Vital Land Sabbaths

Summary

The third installment in this series turns from the weekly Sabbath to a bigger one — a Sabbath for the land itself, every seventh year. This article argues that command was economic wisdom, not just ritual.

- The Sabbatical land-rest law of Leviticus 25 — farmland lying fallow every seventh year — read as designed to force sustainable, family-scale, animal-based agriculture rather than commercial monoculture.
- Yahweh's providential supply of abundant "volunteer" produce during the fallow year.
- Biblical debt-release and interest-free lending laws (Deuteronomy 15; Leviticus 25) presented as the same "timeless" economic framework, ignored by modern nations.
- Both land Sabbaths and debt-release laws linked directly to end-time prophecy about famine, disease, and national judgment.

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Vital Land Sabbaths

"For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there SHALL BE FAMINES, AND PESTILENCES, AND EARTHQUAKES, IN DIVERS PLACES. All these are the beginning of sorrows" *(Matt. 24:7-8).*

How do these events relate to the land Sabbath? "For the wrath of Yahweh is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of Yahweh is manifest in them; for Yahweh hath shewed it unto them...so that they are without excuse" *(Romans 1:18-20).*

Unpleasant as it may be, our present world food crisis, rampant outbreaks of disease and spiralling health care problems, as well as the increase in both frequency and severity of "natural" disasters, have all been brought on this world by ourselves! It is all our fault; no one else can take the blame! And it could have been avoided through obedience - and may still be avoided through repentance AND obedience!

Simply put, our current health and environmental problems are punishment for our rebellious attitude!

Our food producing industrial giants give many humanly devised reasons for continuing the present systems of management, which are fast undermining human health and destroying our environment. Millions living an urban existence won't stop to consider their relationship with Yahweh until their health is destroyed or their food runs out! Most rural inhabitants have become part of the "industrial" food chain, or at best, bondservants to it, which leaves almost no one prepared to face the catastrophic reality man has set upon himself!

Yahweh says we are to "sigh and cry" for the abominations taking place in modern Israel *(Ezek. 9:4). (U.S., British Commonwealth and others).* This is because of the seriousness of the penalties roaring toward us like an express train! "A third part of thee shall die with the pestilence, and with the famine shall they be consumed in the midst of thee: and a third part shall fall by the sword around thee; and I will scatter a third part into all the winds, and I will draw out a sword after them" *(Ezek. 5:12).*

At this time, Yahweh is only able to work with those very few of us who are RESPONDING to His call.

He is CALLING EVERYONE in modern spiritual Israel, but most won't listen! The disease plagues and environmental crisis could hardly be any more obvious, but still, most fall into the category of Isaiah's prophecy that Yah'shua quoted on this very topic; "Hearing you will hear and not understand, and seeing you will see and not perceive;" *(Matt. 13:14).*

Whether man recognizes it or not, Yahweh is the great provider - of all things, including methods of producing nutritionally balanced food, which leads to good health! "He *[Yahweh]* waters the hills from His upper chambers; The earth is satisfied with the fruit of Your *[Yahweh's]* works. He causes the grass to grow for the cattle, and vegetation for the service of man, that he may bring forth food from the earth" *(Ps. 104:13-14).*

Man, made in the image of Yahweh, is the life form for which ALL OTHER LIVING CREATURES ON THIS PLANET WERE CREATED! Man is the only creature given the capability of knowing this and of knowing the Creator! But man stubbornly refuses to accept this, ignoring that his very existence, let alone his continued survival, is completely in the hands of the almighty Yahweh! "What you [Yahweh]

give them they gather in; You open your hand, they are filled with good. You hide Your face, they are troubled; You take away their breath, THEY DIE AND RETURN TO THEIR DUST. You send forth Your Spirit; they are created; And You renew the face of the earth" *(Ps.104:28-30).*

Renewing "the face of the earth" happens every year through Yahweh's four seasons. But this is something of which urbanized man has little knowledge and even less interest. Rural mankind has more interest in this area, but his knowledge is mostly based on human reasoning, rather than on the revealed laws of Yahweh.

It is clear from the Bible that if Yahweh's called out ones *(John 15:16)* are to lead the vast majority of mankind by example (now, and through the millennium), we must come to understand certain laws of which most of mankind is completely ignorant today. This chapter will deal primarily on how a law such as Yahweh's land Sabbath, can seem so insignificant to carnal-minded man, while in reality, the importance of this law cannot be exaggerated because it is an integral part of a concise legal system that is fundamental to restructuring human civilization. It was meant to apply to our lives in times

past; it applies now, and it will by all means be implemented in the future. Our simple choice is whether we will partake of voluntarily implementing it, thereby setting an example for the rest of mankind NOW, or if we will be a part of the majority of mankind that will be taught this during the millennium (whether we believe it now or not!).

But which laws of Yahweh, if obeyed, will guard this natural nutritional and health support system on which we all depend? The first is the land Sabbath! But that's in the Bible! And who would think to look in the Bible for infallible guidance on environmental management? What could the Bible have to offer on such a subject?

Some may have read through the entire Bible and discovered, much to their chagrin, that Yahweh's specific instruction to food production appears to be little more than a verse here and there on firstlings, cross breeding, clean and unclean food *(disease inhibiting versus disease promoting),* the land Sabbath and jubilee. Beyond these and a few other points, Yahweh APPEARS to have considered it unnecessary to offer any specific guidance for producing man's most important commodity - FOOD! It APPEARS

this way, only to the "worldly wise and disobedient" - it is not really the case!

When Yahweh inspired the Bible, He was not at all nebulous about something as globally important as environmental management. He gave man very detailed and specific guidance on the matter and in such a manner as it could not possibly be neglected or overlooked by any obedient individual or nation.

The best way to discover the purpose and meaning of any of Yahweh's laws is to put them into practice in our own lives. We have Yah'shua's own words on this: "IF any man will DO His Will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of Yahweh, or whether I speak of Myself" *(John 7:17).* This timeless principle applies to the Sabbatical year. Only by keeping it can we learn the true meaning, intent and full importance of Yahweh's command.

"Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: `When you come into the land which I give you, then the land shall keep a Sabbath to Yahweh. Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard and gather in its fruit; but in the seventh year there shall be a Sabbath of solemn rest for the land, A SABBATH TO Yahweh. You shall neither

sow your field nor prune your vineyard'" *(Lev. 25:2-4).*

"So you shall observe My statutes and keep My judgements, and perform them; and you will dwell in the land in safety *[and health]*... Then I will command My blessing on you in the sixth year, and it will bring forth produce enough for three years" *(Lev. 25:18-22).*

It is a blessing from Yahweh, not a curse! Few today have had opportunity, or have taken advantage of it. Imagination; applied Israelite logic, is therefore needed as we mentally walk through a land Sabbath. This will help us to appreciate its implications for individuals and whole nations, both past and future!

Briefly the land Sabbath imposes the following conditions every seven years:

- no grain to be harvested for commercial purposes.

- no crops to be sown specifically for harvesting that year.

- no vineyards or orchards to be pruned.

- no fruit or vegetables sown.

- no land produce of any kind harvested except for family needs.

- no land produce of any kind available for sale.

- no restriction on pasturing clean livestock.

- all hay or winter fodder to be returned to the field as animal

manure.

Now visualize yourself as an adult male with a wife and two or three children. The civil government of your local country has made the Sabbatical year part of the enforced laws of the land, as Yahweh intended. Your responsibility is to provide food, clothes, shelter and a fulfilling way of life for your family. The provision of clothes, shelter, fuel and recreational amenities would be unaffected by the land Sabbath. But what about FOOD?

And what about the environmental management lessons to be learned from an agricultural based family support system?

We would expect a temporary shortage of certain basic commodities every seventh year, but that wrong thinking is based on our present society. The type and scale of many types of production will be curtailed or eliminated in an OBEDIENT society. But Yahweh will still bless man and his animals abundantly. "For

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

It is clear that this type of production is actually stimulated during the year of rest, not restricted. This increase is made possible by the prohibition of commercial crops, which is highly significant. With this in mind, we have a key to understanding the in depth meaning behind the land Sabbath. "What grows of its own accord of your harvest you shall not reap, nor gather the grapes of your untended vine, 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 your maidservant and for your hired servant, for the stranger who sojourns with you" (Lev. 25:5-6). Volunteer produce would therefore be more than any family could eat.

"When you come into the land which I give you" *(Lev. 25:2),* means that the land Sabbath applies to ALL FOOD PRODUCERS IN THE SAME YEAR! *(Lev. 25:7).* Can you imagine what that means? We would not be able to go down the road and buy from the neighbour. Neither would we be permitted to rent his land for the purpose of farming it during the year of rest! Yahweh's enforced year of rest would

make it impossible to rely, as we do today, on a few specialist producers selling "commercially viable" produce to multiple millions of non-producing consumers!

In a system applying the land Sabbath, grain is easily stored for many years and would therefore always be available. But fresh fruits and vegetables would be non-existent for families without their own garden, orchard and vines. It is hard for us to imagine a system in which everyone produces his own food. Or at least enough food, that he is always able to "glean" from others, some varieties of food in exchange for allowing the others to "glean" from his crops, what they do not have during the year of rest. *(Gleaning is a term defining the practice of harvesting the produce missed during the main harvesting operations.)* "When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field, nor shall you gather the gleanings of your harvest. And you shall not glean your vineyard, nor shall you gather every grape of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the stranger: I am Yahweh your God" *(Lev. 19:9-10).*

There would be no green grocers operating anywhere in the nation in the year of rest! The law would

prevent anyone buying or selling any type of fruit, vegetables, grain or land produce whatsoever! But people could have a FREE supply directly from their own land! These things would turn our modern nations upside down and throw everything into chaos. This helps us to understand why Yahweh says He will utterly destroy our Satan-inspired society and replace it with an entirely new system.

"Behold, Yahweh makes the earth empty and waste, distorts its surface and scatters abroad its inhabitants...the haughty people of the earth languish. The earth is defiled under its inhabitants, BECAUSE THEY HAVE TRANSGRESSED THE LAWS, CHANGED THE ORDINANCE, BROKEN THE EVERLASTING COVENANT. therefore the curse [of disobedience] has devoured the earth, and those who dwell in it are desolate. therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men are left" *(Isaiah 24:1,3-6).*

In a system based on Godly principles of environmental management, Yahweh has seen the necessity of forestalling our rebellious carnal *(human)* nature. Many people left to their own devices, would only plant a garden in the seventh year, buying their needs from others in the remaining six years.

However, the land Sabbath COMMAND says you "shall not sow thy field", so in order to have any VOLUNTEER produce in the seventh year, families must have a garden in at least the sixth year. For most fruits, many families would need to have their own trees and vines, which must be five years old before you can eat from them *(Lev. 19:23-25).* Yahweh makes all of this mandatory simply by limiting available produce in the seventh year to that which volunteers.

Properly planned and managed gardens and orchards will produce a surprising amount of volunteer produce, even in the untended seventh year.

The following are some of the benefits that accrue to families that keep the land Sabbath:

- self-sufficiency is a reward for those who dwell under their own vine and fig tree *(Micah 4:4).*

- healthy, disease resistant families result from eating a diet of fresh produce, naturally grown on healthy soil.

- increased healthy, disease resistant livestock production because harvesting and selling plant production is illegal in seventh year, and animals eat only healthy pasture/produce.

- the end of mass migration to cities because of the need to produce one's own food.

- greater family unity and spiritual values because of the need to work together and with nature, producing their own food.

- improved soil fertility due to pasture fed animals and less crops.

- animal based agriculture because of no crops in seventh year.

- hazards of soil erosion and desert formation reduced by increased crop cover, less bare soil and no over grazing.

- no massive grain surpluses to encourage factory-farming of animals, including "unclean" animals.

- natural food for animals instead of force-feeding grain and protein concentrates.

- higher pasture production due to increased soil fertility.

- higher regular crop production due to bacterial inoculating effects of pasturing the land.

- annual savings of multiple billions now spent on treating disease symptoms, such as hospitalization,

pharmaceuticals.

- annual savings in multiple billions now spent on disease promoting agents such as chemical pesticides and fertilizers.

Perhaps we can now begin to understand the far-reaching implications of this Biblical law. Its purpose is not to cause economic difficulties. Like all of Yahweh's commands that appear to be negative, it is Yahweh's way of PROVIDING and PROTECTING all those who are obedient to it. The seventh year land Sabbath offers every family a method of providing themselves with an abundant and varied supply of healthy, disease inhibiting food products.

We see that simply resting one-seventh of our available farm land is not the issue. This is not what Yahweh intended under Moses, nor is it what will be acceptable in the future. By concentrating the observance into one year, even short-term economic common sense demands a change to animal based agriculture. And why not, when the alternative is forfeiture of income for one year in seven! It is logical that the primary law for protecting soil fertility on this planet, would have built into it, provisions for continued and alternative sustenance, and for strictly

limiting crop production - the farming practice that destroys soil productivity most rapidly!

To think that we could simply rotate one-seventh of our land out of production each year is like a "Christian" who believes that his religion is something he practices one day a week!

The land Sabbath is a law to teach us ecological and spiritual principles - those values we learn from the simple experience of being obedient to another of Yahweh's laws. The physical principles of health and sound environment are obvious. The spiritual principles which demand that we pass our land on to the next generation in better physical condition than when we received it, are not as obvious. If we do not accomplish this, we are "unprofitable stewards" in the sight of Yahweh!

No farmer, unless he is robbing another area, or cheating the land by using artificial chemicals, can take six grain crops off any piece of land, and rest it once without radically reducing its capacity to produce healthy food. Most farmers might say, "To keep that law, I would have to change my whole system of farming!" That is precisely what Yahweh intends. That is a major purpose behind the law; to get us into an attitude of "giving" to the next

generations, rather than "getting" everything we can right now!

As noted, the land Sabbath is directly linked to animals. Through Yahweh's laws of clean and unclean meats, Yahweh has intentionally given us direction in what animals should play major roles in our agriculture, which as will become clear, helps to maintain healthy soil. Clean versus unclean meats is not "Jewish fanaticism", it is basic nutritional instruction for ALL MANKIND!

There is something very special about the animals designated as "clean", and therefore suitable as food for man. In Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14, they are categorized by those characteristics of BOTH chewing the cud AND dividing the hoof. Collectively, these animals are called "ruminants" because of their special digestive systems. For the past 30 or so years, establishment of improved pasture and other crop species has been aided by inoculating the seeds with cultures of certain micro-organisms at sowing time. This was because the soil population was deficient in these organisms, just as it usually was with the number of earthworms, etc., due to improper farming methods.

There exists an obvious and incredible parallel between the humanly devised "band aid" return of micro-organisms to the soil via seed inoculation, and the Yahweh-given plan for the AUTOMATIC return via animal manure! The environmental impact by even limited regular grazing by ruminants *("clean" animals, such as sheep, cattle, deer, elk, buffalo, goats)* comes not just from the return to the soil of the residues themselves, but also from the inoculating effect of rumen bacteria within those residues.

This indicates that those that graze clean animals on their land, are: a) obeying Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14; b) following an animal-based system of soil management *(rather than crop monoculture);* c) employing a built-in safeguard against their soil becoming depleted of vitally necessary micro-organic life; and d) safe-guarding their animals' digestion by using the grass they eat to complete a cyclical function of certain micro-organisms.

As grass and other pasture species grow up through fertile soil, there are associated micro-organisms *(rumen bacteria)* on the leaves of the plants. *(Ecology of Soil Bacteria, edited by Gray & Parkinson 1967, pp.78,79,152-53,386,483. Livestock Production by*

H.H. Cole, pp.457-458. Agricultural Bacteriology, by J. Percival, p.152.) These organisms are ingested along with every mouthful of pasture, thus re-inoculating the rumen of the animals.

What is significant about this is that man and certain animals such as pigs are created with a three stomach, acid based digestive system, free of rumen bacteria. But the "clean" ruminants have an extra fourth stomach and depend on a population of rumen bacteria to breakdown the contents of their digestive system. During these digestive processes, these rumen bacteria multiply at an enormous rate as they decompose the pasture species ingested by the animal. They are partly digested as protein, further along in the fourth stomach system, with billions of live rumen bacteria being returned to the soil in the animal manure.

The dung bacteria multiply and combine with life in the soil to decompose the manure and other humus, creating a perfectly balanced supply of dozens of trace elements and other soil nutrients required to grow healthy, naturally nutrient-balanced crops, that are essential for a healthy human diet. The same healthy, naturally nutrient-balanced crops, are also responsible for maintaining healthy animals, which maintain

healthy crops, both of which maintain healthy humans and so on, and so on!

Man, through "science", spends billions of dollars and wastes untold millions of hours of mental energy, on such foolishness as researching the pandemic diseases we have brought upon ourselves, when in fact, the answers to all of these "pestilences" have been freely available to anyone who would apply Yahweh's laws! When will man ever believe that, "there is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death" *(Prov. 14:12)*! Or as Yahweh inspired in Zech. 13:4-5: "And it shall be in that day *[the millennium]* that every prophet *[false priest or minister]* will be ashamed...But he will say, `I am no prophet, I AM A FARMER; for a man *[Yahweh's "Elect"]* taught me to keep cattle from my youth"! There is much more that could be spelled out regarding Yahweh's land Sabbath and animal-based agriculture commands, as they relate to our environmental management concerns. It should, by now, be obvious that Yahweh intended us to OBEY these timeless laws, whether we understood them or not, in order that we might enjoy His promised blessings of good health and prosperity within a sound global environment. Indeed, had our modern nations of the British Commonwealth and North America kept these, along with Yahweh's other

laws, when we "came into the land which He gave us", it is difficult to see how we could have avoided health and prosperity in a land that would surely have been flowing with "milk and honey"!

Now, just for a moment, imagine that all of Yahweh's environmental principles were being practiced by our nations - and we were indeed enjoying Yahweh's promised blessings. Then add to that the simple thought: "Now that we have solved our environmental concerns, what would happen if we followed Yahweh's equally timeless advice on economics?" Consider the plight of our nations - in debt to the point of near financial catastrophe. And our citizenry - also in debt to the point of hopelessness for many.

Now what about a few quotes on Yahweh's laws as they relate to basic economics: "If you lend money to any of MY people who are poor among you...you shall not charge him interest" *(Ex. 22:25)*. "You shall not oppress one another, *[financially]" (Lev. 25:17).*

"At the end of every seven years you shall grant a release of *[all]* debts" *(Deut. 15:1).* "The land shall not be sold permanently, for the land is Mine *[Yahweh's];* for you are strangers and sojourners with Me. And in

all the land of your possession you shall grant redemption of the land" *(Lev. 25:23-24)*.

"For the poor will never cease from the land; therefore I command you, saying, `You shall open your hand wide to your brother, to your poor and your needy, in your land'" *(Deut. 15:11)*.

"In the land which Yahweh your God is giving you...if you carefully obey the voice of Yahweh your God, to observe with care all these commandments...Yahweh your God will bless you just as He has 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" *(Deut. 15:4-6)*.

These are only a small sampling of Yahweh's COMMANDMENTS dealing with our modern nations' economic woes. Imagine interest free loans for every family that wanted to buy some farmland and become self-sufficient. Or for that matter, to better their lives in any way!

Imagine the accomplishments and sense of purpose we would all enjoy, if all debt payments were systematically "written off" each seven years! Imagine being able to "redeem" all lands and properties in the jubilee year, that might have been sold under hard

times or duress. Imagine the well-to-do being generous and actually giving abundantly to satisfy the needs of the poor and the needy! What if our nations obeyed the command not to borrow money! Imagine how we would feel if we had no national debt! Imagine "Wall Street" without interest! Or the poor not being oppressed by the rich!

Imagine what it would be like if people would stop ridiculing and resisting the Bible, and simply take the time to read *(and put into practice)* these profoundly obvious, SELF-EVIDENT TRUTHS REVEALED IN YAHWEH'S WORD!

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