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The Freedom of the Year of Jubilee

25: 8-13

The freedom of the Year of Jubilee DIG: When did the Year of Jubilee occur? Why did YHVH have the Year of Jubilee begin on Yom Kippur? What is the Yovel Year? How did this year tend to balance out the poor and the rich? How does Isaiah 61:1 relate to this?

REFLECT: What kind of freedom does Messiah give? Explain more fully. What kind of debt does all the people owe to ADONAI? How is this debt paid? What is the "Isaiah Avenue," and why is it different from the "Romans Road?" Who can you pray for this week?

The Year of Jubilee is a marvelous climax to the sacred calendar of the Israelites.



Freedom (25:8-9): You are to count seven Shabbats of years, seven times seven years, that is, forty-nine years. Then, on the tenth day of the seventh month, on Yom-Kippur, you are to sound a blast on the shofar; you are to sound the shofar all through your land (25:8-9). Why did YHVH have the Year of Jubilee begin on Yom Kippur? It seems that to understand what is going on here, we need to remember that one of the primary themes for the Year of Jubilee is the theme of freedom. There is freedom in who we are in Messiah, and freedom to follow the Torah as our blueprint for living. But in order to walk in either one of these freedoms, there is a primary,

more fundamental **freedom** everyone must experience first. This is the **freedom** from **sin** itself.

The B'rit Chadashah teaches us that we are all born **sinners (Romans 3:23)**. Because we are born in such a state, we are, therefore, in bondage to that **sin**. Neither following the Torah, nor any other religious teaching can free us from that bondage. But **Yeshua** said that **He** came to set us free (see the commentary on **Romans, to see link click Bu - The New Freedom in Messiah**). The B'rit Chadashah teaches us that if we put our faith/trust/belief in the finished, perfect atonement accomplished by **Yeshua**, several things happen all at once (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Bw - What God Does for Us at the Moment of Faith**). One thing **He** does is to instantly change us from **the kingdom of sin and death** to **the Kingdom of life and righteousness** (see **Bv - The Test of Tsara'at**). Another thing **He** does for us is to break the bonds of our slavery to **sin**. We are now **free** because of **His** atonement.

What an interesting connection we can now see between **the Year of Jubilee** and **the Day of Atonement**. The message of both is a new birth. **The Day of Atonement freed** man from slavery to **sin** and enabled him to start his life anew, at one with **God** and his fellow man. Here, with **the Year of Jubilee**, **ADONAI** was painting another spiritual picture. He was teaching that there is no real **freedom** unless **sinful** man had his **sins** atoned for. But once this happened, he entered into a new realm of existence - real **freedom** to serve his **God**.

Jubilee (25:10-13): The Year of Jubilee forms a marvelous climax to the sacred calendar of the Israelites. **And you are to dedicate the fiftieth year, proclaiming freedom** (Hebrew: *d'ror*) **throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It will be a yovel for you (25:10a)**. There are several Hebrew words translated **freedom**. Here, *d'ror* is commonly called **the Year of Jubilee**. But the English word "jubilee" is just a poorly transliterated form of the Hebrew word **yovel**. English translators change the "y" sound in Hebrew to a "j" and Hebrew "v" sound to a "b." Hence, **yovel** becomes "jubel." *D'ror* is a very rare word, used only a handful of times in the whole TaNaKh. In **Exodus 30:23** we have a hint at why **the Ruach Ha'Kodesh** chose this word to speak of the **freedom** in the **Yovel Year**. **ADONAI** instructed Moshe to make the oil to anoint the High Priest. Among the elements in this oil was flowing *d'ror*, or myrrh. In another place in the TaNaKh, *d'ror* also carries the connotation of **free-flowing**, unhindered, or **free-running**.⁴⁹¹

That fiftieth year will be a yovel for you. Because there would be two fallow years in succession, **the Israelites** were **not to sow, harvest what grows by itself or gather the**

grapes of untended vines. That is, the spontaneous growth of this **year** was not to be made into a regular **harvest** and stored up. **Because it is the Year of Jubilee, it will be holy for you; whatever the fields produce will be food for all of you (25:11-12).** Some would no doubt ask, “But how would we **eat**?” The answer is “Fear not! **I will order my blessing on you during the sixth year, so that the Land brings forth enough produce for all [four] years (25:21).** The Word of God declares that **He** would abundantly bless **them in the sixth year** so that **the Land** would produce enough for the **four years** to follow: the sixth, **seventh, the Yovel Year, the first year** of the next **seven-year** cycle, and when **they** began to plant again.⁴⁹² **Until the produce of year two came in, they would eat the old, stored food (25:21-22).** Harvested grain could last quite well for at least **seven years (Genesis 41:1-19).** Just as the weekly **Sabbath rest** (see [El - The Sabbath Year](#)) was an act of faith in **God**, so too **the Sabbath Year** was an act of faith (see [Ep - Trusting God](#)). However, the fruit and grain which grew spontaneously without reaping or sowing (which is common in Isra’el) during **the Sabbath rest** could be picked and eaten, but not stored.

Spring

Fall

Year six: God’s blessing: reap the barley. wheat

Year six: God’s blessing: reap the

Year seven: Shabbat rest for the Land

Year seven: Shabbat rest for the Land

Yovel Year: Shabbat rest for the Land

Yovel Year: Shabbat rest for the Land

Year one: God’s blessing: sow the barley wheat

Year one: God’s blessing: sow the

Year two: Eat the newly harvested crops

Year two: Eat the newly harvested crops

In this year of yovel, every one of you is to return to the land he owns and everyone is to return to his family (25:10b and 13). The Torah returns to one of the unique features of **the Jubilee** - the return of property that had been sold. The sale of the property had to be adjusted, based on the number of years since the last **Jubilee** in order to determine the amount of produce that would have been collected **(25:15-16).** The greater number of years that remained until **the Jubilee** warranted a higher price, while the purchase closer to the time of **the Jubilee** would proportionately lower the price. The people were not to take advantage of one another; their dealings had to be fair. And the motivation for this was their **fear of God (25:17).** These mitzvot also reminded the rich not

to become too attached to **the land**.⁴⁹³ And to guarantee each family land, and a fresh start every fifty years. Freedom from crushing debt and possession of land, the basic source of wealth, provide a form of social justice built into the economic system that would guarantee most a fair opportunity in life.⁴⁹⁴

Messiah: The word **freedom** (Hebrew: *d'ror*) is used several times in the TaNaKh. But, perhaps, its most significance usage outside the Parashah b'Har is in **Isaiah 61:1**, which reads: **The Spirit of ADONAI Elohim is upon me, because ADONAI has anointed Me to announce Good News to the poor. He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted; to proclaim freedom (*d'ror*) to the captives, to let out into light those bound in the dark.** The word translated **freedom** is *d'ror*, the same word we have been speaking which characterizes **the Yovel Year**. This fact provides for us a clear-cut connection between **the Year of Jubilee** and the **freedom** proclaimed in **Isaiah 61:1**.

The **Isaiah** passage (see the commentary on **Isaiah Jy - The Year of the LORD's Favor and the Day of Vengeance**) is definitely Messianic. Alfred Edersheim (the famous Messianic Jew: 1825-1889), attests to the fact that **the ancient rabbis considered it as such**. The work described in these verses in **Isaiah** is solely the work of **the Messiah**. What is even more important for our discussion is that this is the verse which **Yeshua** quoted when **He** began **His** public ministry in the Nazarene synagogue (see **The Life of Christ Ch - The Spirit of the LORD is On Me**). The fact that **Isaiah 61:1** mentions that the Person doing the speaking is **anointed** [a **Messiah**] by **the Spirit of ADONAI Elohim** only adds to the force which **Yeshua** was giving to this passage which **He** was quoting.

In essence, **Yeshua** was claiming to be **the One** by whom all the messianic works of **Isaiah 61:1** would be performed. One of these tasks was to grant **the captives** of **Isra'el** something which **they** had waited for centuries - **a yovel, freedom** from **their** bondage. Therefore, when **Yeshua** applied this messianic promise to **Himself**, **He** was making a grand proclamation to all of **the House of Isra'el** - in **Him**, the Messianic era of **freedom** (*d'ror*) would be found. Not only that, but **He Himself** would be **the One** making it happen. **He** would set all those held **captive** by the bondage of **their sin**, free forever from that deadly enslavement.⁴⁹⁵

The God of Isra'el desires to provide people with **His** rest and peace through an eternal relationship with **Himself**. The following five principles, taken from the prophet **Isaiah**, help us to recognize how we can have that relationship. Just as Gentile believers have often used a series of verses from **Romans** called "the Romans Road," messianic believers, witnessing to **Jews**, can use a different series of verses from **Isaiah** called "the Isaiah

Avenue.”

Sinners Before God: For all of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteousness is like a filthy garment, and all of us wither like a leaf, and our iniquities carry us away, like the wind (Isaiah 64:5). We may judge ourselves by relative standards, thinking, “I’m as good as the next person,” or, “I’m no worse than the next guy.” Yet, **God** judges each of us by **His** absolute standards of **Himself** and **His** Torah: **You shall be holy, for I, ADONAI your God, am holy (Leviticus 19:2)**. By **His** standards, we are all moral failures. Granted, you may be a nice person, and you may remember to call your mom on Mother’s Day; it’s just that you and “the next person” still fall short of **God’s** high **holy** standards. By the way, every Messianic rabbi or pastor has the same problem. **Psalm 14:3** declares: **There is none that does good, no not one**. We are all born with the fatal disease of **sin** passed down through Adam. So, no one can point fingers or throw stones at anyone else; we all have the same great problem of original **sin**.

Separation From God: Surely the arm of ADONAI is not too short to save, nor His ear too dull to hear. Rather, your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God. Your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He does not hear (Isaiah 59:1-2). The result of our **sin** nature is a broken relationship with **God**. Now you may pray and even fast, but the Bible is clear: **He will not hear**. It’s as if I stole money from you, and then had the nerve to come to you and ask for a gift! Your response should be, “first let’s deal with the past offense, then I can consider your present or future needs.” **God** wants to bless you, but your **sin** nature separates you from **Him**, and must be dealt with first before **He** can bless you. Since this separation continues to our death, it becomes a judgment of everlasting separation from **God**. This breaks **God’s** heart. **He** truly loves you and desires you to have everlasting life with **Him**. That’s why the story doesn’t end here, but continues on with **the Good News** for your life.

Salvation In God: We all like sheep have gone astray. Each of us turned to our own way. So, ADONAI has laid on Him [Messiah] the iniquity of us all (Isaiah 53:6). **God** has provided the way of salvation and forgiveness, since we can do nothing, no good deed, to save ourselves. The best fifteen minutes of our lives cannot save us; the greatest accomplishment of our lives cannot save us either. Because of **His** great love, **God** has promised to send **Messiah** to die as the atonement or payment for our **sins**. In the New Covenant, **Messiah Yeshua** states as well: **I give My life as a ransom for many (Matthew 20:28)**. This is the salvation and right relationship that **God** offers freely.

The Savior Is God: For to us a child is born, a son will be given to us, and the

government will be upon His shoulder. His Name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and shalom there will be no end - on the throne of David and over His Kingdom - to establish it and uphold it through justice and righteousness from now until forevermore. The zeal of ADONAI-Tzva'ot will accomplish this (Isaiah 9:5-6). Only **God Himself** could provide the perfect sacrifice for **sins**, as **He** alone is perfect. What amazing love and humility that **the Mighty God of Isra'el** would be born, live as a **man**, and die as the perfect payment for our **sins**. **Messiah Yeshua** is **Adonai, the Lord**.

Eternal Security With God: You keep in perfect peace one whose mind is steadfast on You, because he trusts in You (Isaiah 26:3). Perfect peace (shalom shalom) is found only in **God** and is accessible only through faith/trust/belief in **Messiah**. Simple acknowledgement of our **sins** and faith in **Messiah Yeshua** as our substitute, our sacrifice, our saving atonement, is the necessary action to a right relationship with **God**. The Bible says: **Abraham believed God, and He credited it to him as righteousness (Genesis 15:6)**. Like **Abraham**, you can have a right relationship with **God** by faith in what **He** alone has provided. Here's a simple prayer that help you:

*Lord, please forgive me for all my **sins** through **Messiah's** sacrifice on the cross for me. Help me to follow **Yeshua** and honor **You**. Thank **You** for loving me. Amen.*⁴⁹⁶

If you have prayed this prayer,
see my commentary on [The Life of Christ Bw - What God Does for Us at the Moment of Faith](#).