

# The Law of Jubilee

By Dr. Stephen E. Jones

Even as Jesus Christ is the central Person of all history, the law of Jubilee is the most fundamental law of all creation. The law of Jubilee is the basis of forgiveness and grace. It is the purpose and goal of the law itself. It compels a climax of earth history and a full end of the dominion of darkness and sin. The basic law of Jubilee is recorded in Leviticus 25:8-13.

**<sup>8</sup> You are also to count off seven Sabbaths of years for yourself, seven times seven years, so that you have the time of the seven Sabbaths of years, *namely*, forty-nine years. <sup>9</sup> You shall then sound a ram's horn abroad on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the Day of Atonement you shall sound a horn all through your land. <sup>10</sup> You shall thus consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim a release through the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a Jubilee for you, and each of you shall return to his own property, and each of you shall return to his family.**

When Israel conquered the land of Canaan under the leadership of Joshua, he divided the land among all the families in Israel. This was their inheritance in the land, and no one (other than God Himself) could lawfully deprive them of their inheritance. However, if drought struck the land, or some other type of disaster, the families might lose their land. They would sell the land to someone else until the year of Jubilee.

The value of the land was measured in terms of its ability to produce barley, and an “omer” of barley (about eight bushels) had a fixed value of fifty shekels (about thirteen ounces) of silver (Leviticus 27:16). In selling land the buyer was to pay a fair price according to the amount of barley the land could normally produce from the present time to the year of Jubilee. Of course, they could not count the Sabbath years, when the land was to rest and could not produce a crop.

When the fair price had been calculated, the sale was made, and the new owners began to farm the property. The previous owners generally found employment on another estate, unless they were hired to work their own land as laborers for the new owner. It was the right of the original land inheritor to redeem his land at any time if he was able to do so. With each passing year the redemption price of the land was decreased proportionately, because, as we said, the land was not valued as land per se but in terms of its harvests. This eliminated any land speculation.

The law of God forbade the outright sale of one's land inheritance, because the land belongs to God. All land sales were temporary. Today we would call them leases. Leviticus 25:23-28 says,

**<sup>23</sup> The land, moreover, shall not be sold permanently, for the land is Mine; for you are but aliens and sojourners with Me. <sup>24</sup> Thus for every piece of your property, you are to provide for the redemption of the land. <sup>25</sup> If a fellow countryman of yours becomes so poor he has to sell part of his property, then *his nearest kinsman is to come and buy back what his relative has sold.* <sup>26</sup> Or in case a man has no kinsman, but so recovers his means as to find sufficient for its redemption, <sup>27</sup> then he shall calculate the years since its sale and refund the balance to the man to whom he sold it, and so return to his property. <sup>28</sup> But if he has not found sufficient means to get it back for himself, then what he has sold shall remain in the hands of its purchaser until the year of Jubilee; but at the Jubilee it shall revert, that he may return to his property.**

No man could permanently lose his land inheritance through debt. At the Jubilee, the land would revert back to him, and any remaining debts were to be cancelled.

### **The Lawful Right of Redemption**

Verse 25 above says also that it was the will of God that the debtor's nearest kinsman should redeem his brother when possible. In fact, the law specifically states in the NASV that "*his nearest kinsman IS TO COME AND BUY BACK what his relative has sold.*" We know that the law is not only a moral document, but is also prophetic, because this is the law that Jesus performed perfectly. It was therefore prophesying that Jesus Christ, our Kinsman-Redeemer, would come to buy back everything that was sold when Adam sinned. The Scriptures cannot be broken. If the redeemer has the power to redeem, the law says he is commanded by the will of the Father in heaven to redeem what his brother has lost.

We are His brethren. Therefore, the law demands that Jesus Christ redeem all that was lost in Adam. The only relevant question is whether or not Jesus Christ really did this or not. I believe He did, for the blood has never lost its power, nor did Jesus fail in any point of law to do all that the Father asked of Him. The law was fully satisfied.

The law of redemption was closely tied to the law of Jubilee. Essentially, redemption of the inheritance was always possible prior to the year of Jubilee. If the debtor somehow could scrape together enough money to redeem himself, he always had the lawful right to do so. A near kinsman also had the lawful right to redeem the debtor at any time. We read in Leviticus 25:47-55.

**<sup>47</sup> Now if the means of a stranger or of a sojourner with you becomes sufficient, and a countryman of yours becomes so poor with regard to him as to sell himself to a stranger who is sojourning with you, or to the descendants of a stranger's family, <sup>48</sup> then he shall have *redemption right* after he has been sold. *One of his brothers may redeem him,* <sup>49</sup> or his uncle, or his uncle's son, may redeem him, or one of his blood relatives from his family may redeem him; or *if he prospers, he may redeem himself.* <sup>50</sup> He then with his purchaser shall calculate from the year when he sold**

himself to him up to the year of Jubilee; and the price of his sale shall correspond to the number of years. *It is like the days of a hired man that he shall be with him.* <sup>51</sup> If there are still many years, he shall refund part of his purchase price in proportion to them for his own redemption; <sup>52</sup> and if few years remain until the year of Jubilee, he shall so calculate with him. In proportion to his years he is to refund *the amount for his redemption.* <sup>53</sup> *Like a man hired year by year he shall be with him; he shall not rule over him with severity in your sight.* <sup>54</sup> *Even if he is not redeemed by these means, he shall still go out in the year of Jubilee, he and his sons with him.* <sup>55</sup> For the sons of Israel are My servants; they are My servants whom I brought out from the land of Egypt. I am the LORD your God.

It is important to understand the law of redemption, because it has everything to do with God's plan for the redemption of both Israel and the world. A friend does not have the right of redemption; only a near kinsman does. This means that if a man sells himself and his family to work for another man, his friend may redeem him—but only if the master allows it. The friend does not have the RIGHT of redemption. Instead, the master has the right to keep the new bondservant in his employ. But if a near kinsman decides to redeem the debtor, the master has no choice in the matter, for the kinsman has the right of redemption.

Jesus came to earth to redeem His people (Luke 1:68). He did not come in the form of an angel, but was born a man, specifically of the seed of Abraham. He did this in order to have the lawful right of redemption. If He had come as an angel, the divine law would have ruled that He was only a FRIEND of sinners, whose sin had given them a debt they could not pay, men who had lost their inheritance through Adam's sin.

Jesus was indeed a friend of sinners, but He chose to be more than that. In order to have the RIGHT of redemption for Israel, He had to be more than a mere friend. He had to be born of the seed of Abraham. In order to have the RIGHT of redemption for all mankind, He had to be more than an angelic friend. He had to be born of flesh and blood. He qualified on both counts, as we read in Hebrews 2:11-17.

<sup>11</sup> For both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one *Father*; for which reason *He is not ashamed to call them brethren*, <sup>12</sup> saying [in Psalm 22:22], "I will proclaim Thy name to *My brethren*, In the midst of the congregation I will sing Thy praise." <sup>13</sup> And again [in 2 Samuel 22:3], "I will put My trust in Him." And again [in Isaiah 8:18], "Behold, I and the children whom God has given Me." <sup>14</sup> *Since then the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil;* <sup>15</sup> and might deliver those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives. <sup>16</sup> For assuredly *He does not give help to angels, but He gives help to the descendant of Abraham.* <sup>17</sup> Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

We conclude, then, that Jesus Christ was born of flesh and blood in order to have the lawful right of redemption of the whole world. He was likewise born specifically of the seed of Abraham in order to have the lawful right of redemption for the House of Israel. These are separate promises, but they are based upon the same law of redemption. Israel was to be redeemed from the hand of her enemies (Assyria) and would ultimately return to God. The world of flesh and blood, by the same law, will also be redeemed from the final and ultimate enemy—death—for death does not hold the right of redemption and has no choice but to turn every captive loose at Jesus Christ's demand.

### **The Redeemed Serve a New Master**

In the law of redemption, the redeemed bondservant does not have the lawful right to be his own boss or the master of his own destiny. As we quoted earlier in Leviticus 25:53,

**<sup>53</sup> Like a man hired year by year he shall be with him; he shall not rule over him with severity in your sight.**

A redeemer is one who pays the price of redemption for the bondservant. In essence, he buys the bondservant from the master, who is a "stranger," or foreigner, and who is likely to abuse the man and oppress him. The near kinsman is commanded to redeem his brother on the grounds that he will treat the bondservant in a lawful manner with kindness and consideration. This means that the bondservant merely changes masters. Redemption does NOT mean the bondservant is now free to do his own will. The Apostle Paul discusses this point of law in Romans 6, the chapter where he discusses the supposed right of the redeemed Christian to continue in sin that grace may increase.

**<sup>1</sup> What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace might increase? <sup>2</sup> May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it? . . . . <sup>17</sup> But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, <sup>18</sup> and *having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.* <sup>19</sup> I am speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness, resulting in *further* lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness, resulting in sanctification. <sup>20</sup> For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. <sup>21</sup> Therefore what benefit were you then deriving from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death. <sup>22</sup>**

***But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life.***

Paul's discussion here is based upon the law of redemption. The redeemed bondservant is bound by the divine law to serve the redeemer. Jesus is the Redeemer, who bought us with His blood, and for this reason, as Paul says, we have been "*freed from sin and enslaved to God*" (vs. 22). That is, sin is no longer our master, but we now have God as our Master. That means we are now accountable to His law and are expected to be obedient to Him. John says that "*sin is lawlessness*" (1 John 3:4). John also says in 1 John 2:3 and 4,

***<sup>3</sup> And by this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. <sup>4</sup> The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.***

John is not saying that the law is the basis of our salvation. He is saying that our obedience is the outward EVIDENCE that we are saved, for if we claim to be redeemed, but refuse to be a bondservant of Jesus Christ, we do not really know Him. "*By this we know.*" The lawless Christian is violating the law of redemption. For this reason, Jesus says of such people in Matthew 7:23, "*I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.*"

Lawless Christians will not lose their salvation ultimately. They will be "*saved, yet so as through fire,*" as Paul says in 1 Corinthians 3:15. And, of course, if a man merely professes to be a believer but is not really a Christian at all—God judges the heart—then such a man will be thrown into the lake of fire for a longer and more extensive kind of purification. Those unbelievers, however, will finally be set free at the great Jubilee at the end of time, for we read in Leviticus 25:54,

***<sup>54</sup> Even if he is not redeemed by these means, he shall still go out in the year of Jubilee, he and his sons with him.***

What a glorious promise! The Jubilee is the law of grace. No matter how far a man goes into debt, the Jubilee will set him free. Even if no kinsman redeems him, there is a day coming when he will be set free into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. This is why all of creation is awaiting this day. Romans 8:19-25 says,

***<sup>19</sup> For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. <sup>20</sup> For the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope <sup>21</sup> that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children***

**of God. <sup>22</sup> For we know that *the whole creation* groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. <sup>23</sup> And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for *our* adoption as sons, the redemption of our body. <sup>24</sup> For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one also hope for what he sees? <sup>25</sup> But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it.**

The law of Jubilee mandates the setting free of all creation at some point in history. Personally, I believe this will come after 49,000 years of history. The lowest level of Jubilee came after 49 years (Lev. 25:8). The trumpet for the Jubilee was blown on the Day of Atonement, which was ten days into the fiftieth year (Leviticus 25:9).

In prophetic history we see higher-level Jubilees, such as Daniel's seventy weeks (of years), which is actually ten Jubilee cycles, or 490 years. Jesus set us free on the Cross at the end of Daniel's seventy weeks in 33 AD. (See our book, [Secrets of Time](#), chapter 9.)

The forty-Jubilee cycle of 1,960 years is also important, as is the fifty-Jubilee cycle of 2,450 years. These subjects are covered extensively in [Secrets of Time](#), but are beyond the scope of this book. Yet the final Creation's Jubilee, I believe, is 49,000 years. I cannot prove this, of course, nor is it critical to do so. It is sufficient to know that the law of God demands limits on how long a debtor can be enslaved, or how long a sinner can be in bondage to his sin.

All creation waits in anticipation of this Jubilee. It is the goal of history and the ultimate purpose of God. The law of Jubilee on every level obtains its power by the blood of Jesus Christ on the Cross, as we read in 1 John 2:1 and 2,

**<sup>1</sup> My little children, I am writing these things to you that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; <sup>2</sup> and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.**

### **All Land Belongs to God**

The law of Jubilee depends upon a deeper law, which we quoted earlier. It is found in Leviticus 25:23, where God says, "*the land is mine.*" For this reason, it could not be sold permanently, but always had to revert back to the original owners at the year of Jubilee. Adam was made of the dust of the ground (Genesis 2:7). Man was a part of

God's creation and land inheritance. God's intent was to build a house for Himself in earth, and that house is man himself.

Because man is a created being, he does not own himself. God owns all that He has created. All the land belongs to God. It is true that man has been given a level of authority, but man does not have ultimate sovereignty over his "land," that is, himself. For this reason, man has been given the right to sell his land temporarily. He may sell himself into sin for a while, even for a lifetime. But he has never been given the right to sell his land for all time. His land will always have to revert back to God at the Jubilee.

In other words, no man can be so great a sinner that he cannot be set free at the year of Jubilee. No man can go so far into debt that he cannot be set free in the year of Jubilee. *No man has either the authority or the ability to incur a debt that is greater than the year of Jubilee can remedy.* This is the law of God, not man's law.

When man sinned, the "land" was sold. That is, Adam and his children and his entire estate were sold into sin. In essence, God lost His inheritance in the earth. It is for this reason that Jesus Christ came into the world to redeem His lost inheritance. He came as a near Kinsman in order to secure the RIGHT of redemption. By His own blood, He paid the full price of the sin of the entire world from Adam to the end of time. The only question remaining is whether Jesus Christ loves the world enough to actually take advantage of His legal rights.

The answer is found in John 3:16, "*God so loved the world. . .*" The real question is this: If Jesus Christ had the power to save all men, would He do so? Of course He would, because He loves all that He created. Well, Jesus does have the power and the wisdom to save all men. His blood--the payment for the sin of the world--is worth far more than the sin-debt of all mankind put together. More than that, the law is on His side, because He has the *right* of redemption. That means He can redeem all if He wants to do so.

Suppose you, dear reader, had a family of loved ones who had been sold into slavery. If you came, having the legal right of redemption and paid the full price of their redemption, would you be satisfied if the slave master accepted your money, but then gave you only one or two of them? Of course not. If you truly loved them, you would demand all that you paid for. But even if your loved ones refused to be redeemed, this could only delay the process until the year of Jubilee. Remember Leviticus 25:54,

**<sup>54</sup> Even if he is not redeemed by these means, he shall still go out in the year of Jubilee, he and his sons with him.**

Though the rulers of men and nations have consistently refused to declare a Jubilee over its people, God is not a man that He should lie. He will always follow His own law, regardless of the refusal of men to be obedient.

### **The Judgment of God in the Final Age**

The law of God demands the restoration of all things (Acts 3:21). The divine judgments of God are not eternal, as men define eternal. They are *aionian*, as the Greek text says. They pertain only to an eon (*aion*), or an age. The "lake of fire" mentioned in Revelation 20:11-15 is the same as the "fiery stream" mentioned in Daniel 7:9-11. Daniel tells us that the fire comes from God's throne. A throne is an ancient symbol of law. When a king sits upon a throne, he is officially administering the law or its judgments. God is the King of Creation, and He judges all according to His law. Therefore, the fire is the divine law, as Moses tells us in Deuteronomy 33:2,

**<sup>2</sup> And he said, The LORD came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand went a fiery law for them.**

The "fire" of the divine law judges no man for any crime by sentencing them to burn in a literal fire. All sin is reckoned as a debt that is owed to the victims of injustice. If the sinner cannot pay the restitution, he is to be a bondservant until the debt is paid. The believers will rule over them. That is, the believers will be given authority over the sinners (debtors), and be responsible to teach them the righteousness and character of God. For this reason, the prophet tells us in Isaiah 26:9,

**<sup>9</sup> . . . For when the earth experiences Thy judgments, the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness.**

This is the "fire" of the divine law. It is not torture or punishment; it is justice. God's judgments are corrective in nature. With God, there is no endless punishment without mercy. Judgment always ends in grace, for that is the law of Jubilee.

Regardless of the precise nature of God's judgment upon sinners in that age, we know from the law of Jubilee that God's judgments are age-abiding, not everlasting, as some have translated the Greek word, *aionian*. Proper translations of this term are found in Young's Literal Translation and Rotherham's The Emphasized Bible. They understand *aionian* in the same way that the early Church fathers did, for their writings often spoke of the judgments to come as being temporary and limited to an age.

The law of Jubilee demands an end to all liability for sin (debt) at some point in the future. The law of Jubilee demands that all debts be cancelled at the end of that final age. Then all creation will be set free into the glorious liberty of the sons of God.

### **The Restoration of All Things**

When God restores all things, then will Jesus' words be fulfilled in John 12:32, 33,

**<sup>32</sup> "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw *all men to Myself.*" <sup>33</sup> But He was saying this to indicate the kind of death by which He was to die.**

Likewise, the words of the Apostle Paul will be fulfilled in 1Corinthians 15:22-28,

**<sup>22</sup> For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive. <sup>23</sup> But each in his own order . . . . <sup>27</sup> For He has put all things in subjection under His feet. But when He says, "All things are put in subjection," it is evident that He is excepted who put all things in subjection to Him. <sup>28</sup> And when all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, that God may be all in all.**

Even as in Adam all mankind died, so also in Christ, the Second Adam, all mankind will be made alive--but not all at once. Some will come into life in the first resurrection, others at the general resurrection, but all others at the great Jubilee of creation. Paul speaks of this day also in Colossians 1:16-20,

**<sup>16</sup> For by Him all things were created, *both* in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-- all things have been created by Him and for Him. . . <sup>19</sup> For it**

**was the *Father's* good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, <sup>20</sup> and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven.**

Through the Logos, the Word, Jesus Christ, all things were created (John 1:3), and through Him, all things will be reconciled to Himself. There will be nothing left outside of His dominion in the end, as we read in Hebrews 2:8 and 9,

**<sup>8</sup> Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. "For in subjecting all things to him, He left nothing that is not subject to him. But now we do not yet see all things subjected to him. <sup>9</sup> But we do see Him who has been made for a little while lower than the angels, *namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone.***

In this manner He "*is the Savior of all men, especially of believers,*" as the Apostle Paul tells Timothy in 1 Timothy 4:10. Those who are saved before the creation Jubilee are indeed greatly blessed and will rule in His Kingdom. Yet in the end He is also the Savior of ALL men, not just of the believers. For this reason, all creation awaits the manifestation of the sons of God (Romans 8:19-21), knowing that these sons are but the firstfruits of creation (James 1:18). Paul says that the firstfruits sanctify the whole harvest. After the firstfruits were given to God, this signaled the beginning of the general harvest of the whole field. The field is the world (Matthew 13:39).

So also John sees all of creation rejoicing in the end. Revelation 5 says,

**<sup>13</sup> And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying, "To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, *be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever.*"**

This will never happen apart from the law of Jubilee, for most of creation yet remains in enmity against God. They are the ones in need of the Jubilee, for, unlike true believers, they do not take advantage of the law of redemption. The time of redemption ends with the Jubilee. And so we urge all those who hear the Word of God to believe in Jesus

Christ and learn what great salvation He has given to men. Our message is that of the Apostle Paul, which he wrote in 2 Corinthians 5,

**<sup>17</sup> Therefore if any man is in Christ, *he is* a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. <sup>18</sup> Now all *these* things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, <sup>19</sup> namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them [the world], and He has committed to us [Christians] the word of reconciliation. <sup>20</sup> Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were entreating through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. <sup>21</sup> He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.**

We have been given the ministry of reconciliation with a message of good news to give the world. It is NOT the bad news of eternal torment or damnation, but the good news that God has reconciled the world through Christ, who has paid the price for their deliverance and salvation. This is the true Gospel of Jesus Christ, who was lifted up on the cross, and therefore will draw ALL MEN unto Himself. This is not wishful thinking. It is prophecy. It is a statement of intent. It is His promise to us and to the world. Let us all rejoice in this good news of God's grace.

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