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NEW!!! 9/24/07

## Keeping the Sabbath & Jubilee Years...

# For a Prosperous Sustainable Agricultural Economy

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**W**e began to keep the land Sabbath on the Ambassador College Farm Program in Big Sandy, Texas in 1972-73 based on studies in the Bible and history.

In keeping the land Sabbath we did research and taught about how to keep it for those wanting to reap God's promised blessings. As a result we also received many letters telling of the blessings that many of those who kept the Sabbath year had received.

God's written Word in the Bible teaches mankind how to be successful and prosper in every right endeavor (Josh 1:7-8; Isa 28:23-29). This is especially true for agriculture, for God has the power to give rain in due season and rebuke the devourer for those who obey Him (Lev 26:4; Mal 3:11). The 7th year land Sabbath (rest) is a true basis for rebuilding the land and maintaining a healthful sustainable agriculture.

Below is a brief outline of some of the principles we learned from keeping the Sabbath year and in our studies and their application.

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**M**uch of the world is suffering from poverty, disease, famine, natural disasters and every other imaginable and unimaginable kind of curse. What are the causes? Has God abandoned the world?

The truth is mankind, for the most part, has ignored or abandoned God and His divine instruction and wisdom revealed in His Word, the Holy Scriptures of the Bible!

Ambassador College was founded in 1948 (a Sabbath Year) in Pasadena, California for the purpose of training ambassadors to proclaim the gospel (Good News) of the "World Tomorrow" - representing the soon coming Kingdom of God. The motto of the college and all of its programs was "Recapture True Values." Ambassador College agricultural programs were established in the 60's on the AC campuses in Big Sandy, Texas and Bricket Wood, England to learn "True Values" in caring for God's creation. For when God created man, He said to them,

***"Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth" (Gen***

1:28).

***"Then the Lord God took the man and put him in the garden in Eden to tend and keep it" (Gen 2:15).***

God showed the man the earth and every living thing He had created and gave him instruction on how to fulfill his responsibilities (Gen 2:19-20). And He commanded him:

***"Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat;  
"but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for when you eat of it, you shall surely die" (Gen 2:17-18 - see the articles, ["Choices of Life"](#), ["World Crisis in Agriculture"](#) and ["Conquest of the Land Through 7,000 Years"](#)).***

We all know the rest of the story...Adam and Eve were tempted by Satan, the adversary of God and man, and ignored God's instruction (Gen 3)... the rest is history.

So why keep the Sabbatical and Jubilee years commanded by God in the Bible, His instruction manual for mankind? The following are reasons we learned by studying His instructions and discovered by keeping it (Psa 111:10).

## **PURPOSES OF THE SABBATH AND JUBILEE YEARS:**

### **Sabbaths are a Sign and Proof of God and those who believe and obey Him**

The Sabbaths are a sign between God and His people, those who believe and trust in Him (Ex 31:12-17; Eze 20:12-20). God said:

***"Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep, for they are a sign between Me and You throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the Lord who sanctifies you.***

***"You shall keep the Sabbath, therefore, for it is holy to you. Everyone who profanes ("chalal," to profane, defile, pollute, make common, to loose, to break - the desecration of something that is holy) it shall surely die; for anyone that does business thereon, that person shall be cut off from among His people" (Ex 31:13-14).***

God warned of the consequences of not keeping the precepts of the Sabbath year:

***"I will scatter you among the nations... your land shall be desolate...***

***"Then the land shall enjoy its Sabbaths as long as it lies desolate and you are in your enemies land; then the land shall rest and enjoy its Sabbaths.***

***"As long as it lies desolate it shall rest, for the time it did not rest on your Sabbaths when you dwelt in it" (Lev 26:33-35).***

When Hezekiah asked the prophet Isaiah to intercede with God to deliver the nation of Judah from the Assyrian armies God gave them a sign that He would deliver them.

***"This shall be a sign to you: You shall eat this year such as grows of itself, and the second year what springs from the same; also in the third year sow and reap..." (2 Kgs 19:29; Isa 37:30).***

These were signs of keeping the Sabbath and Jubilee years (Lev 25:6,12), which Israel and Judah had forgotten.

## Sabbaths are a Test Commandment

The Sabbaths are a test commandment to *"prove the people whether they would walk in God's law or not"* (Ex 16:4-30). As part of the fourth commandment, the Sabbath and Jubilee years are a test of faith for God's people to obey and trust Him to bless them and provide their needs (Lev 25:20-22; 26:2-12; Neh 5).

*"And if you say, 'What shall we eat in the seventh year, since we shall not sow nor gather in our produce?'*

*"Then I will command My blessing on you in the sixth year, and it shall bring forth produce enough for three years"* (Lev 25:20-21).

## Sabbatical Year is a Time of Rest

The Sabbath and Jubilee years were given to provide a "sabbatical rest" for the land and for man, requiring farmers to take a break from their regular pursuit for profit and wealth, learning to trust God to provide.

The Sabbaths (meaning rest) allow the farmer and his family free time, a rest, from many of the usual farming activities and work such as tilling, planting, harvesting, pruning, etc.

*"Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard, and gather its fruit;*

*"but in the seventh year there shall be a Sabbath of solemn rest for your land, a Sabbath to the Lord. You shall neither sow your field nor prune your vineyard (not pruning the vineyard and fruit trees allows them to return more energy into their roots, thus strengthening the root system).*

*"...for it is a year of rest for the land.*

*"And the Sabbath produce of the land shall be food for you; for you and your servant... for the stranger who sojourns with you,*

*"for your livestock and the animals that are in your land - all its produce shall be for food"* (Lev 25:3-7).

This gives farmers the opportunity to draw closer to God and devote more time to planning, learning, building, making repairs, improvements, etc., as well as time for traveling and keeping God's Feasts to learn God's laws and useful knowledge and wisdom from others (Deut 31:10-13).

## Sabbath Year a Time for Planning & Management

The Sabbath and Jubilee years were given by God as physical and spiritual laws and principles for planning and management to help bring success. The Sabbath year is the basis for developing a 7-year management plan, encouraging diversification to include livestock, and requiring rest and rotation of the land and crops to maintain and build soil fertility and maintain the ecology (Lev 25:2-7). The Jubilee is the basis for a 50 year plan, which keeps a family's farm property in the family so it can be passed on to the succeeding generations.

***"So you shall observe My statutes and keep My judgments, and perform them; and you shall dwell in the land in safety.***

***"Then the land will yield its fruit, and you will eat your fill, and dwell there in safety"***  
(Lev 25:18-19).

***"And you shall consecrate the 50th year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a Jubilee for you; and each of you shall return to his possession, and each of you shall return to his family"*** (Lev 25:10).

## **A Sabbath for Rest & Renewal of the Land**

The Sabbath year and Jubilee year provide a Rest for the renewal of the land.

***"Six years you shall sow your land and gather in its produce,  
"but the seventh year you shall let it rest and lie fallow, that the poor of your people may eat; what they leave, the beasts of the field may eat. In like manner you shall do with your vineyard and your olive grove"*** (Ex 23:10-11).

***"...in the seventh year there shall be a Sabbath of solemn rest for the land, a Sabbath to the Lord. You shall neither sow your field nor prune your vineyard.***

***"...it is a year of rest for the land...***

***"That fiftieth year shall be a Jubilee to you; in it you shall neither sow nor reap what grows of its own accord, nor gather of your untended vine.***

***"For it is the Jubilee; it shall be holy to you; you shall eat its produce from the field...***

***"Then the land shall yield its fruit, and you will eat your fill, and dwell in the land in safety.***

***"And if you say, 'What shall we eat in the seventh year, since we shall not sow nor gather in our produce?'***

***"Then I will command My blessings on you in the sixth year, and it will bring forth produce enough for three years.***

***"And you shall sow in the eighth year, and eat old produce until the ninth year; until the produce comes in, you shall eat of the old harvest"*** (Lev 25:3-4,11-12).

Throughout history, man has exploited the land, which caused erosion and depletion of soil fertility and productivity and resulted in the downfall of many civilizations of the past (see ["Conquest of the Land Through 7,000 Years."](#) Agricultural Information Bulletin No. 99, U.S.D.A and ["Ill Fared the Land"](#)).

The principles of the land rest are principles of soil conservation for maintaining and improving soil fertility, rediscovered by the U.S.D.A. Soil Conservation Service, which was established because of the "dust bowl" of the 1930's in the U.S. For more understanding of soils and sustainable soil management principles see ["Keys to Understanding Soil's & Soil Testing for Sustainable Soil Management"](#) and ["Soil Biotechnology for Profitable & Sustainable Agricultural Systems"](#).

## **A Law for Maintaining a Sound & Prosperous Economy**

The Sabbath and Jubilee years were given as national laws to help maintain a sound and prosperous economy in the nation as a whole and for the welfare of the people in the nation.

For example, the 7th year is a law requiring the release of debts (Deut 15:1-11) to prevent the growth of an unsound boom and bust economy based of a credit-debt system that allows the rich to enslave the people (Jer 34:8-11) and rob future generations.

***"At the end of every seven years you shall grant a release of debts. And this is the form of the release: Every creditor who has lent anything to his neighbor shall release it; he shall not require it of his neighbor or his brother, because it is called the Lord's release.***

***"Of a foreigner you may require it; but your hand shall release what is owed by your brother, ceasing until there be no poor among you; for the Lord shall greatly bless you in the land which the Lord your God gives you to possess as an inheritance.***

***"Only if you carefully hearken onto the voice of the Lord your God, to observe to do all these commandments which I command you today.***

***"For the Lord your God will bless you just as He promised you; you shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow; you shall reign over many nations, but they shall not reign over you...***

***"Beware lest there be a wicked thought in your heart, saying, 'The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand,' and your eye be evil against your poor brother and you give him nothing, and he cry out to the Lord against you, and it become sin among you.***

***"You shall surely give to him, and your heart should not be grieved when you give to him, because for this thing the Lord your God shall bless you in all your works and in all to which you put your hand...***

***"therefore I command you, saying, 'You shall open your hand wide to your brother, to your poor and your needy, in your land.'***

***"If your brother, a Hebrew man, or a Hebrew woman, is sold to you and serves you six years, then in the seventh year you shall let him go free from you.***

***"And when you send him away free from you, you shall not let him go away empty-handed;***

***"you shall supply him liberally from your flock, from your threshing floor, and from your winepress; from what the Lord has blessed you with, you shall give to him" (Deut 15:1-14).***

Releasing debts every 7th year and restoring every family's inheritance at the end of every 49 years protects the family's ability to produce their own needs and survive. This in turn would protect the nation preventing poverty and the great depression cycles that would inevitably result, as history has shown by the great depression cycles that have occurred about every 50 years. Interestingly, the U.S. government instituted bankruptcy laws in the 1930's, a form of the year of release, stopping the avalanche of about 250,000 farmers a year from losing their land, helping restore the economy during the great depression. The U.S. has not had a great depression since, even though other economic laws given by God are being ignored. (see Neh 5).

Closely related to this are the laws against charging usury (excessive interest) and requiring a pledge for a loan, systems that allow the rich to exploit and oppress others through excessive interest, foreclosures and inflation (Ex 22:25-27; Lev 25:35-38; Deut 24:6, 10-17; Neh 5).

## **Sabbath Year Includes Welfare for the Poor**

The Sabbath and Jubilee years are a form of a welfare system requiring a generous and giving attitude by



allowing the poor to eat in the fields.

***"The seventh year you shall let it rest and lie fallow, that the poor of your people may eat; and what they leave, the beasts of the field may eat. In like manner you shall do with your vineyard and your olive grove" (Ex 23:11).***

This is closely related to other laws that allow the poor and stranger to glean the fields and vineyards (Lev 19:9-10; Ruth 2).

## **A Law Protecting Property Rights**

The Jubilee is a law guaranteeing private ownership of land by requiring the return of property to their original families at the end of every 49-year cycle (Lev 25:23-28). This law also gives a sound basis for the proper evaluation of land preventing speculation and inflation of land values, which often cause a boom/bust economy even as in today's mortgage market. It also prevents most of the productive land resources being taken over and owned by a few rich individuals.

***"And if you sell anything to your neighbor or buy from your neighbor's hand, you shall not oppress one another.***

***"According to the number of years after the Jubilee you shall buy from your neighbor, and according to the number of the years of crops he shall sell to you.***

***"According to the multitude of years you shall increase its price, and according to the fewer number of years you shall diminish its price; for he sells to you according to the number of the years of the crops...***

***"The land shall not be sold permanently, for the land is Mine; for you are strangers and sojourners with Me.***

***"And in all the land of your possession you shall grant redemption of the land.***

***"If one of your brethren becomes poor, and has sold of his possessions, and if his kinsman-redeemer comes to redeem it, then he may redeem what his brother sold.***

***"Or if the man has come to redeem it, and he himself becomes able to redeem it, then let him count the years since its sale, and restore the balance to the man to whom he sold it, that he may return to his possession.***

***"But if he is not able to have it restored to himself, then what was sold shall remain in the hand of him who bought it until the Year of Jubilee; and in the Jubilee it shall be released, and he shall return to his possession.***

***"And if a man sells a house in a walled city, then he may redeem it within a whole year after it is sold... But if it is not redeemed within the space of a full year, then the house in the walled city shall belong permanently to him who bought it, throughout his generations. It shall not be released in the Jubilee" (Lev 25:14-16; 23-30).***

This law protects the agricultural property rights of families from foreclosure by both debt and taxes as a guarantee maintaining individual security and opportunity and stabilizing the economy against inflation and depressions.

## **A Law protecting Our Freedoms from Oppression & Slavery**

The Sabbath and Jubilee years are also laws protecting against the oppression and permanent enslaving of brethren (Ex 21:2; Deut 15:12-15; Lev 25:39-55). They guarantee freedom and equal opportunity except for repayment of debt and crimes.

***"If you buy a Hebrew servant, he shall serve six years; and in the seventh he shall go out free and pay nothing" (Ex 21:2).***

But, ***"If a man steals an ox or a sheep, and slaughters it or sells it, he shall restore five oxen for an ox and four sheep for a sheep..."***

***"He should make full restitution; if he has nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft.***

***"If the theft is certainly found alive in his hand...he shall restore double" (Ex 22:1,3-4).***

There was no need for a huge prison system where criminals live free off the government (the people) as is the case in much of the world today while the victims are left without restitution of their losses. Criminals were indentured to their victims or whoever they sold them to till they paid their criminal debt or until the year of release.

When the wealthy in the nation of Judah abused and enslaved their poorer brethren, God warned them through Jeremiah to obey the seventh year of release. They obeyed temporarily, but when the Babylonian army that fought against them left, they reneged, taking back their Jewish slaves. Then soon after they were taken into captivity by Babylon's army (Jer 34:8-22).

## **A Time for Teaching God's Laws of Blessings**

The Sabbath and Jubilee years are appointed as times for teaching and restoring God's law throughout the nation.

***"At the end of every seven years, at the appointed time in the year of release, at the Feast of Tabernacles,***

***"when all Israel comes to appear before the Lord your God in the place which He chooses, you shall read this law before all Israel in their hearing..."***

***"that they may learn to fear (respect) the Lord your God and carefully observe all the words of this law..." (Deut 31:10-13; Mal 4:4).***

***"Now it shall come to pass, if you diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God, to observe carefully all His commandments..."***

***"all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you..."***

***"Blessed shall be the the fruit of your body, the produce of your ground and the increase of your herds, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flocks..." (Deut 28:1-4... see ["Cattle Nutrition & Health Program"](#)).***

***"You shall keep My Sabbaths..."***

***"If you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments, and perform them,***

***"then I will give you rain in due season, the land shall yield its produce, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit.***

***"Your thrashing shall last till the time of vintage, and the vintage shall last till the time of sowing; you shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land safely..." (Lev 26:2-***

5...).

In the Sabbath and Jubilee years, the people were free from many of the regular burdens of farm work. It is a time God appointed requiring everyone, all the people including men, women, children, and aliens to attend the Feast of Tabernacles and the law was to be read before all Israel so,

***"that they may hear and that they may learn to fear the Eternal your God and observe to do all the words of the law."***

In other years, not all were required to attend (Deut 16:16). Many times God restored His law to Israel in Sabbath and Jubilee years (Neh 5:8; 9; 10:29-39).

## **Sabbath & Jubilee Years are Part of Prophetic Calendar**

The Sabbath and Jubilee years are part of God's calendar for keeping track of significant historic and prophetic events. Many significant historic events recorded in the Bible and fulfillments of prophecies have and will occur in Sabbath and Jubilee years. For example, the Exodus was prophesied as a time of release from slavery for Israel and occurred on a Sabbath year (Gen 15:13-14; Ex 12:40-42; Deut 15:1,12-15; Gal 3:16-17 - according to this writers study and analysis of biblical and historical chronology).

And the year Israel entered the promised land was a Jubilee year (Deut 31:7-11; Josh 1:11,13; 4:1-7; 5:10-12), which is also prophetic of the time of liberty and rest in the Kingdom of God during the millennium that will occur at the return and reign of Jesus Christ (Isa 61:1; Lk 4:16-21; Heb 4:1-16; Rev 20:4).

Jesus, the Messiah, was prophesied to begin His ministry 7 weeks and 62 weeks (of years - Sabbath year cycles) from the going forth of the command by Artaxerxes, king of Persia, to restore and build Jerusalem in 457 BC (Dan 9:24-26; Ezra 7:1,8-28). This was fulfilled 483 years later ( $69 \times 7 = 483$ ) at the end of a Sabbath year and the beginning of a Jubilee year in 27 AD when Jesus stood up at the beginning of His 3 1/2 year ministry and read from the book of Isaiah the prophet in the synagogue in Nazareth on the Day of Atonement, a High Sabbath (Lk 4:16-22; Isa 61:1; Lev 25:9-10).

***"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim an acceptable year of the Lord..."***

***"And He began to say to them, 'Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing'"*** (Isa 61:1-2; Lk 4:18-19,21).

The prophetic "blessings and curses" in Leviticus 26 of "seven times" punishment for disobeying God in Leviticus 26:18,21,24,28,34-35 is related to abandoning the 7th year Sabbaths (Lev 26:27-28,32-35). A time is a year and 7 times in this prophecy is 7 years multiplied by a day for a year ( $7 \times 360 = 2520$  years - Num 14:34; Ezek 4:4-6).

Its fulfillments are recorded in history and coincide with the Sabbath year cycle. Captivity of a first part of Israel began in 738 BC by king Put of Assyria (2 Kgs 15:29; 1 Chr 5:25-26). Exactly 2520 years later in 1783, a Sabbath year, some of the children of Israel, through Joseph's son Manasseh's descendants (Gen 48:1-19; 49:22-26) had migrated to America and became an independent nation once again (see ["United States &](#)



[\*Britain in Bible Prophecy\*](#) and [\*"Keys to Understanding the Mysteries of Biblical Prophecy"\*](#).

The nation of Judah began to be taken into captivity in 604 BC for 2520 years to 1917 AD plus another 40 years (Eze 4:6-8) comes to 1948 when they were restored as a nation.

Jerusalem was desolate for 70 years (10 Sabbath yr cycles), as prophesied by Jeremiah for not keeping the Sabbath year and release of their Hebrew slaves (Jer 25:11-12; 34:14-22; II Chr 36:21-23), then a remnant was allowed to return to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple to prepare for the first coming of the Messiah, Jesus Christ (Dan 9:2; Ezra 1:1-6; Mal 3:1).

The 7 Sabbath years to the Jubilee are also a prophetic type of the 7 Sabbaths to Pentecost Lev 23:15-16), which represent the 7 eras or churches of Revelation from the time of Christ's first coming and the beginning of the NT church to His return to restore the Kingdom of God on the earth (Acts 3:19-21; Rev 11:15).

In the fall of 2007 on the Day of Atonement, September 22nd (the 10th of Tishri on the biblical calendar), begins the 3rd Sabbath year of the current Jubilee cycle.

Have a good Sabbath Year!

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