

Parashat Behar

פרשת בהר

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What is up with the Year of Jubilee?

השבועות הזה קוראים / This Week's Reading

תורה: Leviticus 25:1-26:2

הפטרה: Jeremiah 32:6-27

הברית: Luke 21-22

החדשה

Triennial cycle: Vayikra / Leviticus 251:1-25:28

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Parashat Behar is Hebrew for "on the mount" or "on the mountain," it is the fifth word, and the first distinctive word, in the parashah from the 32nd weekly Torah portion (parashah) in the annual cycle of reading the Torah and the ninth parashah in the book of *Vayikra / Leviticus*. In this week's reading we find the mitzvah (command) when entering the Promised Land to observe a year of Jubilee (Yovel). The year of Jubilee begins with a joyful shout with trumpets. During this year, the land was to be fallow, not to be seeded (25:1-12), all property was to revert back to its original owner (25:13-28), all slaves were to be set free (25:39-54), and all debts were to be released. The year of Jubilee is a very important festival but did you know there is no record in Scripture of the actual observance of this festival? There are however a few places in scripture that allude to the festival, let's look at a few of them this week.

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ויקרא 25:23-28

23 בּוֹא תְבוֹאֲתָהּ תֵאכְלוּ יִשְׁן׃ וְהָאָרֶץ לֹא תִמְכַּר לְצַמְתָּת

24 כִּי־לִי הָאָרֶץ כִּי־גֵרִים וְתוֹשְׁבִים אַתֶּם עַמִּדִּי׃ וּבְכָל

אֶרֶץ אַחֲזַתְכֶם נֹאכְלָה תִתְּנוּ לָאָרֶץ׃

25 כִּי־יִמּוֹךְ אַחִיךָ וּמָכַר מֵאֲחֻזָּתוֹ וּבָא גֹאֲלוֹ הַקָּרֵב

26 אֵלָיו וּנְגָל אֶת מִמְכָר אַחִיו׃ וְאִישׁ כִּי לֹא יִהְיֶה־לּוֹ גֹאֵל

27 וְהִשְׁיֵנָה יָדוֹ וּמִצָּא כִדִּי גֹאֲלָתוֹ׃ וְחָשַׁב אֶת־שְׁנֵי מִמְכָּרוֹ

וְהָשִׁיב אֶת־הָעֶדְוָה לְאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר מָכַר־לוֹ וְשָׁב לְאַחֲזָתוֹ׃

28 וְאִם לֹא־מִצָּאָה יָדוֹ דֵּי הָשִׁיב לוֹ וְהָיָה מִמְכָּרוֹ בְּיַד

הַקֹּנֵה אֹתוֹ עַד שְׁנַת הַיּוֹבֵל וַיֵּצֵא בְּיָבֵל וְשָׁב לְאַחֲזָתוֹ׃

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Searching through the Scriptures, we do not find mention of an actual observance of the Jubilee year. However, there are two places that allude to the Jubilee year found in *Nehemiah 5* and *Divrei Hayyamim alef / 1 Chronicles 36:21*.

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Vayikra / Leviticus 25:23-28

25:23 'The land, moreover, shall not be sold permanently, for the land is Mine; for you are but aliens and sojourners with Me.

25:24 'Thus for every piece of your property, you are to provide for the redemption of the land. 25:25 'If a fellow countryman of yours becomes so poor he has to sell part of his property, then his nearest kinsman is to come and buy back what his relative has sold. 25:26 'Or in case a man has no kinsman, but so recovers his means as to find sufficient for its redemption, 25:27 then he shall calculate the years since its sale and refund the balance to the man to whom he sold it, and so return to his property.

25:28 'But if he has not found sufficient means to get it back for himself, then what he has sold shall remain in the hands of its purchaser until the year of jubilee; but at the jubilee it shall revert, that he may return to his property.

(NASB)

Nehemiah 5:1-19

5:1 Now there was a great outcry of the people and of their wives against their Jewish brothers. 5:2 For there were those who said, 'We, our sons and our daughters are many; therefore let us get grain that we may eat and live.' 5:3 There were others who said, 'We are mortgaging our fields, our vineyards and our houses that we might get grain because of the famine.' 5:4 Also there were those who said, 'We have borrowed money for the king's tax on our fields and our vineyards. 5:5 'Now our flesh is like the flesh of our brothers, our children like their children. Yet behold, we are forcing our sons and our daughters to be slaves, and some of our daughters are forced into bondage already, and we are helpless because our fields and vineyards belong to others.' 5:6 Then I was very angry when I had heard their outcry and these words. 5:7 I consulted with myself and contended with the nobles and the rulers and said to them, 'You are exacting usury, each from his brother!' Therefore, I held a great assembly against them. 5:8 I said to them, 'We according to our ability have redeemed our Jewish brothers who were sold to the nations; now would you even sell your brothers that they may be sold to us?' Then they were silent and could not find a word to say. 5:9 Again I said, 'The thing which you are doing is not good; should you not walk in the fear of our God because of the reproach of the nations, our enemies? 5:10 'And likewise I, my brothers and my servants are lending them money and grain. Please, let us leave off this usury. 5:11 'Please, give back to them this very day their fields, their vineyards, their olive groves and their houses, also the hundredth part of the money and of the grain, the new wine and the oil that you are exacting from them.' 5:12 Then they said, 'We will give it back and will require nothing from them; we will do exactly as you say.' So I called the priests and took an oath from them that they would do according to this promise. 5:13 I also shook out the front of my garment and said, 'Thus may God shake out every man from his house and from his possessions who does not fulfill this promise; even thus may he be shaken out and emptied.' And all the assembly said, 'Amen!' And they praised the Lord. Then the people did according to this promise. 5:14 Moreover, from the day that I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, from the twentieth year to the thirty-second year of King Artaxerxes, for twelve years, neither I nor my kinsmen have eaten the governor's food allowance. 5:15 But the former governors who were before me laid burdens on the people and took from them bread and wine besides forty shekels of silver; even their servants domineered the people. But I did not do so because of the fear of God. 5:16 I also applied myself to the work on this wall; we did not buy any land, and all my servants were gathered there for the work. 5:17 Moreover, there were at my table one hundred and fifty Jews and officials, besides those who came to us from the nations that were around us. 5:18 Now that which was prepared for each day was one ox and six choice sheep, also birds were prepared for me; and once in ten days all sorts of wine were furnished in abundance. Yet for all this I did not demand the governor's food allowance, because the servitude was heavy on this people. 5:19

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80 *Remember me, O my God, for good, according to all that I have done for this people. (NASB)*

1 Chronicles 36:21

85 *36:21 to fulfill the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed its sabbaths. All the days of its desolation it kept sabbath until seventy years were complete.*

90 Reading through *Nehemiah 5*, the people were not practicing the Yovel festival as it was commanded in the Torah, *there was a great outcry of the people and of their wives against their Jewish brothers. (5:1)* The advantages of the mitzvah (command) of the Jubilee (Yovel) year was to prevent the accumulation of land on the part of the few to the detriment of the community at large. What was happening in Nehemiah's time was that the people were struggling to feed their families and were selling their families into slavery to do so. The Yovel year also was to prevent one from being born into poverty, and prevent the inequalities which are produced by the extremes of the rich and the poor which allows one man to rule over another. This also would completely do away with slavery and allow the people a fresh opportunity to restart their careers and taking care of their families in freedom. This was not a form of socialism because each person had their own individual land inheritance they could manage and make money and provide for their families on an individual bases. (Note in Parashat Ekev, Sefer Devarim 8:18 that God gives us the ability to work so that He can confirm the covenant he made with Abraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov. You may ask how God confirms His covenant by giving us the ability to work? The confirmation of the covenant is found in the return of the inheritance, the land to the people, and the ability to take care of their families.) On the other hand, socialism is the collective ownership and redistribution of goods which is contrary to God's command, contrary to the Torah. The Yovel year was designed to repair the disorder that crept into the state over the course of time to preserve the **theocracy**. The Jubilee year acknowledges the sovereignty of God as the possessor of the land that we own. The proclamation of the Jubilee year takes place as a period of Shabbats described as *"seven weeks of years, seven times seven years."* (*Vayikra / Leviticus 25:8*) so that the period of seven weeks of years gives (7X7=49) 49 years. Then the trumpet is blown on the 50th year, known as the Jubilee Year. This was then proclaimed as "good news to the poor" because of the return of ownership of their property.

115 The essential message of the Year of Jubilee is that God is at work to restore and vindicate His people. Did you know, there is a parallel found in *Isaiah 61* with the command of the Yovel year? *Isaiah 61* identifies the year of the Lord with an emphasis on redemption, liberty, favor, and good news. In 120 *Isaiah 61* we find that God is at work in the historical events to renew and restore His people. The connection to the Jubilee year is made in *61:2* which says *"To proclaim the favorable year of the Lord ..."* here the prophet Isaiah is proclaiming liberty (freedom) to the captive and proclaiming the year of the Lord. The phrase "the year of the Lord" may be a reference to an entire year that is marked by the 125 rest and peace that is found by resting and being at peace with God. Yeshua read this section from the Prophets (Neviim) when he read from the Torah scroll in the

Note that the **theocracy** was a system where the priests would rule in the name of the Lord. The Israeli theocracy was in effect from the time the Torah was given by Moshe until Saul became king. When the people asked for a king, they were essentially rejecting the Torah command of the Yovel year and rejecting the idea that the Word of the Lord was to govern their lives. How often do we reject the Word of God that should be governing our lives?

synagogue as it says in *Luke 4:18-29*. The most interesting point of reading *Isaiah 61*, is that the good news, restoration of the poor, the comforting of those who mourn, the rebuilding of the ancient ruins the rebuilding of the city (*61:1-4*), the restoration of this type results in the people becoming Cohanim (priests) and being called the Ministers of God. In addition to this, the scripture says in *Yeshaya / Isaiah 61:9-10 All who see them will recognize them Because they are the offspring whom the Lord has blessed. 61:10 I will rejoice greatly in the Lord, My soul will exult in my God; For He has clothed me with garments of salvation, He has wrapped me with a robe of righteousness, As a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, And as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. (NASB)*

Cohen, priests

Do you know of any parallels in Scripture that describe the condition where God does for us as Isaiah says "*he has clothed me with the garments of*

salvation; he has covered me with the robe of righteousness." First, read the section of scriptures from Yeshaya / Isaiah 61:1-11. *61:1 The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, Because the Lord has anointed me To bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to captives And freedom to prisoners; 61:2 To proclaim the favorable year of the Lord And the day of vengeance of our God; To comfort all who mourn, 61:3 To grant those who mourn in*

Zion, Giving them a garland instead of ashes, The oil of gladness instead of mourning, The mantle of praise instead of a spirit of fainting. So they will be called oaks of righteousness, The planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified. 61:4 Then they will rebuild the ancient ruins, They will

רוח אדני יהוה עלי יען משח יהוה אתי לבשר עניים
 שלחני לחבש לנשכרי-לב לקרא לשבויים דרוור
 ולאסורים פקח-קוח: לקרא שנת-דצון ליהוה ויום
 נקם לאלהינו לנחם כל-אבלים: לשום לאבלי ציון
 לתת להם פאר תחת אפר שמן ששון תחת אבל
 מעטה תהלה תחת רוח פהה וקרא להם אילי
 הצדק מטע יהוה להתפאר: וקנו חרבות עולם
 שממות ראשנים יקוממו וחדשו ערי הרב שממות
 דרוור: ועמדו ורים ורעו צאנכם ובני נכר אפריכם
 וכרמיכם: ואתם פהני יהוה תקראו משרתי אלהינו
 יאמר לכם חיל גוים האכלו ובכבודם תתימרו:
 תחת בשתכם משנה וכלמה ירנו חלקם לבן בארצם
 משנה יירשו שמחת עולם תהנה להם: פי אני יהוה
 אהב משפט שא נול בעולה ונתתי פעלתם באמת
 ובכרית עולם אכרות להם: ונדע פגוים ורשם
 וצאצאיהם בתוך העמים כלדאיהם ופירוים פי הם
 זרע בקר יהוה:
 שוש אשיש ביהוה תגל נפשי פאלוי פי הלבישני
 בגדי-ישע מעיל צדקה יעטני כחתן יכהן פאר וכפלה
 תערה כליה: פי בארץ תוציא צמחה וכנגה ורושה
 תצמיח בן אדני יהוה יצמיח צדקה ותהלה נגד כל
 סב הגוים: למען ציון לא אחשה ולמען ירושלם לא

raise up the former devastations; And they will repair the ruined cities, The desolations of many generations. 61:5 Strangers will stand and pasture your flocks, And foreigners will be your farmers and your vinedressers. 61:6 But you will be called the priests of the Lord; You will be spoken of as ministers of our God. You will eat the wealth of nations, And in their riches you will boast. 61:7 Instead of your shame you will have a double portion, And instead of humiliation they will shout for joy over their portion. Therefore they will possess a double portion in their land, Everlasting joy will be theirs. 61:8 For I, the Lord, love justice, I hate robbery in the burnt offering; And I will faithfully give them their recompense And make an everlasting covenant with them. 61:9 Then their offspring will be known among the nations, And their descendants in the midst of the peoples. All who see them will recognize them Because they are the offspring whom the Lord has blessed. 61:10 I will rejoice greatly in the Lord, My soul will exult in my God; For

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He has clothed me with garments of salvation, He has wrapped me with a robe of righteousness, As a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, And as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. 61:11 For as the earth brings forth its sprouts, And as a garden causes the things sown in it to spring up, So the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise To spring up before all the nations. (NASB)

The following is a summary of what we know about the Jubilee year. Yisrael rested 1 day in 7 on the Shabbat (Sabbath Day, *Shemot / Exodus 20:8-11*), Yisrael and the land rested 1 year in 7 called the Shabbat Year (*Shemot / Exodus 23:10-11 and Vayikra / Leviticus 25:1-7*), Yisrael and the land rested every 7 X 7 years (*Vayikra / Leviticus 25:8, Daniel 9:24-27*), Yisrael's economy was founded upon redemption and the Shabbat (i.e. the kinsman redeemer (*Vayikra / Leviticus 25:25-55, Sefer Ruth*)). If a person did not have a wealthy and loving relative to redeem them then God redeemed them on the Year of Jubilee. All Israelite slaves were freed, all debts were forgiven and every Israeli got their land back (they returned to their inheritance). The year of Jubilee was to be celebrated every 49 years and the year began on the same day as Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement, *Vayikra / Leviticus 25:8-9, 16:29, and Daniel 9:24-27*). When the Ram's horn sounded the people were freed, debts were forgiven and returned to their land (*Vayikra / Leviticus 25:13, 23-34, see also Isaiah 58*).

To fully understand the concept of the Jubilee and how it is applied to us today, let's examine Romans chapter 8. *Romans 8:1*, says "Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." *Romans 8:1* proclaim the jubilee of Christ in that now there is no *katakrima* (condemnation) for those who are in Yeshua the Messiah.

Romans 8:1-11

8 οὐδὲν ἄρα νῦν κατάκριμα τοῖς ἐν χριστῷ ἰησοῦ μὴ κατὰ
2 σάρκα περιπατοῦσιν ἀλλὰ κατὰ πνεῦμα . ὁ γὰρ νόμος τοῦ πνεύ-
ματος τῆς ζωῆς ἐν χριστῷ ἰησοῦ ἠλευθέρωσέν με ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου
3 τῆς ἁμαρτίας καὶ τοῦ θανάτου . τὸ γὰρ ἀδύνατον τοῦ νόμου ἐν
ῶ ἡσθένει διὰ τῆς σαρκὸς ὁ θεὸς τὸν ἑαυτοῦ υἱὸν πέμψας ἐν
ὁμοιώματι σαρκὸς ἁμαρτίας καὶ περὶ ἁμαρτίας κατέκρινεν τὴν
ἁμαρτίαν ἐν τῇ σαρκί . ἵνα τὸ δικαίωμα τοῦ νόμου πληρωθῇ 4
ἐν ἡμῖν τοῖς μὴ κατὰ σάρκα περιπατοῦσιν ἀλλὰ κατὰ πνεῦμα .
οἱ γὰρ κατὰ σάρκα ὄντες τὰ τῆς σαρκὸς φρονοῦσιν οἱ δὲ κατὰ 5
πνεῦμα τὰ τοῦ πνεύματος . τὸ γὰρ φρόνημα τῆς σαρκὸς θά- 6
νατος τὸ δὲ φρόνημα τοῦ πνεύματος ζωὴ καὶ εἰρήνη . διότι τὸ 7
φρόνημα τῆς σαρκὸς ἔχθρα εἰς θεὸν τῷ γὰρ νόμῳ τοῦ θεοῦ οὐχ
ὑποτάσσεται οὐδὲ γὰρ δύναται . οἱ δὲ ἐν σαρκί ὄντες θεῷ ἀρέ- 8
σαι οὐ δύνανται . ὑμεῖς δὲ οὐκ ἐστέ ἐν σαρκί ἀλλ' ἐν πνεύματι 9
εἶπερ πνεῦμα θεοῦ οἰκεῖ ἐν ὑμῖν εἰ δέ τις πνεῦμα χριστοῦ οὐκ
ἔχει οὗτος οὐκ ἔστιν αὐτοῦ . εἰ δὲ χριστὸς ἐν ὑμῖν τὸ μὲν σῶμα 10
νεκρὸν δι' ἁμαρτίαν τὸ δὲ πνεῦμα ζωὴ διὰ δικαιοσύνην . εἰ δὲ 11
τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ ἐγείραντος ἰησοῦν ἐκ νεκρῶν οἰκεῖ ἐν ὑμῖν ὁ ἐ-
γείρας τὸν χριστὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν ζωοποιήσει καὶ τὰ θνητὰ σώματα
ὑμῶν διὰ τὸ ἔνοικον αὐτοῦ πνεῦμα ἐν ὑμῖν . ἄρα οὖν ἀδελ-

Romans 8:3 says "For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh ..." as we see in the Scriptures, the mitzvah of the Yovel year did not appear

Romans 8:1-11

8:1 Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. 8:2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. 8:3 For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin. He condemned sin in the flesh. 8:4 so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. 8:5 For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. 8:6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, 8:7 because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so 8:8 and those who are in the flesh cannot please God. 8:9 However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him. 8:10 If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness. 8:11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. (NASB)

215 to be celebrated. According to *Nehemiah 5*, the weakness of the flesh and the
greed of the flesh kept the people from setting their own brothers and sisters free
from bondage. It wasn't until they swore an oath to God that they did as God
commanded. There is a parallel here, the weakness of the flesh and sin. *Romans*
220 *8:3-4* goes on to say "...God did sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful
flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, 8:4 so that the
requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the
flesh but according to the Spirit." If we are unable to redeem ourselves (redeem
ourselves from sin) God redeems us based upon the law of the kinsman redeemer.
225 Because of the weakness of the flesh, and because we are in sin, we are unable to
set ourselves free from sin bondage on our own. Yeshua said that if you abide in
me and I abide in you then we will live because of Him (*John 6:50-58*). The
apostle Paul understood this saying that *8:10 If Christ is in you, though the body*
is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness. 8:11 But if
the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised
Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His
Spirit who dwells in you. Praise the Lord, in Yeshua the Messiah, the Yovel
(Jubilee) is proclaimed, and we are set free.

230 Based on our study of the Yovel (Jubilee) year, the Year of Jubilee
foreshadows the restoration of all who place their faith in Yeshua the Messiah. In
Yeshua the Messiah, God has established the true liberty (freedom) of the
children of God and the deliverance of creation from the bondage of sin
(corruption). Therefore, I can say with confidence that the Yovel Year (Jubilee
Year) was commanded, prophesied, and modeled in the Tanach, and then
235 proclaimed in Yeshua HaMoshiach (Jesus the Messiah/Christ) in the Ketuvei
Shelachim (Apostolic Writings). The year of Jubilee is favor found in a personal
relationship with God by faith, and a life lived in our Lord and Savior Yeshua
(Jesus).

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250 **What to pray:** *Ask the Lord to help you to enter into His Yovel year in Yeshua
the Messiah so that your life may be set free from the burden of sin.*

Be Blessed in Yeshua, Christ our Messiah!

255 הללויה לאדוננו מורנו ורבינו ישוע מלך המשיח לעולם ועד:
Hallelujah for our Lord, our Teacher, our Rabbi,
"Yeshua" King Messiah forever and ever