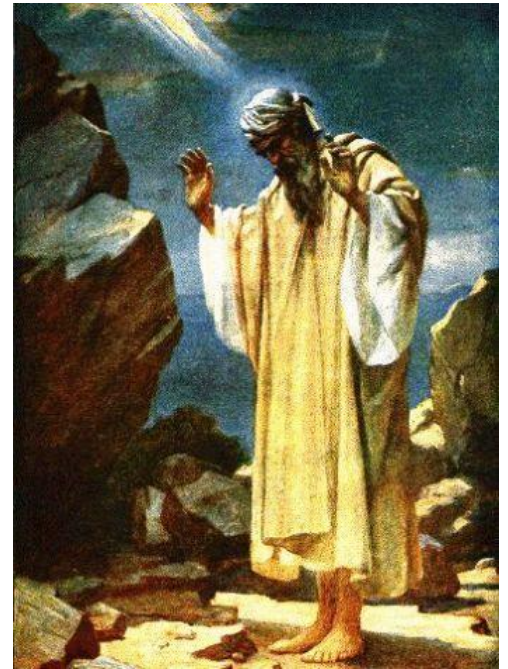




**בהר *Behar* / In the Mountain**  
[Leviticus 25.1—26.2](#)  
[Jeremiah 16.19—17.14](#)  
[Luke 21—24](#)



**Sabbath Year** This portion is about learning to trust God. [Leviticus 25](#) says that every 7<sup>th</sup> year is to be a year of rest, introduced in [Deuteronomy 15.1](#) as a שְׁמִטָּה *shmita* (year of remission/release. No planting or harvesting is to be done. Obedience or suffering is the result, [Leviticus 26.33-35](#).

In America, the land rush, poor land use, and drought led to the Dust Bowl of the 1930s, more than 100,000,000 acres of wasteland. America looked to the government for a solution.

During the time of יֵשׁוּעַ *Yeshua* Jesus/salvation, the leaders were afraid of losing their Temple and nation, and looked to the government of Rome to rescue them.

- [Matthew 26.60-61](#) יֵשׁוּעַ is accused of threatening to tear down the Temple, (though [John 2.21](#) explains that יֵשׁוּעַ refers to His body)
- [John 11.47-48](#) Fear that belief in יֵשׁוּעַ will cause Romans to take over
- [Acts 6.13-14](#) Stephen is accused of speaking against the Temple and תּוֹרָה *Torah* Law/Instruction and saying that יֵשׁוּעַ will destroy them as well
- [Acts 21.27-28](#) Paul is accused of teaching against the Temple and תּוֹרָה

Today, the government of יִשְׂרָאֵל *Yisra'el* Israel hopes that by giving Land to its enemies, it will ward off losing the Temple mount, Jerusalem, and strategic boundaries, trading Land for peace. God says in [Leviticus 25.23](#) that the Land may not be sold permanently. Again the choice is trusting God or government.

[Leviticus 25.20-22](#) says that the harvest from the 6<sup>th</sup> year will carry the people for three years. There are two “new year” dates in the Bible. One is Tishri 1 (September or October), the secular year. The other is Nisan 1 (March or April), the religious year. The change occurs in [Exodus 12.2](#), when God tells Moses to celebrate the New Year on Nisan 1 (AKA Abib 1) because of Passover. This chart shows the years and reaping times:

		Reap in Spring, Summer, and start of Fall						Sow in Winter										
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12					
Rel.		ניסן Nisan	איר Iyyar	סיון Sivan	תמוז Tammuz	אב Av	אלול Elul	תשרי Tishri	מרחשון Cheshvan	כסלו Kislev	טבת Tevet	שבט Shvat	אדר Adar					
	Sec.	תשרי Tishri	מרחשון Cheshvan	כסלו Kislev	טבת Tevet	שבט Shvat	אדר Adar	ניסן Nisan	איר Iyyar	סיון Sivan	תמוז Tammuz	אב Av	אלול Elul					
							Sow in Winter						Reap in Spring, Summer, and start of Fall					

**One Harvest to Last Three Years** Sowing is done in **ישראל** in winter, near the end of the religious year or after the start of the secular year. Reaping begins at the start of the religious year or near the end of the secular year. [Leviticus 25.22](#) says that what is sown in the 8<sup>th</sup> year will be harvested and eaten in the 9<sup>th</sup>. If the **שמיטה** year is reckoned by the religious year, then the abundant harvest of the 5<sup>th</sup> can be eaten in the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> years. There could be sowing in the 6<sup>th</sup> year, but it wouldn't be reaped in the 7<sup>th</sup>, would be a poor use of grain, and so probably wouldn't occur. No sowing is allowed in the 7<sup>th</sup> year. So the harvest of the 5<sup>th</sup> year lasts until what is sown in the 8<sup>th</sup> year is reaped in the 9<sup>th</sup>. The 5<sup>th</sup> year's harvest is eaten in the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> years.

**Reckoned by the Secular Year** According to contemporary thought, the **שמיטה** year begins on **ראש השנה** *Rosh Hashanah* Head of the Year/Feast of Trumpets, the start of the secular year. Debts are forgiven at sunset on the 29<sup>th</sup> of Elul of the 6<sup>th</sup> year. Reaping is completed by this time as well, and the harvest lasts for the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> years. Sowing and reaping occurs as normal in the 8<sup>th</sup> year.

**Trust** God prepares **ישראל** for **שמיטה** through the wilderness provision of manna. In [Exodus 16.4-5](#), God tells Moses that enough manna will be provided for each day and a double portion on the 6<sup>th</sup> will last through the 7<sup>th</sup>. In this way, the commandment not to work on the 7<sup>th</sup> day is confirmed. After practicing this concept in the wilderness, they are to graduate to not reaping for a whole year when settling the Land. It takes trust in **יהוה** [YHVH](#) the LORD not to sow or reap for a whole year. And it takes trust in **יהוה** not to give more Land to the enemies of **ישראל** in a bid for peace.

**Stewards** In [Leviticus 25.2](#), God describes the Land: **אשר אני נתן לכם** *asher ani natan lakhem* which I give to them, **נתן** [natan](#) give/commit/entrust. The Land is God's and He has rules for living in it. The people of **ישראל** are stewards. "The Land is Mine," [Leviticus 25.23](#), and the people of **ישראל** are strangers and settlers in it. The Land is not for **ישראל** to give away or sell. King Solomon financed building projects partly by giving Land away. After his death, the kingdom split and later went into captivity. [2 Chronicles 36.21](#) explains that because **ישראל** did not practice giving the Land its Sabbath rest, God kicks them out for seventy years. 490 years of ignoring the command, divided by the seven-year cycle, equals 70 years. So for the 70-year exile the Land is barren and earns its rest. God is serious about His commands—and about His Land.



**Obedience Brings Blessing** Here's an interesting story from 2008 about the effect on the potato crop in ישראל that שמטה, and how some work this commandment into their everyday lives. Note that the secular year is referenced. The farmers in this story planted their potatoes before ראש השנה, when the secular שמטה begins.

## Shemittah Potatoes Escape Frost

by Hillel Fendel, <http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/125218>

(IsraelINN.com) Thousands of dunams of potato-crop land were saved from the severe damages of the recent frost - precisely because they were grown in accordance with Shemittah rules.

The Otzar HaAretz enterprise announces that despite the loss of some 80% of this year's potato crop due to frost, tens of thousands of its potato-growing dunams in the western Negev were saved. Senior Otzar HaAretz agronomist Moti Shomron explains why:



"It is forbidden to plant in the Shemittah year, and therefore the farmers following the Otzar HaAretz plan were forced to plant their potato saplings earlier than usual this year. What happened then was that the potato plants sprouted earlier than usual and had time to grow and become stronger before the frost hit. When the frost came, the leaves were hurt, but not the bulbs - and thus the potato crop was saved."

In contrast, most farmers in Israel planted their potato crops at the regular time, i.e., the end of September, Shomron said, "and unfortunately, most of them are now forced to deal with small, damaged potatoes, and in fact, most of the crop has been destroyed."

It is estimated that four out of every five tons of potential potatoes for this year have been lost.

Otzar HaAretz is a semi-public enterprise that enables the observance of the strict Biblical laws of the Shemittah year. The Torah stipulates that every seventh year, Jews must not work the Land of Israel and it must lie fallow. The year is known as Shemittah, from the root meaning to "drop" or "abandon." In the Shemittah of 1889, rabbis of the Land of Israel agreed to temporarily sell parts of the Land to non-Jews, so that certain agricultural activities could be carried out. As the national economy grew and the potential losses -including the very destruction of the fledgling Jewish community - became more threatening, the dispensation became more widespread and institutionalized, yet never universally accepted.

Another solution that has been instituted, though never on as large a scale as this year, is that of the Otzar HaAretz initiative, known as *Otzar Beit Din* (Rabbinical Court Treasury). Based on the concept that produce grown in the seventh year is not forbidden, but is rather ownerless and may be taken for personal use, the Otzar Beit Din solution involves the public gathering of fruits in a large-scale manner and their sale in a public, not-for-profit manner.

The running of this enterprise requires the recruitment of both farmers willing to abide by its rules and consumers who are willing to commit to acquiring a certain minimum of produce during the

course of the year. The produce grown in this manner has the status of "kedushat shvi'it," i.e., it is sacred and must be handled with extra care - and specifically, must not be thrown out in a degrading manner. Only consumers who are willing to take the extra care necessary for the consumption of the sacred fruits and vegetables are candidates for Otzar HaAretz.

Despite the difficulties, 180 stores have agreed to sell Otzar HaAretz produce, thus solving many problems at once: The need for Arab-grown produce has been lessened, many farmers are able to continue supporting their families without violating Shemittah laws, the national agricultural economy is not harmed, and Shemittah is observed throughout the country.

Rabbi Yehuda Amichai, head of the Torah and Land Institute - formerly of Gush Katif - which oversees Otzar HaAretz, said, "We have merited this year to see G-d's miracles and how His will guides us in all our ways. I am happy to be a witness to this 'agricultural miracle' that proves how G-d 'pays back' those who follow His laws. At the same time, we are sorry for the many farmers in Israel whose crops were ruined in the frost..."

Some 30,000 tons of potatoes have been destroyed so far because of the frost.

**Year of Jubilee** After seven cycles of שְׁמִטָּה years, the next year, or every 50<sup>th</sup> year, is the יוֹבֵל *yovel* ram's horn/[Year of Jubilee](#). The יוֹבֵל is ushered in with the blowing of the שׁוֹפָר *shofar* ram's horn on ראש השנה. Since 5775 (2014-2015) is a שְׁמִטָּה year, and the 7<sup>th</sup> in the cycle, 5776 (2015-2016) is a יוֹבֵל. See an interesting [video](#) by Pastor Mark Biltz of [El Shaddai Ministries](#) concerning this time.



The bulk of [Leviticus 25](#) is devoted to the יוֹבֵל, a greater test of faith than the שְׁמִטָּה year. Though many in modern יִשְׂרָאֵל follow the שְׁמִטָּה year, the יוֹבֵל has been mainly ignored all along. The יוֹבֵל mandates the release of property back to its original owners and slaves to freedom. Remember the "Cynical Golden Rule," "Those who have the gold make the rules." Most people with money are unwilling to relinquish it. Verses 35-43 specify that a brother of יִשְׂרָאֵל must be redeemed in the יוֹבֵל, but verses 43-46 allow for an alien from a surrounding nation to be held indefinitely. Three times in this section the phrase is repeated, "I am יהוה your God," and three times, "fear your God." So there's no doubt about the importance of this commandment.



**דרור** for **ישראל** We can now see in a new light when **ישוע** reads from Isaiah in the synagogue, [Luke 4.16-21](#). He quotes from Isaiah [61.1-2](#) which proclaims **דרור** *deror* liberty to the captives. This is the same expression used in this portion, [Leviticus 25.10](#), “Proclaim **דרור** throughout the Land unto all the inhabitants thereof.” Moses—Isaiah—**ישוע**. All telling of God’s **דרור** of the captives—of **ישראל**. If we are part of **ישראל**, we can be part of the **דרור** which **ישוע** brings. Outside of **ישראל**, we are held in bondage indefinitely.

As [John 1.11](#) says, **ישראל** mostly rejects **ישוע**. That opens the door for the rest of us to be grafted into the olive tree of **ישראל**, [Romans 11.13-21](#). The Canaanite woman in [Matthew 15.21-28](#) understands this. **ישוע** at first ignores her plea to heal her daughter, and then He calls her a dog! She persists and argues that even dogs get crumbs. **ישוע** praises her faith and heals her daughter. Replacement theology, that the Church has replaced **ישראל**, is certainly more attractive than considering ourselves dogs. But it’s better to be a dog that gets grafted into **ישראל** than a proud rebel who remains outside the New Covenant, apart from grace, [Ephesians 2.19](#), [Romans 8.17](#), [Galatians 3.29](#).

**Kinsman Redeemer** [Leviticus 25.25](#) explains that if a man becomes poor and sells his property, then shall come **גאלו הקרב אליו וגאל** *go-alo haqarov ehlay vehga'al* his kinsman that is next unto him and shall redeem that which his brother sold. See how the root **גאל** *ga'al* is used twice, redeemer and redeem, tied to the root **קרוב** *qarov* near of place/personal relationship/kinship. It is the responsibility of the closest relative to redeem, to act as redeemer. This is a fading concept in modern America. In verse [25.48](#), a **גאל** may redeem the person who has been sold as a slave. Then in [Ruth 2.1](#), Boaz is introduced as Naomi’s dead husband’s kinsman, who eventually redeems Naomi from no male heir. Although there is a closer relative than Boaz, in [Ruth 4.6](#) that man backs out from accepting responsibility. As a result, he remains nameless and loses the privilege of the **גאל** whose name is carried through the centuries as the ancestor of Obed, Jesse, King David, [Ruth 4.21-22](#), and **ישוע**, [Matthew 1.5](#). The **גאל** is also the revenger of blood who shall hunt down and kill a murderer, [Numbers 35.19](#).



**My Kinsman Redeemer** I was sold as a slave to sin, and then I received a heart transplant from a Jewish carpenter by the Name of **ישוע** at the age of 22. He is my close relative, my **גאל** who rescues me. I was nameless, but now I have an eternal heritage because of our connection. Should someone kill me, I also have a **גאל** who will hunt him down. I leave to my **גאל** what He will do to that person when He catches him.

Naomi and Ruth return to Bethlehem with no heirs at the beginning of the barley harvest, [Ruth 1.22](#), the spring Feast of Unleavened Bread, and she stays through the wheat harvest, [Ruth 2.23](#). During this time, she grows in love with her future **גאל**, Boaz, who watches her mature, and they marry around **שבועות** *Shavuot* Feast of Weeks/Pentecost. The time between the two feasts is the Counting of the Omer, a time to count up 50 days in anticipation of the feast marking the giving of

**תורה** on Mt. Sinai. In other words, a Gentile woman from Moab, land of the enemies of **ישראל**, marries a prominent Jewish **גאל** of Judah while celebrating the giving of the written Word. She becomes a famous bride, known throughout the world for 3,000 years. Her journey begins when she grabs hold of her Jewish mother-in-law and refuses let go, [Ruth 1.16-17](#).



We who are redeemed by the prominent Jewish **גאל** of Judah mature in the faith and count up, anticipating marriage to the Living Word. Because **ישראל** mainly rejects **ישוע** as Messiah, this opens the door for us Gentiles to become part of God's family.

**God is Trustworthy** The Haphtarah portion of [Jeremiah 32.6-27](#) tells how God commands Jeremiah to buy a certain piece of property, even though Jeremiah also prophesies the destruction of Jerusalem. Destruction will be followed by restoration. God concludes this portion by asking Jeremiah, "Is there anything too hard for Me?" God provides water, manna, and quail in the wilderness so that **ישראל** will survive. **ישראל** can trust God for the **שמטה** and **יובל** years as well.

**Consider the Value** As the **יובל** approaches, **ישראל** is to calculate the number of years left and adjust the value of property accordingly. For example, a piece of property may be worth \$1,000,000 at the beginning of the seventy-year cycle. But it might sell for only a few thousand near the end of the 50-year cycle, since it must be returned to the original owner. We, too, should consider the imminent return of **ישוע** and adjust the value of our possessions accordingly! "Seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well," [Matthew 6.33](#).

Glossary, in order of appearance:

בהר	<i>behar</i>	in the mountain
שמיטה	<i>shmita</i>	(year of) remission/release
ישוע	<i>Yeshua</i>	Jesus/salvation
תורה	<i>Torah</i>	Law/Instruction
ישראל	<i>Yisra'el</i>	Israel
אשר אני נתן לכם	<i>asher ani natan lakhem</i>	which I give to them
נתן	<i>natan</i>	give/commit/entrust
ראש השנה	<i>Rosh Hashanah</i>	Head of the Year Feast of Trumpets
יהוה	<i>YHVH</i>	the LORD, God's holy Name
יובל	<i>yovel</i>	ram's horn/Year of Jubilee
שופר	<i>shofar</i>	ram's horn
דרור	<i>deror</i>	liberty
גאלו הקרב אליו וגאל	<i>go-alo haqarov ehlav vehga'al</i>	his kinsman that is next unto him
גאל	<i>ga'al</i>	redeem/redeemer
שבועות	<i>Shavuot</i>	Feast of Weeks/Pentecost