Lesson One: Leviticus 25

1. If God commanded you not to work your job for a year, or to take a one year break from school, how would you feel, and why? What would you do?

2. Read Leviticus 25:1–7. God commanded in Israel, every seven years, a special year known as “the Sabbath year.” Summarize from these verses what things did not go on that year.

3. Read Leviticus 25:8–12. When was the Year of the Jubilee held? What evidently did not happen, then, for two years in a row, twice a century?

4. Read Leviticus 25:20–22. What did God promise, so that people could survive for both the Sabbath year and the Year of Jubilee?

5. The Hebrew name for the Jubilee (Yobel, pronounced “Yo-VAIL”) seems to be related to one of the Hebrew words for the word “ram,” for the ram’s horn that was sounded in the Year of Jubilee on the Day of Atonement (25:9). The Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16) very clearly pictured what Christ would do. What was God showing about the Year of Jubilee by having the ram’s horn blown for the Jubilee year on this day that predicted Christ so clearly?

6. Read Leviticus 25:13. What was the first way in which the Year of Jubilee was different from a normal Sabbath year? How do you think obeying this would have made you feel?

7. Another aspect of the Year of Jubilee was God’s command that all land be returned to those whose families had originally owned it (25:25-29). Read Leviticus 25:23. What were God’s key reasons for commanding this?
8. Three key aspects of the Year of the Jubilee— in addition to the canceling of debts (detailed in Deuteronomy 15) and letting land lie fallow (unplanted and unharvested), which were also part of the Sabbath year—were:
   b. Returning of land/property (25:23-34)
   c. Simple living, trusting God to provide (25:18-22)
   Which of these five would you find hardest to do today? Why?

9. Our synod can’t cancel the millions of dollars of debts we owe, together, to others. Instead, we’re seeking to pay off all those debts early, in the coming months rather than over many years. If God blesses us and moves us to do this, what benefits would you foresee?

10. Leviticus 25 and the ancient Jewish year of Jubilee might seem to have little to do with these early debt repayment hopes of ours. The laws were for other people, long ago, far away. Yet the freedom and favor of God are blessings that we share with the ancient Jewish people. Still, why do we gratefully learn to think of ourselves as God’s slaves? (See Leviticus 25:42; check Romans 6:22 and 2 Corinthians 5:15 if you need help.)

11. Leviticus 25:17 tells us that the attitude toward God we believers need above all is to “fear” him. According to Proverbs 8:13 and Psalm 86:11, what does this mean?


13. Agree or disagree, and defend your answer: The more we obey God, the more he will bless us.

14. What freedom should highly indebted believers and congregations, and our indebted synod, strive to regain? Why? (See Proverbs 22:7 and Romans 13:8.)
1. Let’s review. What unique things were to happen twice a century among the Jews, in God’s Year of Jubilee?

2. What main truths does the Year of Jubilee, to be announced with a ram’s horn blast on the Day of Atonement, teach us about our freedom as Jesus’ slaves now? (See Leviticus 25:23 if you need a partial reminder.)


4. When did God the Spirit come on Jesus powerfully? (See Acts 10:34, if you’re not sure.)

5. What mission did Jesus take up after his baptism? (Put Isaiah 61:1–3a in your own words.)

6. Who are the poor in verse 1? (Compare Isaiah 49:1 and Matthew 5:3.) What is the good news Jesus gives them, as he proclaims the new year of jubilee?

7. When Jesus read verse 1 in Nazareth’s synagogue in Luke 4, he spoke of release from darkness and recovery of sight for the blind, as did the ancient Greek translation of this verse, the Septuagint (see the NIV footnote). We might picture prisoners emerging from a dark dungeon, squinting and blinking. From what darkness and blindness does Jesus offer release as he “proclaims the year of the LORD’s favor?”

8. Read Colossians 2:16–17. How do these verses help to explain the meaning of the Year of Jubilee for us today?
WELS Year of Jubilee Bible Study
A Study of the Ancient Year of Jubilee
and its Meaning for Modern Believers in Jesus
Lesson Two: Isaiah 61:1-3

9. In Isaiah 61 Jesus doesn’t say on whom he will take vengeance. Read Isaiah 63:4–6, though. There “the day of vengeance” and “the year of redemption” fit together. On whom does Jesus take vengeance in Isaiah 63:6?

10. Picture, at the end of Isaiah 61:2 and the start of 61:3, God’s people all gathered at a tomb, weeping. What does Jesus do? Why?

11. Read Hebrews 2:15. Why is this the best freedom?

12. Ancient Jews would use ashes, even putting them on their heads and sitting in them, as they mourned. They wouldn’t wear a joyful head covering at such a time. (Today, similarly, there are certain hats a lady might wear to a funeral that she would not wear to a wedding or an Easter service.) In the first part of 61:3, everything has changed. Why do we dress up so joyfully in Jesus’ picture?

13. At the end of verse 3 the picture switches from the way dress to trees. Why would big, sturdy oaks be a beautiful picture of us, when Jesus sets us free from sin and death?

14. Why did the LORD plant us as believers in the first place, according to the end of verse 3? What is our main purpose all our lives?

15. How does this purpose guide us in all our daily decisions about how we will use God’s blessings? (See Matthew 6:33 if you need help.)

16. Agree or disagree? If we pay off our synod’s debts early, it will glorify God and his grace. Give a reason for your answer.
1. Let’s review. When did God want his Old Testament people to observe a special Sabbath year called the year of Jubilee? What things were they to do?

2. How did Jesus picture the new era of the Lord’s favor in the opening verses of Isaiah 61?

3. Read 1 Corinthians 1:26-31. As Jesus began to set us all free, he could have started his work in Israel’s capital, Jerusalem, or even in Rome, the capital and biggest city in the empire. Instead, Jesus starts in his hometown of Nazareth, a tiny town in an out-of-the-way area. Why is this good news for us?

4. Jesus knew the Scriptures better than any other synagogue teacher. According to the following passages, for what reasons did he still go to the synagogue weekly?
   a. Luke 2:52
   b. Galatians 4:4–5
   c. Romans 5:19
   d. 1 Corinthians 11:1

5. It isn’t slavery to need to go to God’s house weekly. Give several reasons why it is not.

6. Agree or disagree, and defend your answer: The key to our congregation’s and our synod’s health is worship and Bible class attendance.

7. Look at Luke 4:17–19. What four things does Jesus call us in verse 18? What common features between these four descriptions do you see?
8. Is it possible to become “too familiar” with Jesus, like the people in Nazareth did?

9. Clearly, on the edge of the cliff near Nazareth, Jesus could have died. He wouldn’t let it happen then and there, though. What does this prove about his death for you just outside Jerusalem about two years later?

10. According to Matthew 4:13, after this Jesus moved away from Nazareth to Capernaum, a town on the north side of the Sea of Galilee. He no longer spent time regularly in Nazareth. Apparently (see Matthew 13:54–58 and/or Mark 6:1–6a), Jesus only returned one more time to Nazareth to speak in their synagogue. What is the warning for us? The comfort?

11. Could Jesus take his Word away from our church and/or our synod, just as he did to the people in Nazareth? Why or why not?

12. Read Ezekiel 46:17. Ezekiel, who spoke to God’s people in exile, ended his prophecies with a detailed metaphor of a new temple, picturing the worship of our holy God, now and forever. Ezekiel mentions the Year of Jubilee in this verse. What does he call it?

13. Read Ezekiel 48:35. Amid all the complicated specifics of this vision, what is God’s simple bottom line about the new, eternal city of Jerusalem and temple which Ezekiel describes?

14. What light does this shed on Jesus’ precious promise in John 8:36, that “if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed”?

15. What light does our eternal Jubilee shed on our efforts to repay our synod’s debts early?