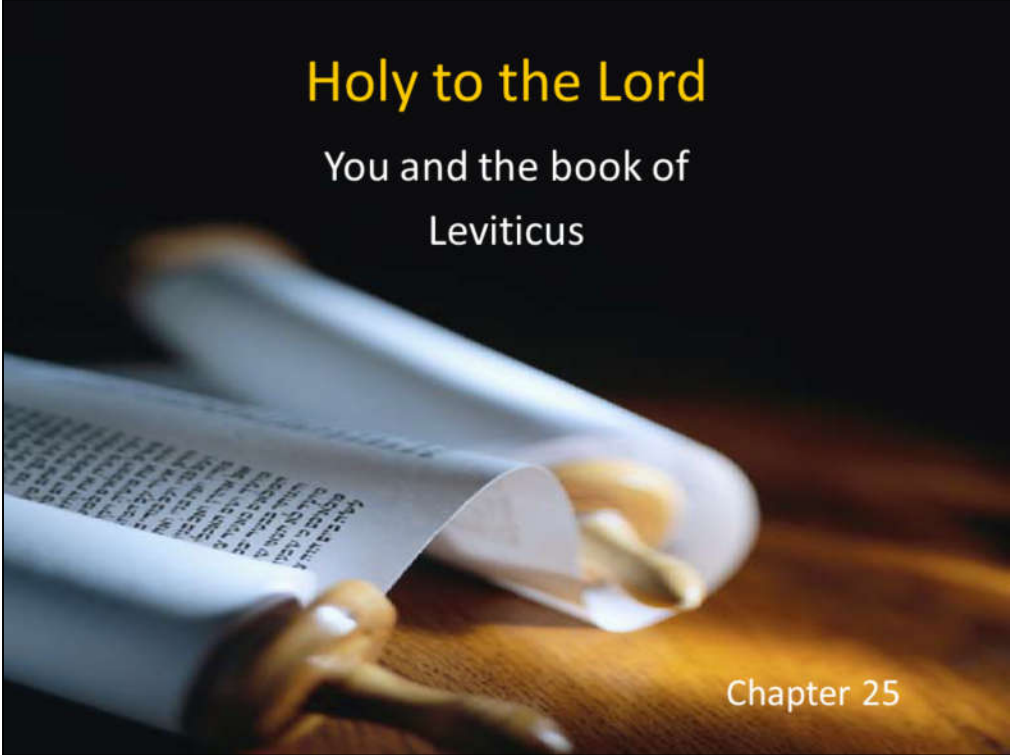


# Holy to the Lord

You and the book of  
Leviticus



Chapter 25



You are going to see the number 7 all over this chapter (explicitly and implicitly)

## Land



We have just finished some chapters that focused on Israel's calendar. With chapter 24 the focus now turns to the land. The word "land" is used 39 times in this chapter and the one following it.

## Lev. 25:1-2



v. 23

Read Leviticus 25:1-2 “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.”

What is the Land to do? (keep a Sabbath—literally this I written, “the land shall sabbath a sabbath”)

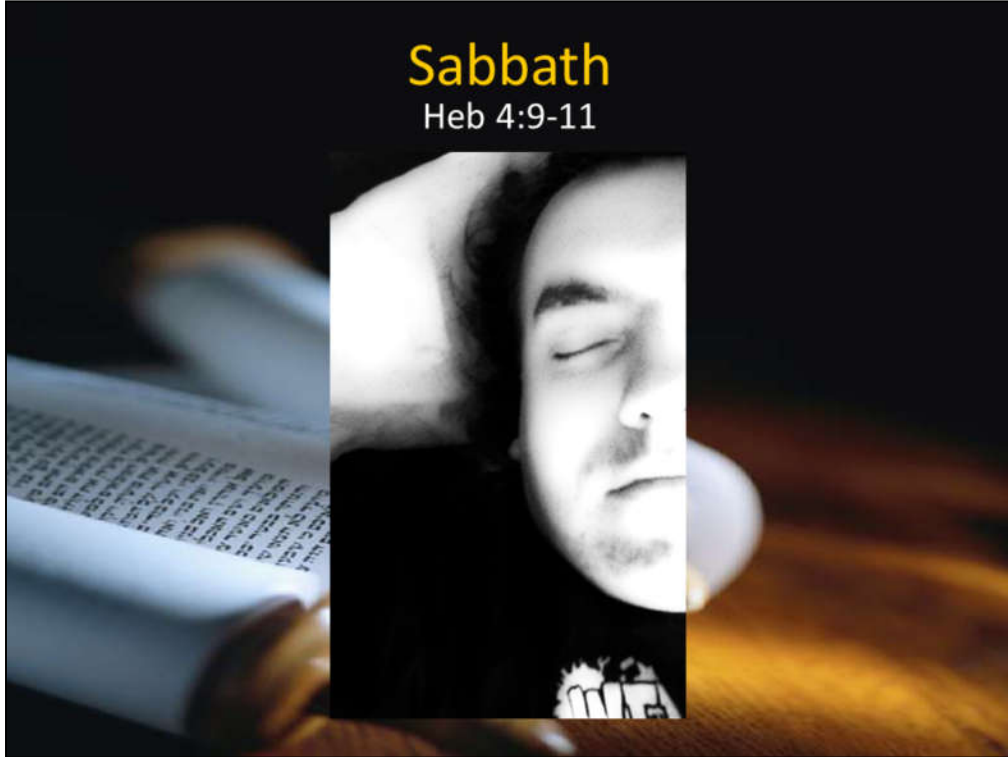
How can the land do that? (lie fallow, this requires human participation, or more correctly—lack of participation)

Who’s land is it? What does God mean when He says in verse 2, “The land I give to you?” (to care for, as good stewards)

Does God ever really give up ownership of the land? (no, read v. 23)

## Sabbath

Heb 4:9-11



As we've talked about before the word "Sabbath" means rest. The concept of Sabbath rest harks back to the Creation when God "rested" from His labours.

As Christians we view this as more than just physical rest. How else do we view this? (The ultimate rest takes place in the redemption that the people of God have in Christ.)

Read Hebrews 4:9-11 "So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, [10] for whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his. [11] Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience."

## Lev 25:3-7

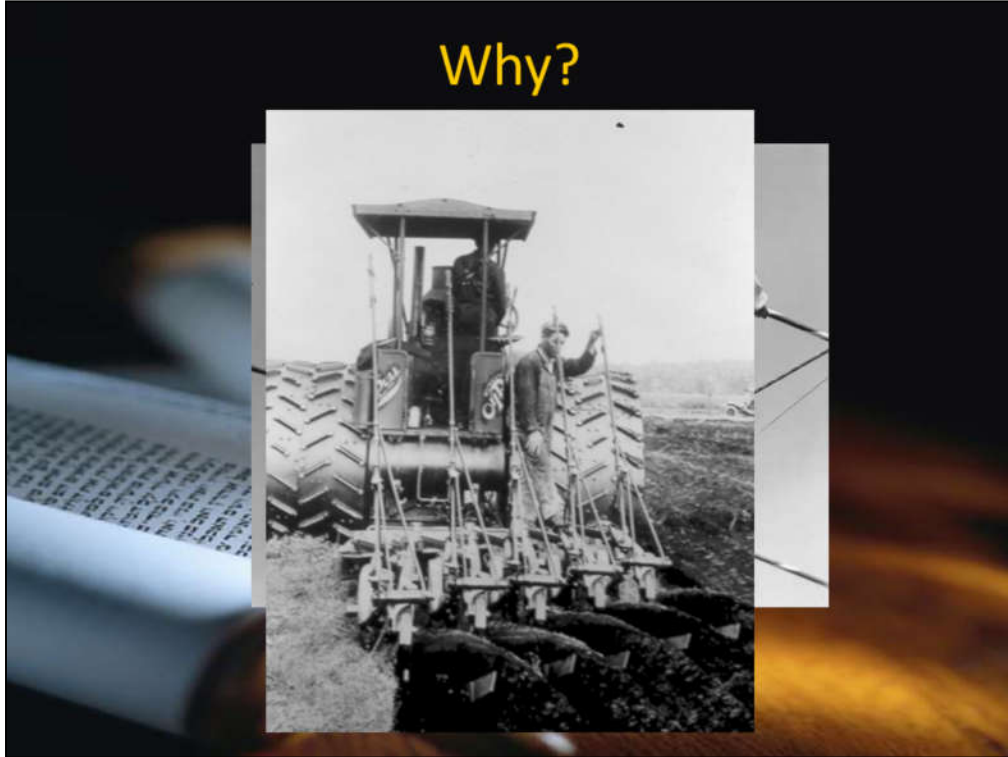


The next few verses are the instructions for carrying out the Sabbath Year

Read Leviticus 25:3-7 “For six years you shall sow your field, and for six years you shall prune your vineyard and gather in its fruits, [4] 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. [5] You shall not reap what grows of itself in your harvest, or gather the grapes of your undressed vine. It shall be a year of solemn rest for the land. [6] The Sabbath of the land shall provide food for you, for yourself and for your male and female slaves and for your hired servant and the sojourner who lives with you, [7] and for your cattle and for the wild animals that are in your land: all its yield shall be for food.



# Why?



What is the purpose of the Sabbath Year?

What might be a practical reason? (Let the land replenish itself –like farmers used to do with summer fallow.)

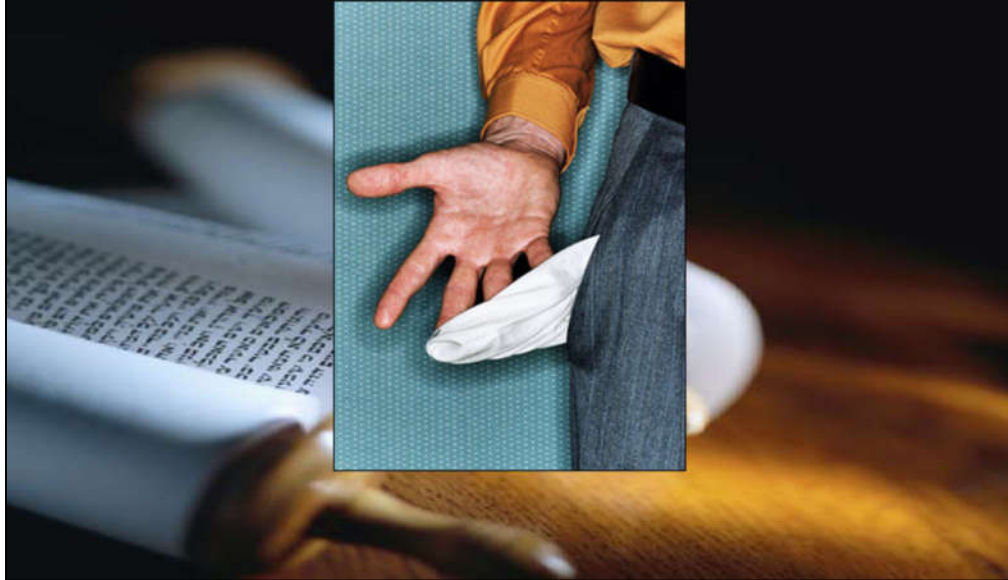
What might be a theological reason? (Causes people to put their trust in God. Will he care for us if we don't plant for a year.)

How is this different than saying, "I'll just quit my job, God will care for me." -Or "I'll jump off this bridge, God will catch me."

The theological point here is to see what is more important to the people, their God or their crops. Which one will they worship?

## How can they afford it?

Lev 25:20-22



Won't they starve if they don't harvest? How will they be able to do it?

Read Leviticus 25:20-22 "And if you say, 'What shall we eat in the seventh year, if we may not sow or gather in our crop?' [21] I will command my blessing on you in the sixth year, so that it will produce a crop sufficient for three years. [22] When you sow in the eighth year, you will be eating some of the old crop; you shall eat the old until the ninth year, when its crop arrives."

Note: Under this system, who will have to uphold their promise first, God or the people? (God. He upholds His part of the bargain in the 6<sup>th</sup> year.)



## How well did it go?



How did this idea of the Sabbath year work?

Can you think of a passage in the Bible where they talk about it? (No. There is none.)

What does that tell you? (Likely that they never did keep the Sabbath year. Nowhere in Scripture is there a record of them ever keeping the year of Sabbath)

Which means that despite the fact that God held up His part of the bargain and gave them a bumper crop in the 6<sup>th</sup> year, they did not keep up their end of the deal. What does this say to God?

## What did God do?

Jer. 25:1-14



By not keeping the Sabbath Year they showed they weren't willing to put their trust in God.

According to Jeremiah 25, what else did they do to enrage God while they were in the promised land? (Did not listen to the prophets, did evil deeds, worshiped other gods)

What did God decide to do about this? (He will remove them from the land for seventy years.)

# Why 70?

2 Chron. 36:17-21



## How did God get 70?

Years in the Promised Land: 490

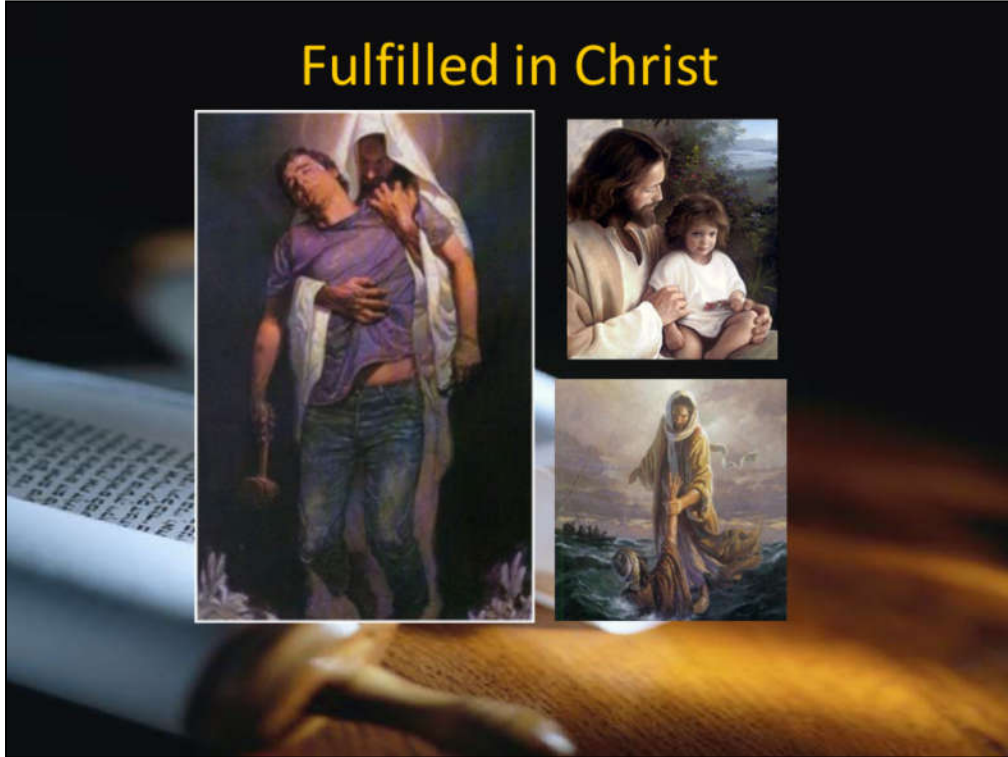
Sabbath Years  
not observed: 70

Malachi 3:8-10

Did God just randomly come up with the number seventy? No.

Some simple mathematics shows God's reasoning for the length of this period of exile.

## Fulfilled in Christ



In the Gospels we all kinds of ways that Jesus shows comfort and compassion to those around Him.

- 1) He said "Let the little children come to me." He welcomed them, comforted them and healed them.
- 2) When Peter was drowning in the sea, Jesus was quick to save him.
- 3) And of course He comforts us even though we are the ones whom He died for.

## Fulfilled in Christ

Matt 11:28-30



How does the Divine Service assist in fulfilling the Sabbath rest?

How do you view what goes on during Divine Service?

Is it a chore, something you do to please God, or is it finding Sabbath rest in God? -  
-Receiving His gifts of forgiveness and strengthening of faith in Word and Sacrament.

What do you say to someone who says they have no time for church?

-or they don't really need it?

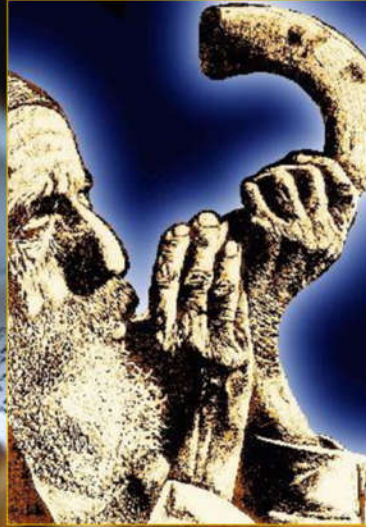
Read Matthew 11:28-30 "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. [29] Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. [30] For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

Christ meets us here in the Divine Service and comforts us.



## Year of Jubilee

Lev. 25:8-12



When they reached every seventh Sabbath year (or seven sevens) they were to have a year of celebration, known as the year of Jubilee.

Read Leviticus 25:8-12 "You shall count seven weeks of years, seven times seven years, so that the time of the seven weeks of years shall give you forty-nine years. [9] 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. [10] 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. [11] That fiftieth year shall be a jubilee for you; in it you shall neither sow nor reap what grows of itself nor gather the grapes from the undressed vines. [12] For it is a jubilee. It shall be holy to you. You may eat the produce of the field."

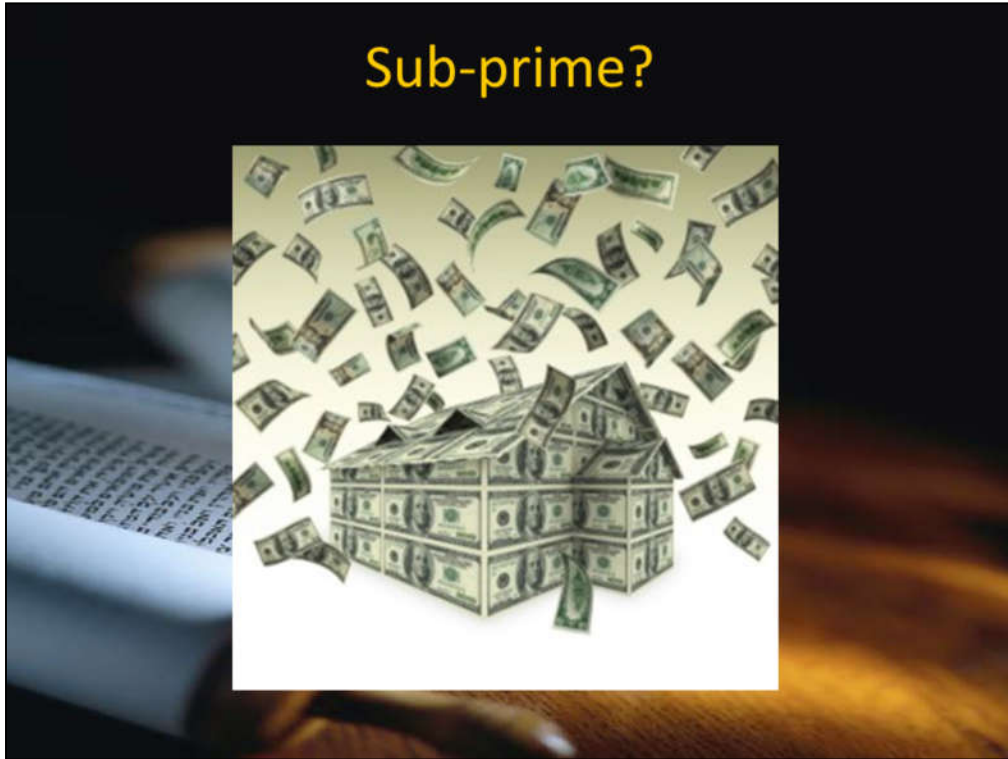
How is the year of Jubilee similar to a Sabbath Year? (rest for the land)

How is it unique from the Sabbath year? (A return to your property and to your clan)

The blowing of the horn accomplished two things:

1. It announced God's amnesty to all debtors. The release from debt for all the inhabitants of the land.
2. The horn consecrated the entire year, announcing it to be treated as a holy year.

## Sub-prime?



How would the year of Jubilee be viewed by those in the U.S. affected by the sub prime fiasco?

## Lev. 25:13-17



Let's look a little deeper into this sense of "return."

Read Leviticus 25:13-17 "In this year of jubilee each of you shall return to his property. [14] And if you make a sale to your neighbor or buy from your neighbor, you shall not wrong one another. [15] You shall pay your neighbor according to the number of years after the jubilee, and he shall sell to you according to the number of years for crops. [16] If the years are many, you shall increase the price, and if the years are few, you shall reduce the price, for it is the number of the crops that he is selling to you. [17] You shall not wrong one another, but you shall fear your God, for I am the Lord your God. "

Here the Lord explains that the land can be sold to another, but only for a period of time (leased). How does God ensure that? (By setting up a set time when all land is returned to it's owner: the year of Jubilee)

Thus the cost of the lease is determined by how many years a left until the year of Jubilee when it will return to the one who leased it. Ie. The greater number of years to the Jubilee the higher the price of the land.

## Kinsman Redeemer

Lev. 25:23-28



Read Leviticus 25:23-28 "The land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is mine. For you are strangers and sojourners with me. [24] And in all the country you possess, you shall allow a redemption of the land. [25] "If your brother becomes poor and sells part of his property, then his nearest redeemer shall come and redeem what his brother has sold. [26] If a man has no one to redeem it and then himself becomes prosperous and finds sufficient means to redeem it, [27] let him calculate the years since he sold it and pay back the balance to the man to whom he sold it, and then return to his property. [28] But if he has not sufficient means to recover it, then what he sold shall remain in the hand of the buyer until the year of jubilee. In the jubilee it shall be released, and he shall return to his property.

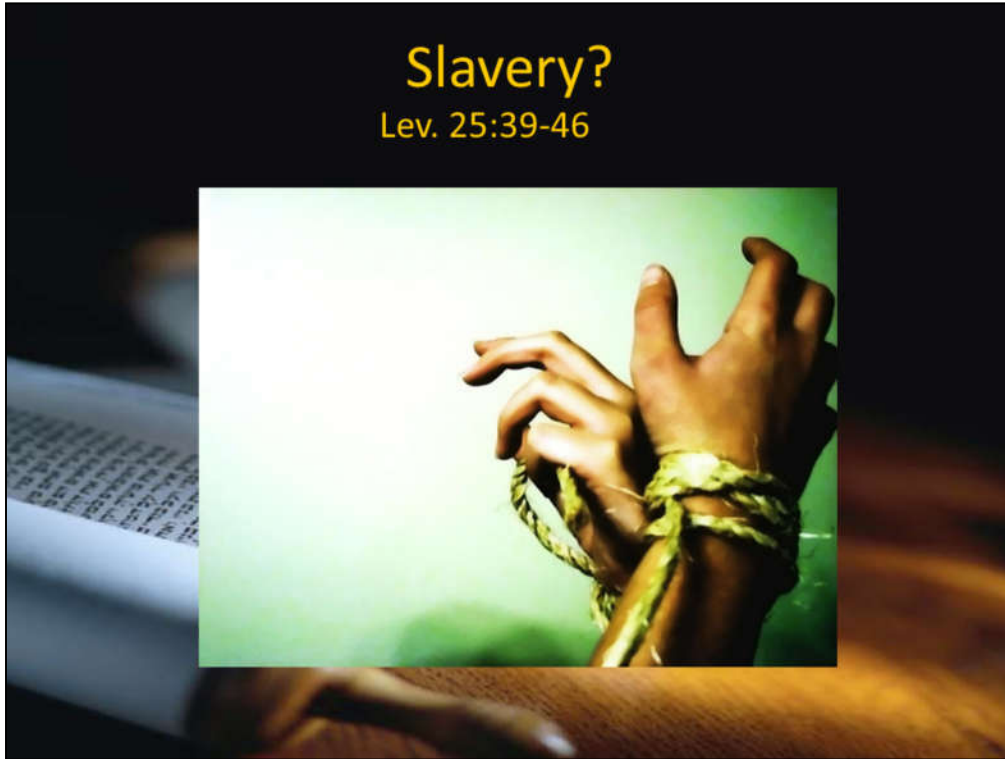
The land could be recovered by one of your own kin, if able to. This way the land returns to the family clan.

This person became known as the "Kinsman Redeemer."

-Plays an vital role in the book of Ruth (Boaz redeems Naomi)

## Slavery?

Lev. 25:39-46



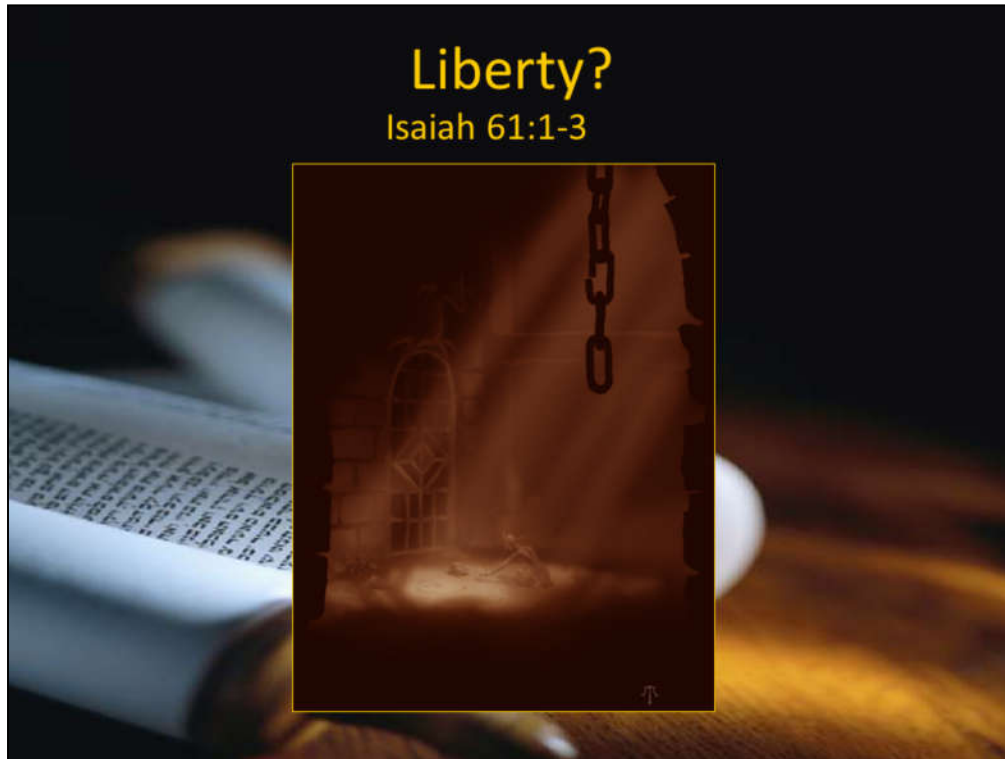
Read Leviticus 25:39-46

"If your brother becomes poor beside you and sells himself to you, you shall not make him serve as a slave: [40] he shall be with you as a hired servant and as a sojourner. He shall serve with you until the year of the jubilee. [41] Then he shall go out from you, he and his children with him, and go back to his own clan and return to the possession of his fathers. [42] For they are my servants, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt; they shall not be sold as slaves. [43] You shall not rule over him ruthlessly but shall fear your God. [44] As for your male and female slaves whom you may have: you may buy male and female slaves from among the nations that are around you. [45] You may also buy from among the strangers who sojourn with you and their clans that are with you, who have been born in your land, and they may be your property. [46] You may bequeath them to your sons after you to inherit as a possession forever. You may make slaves of them, but over your brothers the people of Israel you shall not rule, one over another ruthlessly."

The Israelites were not allowed to treat each other as slaves, but were considered hired labourers. Did their debt go on indefinitely? (No, it ended at the year of Jubilee, even if the debt was not completely paid.)

It is interesting to note that the Israelites are allowed to have Gentile slaves. We should note that God's law doesn't establish slavery, but it does regulate it and ensure that it is more humane. The Israelite slaves were seen more as servants compared to the slavery practices in the other ancient cultures.





Read Isaiah 61:1-3 “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 brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; [2] to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; [3] to grant to those who mourn in Zion— to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit; that they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified.”

Isaiah is writing this to comfort those who have been thrown out of the land and are living in exile in Babylon. He intentionally uses phrases that were commonly used to proclaim the Year of Jubilee. Why would He do that? (To help them understand, in a familiar way, that the entire people of Israel will be made free of its debt. The punishment is over. They will have liberty again.)



## Our Redeemer

Luke 4:16-21



Read Luke 4:16-21 And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read. [17] And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written,

[18] "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 recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed,

[19] to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

[20] And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. [21] And he began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

Why does Jesus now use this phrase from Isaiah and why does He connect it to Himself.?

(He becomes our kinsman redeemer.)

(The entire people of God are liberated from their debt through Christ.)

As ones who have been forgiven (liberated from our sin) we have true Sabbath rest

in Christ.

## Sabbath Rest



Not this kind of rest

## Sabbath Rest



A rest that is reassured that all things have been taken care of in Christ.