, not just the people themselves, but the land needed a Sabbath for rest and renewal, just like we need a Sabbath for rest and renewal.

Of course, nowadays, farmers and crofters, they work on the mainland seven days a week. They don't give the land a Sabbath year's rest and renewal. And some allow for crop rotation, but most farmers and crofters, as you know, they'll apply chemicals.

That's what we all do nowadays. We apply chemicals of fertilizer to the field to keep it fertile. But when it came to the year of Jubilee, the Sabbath was to have this special place.

Because, as we read in verse 8, that cycle of a Sabbath year's rest and renewal was to continue for seven cycles. seven cycles of seven years.

So, if you're good at maths, seven times seven is 49. So, that on the 49th year, we're told that there was to be two Sabbath years. Two Sabbaths of not working the land.

[12 : 33] Because the 49th year was the Sabbath year's rest and renewal. And then the 50th year was the year of Jubilee. And on the year of Jubilee, there was not only rest and renewal, there was release and return.

So, there was not only rest and renewal, there was release and return. That's what we see secondly, release and return. So, rest and renewal, then release and return.

Release and return. Look at verse 8. It says, You shall count seven weeks of seven years, seven times seven years, so that the time of the seven weeks of years shall give you 49 years.

Then you shall sound the loud trumpet on the tenth day of the seventh month, on the day of atonement. You shall sound the trumpet throughout all your land. And you shall consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants.

It shall be a jubilee for you when each of you shall return to his property and each of you shall return to his clan. Now, as you know, and as we were saying to the children, the platinum jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II, it has gifted, well, everybody who's still working, it has given them an extra day's holiday this year.

[13 : 55] It's given them an extra holy day. And that's also what happened in this year of jubilee. jubilee. Because the year of jubilee in the Bible, it took place during the holy day of the day of atonement, which was an important day, an integral day in the Jewish calendar.

The day of atonement was the one day in the year on which the high priest, the high priest, he would enter into the holy of holies, into the immediate presence of God.

He would stand in the presence of God. You can read all about it in chapter 16 of Leviticus. But just to summarize what it says in chapter 16, on the day of atonement, the high priest would stand as the mediator, as the representative of the people.

And as the high priest, he would take two goats. He would take two goats. One was to be a substitutionary sacrifice. The other was the scapegoat. The first goat, the substitutionary sacrifice, it was to be offered up to God as a sin offering.

And the high priest would then take the blood of this goat and he would go into the holy of holies, go into that curtain, the curtain that was torn at the temple when Jesus died.

[15 : 18] He would go in there, into the immediate presence of God, and sprinkle the blood of the goat on the mercy seat. The blood of the substitutionary sacrifice, was to be shed and sprinkled.

Because as we said, without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sins. It's blood that makes the atonement for the soul. Then after making atonement on behalf of the people, the high priest would then place his hands on the head of the other goat.

So he would place his hands on the head of the other goat, the scapegoat, and he would confess the sins of the people. And as the high priest confessed the sins of the people, they were, somehow, some way, or pictorially, transferred onto this scapegoat, where the scapegoat literally bore the sins of the people.

The scapegoat took the blame for the people. And that's where we get the term scapegoat from. Someone who's innocent, who takes the blame.

But what's remarkable is that the scapegoat was then driven out into the wilderness. It was driven out into the wilderness, never to be seen again. And that image where the people were seeing their sin going out into the wilderness, never to be seen again, that was what they were to know for themselves.

[16 : 41] Their sin was being taken away, never to be seen again. But of course, what took place on the day of atonement was all a pointer forward and a proclamation of Jesus Christ.

Because our Bible tells us, our Bible teaches us time and time again that Jesus is our great high priest. Jesus has gone in within the inner veil.

Jesus is our substitutionary sacrifice. Jesus is our atoning sacrifice. He's our scapegoat who takes away our sin. This is the wonder of who Jesus is.

He was substituted and sacrificed in place of sinners at Calvary in order to take our sins away from us. Why? Because the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin.

My friend, even in the Old Testament, in this seemingly closed book, we find Jesus. Jesus is here. And this is the wonder and glory of the gospel, that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, died to take away our sin.

[17 : 57] You know, it's no wonder when John the Apostle, when he looked at the cross, all he could say was, herein is love. This is love.

You want to know what love looks like? Herein is love. Not that we loved God, but that he loved us. That he sent his only Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sin.

This is the wonder and glory of the gospel. But you know, when it came to this year, this year of Jubilee, the Jubilee commemoration and celebration, it all began on the Day of Atonement, this holy day.

And as we read, the Jubilee year, it followed this seventh cycle of seven Sabbath years of rest and renewal for the land. So it was the 49th year.

And then on the 50th year was the year of Jubilee. And it all began on this day, the Day of Atonement. And we're told there in verse 9, you shall sound the trumpet on the tenth day of the seventh month.

[19 : 06] On the Day of Atonement, you shall sound the trumpet throughout all your land. So the Day of Atonement, this holy day, took place on the tenth day of the seventh month.

And that's interesting because the first day of the seventh month was the Jewish New Year. And at the Jewish New Year, a trumpet was always sounded, sounded twice, in order to mark the Jewish New Year.

But it wasn't actually a trumpet. It was like a ram's horn. So those of you who are shepherds, it was a ram's horn that they called a shofar. A shofar.

I don't know what the Gaelic word would be for it, but they called it a shofar. And the shofar was blown each year to mark the beginning of the new year. But on the 50th year, on the year of Jubilee, on the tenth day of the seventh month, on this Day of Atonement, the trumpet, the ram's horn, the shofar, it was blown so loudly.

And it was to mark the beginning of the year of Jubilee. But the thing is, the year of Jubilee didn't just provide rest and renewal for the land. The year of Jubilee provided release and return for the land.

[20 : 28] And I say that because when you read through the passage and the chapters that follow, you know, like it is nowadays, land can be leased.

So people lease their land for cattle or whatever. Some people have houses and they rent their houses in order to make an income. But when you were a Jew, your contract wasn't month by month.

It wasn't per calendar month or per year. Your contract was all based around this year of Jubilee, the 50th year. Which means that if there were 25 years until the Jubilee, the price of your property or your land could be proportionally higher than if there were only five years to the Jubilee.

And what the Lord was doing here was just to ensure, simply, that the land and the property owners didn't take advantage of the people. That people weren't paying through the nose for renting property or land.

It was to create this balanced society which sought to prevent the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer. Which is similar to what we have nowadays where you're taxed for having a second home and you're taxed for renting a property or you're taxed for doing Airbnb.

- [21 : 46] It's the same sort of idea. But the year of Jubilee not only provided release and return for the land, this is what I find fascinating. It also provided release and return for slaves and servants.

A slave or a servant could work for his master or his employer for a number of years. Maybe even for 40 years. He could work even in another part of the country as a slave or a servant.

But when that ram's horn was sounded, when the shofar was sounded on the day of atonement at the beginning of the year of Jubilee, all the slaves and all the servants were set free.

They were all set free. All the slaves and servants were set free. They were released from their masters and they were released from their employers and they were all allowed to return home.

They were free. Which means that all the ties that they had would be severed. All the contracts that they had with their employer would come to an end. All the debts that they had.

- [22 : 54] It's another amazing thing about the year of Jubilee. If you had any debt, if you had any debt in your bank account or whatever, it would all be cleared. The slate would be wiped clean on the year of Jubilee.

And you know, like it is for us this year, the year of Jubilee was always a special year for the Lord's people. It was a special year in the life of the nation because there was rest and renewal for the land.

There was release and return for the slaves and the servants where all contracts were cleared, all debts were deleted, all bills were balanced in the year of Jubilee.

The slate was wiped clean. But you know, this is what I love about the Old Testament. This rest and renewal and the release and return at the Jubilee was all pointing forward to one thing, redemption and restoration.

The year of Jubilee had rest and renewal. It had release and return, but it was pointing forward to redemption and restoration. And that's what we see lastly.

- [24 : 04] Redemption and restoration. Look at verse 11. That fiftieth year shall be a Jubilee for you. In it you shall neither sow nor reap what grows of itself nor gathers the grapes from the undressed vines.

For it is a Jubilee. It shall be holy to you. You may eat the produce of the field. In this year of Jubilee each of you shall return to his property.

Now the year of Jubilee in the Bible it was often referred to as the year of the Lord's favour.

The year of the Lord's favour. And as we said it was on that year that there was rest and renewal for the land. There was release and return for all the slaves and all the servants.

It was the year in which all the contracts were cleared. all the debts were deleted. All the bills were balanced and all the slates were wiped clean. It was a new beginning.

- [25 : 10] It was a year of new beginning. And it all took place in the year of Jubilee. The year of the Lord's favour. Which as we said points forward to one thing.

Redemption and restoration through Jesus Christ. And you know this is what I love about the Old Testament. The Old Testament prophet Isaiah.

He proclaimed and he prophesied 700 years before Jesus was born. And he says there in Isaiah 61. Read it when you go home. Isaiah wrote The spirit of the Lord God is upon me because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor.

He has sent me to bind up the broken hearted to proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to those who are bound. to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.

He was sent to proclaim the year of Jubilee. But then you move forward 700 years into the New Testament. And you know our Bible it holds together.

[26 : 17] It all fits together. It all points towards one person Jesus. Because we're told in Luke chapter 4. Luke's gospel chapter 4 that when Jesus went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day he stood up to read.

And he read from Isaiah chapter 61. But he made it personal to him when he read because he said the spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and the recovering of sight to the blind. He has sent me to set at liberty those who are oppressed. He has sent me to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

He has sent me to proclaim the year of Jubilee. And Jesus we're told when he had finished reading he said to the congregation today today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.

You know my friend the year of Jubilee in Leviticus 25 the year of the Lord's favor it all points forward to one thing redemption and restoration through Jesus Christ.

[27 : 39] Because as we've seen in this chapter Jesus is our great high priest. Jesus is our substitutionary sacrifice. Jesus is our scapegoat for sin who takes away our sin from us as far as east as distant from the west.

And you know when we come to this Jesus he promises to us atonement and assurance of salvation. Jesus promises to us Sabbath rest and renewal in heaven.

Jesus promises us release and return from slavery and service to sin. Jesus promises us that when we come to him when we come to Calvary all our contracts with sin will be cleared.

All our debts of sin will be deleted. All our bills and burdens of sin will be balanced. Jesus promises us that when we come to Calvary the slate will be wiped clean.

It will be a year of jubilee. A year of the Lord's favor. And you know my unconverted friend here this morning this year it may be the year of jubilee for Queen Elizabeth II but you know because of the cross because of the cross of Jesus Christ every day of every year is the year of jubilee for King Jesus.

[29 : 10] Every day of every year is the year of the Lord's favor being shown towards you. Every day of every year is an opportunity for you to come to Calvary to come and have your sins dealt with to come to this Calvary and have your contract with sin cleared to have your debt with sin deleted to have all your bills and burdens balanced to have the slate wiped clean every day of every year you have this wonderful opportunity to be saved and that's why your Bible says to you so clearly now is the accepted time today today is the day of salvation today is the day for you to come to the King of Kings and to the Lord of Lords because the wonderful thing is

He invites you to come He calls you to come He calls you to come to Him to call upon Him to confess your sin to Him to confess Him as Lord over your life and to commit your life to Him as your Savior my friend today today is the year of Jubilee today is the year of the Lord's favor shown towards you today is the day because now is the accepted time to come today is the day of salvation don't linger my friend don't stay where you are don't halt between two opinions any longer no my friend today is the day because now is the accepted time today is the day of salvation may the Lord bless these thoughts to us let us pray

O Lord our gracious God we give thanks to Thee this morning that that even in these books in the Old Testament that we find Jesus there Jesus pointed pointed out and proclaimed to us and Lord we pray that we would hear his voice that we would hear his invitation to us to come to come and have all our debts deleted our contract cleared our slate wiped clean because when we come to him he promises to wash us and cleanse us as white as snow O Lord help us we pray for those who may be seeking that they would seek the Lord while he's to be found and call upon him while he is near and we know that he is near this morning as he passes by in the gospel Lord bless thy truth to us we pray uphold us we ask lead us and guide us by thy spirit for we ask everything in Jesus name and for his sake amen we're going to bring our service to a conclusion this morning we're going to sing in psalm 34 psalm 34 it's on page 247 in the blue psalm book psalm 34 we're singing from verse 5 down to the verse mark 10 as many of you know

I love knowing everybody's favorite psalm and well I've had a good search about the internet to try and find out the queen's favorite psalm and apparently the queen's favorite psalm I've never asked her to prove this so I'd have to ask her myself but haven't had the opportunity but apparently the queen's favorite psalm is psalm 34 so that's why we're singing psalm 34 the queen's favorite psalm so we're singing from verse 5 down to the verse marked 10 they looked to him enlightened were not shamed were their faces this poor man cried god heard and saved him from all his distresses the angel of the lord encamps and round encompasseth all those about that do him fear and them deliver it we're singing down to the verse mark 10 of psalm 34 to god's praise they look they look to him and light and were not shame and were their faces this poor man cried god heard and saved him from all his distresses the angel of the lord encamps and round encompasseth all those about that to him fear and them delivereth oh taste and see that god is good who trusts in him is blessed fear god his saints none that in fear shall be with want oppressed the lions young may hungry be and they may like their food but they that truly seek the lord shall not lack any good the grace of the lord jesus christ the love of god the father and the fellowship of the holy spirit be with you all now and forever more amen then he was■■■ me he