

בשורה
Besorah!

Proclaim Liberty

Throughout the Torah (first 5 books of Moses), much mention is made of atonement for sins. Most of these refer to the sins of an individual man or woman (see Leviticus, chapters 4-15). However, we know that there is one day when the entire nation comes together to seek atonement: the Day of Atonement.

In previous issues, we have examined the various rituals ordained for that day and how Yeshua fulfilled them in His death and resurrection. But there is another, seldom-mentioned, aspect of Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) that we will look at in this issue: that, of the Year of Jubilee.

Lev 25:8,9 reads, '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. Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubilee 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'. Leviticus 25 begins by outlining a Sabbath year – every seventh year – when no plowing, planting or harvesting was to be done. Anything that grew naturally was deemed 'ownerless' and could be picked by anyone.

The Lord promised to bless the produce of the sixth year in order to sustain and enable the people to observe a year of rest.

Lev 25:10 reads, 'and ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubilee unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family'. Whereas the Sabbatical year (Heb. שבת – rest, or cease) instructed that the land was to lie untilled and all bondservants of those who were Israelites were to be set free, this 50th year was a proclamation of liberty (Heb. קרא דרור - dror means 'release') which included the Sabbath rest and extended to the release of all land. Originally distributed by lot, inherited lands that had been sold to relieve debt would revert to their ancestral ownership in the Jubilee. This preserved tribal inheritance and ensured that the majority of land would not ultimately end up in the possession of a few wealthy people. So this liberty comprises the forgiveness of all debt and the restoration of inheritance among the nation of Israel.



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Consider the fact that the 50th year follows the 49th year. During both years, there was to have been no planting, sowing or harvesting but only a reliance upon the Lord for what 'grew of itself' for each day. So the year before the Sabbatical and Jubilee years needed to produce a bumper crop. Observing a Jubilee year was truly an act of faith! Think of it: all of this originates, and emerges from, the Day of Atonement - not any other High Holy Day or Festival! The whole nation gathers before God, seeking His forgiveness of all debt and follows on to suspend planting and harvesting and to release others from all debts! Now, the prayer that Jesus taught us, 'Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors,' (Matt 6:11,12) has a certain ring to it.

Let's also remember that the Jubilee was proclaimed on a day of fasting. With that as the context, the whole chapter of Isaiah 58 has much more meaning! The very first verse employs the language of the Atonement and Jubilee: 'Cry aloud קרא - proclaim), spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet (shofar), and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.' The chapter goes on to say, 'Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not? ... Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure, and exact all your labours. ... wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the LORD? Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? When thou seest the naked, that thou cover him, etc.' The very vocabulary of this entire

chapter is an allusion to the year of Jubilee on the Day of Atonement.

Chapter 59 continues with, 'But your iniquities have separated between you and your God...' (v.2).

Isaiah wrote, 'Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry (proclaim, as above) unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD'S hand double for all her sins' (40:2). The word 'pardoned', here, is the same Hebrew word as 'acceptable', above.

If we continue reading, we arrive at Isaiah 61 which begins, 'The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty (same as Lev 25:10) to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; To proclaim the acceptable (same as Is 40:2) year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn' (vv. 1,2).

Notice again the words 'proclaim liberty' and 'acceptable year'. No wonder all eyes were fastened on Jesus when He read this passage and went on to declare, 'This day, this scripture is fulfilled in your ears'! (Luke 4:18-21)

The context of the Year of Jubilee also makes sense of Luke 6:1 which reads, 'And it came to pass on the second sabbath after the first, that he went through the corn fields; and his disciples plucked the ears of corn, and did eat, rubbing them in their hands'. In either a Sabbatical or Jubilee

year, the disciples were doing exactly what they were supposed to do. When reprimanded by the leaders, Jesus replied, 'the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath' (v. 5). Jesus then goes on to heal a man with a withered hand – on the Sabbath.

On another Sabbath, Yeshua heals a woman who had a spirit of infirmity for 18 years. When He sees her, He says, 'Woman, thou art loosed (released) from thine infirmity'. When chided for doing so, Jesus implies that her heritage, as a daughter of Abraham, was a factor! (Luke 13:12-16)

Paul uses 'Jubilee language' when he writes, 'Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet 'for-the-portion-of-our- inheritance' of the saints in light, Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins' (Col 1:12-14). One is only 'made meet' for redemption of an inheritance through the Atonement of Yeshua.

Deut 32:8 & 9 reads, 'When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel. For the LORD'S portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance. The Land (Lev 25:23) and People of Israel are the Lord's. A day is coming when the Lord will make the whole nation of Israel 'meet' for their inheritance – and His. They shall look upon Him whom they have pierced and mourn for Him as for an only Son (Zech 12:10). When He remembers His mercy and truth

toward the house of Israel, all the ends of the earth will see the Yeshua of our God (Ps 98:3)!

'Then shalt thou (Israel) delight thyself in the LORD; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it'! (Is 58:14)

We work looking forward to that day! In the meantime, 'blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered' (Ps 32:1) by the blood of Yeshua. May your name be inscribed in the Lamb's book of life,
Chrissy Rodgers

Ed note: In 1893, David Baron and C.A. Schoenberger branched out from the Mildmay Mission to the Jews to form the Hebrew Christian Testimony to Israel. In 1973, MMJ and HCTI merged back together to form the Messianic Testimony of today. This year, 2023, is the Jubilee year of that merger! As if on cue, a brother contacted us earlier this year to present us with the most extensive archive ever assembled of the life, travels and works of David Baron. Due to the sad fact that much of David Baron's writings were destroyed in the Blitz, this is a veritable treasure trove!

Work is currently being done to produce a book from all this research and documentation. As you can appreciate, it is a mammoth task, but we hope to make it available to the Body of Messiah in due course. Please pray for all involved in this project!