

## Jesus' ministry of Jubilee in Luke 5

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5.1-11: Simon, the fisher and self-described “sinful man,” is liberated from imperially-generated scarcity of fish

5.12-16: The leper is “made clean” (Greek, *katharizō*) and thus fully welcomed into God’s people; called to do as Moses “commanded” (Greek, *prostassō*, as Leviticus 14.4ff) and “make an offering” (Greek, *prospherō*; 100 of 165 uses in the LXX are in Leviticus and Numbers)

5.17-26: The weakened man has his sins “let go of” (forgiven)

5.27-39: Levi (representing the Levites), a Jewish tax collector, is welcomed to table fellowship with Jesus, along with other “tax collectors and sinners”; thus, the Levites are “purified” (Malachi 3.3 LXX, *katharizō*) to “bring sacrifices in justice (LXX, *dikaiousunē*). Jesus has come not for the already “righteous” (Greek, *dikaioi*, like Simeon, Luke 2.25) but for sinners to undergo “repentance.”

### Levites, from birth to rebirth

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**GENESIS 29.34:** Born from Leah after Simeon

**GENESIS 34.25:** Levi and Simeon pair up to murder the Shechemites in revenge for the rape of their sister, Dinah.

**GENESIS 49.4-7:** Jacob curses Simeon and Levi: “weapons of violence are their swords. May I never come into their council; may I not be joined to their company—for in their anger they killed men...”

**EXODUS 32.26-29:** In response to the Golden Calf, Moses calls on the Levites to “Put your sword on your side, each of you! Go back and forth from gate to gate throughout the camp, and each of you kill your brother, your friend, and your neighbor.” When they do and kill 3000, Moses calls them “ordained for the service of YHWH...and so you have brought a blessing on yourselves this day.”

**NUMBERS 3.6FF:** Moses commands the “tribe of Levi” to serve as assistants to Aaron, the priest

**NUMBERS 16.1FF:** Korah, a Levite, leads a rebellion against Moses and Aaron for “exalt[ing] yourselves above the assembly of YHWH”. At Moses’ word, the earth swallows up Korah and his people and goods.

**DEUTERONOMY:** In various passages, the Levites are empowered to carry the ark of the covenant (10.8), serve as priests (21.5, contra Numbers) and resolve disputes

Levites are mentioned only at Josh 13.14, 33 in Josh-2 Kings and very rarely in the prophets, outside of Malachi 2-3, which concludes with this passage (3.1-3):

1 See, I am sending my messenger [or “angel”] to prepare the way before me [as Luke 7.27], and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger [or “angel”] of the covenant in whom you delight--indeed, he is coming, says YHWH of hosts.  
2 But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap;  
3 he will sit as a refiner and purifier [LXX, *katharizō*] of silver, and he will purify [LXX, *katharizō*] the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to YHWH in justice [*dikaiousunē*].