

SESSION #36 (16 November 2010); Deut 15:7-18; Israel’s Distinctive Theocentric Faith in God’s Economic Order—Part 3

I. INTRODUCTION & REVIEW

1:1-5	Introduction to God’s spokesman, the 1 st Prophet Moses
1:6 - 4:40	1 st Exposition of the Torah = <u>motivation</u> to obey from (1) <u>past gracious actions</u> of Yahweh and (2) sovereign <u>destiny</u> of the nation (<u>future gracious actions</u> of Yahweh)
4:41-49	Editorial comment on context of 2 nd Exposition of the Torah
5:1 - 26:19	2 nd Exposition of the Torah = proper response to Yahweh in heart and soul
5:1-11:32	Loving Yahweh with <u>all the heart</u>
12:1 - 26:19	Loving Yahweh with <u>all the soul</u> (<i>nephesh</i> =life)
12:1-31	Theological unity of Israel’s tribes (1 st , 2 nd , 10 th commandments)
12:32 - 13:18	Enforcement of Theological Orthodoxy (1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd , 9 th , 10 th commandments)
14:1-21	Enforcement of Distinct Cultural Sustenance from Life to Death (all 10 commandments)
14:22-29	A Distinct Culture of Financial Faith-Rest (all 10 commandments with emphasis upon the 4 th and 8 th commandments)
15:1-18 A Distinct Culture of Economic Liberation (esp. 4th and 8th commandments)	

- A. People “discrimination” by relationship to Yahweh, not by economic status in life.
- B. Israel was to be a “witnessing culture” with distinct views of death, diet, wealth & property, and debt.
- Death treated as a temporary [abnormality], not an everlasting sorrow of life.
 - Food from animals treated as “[substitutionary death]” honoring the animal’s life by returning its blood back to the earth.
 - Wealth & property treated as owned under [stewardship] to God, not as absolute ownership.
 - Debt is treated as something endangering life’s purpose to be free and therefore responsible to God for producing fruit.
- C. Sabbatical year was a comprehensive economic rest for land, animals, vineyards, orchards, as well as Israelites and *Gers* (“resident aliens”).
- Sabbath principle unique in history
 - Sabbath principle witnessed to the accomplishment of labor modeled by God at Creation Week (**Ex 20**).
 - Sabbath principle witnessed to freedom from perpetual labor modeled by the Exodus liberation from Egyptian slavery (**Deut 5**).

- Sabbath principle witnessed to a present sharing of God’s rest by anticipation of His sufficient, complete work of salvation (**Heb 4**). Beisner: “*By resting when God tells us to rest, we testify that we serve a Master who takes care of His servants.*”
 - At the end of the Sabbath year a national Bible conference was held to prepare for the next 7-year period (**Deut 31**). Connection with **John 8:30-32**— freedom from [guilt and sin].
 - With land out of production, economic charitable loans were ended to protect the poor who were relying upon them. This idea apparently led to what today we call bankruptcy laws and the end of cruel imprisonment for those hopelessly in debt (“debtors’ prison”).
- D. Sabbatical year was part of God’s total [economic program] of providential control; part of the Abrahamic Contract to bless the world through Israel.
1. Israel’s unique relationship to the true God manifested through its culture → international awareness of its culture via world trade businesses (**Deut 15:4** **certainly bless** –economics is the key to cultural dominance, not the military.
 2. Depended upon Israel’s faithful obedience to work (**Deut 15:5**).
Sadly, pagan views of natural resources and history infiltrated Israel rather than Israel’s culture conquering paganism.

II. COMPASSION FOR THE GENUINELY POOR (15:7-11)

Detailed informal case-law to give guidance in dealing personally with the genuinely poor.

- A. The “genuinely poor”
- Modern definitions use relative levels compared to total national wealth
 - Traditional definitions that are absolute: “an insufficiency of the material necessities of life; having little or no means to support oneself.”
 - NT Greek words for the poor:
penes = someone who cannot sustain himself from his own property and so has to work with his hands, a laborer; has no superfluous (**2 Cor 9:6-11**)
ptochos = has nothing; relies on begging (**Rom 15:26**)
 - Church protocol of helping the poor (utilized by rescue missions in the inner cities in the 19th century) **2 Thess 3:10-12**
- B. Godly compassion (dealing with the mental attitude because the Word of God is realistic)

15:7 brother. . .gate. . .

will not withdraw your hand from your needy brother

15:8 must certainly open your hand . . .and certainly lend. . .

**15:9 take care lest there be a word in your heart, a worthlessness, saying... .
has almost arrived. . .eye be evil. . .**

cry out. . .be a sin to you. . .

Principle: There is a greater reality than the economic sphere, as James pointed out in **James 4:13-17**; God's holiness prevails and is the true standard of "social justice" to which we must conform or pay the consequences.

15:10 surely give [inf abs]. . .heart not be evil / broken
realistic assessment of the mental attitudes and the battle to "faith-rest" this matter

because on account of this thing, He will bless you, Yahweh your God.
"account" used in **Gen 39:5** for the Lord's blessing on the Pharaoh who listened to Joseph.

in all your works and in all to which you put your hand. . .

15:11 poor will never cease
Cf **15:4** (potential based upon **15:5**); here a prophecy that implies Israel will not trust and obey sufficiently to attain the economic prosperity that could have occurred.

III. LIMITS ON DEBT-SLAVERY (15:12-18)

15:12 your brother. . .is sold to you
Debt-slavery was used to pay off loans (cf. **Exodus 21:1-6**). Throughout pagan society such slavery could well be perpetual, but in Israel such slavery could not continue beyond 6 years because the culture of Israel had to reflect freedom as a picture of the spiritual freedom of salvation. "Redemption" theologically came from [_redemption_] of slaves economically.

15:13-14 empty-handed. . .surely supply him. . .
Compare this text with the bare "law" in **Ex 21:1-6**: there is more of the spiritual here.

as the Lord has blessed you, you must give to him.

15:15 remember that you were a slave
Egypt is the model pagan culture that was to act as the contrast with what Israel was to model.

- Power of [_civil government_] (Divine Institution #4) —coercive lethal force designed to restrain evil becomes prostituted into a [_social redemption_] scheme like Babel.

- Pyramids and other building projects that cost the labor and death of thousands of slaves.
- Marxist state of USSR caused the death of more people than any other empire in history.
- Modern Socialism perverts DI#4 into a vehicle of alleged redemption by [legalism] (leveling economic status by coercive confiscation of wealth and re-distribution; enslaving the entire population by inflating the money supply, and arrogantly assuming that an elite few know more about productivity than the laboring population).
- Modern Globalism is Socialism applied internationally to level cultural differences, and return humanity to the ancient worship of nature.

Lord redeemed you

Here's the image of "redemption" → from slavery to freedom because of a Savior.
 Liberty cannot coexist with [equality].
 Charity cannot coexist with [government welfare].

5:16-18 if it happens. . .

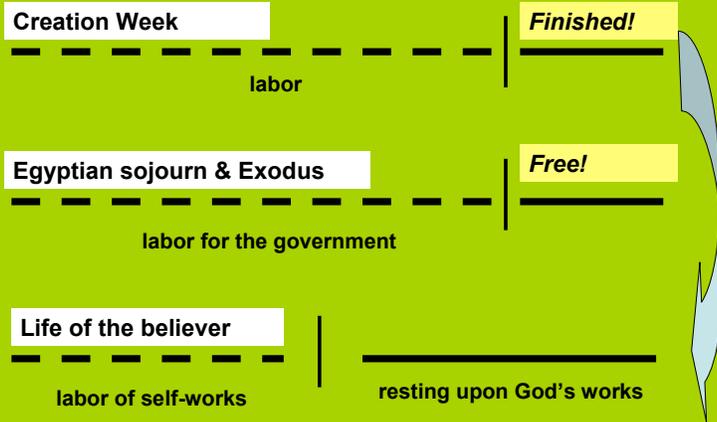
Slavery beyond the 6th year had to document its voluntary nature to distinguish it from pagan practices.

Some people cannot handle the responsibility of freedom; they prefer institutional security to freedom.

IV. CONCLUSION

- A. Poverty and indebtedness are part of the abnormality of the fallen world; they are "damaged states of being" from what God originally created man for. They are economic [pictures] that correspond to elements in God's plan of salvation.
 - Poverty pictures [unsaved mankind before the Great White Throne of God without any works of value].
 - Indebtedness pictures [unsaved mankind under the dominion of Satan, the world, and the flesh].
- B. Christians ought to oppose both poverty and indebtedness in areas where they can control and make a difference.
 - Wisely help the truly poor to fulfill their created potential as dominion people.
 - Limit personal indebtedness and work toward debt-free families.

Sabbath Rest



Divine Institutions

#1 responsible thought, speech, action (Gen 1-2)

#2 marriage (Gen 2)

#3 family (Gen 2)

#4 civil government (Gen 9)