

LEVITICUS

Lesson 39 - Chapter 25 Conclusion

We'll finish up Leviticus 25 today. In Leviticus 25 we studied the all-important Jubilee, which has the nickname of "the favorable year of the Lord". I have been asked several questions about the Jubilee and just how faithful and scrupulous Israel might have been in following it. In reality there is no Biblical record to indicate that Israel celebrated a Jubilee. Outside the Bible the Talmud has a great deal of tradition about the Jubilee and it is apparent that Jubilee years were observed to varying degrees, but there is equally no evidence or record that it was ever observed scrupulously.

Instead we find Rabbinical rulings over exactly WHERE the Jubilee laws should be enforced. In other words how far north, south, east and west from Jerusalem should the Israelite land be considered under these Jubilee ordinances. Later, upon the first exile from the land, this question became all the more important because the Hebrew people needed to know if these rulings followed them OUTSIDE the land of Israel. The Rabbis and Sages divided the Jubilee into two areas of concern to determine the answer: one concerned land and the other concerned monetary debts. And this is because the principle of release was of course the thorny issue that the poorer folks wanted to be applied, and the richer folks would just as soon find a way around. The Jewish religious authorities ruled that matters directly concerning land were restricted only to the Holy Lands, while monetary matters followed the Diaspora wherever they might wander. Other Rabbis and Sages disputed that and said that the Jubilee laws applied only in Israel proper.

While I cannot say with certainty how to apply all of the many Jubilee rulings to our lives, I can say that the Scriptures are very specific that the LAND involved in the Jubilee is the land that God gave to Israel. So I agree with those Rabbis who say it only involves Israel proper. That means, Believers, that you do NOT have to give the land you bought from someone back to them every Biblical Jubilee year. Nor can you have your mortgage debt canceled when Jubilee arrives (sorry!). However the God-principles that under gird Jubilee remain. Farmers will attest that giving the land a complete rest every 7th year is good for it, although the requirement of the every 7th year Sabbath year does not apply to land outside of what was at one time Canaan (again, Leviticus is quite clear on this matter). The principle of release from debt and slavery is at the core of Jubilee and we find that the work of Messiah as spoken of in the OT prophecies, and the NT records of the Messiah's coming, is at the heart of what He accomplished. And another one of those Jubilee principles involves the Israelites NEVER selling their land permanently not only to someone outside each family's own tribe but outside their nation. Of course this is exactly what we see being forced upon Israel today by the United States and other world governments, and being embraced by the current Israeli government. I shudder at what is in store for us, and them, as the Lord dispenses His justice

for rebelling against Him in so sensitive and important a matter.

After Jubilee we began discussing the principle of the Kinsman Redeemer and I told you that nowhere in the New Testament is the term Kinsman Redeemer actually used to apply to Yeshua. Rather the term is abbreviated to “redeemer”. The NT assumes that we already know the nuances about these sorts of things (like what a Kinsman Redeemer is). Let me be clear; yes, of course, Jesus Christ is our Kinsman Redeemer. The point is that (like so many subjects) it is the Torah that explains the duties and qualities of a Kinsman Redeemer, not the New Testament. And we found that in accordance with the Law of Moses Yeshua indeed qualified as the Kinsman Redeemer by a) being a kinsman, and b) having the means to pay the debt. And that means was His perfect life as a sacrifice.

Now that’s all well and good. But just who are Jesus’ kinsmen? On a physical, national level, there is only one possible answer; His kinsmen are Israelites. Period. Yeshua’s physical people and the nation and culture He fully identified Himself with were the Hebrew people. He NEVER made Himself out to be some kind of universal man; He was not some strange generic person who represented all humans. He was a dark, olive skinned Semitic man, born to a fully Jewish mother; we have Miriam’s (Mary’s) genealogy to prove it. The laws Yeshua followed were Jewish Laws. The Traditions He followed were Jewish traditions. The God He worshipped was the Jewish God. Jesus, from a human physical standpoint, was as Jewish as it gets. So who were Jesus’ kinsmen? Jews! Or, more accurately Israelites. His kinsmen were those set-apart-for-God people.

If indeed Yeshua is a kinsman redeemer, then, on a physical level, He can only redeem His kinsmen.....Israelites. Otherwise He’s not a kinsman redeemer at all, He’s a universal redeemer. Did Jesus save all humans, universally, without exception or distinction? It has become common to say, “oh yes, isn’t that wonderful!?” But Scripturally (not doctrinally) the answer is NO; He only saved those who TRUST IN HIM. Remember that Leviticus 25 makes it clear that the kinsman redeemer cannot redeem a foreigner; and the definition of a foreigner is a non-Israelite throughout the Bible. Now stay with me and don’t jump to conclusions, yet. NO foreigner is even eligible for redemption.

NAS Leviticus 25:44 'As for your male and female slaves whom you may have-- you may acquire male and female slaves from the pagan nations that are around you. 45 'Then, too, it is out of the sons of the sojourners who live as aliens among you that you may gain acquisition, and out of their families who are with you, whom they will have produced in your land; they also may become your possession. 46 'You may even bequeath them to your sons after you, to receive as a possession; you can use them as permanent slaves. But in respect to your countrymen, the sons of Israel, you shall not rule with severity over one another.

Let me say that again: a foreigner, one who is **not** part of the nation of Israel, is not eligible for redemption. Lev. 25 also says that an alien who lives with Israel is not eligible. What’s the definition of an alien living among them? Someone who lives WITH Israel, but not AS Israel. Israel had lots of people who lived among them and enjoyed all the economic and security benefits that resulted from God pouring out blessing on His people (that’s WHY they chose to

live among Israel). But redemption was not for them. Yeshua could ONLY redeem His kinsmen; and His kinsmen are ONLY those who are identified with Israel.

Now before some of you go running out the door screaming “heretic!” allow me to finish.

From the time Yehoveh separated one man apart from all other men on the face of the earth (Abraham) to start a new line of people for God, a provision was made that ANY human, from ANY nation could be joined to Israel under full citizenship. But those persons had requirements place upon them: they had to give up their false gods and allegiance to their former nation and worship only Yehoveh; and they had to follow the laws of Hebrew society. In other words they had to live under the provisions of the covenants God made with Abraham and his descendants. Foreigners became God’s covenant people ONLY by accepting God’s covenant. When they accepted God’s covenant then they became eligible for redemption just like all other Israelites.

Listen: what made an Israelite an Israelite was not necessarily their bloodline or their genealogy.....it was their acceptance of Yehoveh as their Lord and His covenants as their constitution. It has always been that way. The covenant of Yeshua, which we call the New Covenant, is just the crowning glory of a series of covenants God made with Israel. He told us of the need and purpose and characteristics of the New Covenant (which is but a renewal of the original covenant) in the Older Testament. The NT simply identifies WHO the Messiah is, and tells us how He went about fulfilling all the OT prophecies about Himself, and what His advent means to mankind.

All covenants (except for Noah’s of course), beginning with Abraham, were made with the Hebrews. There isn’t any such thing as a gentile Biblical covenant. Rather, as Paul so eloquently explains in Romans 11, it is necessary for gentiles, foreigners to Israel, to be grafted into Israel so that we can be UNDER Israel’s covenants and thereby we are no longer foreigners. Only by being under Israel’s covenants can we qualify as kinsmen of Yeshua and therefore eligible to be redeemed by our Messianic kinsman redeemer.

Just as all the laws and principles of Torah were physical demonstrations of spiritual principles, so then is it that with the advent of Yeshua the Messiah that gentiles do NOT have to become PHYSICAL Israelites as did foreigners of old (this was by means of allegiance to the nation of Israel and a physical circumcision ceremony). Rather by faith....which is an act of the spirit..... by faith in Yeshua HaMashiach we join Israel on a spiritual level. It is by means of a circumcised heart that we join spiritual Israel. And what is Israel on a spiritual level? It is the perfect heavenly ideal of God’s set-apart people who embody all the spiritual principles of Torah. In fact Paul goes on to say that simply being a Jew, a Hebrew, by birth, by blood, is not enough to be part of God’s Kingdom and His eternal set-apart people. Certainly the physical fleshly reality of Jewishness can never be taken from the Jewish people, and it brings with it certain advantages and honors; but physical Jewishness is not the requirement for a relationship on a permanent basis with the God of the Universe or for redemption by Messiah, our kinsman redeemer. Rather it is the SPIRITUAL reality of Jewishness (the fullest reality of Yehoveh’s covenants) culminating in God becoming flesh and giving up His own life as the redemption price for ours that defines that relationship.

So how is it that Jesus the Jew can be the kinsman redeemer of one who is born outside of Israel? One who is not His Israelite kinsman? He can't. One must be JOINED to Israel, which we are when we come to trust in Him. Again not on a physical level but on a spiritual level.

Turn to Romans 11. We going to keep reviewing this until the depth and familiarity of this key section of the Bible becomes like a comfortable friend.

READ ROMANS 11:13-24

The Olive Tree is the standard biblical metaphor for Israel. And Paul makes clear that those of us who are born as gentiles (foreigners) must be grafted INTO the Israel Olive Tree.....removed from our former roots as "wild olive trees".....the pagan gentile world. And we're told that this Israel Olive Tree has some branches that have been torn off.....Israel has some of its members that have been torn off, removed. And those torn off branches are those Israelites that refuse to Believe in the kinsman redeemer that God sent for them. Those of us born as gentiles are foreigners who MUST be grafted into to the Israel Olive Tree.....a tree that is NOT natural for us....if we want to partake of Israel's covenants. Those who are born Jews are native to the Israel Olive Tree; but in order to remain attached Paul says they MUST remain true to God's covenants.....all of them.....including the revelation of the Messiah. Therefore for Jew or Gentile to be part of the Israel Olive Tree (since the advent of Yeshua).....the true and highest ideal of Israel.....on a spiritual level.....we MUST accept the Messiah that God has sent us.

Do you get it? Jesus is a kinsman redeemer because He redeems His kinsmen. By means of faith in Him we are grafted into His family.....the Israelites.....and become kinsmen so He can redeem us. Otherwise if we remain foreign gentiles, even aliens living among the Hebrews, we are NOT His kinsmen and we are not eligible to even HAVE a kinsman redeemer.

So as the kinsman redeemer who buys the freedom of another or affects the release of another of his family, so does Yeshua buy ours and releases us from bondage. And as the kinsman redeemer of Leviticus redeems by means of a personal sacrifice of sorts (that is, he pays the price for nothing he has caused and the person in debt gets all the benefit) so it is that Jesus pays the price by means of His personal sacrifice on our behalf.

Yet there is another side to all of this.

There is the **Go'el ha-dam**, that function of a kinsman redeemer as a blood avenger. When we look at the end of time when Yeshua comes to defeat the Devil and overcome evil He comes as the blood avenger, the **Go'el ha-dam**. The first time He came He came as the **Go'el**.....the kinsman redeemer that pays the price for redemption. That function is complete and doesn't have to be accomplished again. When He next comes Messiah comes as the **Go'el ha-dam**....the blood avenger. Jesus, our blood avenger, will bind up the Evil One for destruction. Those who have fought against and persecuted and killed God's people will now have their blood spilled and He is the one who will do the blood spilling. Those who have already died in their sin will now have their "eternal blood" spilled, so to speak. Those who are present at Har Megiddo (Armageddon) to fight Yeshua will first have their physical blood

spilled, and then their “eternal blood” spilled. This is the day God has promised: the day He avenges. The great and terrible Day of the Lord; the day Jesus Christ, the kinsman redeemer, avenges the blood of His kinsmen. So much for a meek and mild Savior who wouldn’t harm a fly.

NAS Revelation 19:1 *After these things I heard, as it were, a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, "Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God; 2 because His judgments are true and righteous; for He has judged the great harlot who was corrupting the earth with her immorality, and He has avenged the blood of His bond-servants on her."*

Now I have spoken before about how there are two natures of Messiah that will manifest itself: the suffering servant and the mighty warrior/king. The Jews speak of this in terms of Messiah Ben Yoseph.....the suffering servant.....and Messiah Ben David.....the mighty warrior/king. Most Jews do not accept Yeshua as Messiah, at least partly, because He did not manifest his warrior/king nature when He was here on earth (and that was the side of Messiah they REALLY wanted).

But particularly among the learned Rabbis there was yet another reason for their denial of Him: they saw ONLY the blood avenger side of a kinsman redeemer as important for their purposes. That is by the time of Jesus the principle and laws of the kinsman redeemer had been reduced to primarily being those of a blood avenger. It was no longer deemed an obligation for a kinsman to redeem a family member from slavery or from loss of land. These laws of Leviticus 25 had been twisted and turned until the primary purpose for a kinsman redeemer had evolved from being a duty to holding a right of first refusal. In other words redemption, by Yeshua’s day, was considered completely optional upon a close family member; and often the “redeeming” simply meant that a wealthy relative had the right of first refusal to acquire a piece of land a poorer relative had defaulted on. The process had moved from being a sacrifice on the part of the redeemer to being a blessing for the redeemer (a blessing of acquisition and profit). So the redeemer took ownership of that piece of land; it didn’t go back to the poor relative who lost it as the Law required. In other words it had become like our modern concept of acquiring a piece of foreclosed property on the courthouse steps and keeping it as our own for our own benefit.

The only reason that blood vengeance didn’t happen regularly in Christ’s day was because the Romans had outlawed it; nonetheless it happened from time to time anyway among the Hebrews.

So one of the theological reasons that some Rabbis will use to explain that Yeshua cannot possibly be the Messiah is that He did NOT behave as a blood avenger should; and they’re right. But just as Yeshua did not characterize Messiah Ben David, the warrior/king, on His first coming (but will on His 2nd) so He did not characterize the attribute of blood avenger on His first coming (but will on His 2nd).

NAS Revelation 6:9 *And when He broke the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God, and because of the*

testimony which they had maintained; 10 and they cried out with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, wilt Thou refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" 11 And there was given to each of them a white robe; and they were told that they should rest for a little while longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brethren who were to be killed even as they had been, should be completed also.

Yeshua is our kinsman redeemer, because by trusting in Him we become His kinsmen. He is our blood avenger. And the blood of God's enemy is going to flow as high as the bridle of a horse in the valley of Armageddon, and it will be Jesus leading the charge.

This finishes up Leviticus 25 and we are about to enter the final 2 chapters of Leviticus; we'll move through these final two chapters fairly rapidly. So let's review a bit and get some important principles settled in our minds.

As we have hopefully begun to learn in our study of Torah, with its rules and ordinances, the Biblical Feasts and the sacrificial system, it is that Jesus came to fulfill it all not to abolish it or bring it to an end. He came to take all the ideal spiritual principles that the law demonstrated in a manner mankind could comprehend through VISIBLE means, in the form of colorful ritual, the appointed times and national celebrations, through the Sabbath rest, through the building of the Tabernacle and then the Temple, He would eventually bring these physical representations to their ultimate divine purpose. What is so key to understand.....and frankly is virtually **opposite** of what has been taught as a foundational doctrine of the gentile church....is that Jesus did NOT come to do away with the Torah and all the principles and prophecies it contained; He did NOT destroy the Torah, and then start all over again with a whole new set of principles and commandments. And just so no one would misread what He was doing as Messiah He directly stated it in Matthew 5:17-19.....which is a section of the Sermon on the Mount that everyone in here ought to memorize, to refer to often, and refer your pastor or friends who might still believe that the Law is dead and gone.

Let me remind you what it says...again, this is Yeshua speaking:

NAS Matthew 5:17 "Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill. 18 "For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the Law, until all is accomplished. 19

It was the highest MEANING and INTENT of each of the prophecies and laws that He was bringing to light. Now please think on that for a second; as simplistic as that statement is and as often as I've repeated it, sometimes the enormity of it doesn't quite penetrate our minds.

Everything in the Torah and in the Prophets was like a blueprint of God's plan. An overall picture was sketched, and how each piece of the plan was to look and to operate was carefully spelled out. Every material, every dimension, every instruction and ritual was where each piece of His plan for a Kingdom of God fit; it was precise and critical.

Let me illustrate this for you: Imagine if you bought a nice lot, then went to a home builder,

drew up plans and blueprints and contracted him to build that house. You went away and when you came back 6 months later there was indeed a house on your lot but it didn't look at all like the blueprints. You confront your builder and ask him: what have you done? I asked for a metal roof, I got asphalt shingles. I asked that the house be built from concrete blocks, you made it out of wood. I told you that I want carpeted floors but you gave me laminated flooring. I asked for a 2 story house, you made it just one. I said it was to be 3000 square feet, and it's only 2000 square feet. It was supposed to have a double garage and instead it has a double carport. His response is: well, yes, but you wanted 4 bedrooms, and you got 4. You asked for 3 bathrooms and you got 3. You said you wanted a living room and a den, you got all that. So, what's the problem? All the rest is just details.

The problem, of course, is that the builder didn't follow the plan. What you wound up with was substantially different than the blueprints. It was a house, but it wasn't **THE** house.

So let's take this illustration a little further. Because you're so unhappy with it you don't accept the house and so the builder gets stuck with it; he puts it up for sale, hoping to sell it to someone else. Several people come to see it, one family likes it particularly well, and they buy it. They don't have a problem with the house at all; in fact they see it as a bargain and think that it fits their needs wonderfully, just as it is. They move in and live their lives there, completely satisfied.

Of course what they don't know is that what they've bought wasn't what was originally intended; the house they live in wasn't built according to the original blueprints. Since they had never even seen the original blueprints the house they now owned and lived in seemed fine to them; it functioned OK for them; it had enough bedrooms and bathrooms, it seemed large enough; so they were happy. What they will never know unless they hear of the original blueprints and look at them carefully is how glorious and wonderful this house was supposed to have been. That what they had accepted for their house only partially resembled, or even lived up to, what had been planned. But its familiar, comfortable, and even if given the opportunity to see the original plans its likely they wouldn't want to because it might be troubling.

It's somewhat like that when we study the life of the Messiah and the coming Kingdom of God in the New Testament, **before** we study the beginning of all things, the laws and principles of the Lord, the prophecies of Messiah's coming and what the Kingdom is destined to look like, which is all contained in the Old Testament. The blueprints for the Kingdom are found in the Torah and the Prophets. The issue for the New Testament church is that it doesn't have all the information. It is perfectly satisfied with what it has without understanding that there is far more to it; because not only have most NOT read the original blueprints, many religious leaders tell us that it would be a bad thing to do. To read the original blueprints will just confuse us, or make us dissatisfied or even pull us away from the faith. In fact some will say that the divine architect threw the original blueprints away and a whole new plan has been devised, so it's really just a waste of time to study those old blueprints anyway. We should just accept how the house looks from the outside and move on.

One of the difficult issues that the Church has struggled with practically since its inception (yet,

the Bible clearly states it) is that the redemption of the gentile world is dependent on the Hebrew world. Listen to what Jesus said as He talks to the Samaritan woman by the well: **NAS John 4:19** *The woman said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. 20 "Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, and you people say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." 21 Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall you worship the Father. 22 "You worship that which you do not know; we worship that which we know, for salvation is from the Jews.*

Salvation is inextricably and organically connected to the Hebrews. Last week I stated that there is no such thing as a Biblical covenant made between God and the gentiles. There is no "gentile covenant". Every covenant made, starting with Abraham, was made between Yehoveh and the Hebrews.

That is NOT the same thing as God making provisions to bring gentiles into the fold of Israel's covenants. Making a way for gentiles to share in the Hebrew's covenants began with Abraham; not as a separate covenant for gentiles but as part of the Israelite covenants. Abraham was told that (as one of the provisions of the Abrahamic covenant) all the nations of the world would be blessed by and through Him. That necessarily means that somehow, at sometime, gentiles would have the opportunity to be included but that this blessing MUST and will ONLY occur by means of Abraham and his descendants, the Hebrews.

As a demonstration of HOW the blessing of gentiles would eventually occur and what it would look like, a means of taking a gentile foreigner into Israel in Biblical times and they're becoming a PHYSICAL member of Israel was announced to Abraham by God; it was that these foreigners would have to renounce their false gods, accept ONLY Yehoveh, the god of Israel, and live by the community rules and regulations of the Hebrews (eventually these rules and regulations would be laid down in the Torah, especially that part of Torah known as the Law).

Later, on Mt. Sinai, this was refined a little further and the ritual of male circumcision as a requirement for a foreigner to become part of Israel was included and carefully defined community rules and regulations were set down. So while that newcomer or outsider begins life as a foreigner IF he desires to be part of Israel, and IF he accepts the rules of the Hebrew covenant, then he is no longer a foreigner he is an Israelite, operating under the blessings AND curses of the covenants God made with Israel. The designation of foreigner no longer applies.

Paul, in Romans 11, makes it clear that that same principle remains in full operation even under the blood of Messiah; just as male circumcision was added as a physical requirement at Mt. Sinai, faith and trust in the Hebrew Messiah was added as a SPIRITUAL requirement under the newest covenant. With the advent of Yeshua God's set apart people begin to take on a higher and fuller spiritual essence; even more the prophetic blessing presented as a promise to Abraham.....that the nations of the world would be blessed by him.....is fulfilled.

Yet all of this takes place under the provisions of the covenants given to Israel, not outside of

them. A kinsman-redeemer is an office created under the covenants given to Israel and is only valid under the laws of Israel, found in the Torah, and not outside of them. We can't go around making up new rules and ordinances for the kinsman-redeemer because it fits our purposes and agendas.

So here's the bottom line: did Jesus reverse the Torah provisions of the Israelite kinsman-redeemer, by leaving His Israelite roots behind, going outside the Israelite covenants, creating new rules and becoming a **gentile** kinsman-redeemer (with Israel no longer being His kinsmen, and instead gentiles are now His kinsmen); or did He follow the Torah provisions of the Israelite kinsman-redeemer by remaining an Israelite and in doing so making a way for, and welcoming, gentiles into His Israelite family so He could redeem them?

Paul answers this question in a straightforward manner in Romans 11:

NAS Romans 11:17 *But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive, were grafted in among them and became partaker with them of the rich root of the olive tree, 18 do not be arrogant toward the branches; but if you are arrogant, remember that it is not you who supports the root, but the root supports you.*

NAS Romans 11:24 *For if you were cut off from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more shall these who are the natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree?*

The requirement is that WE must join Jesus' family; He doesn't join ours. The earth didn't orbit around the sun in the OT, and now in the NT the sun orbits around the earth.

Understand one final time: this is a spiritual matter, not a physical matter. Gentiles don't become physical Jews when we accept Yeshua. Nor do Jews become physical Gentiles when THEY accept Yeshua. Further, even if 99% of those who trust Yeshua for salvation don't even know that they have been grafted into Israel's covenants, they're still saved.

But, how much more we begin to understand, and how much more useful we can be, when we open ourselves to this wonderful truth.

We'll begin Leviticus 26 next week.