

## Deuteronomy 15

Verses 1 - 6

**“At the end of every seven years you shall grant a release of debts. <sup>2</sup> And this is the regulation for the release of debts: every creditor is to forgive what he has loaned to his neighbor; he shall not require it of his neighbor and his brother, because the Lord’s release has been proclaimed. <sup>3</sup> From a foreigner you may require *it*, but your hand shall forgive whatever of yours is with your brother. <sup>4</sup> However, there will be no poor among you, since the Lord will certainly bless you in the land which the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance to possess, <sup>5</sup> if only you listen obediently to the voice of the Lord your God, to follow carefully all this commandment which I am commanding you today. <sup>6</sup> For the Lord your God will have blessed you just as He has promised you, and you will lend to many nations, but you will not borrow; and you will rule over many nations, but they will not rule over you.**

**At the end of every seven years you shall grant a release of debts. <sup>2</sup> every creditor is to forgive what he has loaned to his neighbor; he shall not require it of his neighbor and his brother. <sup>3</sup> From a foreigner you may require *it***

All debts to fellow Israelites were to be forgiven in the Sabbatical Year.

This was God’s way of providing a safety net for the poor in Israel.

**<sup>4</sup> However, there will be no poor among you, since the Lord will certainly bless you in the land which the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance to possess, <sup>5</sup> if only you listen obediently to the voice of the Lord your God, to follow carefully all this commandment which I am commanding you today.**

God was willing to bless the people so that no one in Israel would be poor.

But there was a qualifier to this promise, they had to listen and carefully follow all of the commandments.

We know Israel had many financial ups and downs in the Book of Judges because they went thru many periods of being faithful and unfaithful.

**<sup>6</sup> For the Lord your God will have blessed you just as He has promised you, and you will lend to many nations, but you will not borrow; and you will rule over many nations, but they will not rule over you.**

This promise was also conditional and followed the same rule as verses 4 and 5.

Verses 7 - 11

**<sup>7</sup> “If there is a poor person among you, one of your brothers, in any of your towns in your land which the Lord your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart, nor close your hand from your poor brother; <sup>8</sup> but you shall fully open your hand to him, and generously lend him enough for his need *in* whatever he lacks.**

**<sup>9</sup> Be careful that there is no mean-spirited thought in your heart, such as, ‘The seventh year, the year of release of debts, is near,’ and your eye is malicious toward your poor brother, and you give him nothing; then he may cry out to the Lord against you, and it will be a sin in you. <sup>10</sup> You shall generously give to him, and your heart shall not be grudging when you give to him, because for this thing the Lord your God will bless you in all your work, and in all your undertakings.**

**<sup>11</sup> For the poor will not cease to exist in the land; therefore I am commanding you, saying, ‘You shall fully open your hand to your brother, to your needy and poor in your land.’**

**If there is a poor person among you, one of your brothers, in any of your towns**

Moses directs every Israelite to look on his poor neighbor as a brother. Obviously with the thought that everyone would help a brother

**Generously lend him enough for his need *in* whatever he lacks.**

Lending suggests that this was a loan and it would be repaid so no one should have been stingy in helping the person.

**<sup>9</sup> Be careful that there is no mean-spirited thought in your heart, such as, ‘The seventh year, the year of release of debts, is near and you give him nothing; then he may cry out to the Lord against you, and it will be a sin in you.**

If a Jew lent money to someone close to the Sabbath year there was a chance that it would not be repaid in full because it was too short of a window for the entire loan to be repaid.

But God said this should not be a barrier to helping a neighbor who needed help because if a Jew didn't help the poor, it would become a sin.

**<sup>10</sup> You shall generously give to him, and your heart shall not be grudging when you give to him, because for this thing the Lord your God will bless you in all your work, and in all your undertakings.**

God promised to bless the man who helped the poor in a generous way.

See Proverbs 19:17

**<sup>11</sup> For the poor will not cease to exist in the land; therefore I am commanding you, saying, 'You shall fully open your hand to your brother, to your needy and poor in your land.'**

There are many causes of poverty and with so many variables in life, we should all be cautious about judging the poor.

Therefore, God wants his people to be generous givers.

Verses 12 - 18

**<sup>12</sup> "If your fellow countryman, a Hebrew man or woman, is sold to you, then he shall serve you for six years, but in the seventh year you shall set him free. <sup>13</sup> And when you set him free, you shall not send him away empty-handed. <sup>14</sup> You shall give generously to him from your flock, your threshing floor, and from your wine vat; you shall give to him as the Lord your God has blessed you. <sup>15</sup> And you are to remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God redeemed you; therefore I am commanding this of you today. <sup>16</sup> But it shall come about, if he says to you, 'I will not leave you,' because he loves you and your household, since he is doing well with you, <sup>17</sup> then you shall take an awl and pierce it through his ear into the door, and he shall be your servant permanently. You shall also do the same to your female slave. <sup>18</sup> "It shall not seem difficult for you when you set him free, because he has given you six years *with* double the service of a hired worker; so the Lord your God will bless you in whatever you do.**

<sup>12</sup> **“If your fellow countryman, a Hebrew man or woman, is sold to you, then he shall serve you for six years, but in the seventh year you shall set him free.**

Here, a Hebrew man is buying a fellow Jew who is owned by a third party, so God allows the buyer to recoup his investment.

The one he bought must serve him for 6 years, but on the 7<sup>th</sup> year he must be set free

This is not slavery, but a way for a person to pay off his debt.

**And when you set him free, you shall not send him away empty-handed.**

After 6 years he was free to leave and he was to be sent away with gifts that would sustain him until he found gainful employment.

This was another change in the law.

See pic 1505 **Change in the law #3**

**Changes in the Law**

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Exodus 21:2 - 6    1. If you buy a Hebrew slave, he shall serve for six years  
2. But on the seventh he shall leave as a free man without a payment to you

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Deut. 15:12-17    1. If your fellow countryman, a Hebrew man or woman, is sold to you,  
then he shall serve you for six years, but in the seventh year you shall set him free.  
2. You shall not send him away empty-handed. You shall give generously to him  
as the Lord your God has blessed you.

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**Why did God make this change?**

In Exodus 21 the Jews were in the wilderness and had little income  
In Deut. 15 they were 1 or 2 months from entering Canaan  
Once they took the land and settled down they had great riches  
They could then afford to give from their plenty

Unfortunately, many of the Jews did not obey this law and God severely punished them for disobeying Him. See Jeremiah 34:12-22

**<sup>15</sup> And you are to remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God redeemed you; therefore I am commanding this of you today.**

God appeals to the Jews on a very personal level.

They were slaves in Egypt and had no hope of obtaining their freedom. But God intervened in a miraculous way and then provided all of their needs until they reached the Promised Land.

**But it shall come about, if he says to you, 'I will not leave you,' because he loves you and your household, since he is doing well with you, <sup>17</sup> then you shall take an awl and pierce it through his ear into the door, and he shall be your servant permanently.**

The first thing to notice here is that God refers to this man as a servant.

It is obvious that this master (not a slave owner) is kind and the relationship has been favorable to both sides.

Since the servant chooses to stay this is not a case of slavery.

Verses 19 - 22

**<sup>19</sup> "You shall consecrate to the Lord your God all the firstborn males that are born in your herd and in your flock; you shall not work with the firstborn of your herd, nor shear the firstborn of your flock. <sup>20</sup> You and your household shall eat it every year before the Lord your God in the place which the Lord chooses. <sup>21</sup> But if it has any impairment, *such as* a limp, or blindness, *or* any serious impairment, you shall not sacrifice it to the Lord your God. <sup>22</sup> You shall eat it within your gates; the unclean and the clean alike *may eat it*, as a gazelle or a deer. <sup>23</sup> Only you shall not eat its blood; you are to pour it out on the ground like water.**

**<sup>19</sup> "You shall consecrate to the Lord your God all the firstborn males that are born in your herd and in your flock; you shall not work with the firstborn of your herd, nor shear the firstborn of your flock.**

It was forbidden to use the firstlings for work, as in threshing, or plowing

In the case of sheep, it was forbidden to shear the firstlings of the flock.

**<sup>20</sup> You and your household shall eat it every year before the Lord your God in the place which the Lord chooses**

Here we have another change in the law

See sheet 1510 **Change in the law #4**

#### Changes in the law

Num. 18:17 - 18 But the firstborn of an ox, the firstborn of a sheep, or the firstborn of a goat, you shall not redeem; they are holy. You shall sprinkle their blood on the altar and offer up their fat in smoke as an offering by fire, for a soothing aroma to the Lord. However, their meat shall be yours; it shall be yours like the breast of a wave offering and like the right thigh  
(The meat from these animals belonged to the priests)

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Deut. 15:19 - 20 You shall consecrate to the Lord your God all the firstborn males that are born in your herd and in your flock; you shall not work with the firstborn of your herd, nor shear the firstborn of your flock. You and your household shall eat it every year before the Lord your God in the place which the Lord chooses  
So the meat now went to the households instead of the priests.

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#### Why did God make this change?

While they were in the wilderness, the flocks of the people would have been limited  
So the supply of meat needed to meet the needs of the priests was fine  
But once the Hebrews took possession of the Promised Land  
The supply of meat would have been too great for the limited number of Priests

**But if it has any impairment, *such as a limp, or blindness, or any serious impairment*, you shall not sacrifice it to the Lord your God.**

Blemished animals could not be sacrificed but were to be eaten like any other animals slain for food, with the provision that the blood was not eaten but poured out on the ground.