

Torah Portion Behar / Bechukotai

Behar Leviticus 25:1 – 26:2

In Hebrew behar means “on the mount”.

In this portion of scripture God lays out the commandments about resting the land every seven years and every 50th year, or Jubilee. Yahweh also allows slavery but lays out the groundwork for the releasing of slaves.

In addition to the weekly Sabbath, Yahweh gives instructions regarding the land every 7th year and every 50th year. The counting of these years begins at Yom Teruah (Rosh Hashana) in the fall and not from the first month (Tishri). The Jewish calendar has a civil new year (beginning in the fall) and a religious new year (beginning in the Spring).

Notice how both the Shemitta (7th year) and the Jubilee (50th year) are tied to the number 7. In Hebraic understanding the number seven represents “perfection, completion”.

The Jubilee begins on Yom Kippur. Yeshua will step foot on this earth again, one day in the future, on a Yom Kippur. It will be a Jubilee year. He will restore all things to the nation of Israel. All of the tribes will return to the land and all of the land will be returned to Israel. The King of kings and LORD of lords will rule supreme on the earth.

Bechukotai Leviticus 26:3 – 27:34

This portion could be divided as follows:

Promise of Blessing and Retribution
Redeeming Persons and Property Dedicated to God

I would like to focus on the last part of redeeming persons and property dedicated to the LORD. In Leviticus 27:1-34 the LORD gives instructions regarding the redemption of persons. In verses 1-8 the LORD sets the accepted price or valuation (redemption) that is to be paid for a male or female of various ages, who have been vowed to the LORD.

In Judges 11:29-40 we read about a Judge of Israel, Jephthah, who made a hasty vow to God. In verses 30-34 we read that he promised to sacrifice to Elohim the first thing that came out of his house to meet him upon his return home from victorious battle. His only child, a daughter, was the thing that came out to meet him upon his return home. Now, Jephthah and his daughter were both heart broken.

We can learn several things from this story. First, rash or hasty vows should never be made to the LORD. We should consider our words very carefully before we speak them because YHVH expects us to carry out what we speak.

Second, notice how the young girl didn't run away from her father when she heard the vow that he had made before God. She told him to carry out the vow which included her. I have noticed many times in the Word how children honored the vows of their parents: Samuel, Samson, Isaac, etc. Now, if I had been either one of these people I would probably have run the other way, disappeared somewhere. These children, however, honored and revered their parents to such a degree that they were ready and willing to change the course of their lives by being obedient to the vows of their parents. This is a Biblical principle which our culture has lost. Most children/teens in our culture don't even obey their parents while they still live at home, much less allow them to dictate their entire future. In fact, in this Western culture, most children/teens run the household instead of the parents ruling the household. Parents seem to do what the children/teens dictate than the other way around. It is a sad dilemma and one which goes against the Word of God.

Third, commentators have argued as to whether or not this young virgin lady was actually sacrificed by her father to YHVH. Here I will share my commentating opinion. Based on the fact that human sacrifice was forbidden by God and based on the fact that He would not have accepted a human sacrificed to him, and also based on the fact that the pagan practice of sacrificing children to Molech did not come until much, much later, I would have to believe that Jephthah did not sacrifice his daughter. So, what did he do with her, and to what did she willingly agree?

Based on the above scriptures in Leviticus 27:1-34, I believe that Jephthah would have paid a redemption price for his daughter. In addition, based on the story of Hannah and Samuel; which we find in the book of Samuel, this young lady was probably required to stay a virgin for the rest of her life and she gave herself to the service of the tabernacle, much like Samuel later did. This would have been a great sacrifice for her caused by the rash vow of her father. Let us guard our words carefully!

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