Subject: FBBC - Jewish Jubilee
Title: “Proclaim liberty throughout all the land...” - Leviticus 25:10
Text: Leviticus 25:1-55

Leviticus 25:1 And the Lord spake unto Moses in mount Sinai, saying,  
2 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 unto the Lord.  
3 Six years thou shalt sow thy field, and six years thou shalt prune thy vineyard, and  
gather in the fruit thereof;  
4 But in the seventh year shall be a sabbath of rest unto the land, a sabbath for the Lord:  
thou shalt neither sow thy field, nor prune thy vineyard.  
5 That which groweth of its own accord of thy harvest thou shalt not reap, neither gather  
the grapes of thy vine undressed: for it is a year of rest unto the land.  
6 And the sabbath of the land shall be meat for you; for thee, and for thy servant, and for  
thy maid, and for thy hired servant, and for thy stranger that sojourneth with thee.  
7 And for thy cattle, and for the beast that are in thy land, shall all the increase thereof be  
meat.  
8 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.  
9 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.  
10 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.  
11 A jubile shall that fiftieth year be unto you: ye shall not sow, neither reap that which  
groweth of itself in it, nor gather the grapes in it of thy vine undressed.  
For it is the jubile; it shall be holy unto you: ye shall eat the increase thereof out of the  
field.  
13 In the year of this jubile ye shall return every man unto his possession.  
14 And if thou sell ought unto thy neighbour, or buyest ought of thy neighbour’s hand, ye  
shall not oppress one another:  
15 According to the number of years after the jubile thou shalt buy of thy neighbour, and  
according unto the number of years of the fruits he shall sell unto thee:  
16 According to the multitude of years thou shalt increase the price thereof, and according  
to the fewness of years thou shalt diminish the price of it: for according to the number of  
the years of the fruits doth he sell unto thee.  
17 Ye shall not therefore oppress one another; but thou shalt fear thy God:for I am the  
Lord your God.

Introduction

* FBBC has entered its 50th year of ministry. This took place the first Sunday of Decem-  
ber, last Sunday, December 6th. Although the Jewish Jubilee is not something de-  
signed for Christians to celebrate, it teaches us some valuable history and wonderful  
lessons for our Christian life.
* We read about this Jewish Jubilee in Leviticus 25. Chapter 25 begins a section of the book that deals with “The Laws of Sanctification in the Land of Canaan.” The Law of the Sabbath Year is contained in Leviticus 25:1-7 and the remainder of the chapter deals with the Jubilee.

* The Sabbath Year was to be recognized every 7th year. Seven seven-year cycles were to be completed, and at the end of the Sabbath of the 49th year, another Sabbath was to begin on the Day of Atonement. Thus the 49th and 50th years in the cycle were designated Sabbaths. No work, no planting, no harvesting, two years in a row. This presented some unusual challenges.

**History**

* On the 7th day of the 10th month (the Day of Atonement - Yom Kippur), a ram’s horn blast was heard to announce the beginning of the Jubilee.

* The trumpet sound signifies in both Testaments, God’s direct manifestation or involvement in the human realm.

* References to the Jubilee are scarce in the O.T. There is no evidence that the institution was every practiced (Exodus 21:2-11; 23:10, 11; Deuteronomy 15:1-18).

* The history of Israel is the history of a nation profaning holiness.

* Jeremiah 34:8 This is the word that came unto Jeremiah from the Lord, after that the king Zedekiah had made a covenant with all the people which were at Jerusalem, to proclaim liberty unto them; 9 That every man should let his manservant, and every man his maidservant, being an Hebrew or an Hebrewess, go free; that none should serve himself of them, to wit, of a Jew his brother. 10 Now when all the princes, and all the people, which had entered into the covenant, heard that every one should let his manservant, and every one his maidservant, being an Hebrew or an Hebrewess, go free; that none should serve themselves of them any more, then they obeyed, and let them go. 11 But afterward they turned, and caused the servants and the handmaids, whom they had let go free, to return, and brought them into subjection for servants and for handmaids. 12 Therefore the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, 13 Thus saith the Lord, the God 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, 14 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. 15 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:
But ye turned and polluted my name, and caused every man his servant, and every man his handmaid, whom he had set at liberty at their pleasure, to return, and brought them into subjection, to be unto you for servants and for handmaids.

Therefore thus saith the Lord; Ye have not hearkened unto me, in proclaiming liberty, every one to his brother, and every man to his neighbour: behold, I proclaim a liberty for you, saith the Lord, to the sword, to the pestilence, and to the famine; and I will make you to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth.

* As the Lord redeemed Israel from slavery and the hardships of Egypt, the Jubilee is a time to celebrate same - freedom and redemption - a new start.

* History of the Sabbath - Deuteronomy 15:1-6 - release (1-3).

Deuteronomy 15:1 At the end of every seven years thou shalt make a release.
2 And this is the manner of the release: Every creditor that lendeth ought unto his neighbour shall release it; he shall not exact it of his neighbour, or of his brother; because it is called the Lord's release.
3 Of a foreigner thou mayest exact it again: but that which is thine with thy brother thine hand shall release;
4 Save when there shall be no poor among you; for the Lord shall greatly bless thee in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance to possess it:
5 Only if thou carefully hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all these commandments which I command thee this day.
6 For the Lord thy God blesseth thee, as he promised thee: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, but thou shalt not borrow; and thou shalt reign over many nations, but they shall not reign over thee.

* Early Israel was relatively egalitarian.
  - Leviticus 25 prevents anyone from selling himself permanently (or his land).
  - Each tribe a lotted a parcel of land (Numbers 32; Joshua 13).
  - Redemption of land or property - Ruth, Jeremiah 32
  - Levites were not given any land - 48 cities with pasture immediately surrounding (Numbers 35:1-8; Joshua 21; I Chronicles 6:54-80).
  - The Jubilee did not release foreign slaves (Leviticus 25:44-46).

* Jubilee (trumpet) - The trumpet blast on the Day of Atonement signified God’s involvement in man’s way of life.

Jubilee = release

Leviticus 25:10 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.

* The instructions for the Sabbath and Jubilee years were given in the wilderness on Mt. Sinai (Leviticus 25:1).
Outline of Leviticus Chapter 25

1, 2a  The Lord Addresses Israel through Moses
2b-7  The Sabbatical Year
8-19  General Stipulations for the Jubilee
20-22 The Lord’s Blessing on the 7th Year
23-24 The Theological Reason for the Inalienability of the Land
25-54 Four Cases of Examples Where a Fellow Israelite Becomes Impoverished
   a. Rules on selling and leasing land or houses (25-34)
   b. Rules on loans to poor Israelites (35-38)
   c. Rules on slaves (39-46)
   d. Rules on the Israelites who is held by a resident stranger or alien (47-54)
55  The Theological Reason for the Above Rules on the Slave

* There are many lessons to be learned from the Jubilee. The overriding theme is the subject of stewardship. The Steward has the responsibility of managing another’s resources. Although many things are mentioned central to the discussion is v.23, “The land shall not be sold for ever: for the land is mine...for ye are strangers and sojourners with me.”

* The land was given to Israel - Genesis 15:7; 17:8; 24:7; Exodus 6:4; Deuteronomy 5:16.

* The observance of the 7th year sabbath was to be a radical demonstration that the land belonged to God and not them!

* The Jews were warned that if they did not obey, God would make sure the land got its sabbath rest (Leviticus 26:27-34)

* The sabbaths were a powerful testimony of Israel’s recognition of and dependence upon the Lord. Israel would declare that the Lord would provide their needs.

Myths about the Jubilee

* Jubilee involves forgiveness of debt - not so - there was no debt. The “mortgage” was essentially paid off.

* Jubilee involves the redistribution of wealth - no - the land never leaves ownership of the original family.

* Each tribe was originally allotted a parcel of land that they retained throughout all the various transactions (Numbers 32; Joshua 13).
* Jubilee shows the relative nature of private property - **no** - just the opposite! God gave them the land.

* Jubilee leads to income equality - **no** - people could become wealthy based upon their stewardship, however, ultimately the land would be returned to its original owner, but not everything!

* Jubilee is an universally applicable truth - **no** - this applied only to Israel.

* The fact of the matter is that there is no record that they ever actually celebrated the jubilee! Jeremiah 34:8ff records God’s reaction to Israel’s disobedience. **The context appears to be failure to keep Jubilee.**

Summary Statements

* There are several myths about the Jubilee. A careful reading of the word will eliminate the confusion.

* The Jubilee was the 50th year of a 50-year cycle.

* The instructions were given to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai.

* The Jubilee was a strictly Jewish celebration.

* The Jubilee applied to the land and servants and slaves in Israel.

* How was it celebrated? Sporadically at best and incomplete.

What can we learn from Jubilee?

The lessons that follow can be applied to Christian people and are taught in other passages and books:

* We are but **strangers and pilgrims on earth** (Leviticus 25:23; I Peter 2:11). We are just passing through.

* Believers are saved by grace and have **no absolute ownership** in this world. We are to be stewards of god’s resources.

* The land, the produce, the harvest **are gifts from God** - “**The land is mine**” (Leviticus 25:23).

* We are to **be others conscious** (Leviticus 25:14, 17, 43, 46, 53) - “**Love your neighbor**” (Leviticus 19:18).

* We are the **Lord’s servants** in this world.
* **Holiness lies in the selfless helping of fellow humans**, Jesus being our most wonderful example (Mark 10:45). He is the true Servant.

* **Generosity and care for one’s family is encouraged.** We are not to exact interest on our own family.

* There is such a thing as “**holy time**” (Romans 14:5, 6; Leviticus 25:1-8).

* Time is consecrated, becoming holy **when the people’s hearts are holy**. Holy time is purposely set aside to celebrate God’s institutions.

* The Jubilee **challenges our ego-centric selfish nature**. The Jubilee, while theoretically a time of freedom and liberation (the day of Atonement), challenges the human heart.

* We are by nature self-centered - egotistical - self-indulgent - covetous - arrogant, etc.

* The Jubilee was **conditioned on obedience** to God.

* No work could be done during Jubilee year. **Inward holiness was to be expressed outwardly by obedience to the instructions of the Sabbath**.

* The Jubilee signified a **new and a fresh start**.

* Every Israelite **returns to his family and inheritance** with a fresh start in view. All debt should have been paid at this time.

* **Faith was severely tested** by allowing your land to lie fallow for two years (Leviticus 25:20), “**What shall we eat the seventh year?**”

* **Faith in God’s provision** was designed to bring rest, relief and peace.

* The Jubilee taught the lesson that one’s **reliance upon the Lord and His provision was more important than your own personal labor or work**. Thus, those who put their trust in the Lord, first, will have their needs supplied (Matthew 6:33).

**Conclusion**

* Christ has come - He is the One that fulfills the Jubilee (Luke 4:17-1). He is the Lord of the Sabbath (Matthew 12:8; Mark 2:28; Luke 6:5).

* Christ is holy and represents all the various kinds of holy time based upon the sabbatical principle! He came to bring rest to all humanity, rest to the human heart.

* Isaiah 61:1 - the acceptable year of the Lord (Luke 4) partly inspired by the Jubilee year (?).
* The Messianic age brings liberty to the oppressed and release to the captives.

* The Jubilee looks back to redemption from Egyptian slavery (Leviticus 25:38, 55) and looks forward to the restitution of all things (Acts 3:21) - II Peter 3:13.

* In type, Jubilee represents our freedom from the bondage of sin through Christ and the promises of eternity to come.