

## **Day 197 - SUNDAY: July 2nd**

### Deuteronomy 15

#### Deuteronomy 15:1-23 NKJV

"At the end of every seven years you shall grant a release of debts. And this is the form of the release: Every creditor who has lent anything to his neighbor shall release it; he shall not require it of his neighbor or his brother, because it is called the LORD's release. Of a foreigner you may require it; but you shall give up your claim to what is owed by your brother, except when there may be no poor among you; for the LORD will greatly bless you in the land which the LORD your God is giving you to possess as an inheritance— only if you carefully obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe with care all these commandments which I command you today. For the LORD your God will bless you just as He promised you; you shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow; you shall reign over many nations, but they shall not reign over you. "If there is among you a poor man of your brethren, within any of the gates in your land which the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart nor shut your hand from your poor brother, but you shall open your hand wide to him and willingly lend him sufficient for his need, whatever he needs. Beware lest there be a wicked thought in your heart, saying, 'The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand,' and your eye be evil against your poor brother and you give him nothing, and he cry out to the LORD against you, and it become sin among you. You shall surely give to him, and your heart should not be grieved when you give to him, because for this thing the LORD your God will bless you in all your works and in all to which you put your hand. For the poor will never cease from the land; therefore I command you, saying, 'You shall open your hand wide to your brother, to your poor and your needy, in your land.' "If your brother, a Hebrew man, or a Hebrew woman, is sold to you and serves you six years, then in the seventh year you shall let him go free from you. And when you send him

away free from you, you shall not let him go away empty-handed; you shall supply him liberally from your flock, from your threshing floor, and from your winepress. From what the LORD has blessed you with, you shall give to him. You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God redeemed you; therefore I command you this thing today. And if it happens that he says to you, 'I will not go away from you,' because he loves you and your house, since he prospers with you, then you shall take an awl and thrust it through his ear to the door, and he shall be your servant forever. Also to your female servant you shall do likewise. It shall not seem hard to you when you send him away free from you; for he has been worth a double hired servant in serving you six years. Then the LORD your God will bless you in all that you do. "All the firstborn males that come from your herd and your flock you shall sanctify to the LORD your God; you shall do no work with the firstborn of your herd, nor shear the firstborn of your flock. You and your household shall eat it before the LORD your God year by year in the place which the LORD chooses. But if there is a defect in it, if it is lame or blind or has any serious defect, you shall not sacrifice it to the LORD your God. You may eat it within your gates; the unclean and the clean person alike may eat it, as if it were a gazelle or a deer. Only you shall not eat its blood; you shall pour it on the ground like water.

### **Daily Deep Dive:**

As we very often do, I would like to first use the UCG reading plan to begin this chapter: "The New King James Version does not provide the best translation of verse 4, as it could be read to say that the law regarding the year of release would sometimes not be in effect because of periods when no one was poor. Perhaps it should read,

"...that there be no poor among you," meaning this law would help prevent extreme poverty by preventing debts being exacted from those unable to fully repay them. The Living Bible translates the verse as, "No one will become poor because of this"—indicating that the year of release would not impoverish lenders. And the Revised Standard Version renders verses 4–5 this way: "But there will be no poor among you...if only you will obey the voice of the Lord your God...."

Although there should have been no poverty within the nation of Israel, since God promised to bless everyone among His people (Deuteronomy 15:4)—which will be the case throughout the whole world during the future millennial reign of Christ (Micah 4:4)—God's promise to the Israelites was conditional upon their obedience (Deuteronomy 15:5). And since He knew the kind of people they would be (compare Deuteronomy 5:29), He also knew that there would be poverty (Deuteronomy 15:11; compare Matthew 26:11). Therefore, He devised a system to deal with the poor in a merciful and compassionate way unlike any social system known in this world today.

At the end of every seven years, a total release of all debts had to be granted (Deuteronomy 15:1). If there is any

modern parallel at all, it is that of declaring bankruptcy—except that, in ancient Israel, the seven-year release was mandatory, and it did not matter whether creditor or debtor wanted such a release or not. Further, this procedure also required that a poor Hebrew person, who had "sold" himself to his creditor to pay off his debts, had to be released as well. But more than that, since the poor Hebrew servant had diligently worked for his master, he was to be given a generous bonus on his departure (verses 12–15, 18) to enable him to make a new start. The servant was permitted, however, to continue working for his master if he so wished (verses 16–17), yet *without* being subject to a continued obligation for repayment of prior debts. In all of this, especially in recalling Israel's deliverance from Egypt, God stresses that His way is the way of liberation and freedom.”

[END]

Verse 3 – Part of what should have drawn the world to want to join and become a part of the nation of Israel were the wonderful laws and ways of conducting affairs among the people that were just and fair. People didn't get all these benefits if they didn't join the nation and become obedient in following God. This release of debts was part of the

system that you only received by becoming a part of this nation and being obedient to God's laws.

Verse 6 – God wants all of us to learn to live within the blessings that He has given us. Debt is not something that God wanted for His nation or His people.

Verse 8 – Notice how God expects those who have their needs covered to be toward those who are struggling. Notice it says to “open wide” your hand. This is a picture of giving completely and without reservation. Then it uses the Hebrew literary design of using the same word “lend” two times. The Hebrew says “lend lend” which is translated with the added emphasis of “willingly lend” (NKJV). When God inspires this added emphasis, it should make us stop and consider the importance of the principle He wants us to learn.

Verse 9 – In our evil human nature, it could be easy to say to ourselves, I know I won't see any of this money I lend my poor brother back, because the year of release is almost here and I'll have to simply forgive the debt at that time, so I won't give to him at all. God commanded in verse 8 that we should be generous and quick to help, so this would

violate God's clear command. God understood this would be a tempting thought for us but warns against this kind of thinking. God is the giver of all good gifts (compare James 1:17) and He is also able to make abundant blessings pour out in our lives (compare 2 Corinthians 9:8). We should do what is right and what pleases our great God, even if we can't see how it's beneficial for us. Let God worry about the details. If we have the capacity to do good, we should do it (compare Galatians 6:10). We see in the next verse the promise from God that He will bless us for doing right.

Verse 11 – Jesus Christ, maybe thinking of this verse, says in John 12:8, “For the poor you have with you always”.

There will always be those who struggle and have financial needs. As we have the opportunity and blessings to share, we should.

Verse 14 – This is another verse with the Hebrew repeated word pattern to add emphasis. After someone had served for their six years and had fulfilled their time constraint, the master of that person was to “furnish him liberally”. The Hebrew word here that is repeated twice means “to adorn with a neck ornament” (BDB). It figuratively means “to fit

out with supplies” (Strong’s). God inspired this to be used twice in a row to add the level and the certainty that this must be done. They were to be generous and ensure this command was followed fully.

Verse 15 – When Israel left Egypt, God created a situation where they “plundered” the Egyptians and went out with great wealth. God expected the people to remember this and be generous to someone who had served them for these six years.

Verse 17 – In Exodus 21:6, we are given the added detail that this was done before a “the judges”. Gill’s commentary states: “and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; or with a needle, as the Targum of Jonathan, which also says it was the right ear; and so Jarchi; and the upper part of it, as says Maimonides, who likewise observes, that that with which it is bored must be of metal; and moreover, that it is the master himself that must do it, and not his son, nor his messenger, nor a messenger of the sanhedrim (m): the ear is an hieroglyphic of obedience, and the boring of it through to the doorpost denotes the strict and close obedience of such a servant to his master, and how he is,

and ought to be, addicted to his service, and be constantly employed in it, and never stir from it, nor so much as go over the threshold of his master's house.” [END]

Verse 18 – The JFB commentary states: “that is, he is entitled to double wages because his service was more advantageous to you, being both without wages and for a length of time, whereas hired servants were engaged yearly (Lev\_25:53), or at most for three years (Isa\_16:14).”

Verse 20 – The John Gill commentary states: “Which, if understood of male firstlings, as in connection with the preceding verse, only priests might eat of them, being devoted to the Lord; so Jarchi says, to the priest he speaks; but if this respects the Israelites in common, then they must be understood either of female firstlings or second firstlings, which the people voluntarily separated and which they were not to eat in their own houses:” [END]