

Bethany Bible Study & Discussion



Deuteronomy Part 16 (chapter 15) KJV

4.12.2023

Chapter 15

Release of the Lord (debtors & slaves)

Who must be released from debt? When? (1-3)

How can poverty be eradicated? Why did poverty persist? What is the warning given to selfish?(4-11)

When must the slave be released? What were the terms of release? Can a slave choose slavery for ever? (12-18)

What must we do with the firstborn? (19-23)

What is the connection between compassion & worship?

Worship

CH.12 PREPARING for WORSHIP

- Destroy the idols
- Go to the “chosen” place

CH.13 DANGERS/DISTRACTIONS TO WORSHIP

Miracle worker & False prophets | Family & Friends | City

CH. 14 Body, Diet, Tithes

CH.15 Compassion to debtors, slaves, and poor

Compassion & Worship

Compassion to Debtors (1-3)

Compassion to Poor (4-11)

Compassion to Slaves (12-18)

Ready for worship (19-23)

Compassion to Debtors:

Who must be released from debt? When?

1-3

Lord's debt Release (1-3)

At the end of every seven years thou shalt make a **release**.

² And this is the manner of the **release**: Every creditor that lendeth ought unto his neighbour shall **release** it; he shall not exact it of his neighbour, or of his brother; because **it is called the Lord's release**.

³ Of a foreigner thou mayest exact it again: but that which is thine with thy brother thine hand shall **release**;

Debt

Why in debt?

Maybe poor harvest

Maybe death of husband and sons who work in the land

Potential solutions

Borrow (using the land as collateral)

Or work as slaves to provide for family and pay off debt

Today many are in debt in US, often due to excess spending and poor planning, and easy access to credit cards & loans

Compassion to debtors: Lord's release

At the end of every seven years thou shalt make a release. Every creditor that lendeth ought unto his neighbour shall release it; he shall not exact it of his neighbour, or of his brother; because it is called the Lord's release (1-2)

Debt released (or canceled) after 7-years

Not just suspension for 1-year but complete forgiveness of loan. Most likely release of land also if given as collateral.

Rule does not apply to foreigners

Israel considered as one family with rules given by God

Debt & Bible

Owe no man any thing, but to love one another (Romans 13:8)

To be in debt is not a sin; Bible does not condemn debt, but does not encourage debt either. Excessive debt can be dangerous.

Some level of debt seems to be necessary for most American families.

Jesus asks us to help those in need ... Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away (Mathew 5:42)

Compassion to Poor:

How can poverty be eradicated ?

Why did poverty persist?

What is the warning given to selfish?

Compassion to Poor (4-11)

⁴ Save when there shall be no poor among you; for the Lord shall greatly bless thee in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance to possess it: ⁵ Only if thou carefully hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all these commandments which I command thee this day. ⁶ For the Lord thy God blesseth thee, as he promised thee: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, but thou shalt not borrow; and thou shalt reign over many nations, but they shall not reign over thee.

⁷ If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren within any of thy gates in thy land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother: ⁸ But thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need, in that which he wanteth.

⁹ Beware that there be not a thought in thy wicked heart, saying, The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand; and thine eye be evil against thy poor brother, and thou givest him nought; and he cry unto the Lord against thee, and it be sin unto thee.

¹⁰ Thou shalt surely give him, and thine heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him: because that for this thing the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hand unto.

¹¹ For the poor shall never cease out of the land: therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land.

Blessings follow obedience

for the Lord shall greatly bless thee in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance to possess it:⁵ Only if thou carefully hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all these commandments which I command thee this day. ⁶For the Lord thy God blesseth thee, as he promised thee: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, but thou shalt not borrow; and thou shalt reign over many nations, but they shall not reign over thee (4-6)

When we obey the Lord, blessings will follow (4,5)

We will be lenders to many nations and not debtors (6)

We will reign over nations (6)

The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender (Proverbs 22:7)

Responding to the Poor

⁷If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren within any of thy gates in thy land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother: ⁸But thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need, in that which he wanteth. ⁹Beware that there be not a thought in thy wicked heart, saying, The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand; and thine eye be evil against thy poor brother, and thou givest him nought;

Focus group: Poor 'brethren' (Israelites, not foreigners)

Appropriate Response:

Do not harden your hearts

Do not shut thine hand

Open your hand wide

Lend whatever they need

Give cheerfully without hesitation

Do not think of potential default (due to year of release)

God's response

Beware that there be not a thought in thy wicked heart, saying, The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand; and thine eye be evil against thy poor brother, and thou givest him nought; and he cry unto the Lord against thee, and it be sin unto thee (9)

Thou shalt surely give him, and thine heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him: because that for this thing the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hand unto (10)

If we respond correctly (as per previous slide)

Lord will bless all our works and all that we put our hand to (10)

If we are selfish and ignore the poverty of our brethren

It will be a sin and count against us (9)

Israelites Obey



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graph TD; A[Israelites Obey] --> B[God showers His blessings]; B --> C[Israelites acknowledge blessings and give thanks to God]; C --> D[Israelites share the blessings with the poor]; D --> E[God acknowledges the generosity and blesses even more];
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God showers His blessings

Israelites acknowledge blessings and **give thanks** to God

Israelites **share the blessings** with the poor

God acknowledges the generosity and **blesses** even more

God's Plan
for
eradicating
Poverty

Goal of Compassion to Poor not achieved

There shall be no poor among you (4)

... poor shall never cease out of your land (11)

Seemingly contradictory statements

But God does not contradict himself

Contradiction existed and goal of compassion not fully realized because of **continued disobedience** by Israelites

God's Planned
Blessings
disrupted by
Disobedience

Israelites were disobedient so
poverty persisted (11)

Lack of blessings in our life is
not due to God's indifference,
but because of our disobedience!

How do we respond to the poor among us?

God's divine order was to bring Israelites together as not just a nation but as 'one family' that cared for one another.

Similarly, **a local church must be "one family"** that cares for one another.

Paul uses the illustration of a 'body'. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it (I Corinthians 12:26)

Our **compassion & generosity** must extend beyond finances, to include giving of our time, emotions, talents, and practical assistance. **Not easy but that is God's divine order for blessing in a church family.**

Be
Compassionate
Be
Generous

He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given will he pay him again (**Proverbs 19:17**)

But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? (**I John 3:17**)

Compassion to Slaves:

When must the slave be released?

What were the terms of release?

Can a slave choose slavery for ever?

Compassion to Slaves

¹² And if thy brother, an Hebrew man, or an Hebrew woman, be sold unto thee, and serve thee six years; then in the seventh year thou shalt let him go free from thee.

¹³ And when thou sendest him out free from thee, thou shalt not let him go away empty: ¹⁴ Thou shalt furnish him liberally out of thy flock, and out of thy floor, and out of thy winepress: of that wherewith the Lord thy God hath blessed thee thou shalt give unto him.

¹⁵ And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the Lord thy God redeemed thee: therefore I command thee this thing to day.

¹⁶ And it shall be, if he say unto thee, I will not go away from thee; because he loveth thee and thine house, because he is well with thee; ¹⁷ Then thou shalt take an aul, and thrust it through his ear unto the door, and he shall be thy servant for ever. And also unto thy maidservant thou shalt do likewise.

¹⁸ It shall not seem hard unto thee, when thou sendest him away free from thee; for he hath been worth a double hired servant to thee, in serving thee six years: and the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all that thou doest.

Release of Slaves

¹² And if thy brother, an Hebrew man, or an Hebrew woman, be sold unto thee, and serve thee six years; then in the seventh year thou shalt let him go free from thee.

¹³ And when thou sendest him out free from thee, thou shalt not let him go away empty:

Released in the 7th year

Released with honor and with adequate supplies

- Thou shalt furnish him **liberally** out of thy flock, and out of thy floor, and out of thy winepress: of that wherewith the Lord thy God hath blessed thee thou shalt give unto him (14)
- This provision gives support for a new start.

Why in slavery?

Maybe in slavery because of debt

- Slavery offered in exchange as payment for debt
- Working to payoff debt

Motivation for compassion & generosity

¹⁵ And **thou shalt remember** that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the Lord thy God redeemed thee: therefore I command thee this thing to day.

¹⁸ It shall not seem hard unto thee, when thou sendest him away free from thee; for he hath been worth a double hired servant to thee, in serving thee six years: and the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all that thou doest.

1. Once Israelites were in bondage (15)

- God in mercy redeemed them and provided for them
- Such mercy should be reciprocated and passed on

2. The slaves were a good deal ... double hired servant (18) (likely paid less than 100% of their wages to compensate for debt owed)

3. God's commandment to be compassionate and generous (15)

4. Compassion and generosity will lead to God's blessings (18)

No matter how tall we grow, we should never forget our roots ... it will keep us humble and compassionate.

A willing slave for life (bondslave)

¹⁶ And it shall be, if he say unto thee, I will not go away from thee; because he loveth thee and thine house, because he is well with thee;
¹⁷ Then thou shalt take an awl, and thrust it through his ear unto the door, and he shall be thy servant for ever. And also unto thy maidservant thou shalt do likewise.

Reason to serve Loves the household (good testimony of master!)

Sign: Ear pierced as evidence of lifetime relationship

Eligibility Male and female (Exodus mentions only males)

⁶ then his master shall bring him to the judges. He shall also bring him to the door, or to the doorpost, and his master shall pierce his ear with an awl; and he shall serve him forever (**Exodus 21:6**)

Rest from work

LAND: And six years thou shalt sow thy land, and shalt gather in the fruits thereof: ¹¹ But the seventh year thou shalt let it rest and lie still; that the poor of thy people may eat: and what they leave the beasts of the field shall eat. In like manner thou shalt deal with thy vineyard, and with thy oliveyard.
(Exodus 23:10-11)

WORK: Six days thou shalt labor, and do all thy work. But the seventh day is the **sabbath** of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; that thy manservant and thy maidservant may rest as well as thou.
(Deuteronomy 5:13-14)


Paul ... a slave to Christ ... For life

Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God (**Romans 1:1**). I bear in my body the marks of Lord Jesus (**Galatians 6:17**)

Are we committed to our calling for life or are we seeking early retirement?

Lifetime service to the Lord is expected and has its privileges ...

Moses delegated his responsibilities but served till the end
and God buried him



Worship: What must we do with the firstborn?

19-23

Offering of firstlings

¹⁹ All the firstling males that come of thy herd and of thy flock thou shalt sanctify unto the Lord thy God: thou shalt do no work with the firstling of thy bullock, nor shear the firstling of thy sheep.

²⁰ Thou shalt eat it before the Lord thy God year by year in the place which the Lord shall choose, thou and thy household.

²¹ And if there be any blemish therein, as if it be lame, or blind, or have any ill blemish, thou shalt not sacrifice it unto the Lord thy God.

²² Thou shalt eat it within thy gates: the unclean and the clean person shall eat it alike, as the roebuck, and as the hart.

²³ Only thou shalt not eat the blood thereof; thou shalt pour it upon the ground as water.

Worship

Firstling **sanctified** unto the Lord (not subject to work or shearing) (19)

Brought to the 'chosen place', sacrificed, meal enjoyed as a family (20)

If blemished, cannot be offered to the Lord but can be consumed by everyone. Blood must not be eaten (21-23)

Wherein have we polluted thee? ... Do not offer the blind, the lame and sick as sacrifice (Malachi 1:7-10)

Why firstling? To remember the past

THE PAST “On that same night I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn of both people and animals, and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the Lord (Exodus 12:12)

WHAT TO DO? And it shall be when the Lord shall bring thee into the land of the Canaanites, as he sware unto thee and to thy fathers, and shall give it thee, ¹² That thou shalt set apart unto the Lord all that openeth the matrix, and **every firstling** that cometh of a beast which thou hast; the **males** shall be the Lord's ... ¹⁵ And it came to pass, when Pharaoh would hardly let us go, that the Lord slew all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man, and the firstborn of beast: **therefore I sacrifice to the Lord all that openeth the matrix, being males**; but all the firstborn of my children I redeem. (Exodus 13:11-15)

Firstborns of Israelites (people and animals) saved from death in Egypt. In memory and gratitude, Firstborn sons became priests (before tribe of Levi set apart) and firstborn of clean animal sacrificed. Unclean animals redeemed with clean animals.

Later, animals redeemed for money and firstborn sons, born in sin, redeemed for 5 shekels of silver (Numbers 18:16)

Offer the best
to the Lord ...
not leftovers
or polluted or
spoilt

Our first and best must be set apart for the Lord
(Be it our time, talents, or treasure)

Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the
firstfruits of all thine increase: **Proverbs 3:9**

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