

The Sabbatical Year

I. What is a Sabbatical Year?

- Leviticus 25:3-5; Deuteronomy 15
- Every 7th Year the Jews were to rest from their agricultural labor, forgive all debts, and release Jewish slaves.

II. What is the purpose of a Sabbatical Year?

- **To steward the earth in a sustainable, healthy way in obedience to the Creation Mandate.**
 - This was achieved by allowing the land to lie fallow, thereby replenishing the soil's nutrients.
- **To provide for the needs of God's people.**
 - Deuteronomy 15:4-5
 - Every seven years all of God's people would be freed from their debt repayment, thereby giving a fresh start to their income. In addition, the added benefit of God's blessing their obedience would guarantee prosperity for the Jewish people.
- **To increase trust in God.**
 - Leviticus 25:6-7, 20-22
 - On the 6th year, God promised to provide a bountiful harvest that would cover the 6th, 7th, and 8th years.
 - This was clearly a miraculous promise. There was nothing inherently agriculturally significant about every 6th year that would triple the usual harvest. In fact, from a human standpoint, there would never be any promise of good crops from year to year. But God said that if the people obeyed Him, He would provide for them.

III. What does any of this have to do with modern Christians?

- **We must obey God whatever God commands.**
 - There are no excuses for not being salt and light, being baptized, observing the Lord's supper, assembling with God's people, the one-anothers, the spiritual disciplines, and the like. But from a strictly "holiday" standpoint, God doesn't command any of them.
- **Christians will celebrate God's character and deeds.**
 - You cannot be a Christian and not worship, adore, exalt, praise, and glorify everything God is and does.
 - You cannot know about and understand these things and not want to glorify God for them.
- **The Celebratory Year provides the Universal Church an opportunity to corporately worship God.**
 - It allows genuine believers who have never met each other to engage in purposeful, unified worship of God.
 - We believe that every day is a day to obey God. Every day is the perfect day to serve Him and celebrate Him. And that means that every day is an important day to trust Him.
 - There are so many ways that we can dedicate intentional time to recognizing how God would have us steward creation.
 - There are significant implications in the Scriptures concerning debt and forgiveness and paying off our debt and loving our neighbors.
 - And there are earthshaking expectations from God when it comes to practical, real-life, empty-handed trust in God.