

Deuteronomy 31:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Moses commanded them, saying, At the end of every seven years, in the solemnity of the year of release, in the feast of tabernacles,

Analysis

And Moses commanded them, saying, At the end of every seven years, in the solemnity of the year of release—the septennial Sabbath year (Deuteronomy 15:1-11) when debts were canceled and land rested. **In the feast of tabernacles**—the Hebrew chag ha-sukkot (חג הסוכות), the autumn harvest festival commemorating wilderness wandering (Leviticus 23:33-43). Moses prescribed public law-reading every seven years during this week-long feast when all Israel assembled.

The timing was strategic: the Sabbath year's debt forgiveness reminded Israel of dependence on God's provision, while Tabernacles recalled wilderness formation when they received the law at Sinai. Reading the law during this convergence annually reinforced that prosperity and land tenure depended on covenant faithfulness. The seven-year cycle ensured every generation heard the complete law read publicly at least once in childhood, creating transgenerational continuity of covenant knowledge.

Historical Context

Commanded circa 1406 BC for implementation after conquest and settlement. The Feast of Tabernacles became the major pilgrimage festival (along with Passover and Pentecost), when Israelite males traveled to the central sanctuary. Archaeological evidence and biblical texts suggest this septennial reading fell into

disuse during the monarchy's decline. Nehemiah 8 records a dramatic law-reading revival after the Babylonian exile (444 BC), when Ezra read the law publicly and the people wept, repenting of violations they hadn't known they were committing.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. Why does God require regular, public reading of Scripture in gathered assemblies rather than private study alone?
2. How does the seven-year cycle reflect God's concern for generational transmission of covenant knowledge?
3. What contemporary practices ensure believers regularly hear the full counsel of God's word, not selective portions?

Interlinear Text

וְצִוָּה	מֹשֶׁה	אֹתָם	לֵאמֹר	מִקֵּץ	שֵׁן בַּעַד
commanded	And Moses	H853	them saying	At the end	of every seven
H6680	H4872		H559	H7093	H7651
שָׁנָה	בְּמִלְּךָ	שָׁנָה	הַשְּׁמִיטָה	בְּחַג	הַסֻּכּוֹת:
of the year	in the solemnity	of the year	of release	in the feast	of tabernacles
H8141	H4150	H8141	H8059	H2282	H5521

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