



# International Bible Lessons Commentary

Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series

L.G. Parkhurst, Jr.

## Leviticus 25:1-12 New Revised Standard Version May 20, 2018

The [International Bible Lesson](#) (*Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series*) for **Sunday, May 20, 2018**, is from **Leviticus 25:1-12**.

**Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** follow the verse-by-verse *International Bible Lesson Commentary*. **Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further** will help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion: these hints are available on the [International Bible Lessons Commentary](#) website along with the *International Bible Lesson* that you may want to read to your class as part of your Bible study. You can discuss each week's commentary and lesson at the [International Bible Lesson Forum](#).

**(Leviticus 25:1) The LORD spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai, saying:**

After the LORD gave the Israelites instructions for building the tabernacle so they could worship Him, He gave them time and instructions for worshipping Him rightly. The Sabbath gave them one day a week to worship the LORD and grow closer to Him, and the feast days gave them longer periods of time (a week or more at one time) to worship the LORD, study His Law, and fellowship with family and friends. Some of these feast times followed the hard work of harvest time, so today they might be considered vacations.

**(Leviticus 25:2) Speak to the people of Israel and say to them: When you enter the land that I am giving you, the land shall observe a sabbath for the LORD.**

On the Sabbath, the Israelites, their servants, and their domestic animals were to rest from all their labors. God designed people to need rest and He gave the Sabbath law to meet their need for rest. Neither people nor their work animals were to be denied the rest they all needed. Observing the Sabbath also involved faith—faith that the LORD would meet their needs even if they did not work one day a week. The LORD also wanted the land to rest, which would make it more productive. Centuries later, crop rotation was designed to accomplish the same purpose. Not plowing and planting the land for a year also required faith that a previous harvest would provide a surplus that could be saved and used the year the land was not worked. The people could also eat what grew voluntarily (grain that was not sown), but they were not to conduct a formal harvest in the seventh year.

**(Leviticus 25:3) Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard, and gather in their yield;**

The LORD required the Israelites to work their land (sow and harvest) for six years and then let the land (and themselves) rest one year. God gave this Law for their good. The Israelites could wisely use and save what they harvested during six years of production, and then use what they had saved for the seventh year. In Egypt, Joseph collected food during seven years of abundance; then, he feed the people during seven years of famine. If Egyptian farm families had followed the same principle, they would not have needed to ask Joseph for food — eventually losing their land and enslaving themselves (see Genesis 41).

**(Leviticus 25:4) but in the seventh year there shall be a sabbath of complete rest for the land, a sabbath for the LORD: you shall not sow your field or prune your vineyard.**

When the land rested, so did farm families and their workers. During this year of Sabbath rest for the land other work could be done; such as, building and repairing homes, barns, fences, and what the community needed done. In addition, the Israelites would have more time to learn about the LORD and fellowship with the LORD and one another. All of God's laws were for the benefit of His people.

---

**(Leviticus 25:5) You shall not reap the aftergrowth of your harvest or gather the grapes of your unpruned vine: it shall be a year of complete rest for the land.**

The Sabbath rest was for the land and the grapevines and the farm workers. They were not to plow or sow their fields to produce a large crop to harvest. They were not to have a formal harvest time of what the land produced during the Sabbath year. They were not to prune their grapevines to increase their grape production, but let the LORD give the growth. They were to depend on the LORD, use what they had saved from previous harvests, and glean what the land and grapevines produced voluntarily of themselves as the grain crops naturally sowed the land by themselves and the grapevines naturally produced grapes by themselves without pruning.

**(Leviticus 25:6) You may eat what the land yields during its sabbath—you, your male and female slaves, your hired and your bound laborers who live with you;**

Everyone living in Israel was permitted to glean whatever the land yielded voluntarily, in that way the needs for food of everyone in the land were met. The land belonged to the LORD, and no farmer or “land owner” was to deny food to the needy during the Sabbath year. God would provide for everyone without their working the land or their vineyards.

**(Leviticus 25:7) for your livestock also, and for the wild animals in your land all its yield shall be for food.**

They were to care for themselves and their livestock using what the land provided for them without their working the land. They must trust in the LORD, who was the Lord of the land as well as of themselves. On the other hand, if they did not work the land the other six years, the land would produce less good grain each year and they would suffer from starvation.

**(Leviticus 25:8) You shall count off seven weeks of years, seven times seven years, so that the period of seven weeks of years gives forty-nine years.**

In the Bible, the number seven is a perfect number or a number signifying completeness. Seven days complete a week. Six days after creating the world, God rested on the seventh day. Perhaps as an aid to memory, God told the Hebrews that the Year of Jubilee should begin after a period of seven weeks of years (or 7 times which equals 49 years. Scholars believe the fiftieth year would have been the Year of Jubilee (see Leviticus 25:10-11).

**(Leviticus 25:9) Then you shall have the trumpet sounded loud; on the tenth day of the seventh month—on the day of atonement—you shall have the trumpet sounded throughout all your land.**

The Year of Jubilee was to begin on the Day of Atonement, which meant that the year began after the Hebrews had made sacrifices for their sins, and their sins had been forgiven by God, and their sins removed from them by the scapegoat. The year would begin a new start in the kingdom of God and for every person. They would receive the assurance that their sins were forgiven, and those who had voluntarily enslaved themselves due to debt or other misfortunes were freed and their land was returned. In every way each person would be given a new start in life.

**(Leviticus 25:10) And you shall hallow the fiftieth year and you shall proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you: you shall return, every one of you, to your property and every one of you to your family.**

Over the course of the previous 49 years, either from misfortunes or poor choices, individuals, their descendants and families could have lost their liberty and could have sold (actually leased, because all land belonged to the LORD) their land and even themselves into servitude. The Year of Jubilee meant a new start for everyone, as though they had never lost anything. If applied according to the law of God, the value of “leased” land or “servitude” was to be measured relative to the time of the Year of Jubilee.

**(Leviticus 25:11) That fiftieth year shall be a jubilee for you: you shall not sow, or reap the aftergrowth, or harvest the unpruned vines.**

The people could prepare for the Year of Jubilee by saving part of the produce or part of their earnings from previous years, for they were forbidden to work in their fields by sowing or harvesting. Just as Joseph saved food during seven years of plenty in Egypt to prepare for seven years of famine. If they prepared, they could enjoy a year without working. They could glean what the land produced of itself, but they were forbidden to plow, sow, and reap a harvest.

**(Leviticus 25:12) For it is a jubilee; it shall be holy to you: you shall eat only what the field itself produces.**

The Hebrews were restricted from sowing and reaping (in the sense of sending out harvesters to work their fields); however, just as Jesus' disciples were allowed to walk into the fields and take what they needed for that meal or for that day, the Hebrews were allowed to do the same and "eat only what the field itself produces). The Hebrews could eat daily directly from the field, which would be a necessity for the poor, who could not save for the future. The time they did not spend working was to be set aside as "extra time" to draw closer to God and learn more about God and one another; it was not to be a time to live in sinful pleasures or idol worship.

### **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further**

1. Why do you think God established days and years of rest for people, animals, plants, and the land?
2. What are some of the possible consequences when people do not know about or disregard days of rest for themselves and/or others?
3. Why do you think the Year of Jubilee was to begin after the Day of Atonement?
4. Why do you think God gave laws for the caring of needy relatives?
5. In what ways can we make our days of rest more holy to us? What are some benefits of taking extra time and making our rest time more holy to us?

Begin or close your class by reading the short weekly *International Bible Lesson*.

Visit the [International Bible Lessons Forum](#) for Teachers and Students.

Copyright© 2018 by L.G. Parkhurst, Jr. Permission Granted for Not for Profit Use.

Contact: P.O. Box 1052, Edmond, Oklahoma, 73083 and [lgp@theiblf.com](mailto:lgp@theiblf.com).