

The first eighteen verses of this chapter speak of the sabbatical year. Every seventh year the land was to lie fallow, debts were to be forgiven, and Hebrew\* slaves were to be freed. Leviticus 25 gives more details, including the jubilee year which was to be observed after every  $7 \times 7$ , or 49 years.

None of the historical books record an actual observance of the sabbatical or jubilee years. 2 Chronicles 36:21 speaks of the seventy year exile in Babylon as a repayment of 490 years of missed Sabbaths: ... *to fulfill the word of the Lord by the*

*mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed its Sabbaths. All the days that it lay desolate it kept Sabbath, to fulfill seventy years.* Then Jeremiah 25:11 confirms the seventy year duration of the Babylonian captivity.

So, seven years here corresponds to an ordinary week ending in the Sabbath day. This lends support to the interpretation of Daniel's seventy weeks as 490 years.

\* “Hebrew” in this chapter does not mean any ethnic Jew, but those possessing no land.

### Questions:

1. How do you reconcile verse 4 with verse 11?
2. Has the prophecy of verse 6 been fulfilled?
3. What does verse 9 mean? How could this be applied to us?

4. What is the precedent for being generous to the bondservant who is being released from service?

5. Read verse 16. Why would the slave not want to go free? Is there a parallel for us?

6. What is the general attitude we are to have toward the poor?

7. What is the occasion for feasting in verse 20?