The Year Of Jubilee And Redemption

In Leviticus 25:8-17, 23-34 and 39-55, God commanded the Israelites to have a Year of Jubilee every 50 years. Leviticus 25:39-55 teaches that slaves were set free on this special year. Also, note Leviticus 25:23-34 shows all property could be redeemed or purchased by its original owner in this Year of Jubilee. Leviticus 25:9-12 reveals the Year of Jubilee was linked to the Day of Atonement in the previous year.

In Luke 4:17-21, Jesus compared His ministry to the Year of Jubilee. Jesus’ ministry was symbolised by the Year of Jubilee in that His death:

- was associated with atoning for sin.
- purchased God’s original property – the human race – back from the eternal punishment they deserved according to His perfect justice.
- provided the basis on which all slaves to sin and to Satan could be freed.

Difference between Roman slavery and being slaves to God

The main difference between the general Roman concept of slavery and the New Testament concept of slavery to God is that we have a perfectly loving, totally just, infinitely merciful and kind Master. This is something no Roman slave ever had. God’s loving kind attitude to His slaves or servants is reflected in His commands in Leviticus 25:43, 46 and 53 that no Hebrew human masters were to treat their slaves with rigour or “prk” in Hebrew. The word “prk” used in these verses means “harshness, severity”. ¹

Bible Study Question

1. How did the Year of Jubilee symbolise Jesus death?

¹ Harris, Archer and Waltke, Vol. 2, page 735 and Brown, Driver and Briggs, page 827.