

# Deuteronomy 15 Commentary

PREVIOUS

NEXT

CLICK VERSE

To go directly to that verse

- [15:1](#)
- [15:2](#)
- [15:3](#)
- [15:4](#)
- [15:5](#)
- [15:6](#)
- [15:7](#)
- [15:8](#)
- [15:9](#)
- [15:10](#)
- [15:11](#)
- [15:12](#)
- [15:13](#)
- [15:14](#)
- [15:15](#)
- [15:16](#)
- [15:17](#)
- [15:18](#)
- [15:19](#)
- [15:20](#)
- [15:21](#)
- [15:22](#)
- [15:23](#)

Moses on Mt Nebo (Deuteronomy 34:1+)

Listen to Mt Nebo as you Ponder How Moses' May Have Felt

Deuteronomy by Irving Jensen- used by permission

deut

Source: Ryrie Study Bible

## Deuteronomy

Dt 1:1-4:43	Dt 4:44-26:19	Dt 27:1-34:12	
Moses' First Discourse	Moses' Second Discourse	Moses' Third Discourse	
Historical Review	Legal Exposition	Prophetical Promises	
Looking Back 40 Years	Looking Up What God Expected of Israel	Looking Ahead What God Will Do for Israel	
Recapitulation of Wanderings	Rehearsal of Israel's Law	Ratification of Israel's Covenant	Historical Appendices
Remembrance of the past	Commandments for the Present	Dt 27:1-30:20 Blessing and Cursing	Dt 31:1-34:12 Death of Moses

Take Heed Don't forget	Ten Commands	Related Commands			Two Choices Affecting the Future		Moses' Parting Words
Dt 1:1-4:43 Looking Back	Dt 4:44-11:32 Exposition of Decalogue	Dt 12:1-16:17 Ceremonial Laws	Dt 16:18-20:20 Civil Laws	Dt 21:1-26:19 Social Laws	Dt 27:1-28:68 Ratification of Covenant	Dt 29:1- 30:20 Terms of Covenant	Dt 31:1-34:12 Moses' Song, Blessing, Death
<b>Plains of Moab</b>							
<b>ca. 2 Months</b> <b>Moses: Author</b> (Except Dt 34)							

### Deuteronomy 15:1 "At the end of every seven years you shall grant a remission of debts."

- De 31:10 Ex 21:2 23:10,11 Lev 25:2-4 Isa 61:1-3 Jer 36:8-18 Lu 4:18,19
- Deuteronomy 15 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Exodus 23:10-11+ You shall sow your land for six years and gather in its yield, 11 but on the seventh year you shall let it rest and lie fallow, so that the needy of your people may eat; and whatever they leave the beast of the field may eat. You are to do the same with your vineyard and your olive grove.

Leviticus 25:1-7+ (LAND FALLOW EVERY 7 YEARS BUT NO MENTION OF DEBT HERE - ONLY HERE IN DEUTERONOMY 15) The LORD then spoke to Moses at Mount Sinai, saying, 2 "Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, 'When you come into the land which I shall give you, then the land shall have a sabbath to the LORD. 3 'Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard and gather in its crop, 4 but during the seventh year the land shall have a sabbath rest, a sabbath to the LORD; you shall not sow your field nor prune your vineyard. 5 'Your harvest's aftergrowth you shall not reap, and your grapes of untrimmed vines you shall not gather; the land shall have a sabbatical year. 6 'All of you shall have the sabbath products of the land for food; yourself, and your male and female slaves, and your hired man and your foreign resident, those who live as aliens with you. 7 'Even your cattle and the animals that are in your land shall have all its crops to eat.

#### Divisions:

- Dt 15:1–6 Debts Cancelled Every Seven Years
- Dt 15:7–11 Generosity to the Poor
- Dt 15:12–18 The Law Concerning Bond Servants
- Dt 15:19–23 The Law Concerning Firstborn Animals

## SABBATICAL YEAR DEBT REMISSION

**Utley** - This chapter divides nicely into three distinct sections:

1. Dt 15:1–11 deal with the expansion of the Sabbath year's rest of Exod. 23:10–13 and Lev. 25:1–7 to the debtors and local poor. 2 Chronicles 36:21 says that the exile was a result of the Jews' failure to keep this Law.
2. Dt 15:12–18 deal with the kinsman slave, the Hebrew (man or woman) who had to work for someone to pay off debts.
3. Dt 15:19–23 deal with the first born of the flocks, or the offering of the first born animals.

**John Currid** - The foundational unit of the Hebrew calendar is the observance of the weekly Sabbath (5:12–15). One application of that principle from the Decalogue is the institution of the sabbatical year. Its primary purpose is to demonstrate that Israel is fully dependent on God for her existence. A secondary purpose is to care for the disadvantaged in Israel. It is what Kaufman calls 'a welfare system for the poor'. (EPSC-Dt)

**HCSB** - The principle of the Sabbath—that all creation should rest and be rejuvenated on the seventh day—was extended to the seventh year as well

**Wiersbe** - Those who think that it takes a great deal of faith to give God a tithe of their income will probably be shocked when they read this section of the law. Just as every seventh day of the week was set apart for God as the Sabbath Day, so every seventh year was to be set apart as a Sabbath Year. During that year, the Jews were not to cultivate the land but allow it to rest. The people would have to trust God to produce the grain, vegetables, and fruits they needed for themselves and for their flocks and herds and farm animals. (See Lev. 25:1–7.) Every fiftieth year was a “Year of Jubilee” (vv. 8ff) when the land lay fallow for another year! It would really take faith on the part of the people to trust God for what they needed for two long years! ([Be Equipped](#))

**Meredith Kline** - verses 1-18 elaborate the subject of love toward needy brethren, which came up in the exposition of tithing procedure (14:27ff.). Specifically, these stipulations deal with the remission of debts (vv. 1-11) and the manumission of bondservants (vv. 12-18). A further element of continuity is found in the sabbatical frame work for this program of mercy (cf. 14:28). ([Wycliffe Bible Commentary on Deuteronomy](#))

Leviticus 25:4 had given Israel the instruction that "during the seventh year the land shall have a sabbath rest, **asabbath to the LORD**; you shall not sow your field nor prune your vineyard." "After six years of sowing and harvesting the land was to rest for one year. What grew of itself that year, that is without being sown, pruned, or tended, was to be food for all the people. The poor, the widows, and the needy could gather what had grown, as could the owners of the fields or vineyards. In this way provision would be made for all the people, and for all the flocks and herds, as what grew by itself would be considerable. Just as the weekly sabbath was given so that men and women would not exhaust themselves with overmuch labour, so the sabbath year was given that the land would not be exhausted and thus be diminished in its ability to produce the harvest. There was no thought that this year was intended simply to give the people a year of ease. But there was another reason for this seventh year rest for the land. It was a reminder to Israel that the land did not belong ultimately to them. It was the possession of the Lord and He had the right and the authority to determine its use. The Lord gave it to them but they must submit to His ultimate ownership of it. They had to treat it in manner that He ordained. This principle still has to be acknowledged. Christians must recognise that all that they have has come from the Lord and that He has the right to determine how these possessions will be used." (Grant)

**John Trapp** - This Sabbatical year signified the year of grace, the kingdom of Christ, wherein all Israelites indeed are discharged of their debts. {Mat 6:12}

**At the end of every seven years you shall grant a remission (cancellation) of debts** - Keep in mind that when one needed to borrow money, there were no banks but only fellow Israelites from which to borrow. This continues the theme of caring for underprivileged (Dt 14:28-29). Notice it does not say "some of your debts" but simply "debts," implying all of their debts are to be remitted. This practice tends to facilitate socio-economic balance. It does not make the poor rich, but does help them to get a new start in their economic life. The word **remission** is **shemittah** and is used only 4x (Dt 15:1,2,9, 31:10) which the primary sense of a letting drop and simply means the cancellation of a debt that was owed to another person. In other words, in a normal business setting this was a loan that the person would have been expected to and even be obligated to repay. In Ex. 23:10–11 **shemittah** is used for the land lying fallow every seven years. There is a type of fishing called "catch and release," which in a sense pictures this practice. The debtor is caught in the net of the creditor, but the creditor has to release him at 7 years! At that time the debtor has absolutely no obligation to pay back what had been loaned to him.

The message of this commandment is clearly to serve as a reminder to Israel that they had experienced the grace of God when He released them from their enslavement in Egypt and then He provided a sacrificial system whereby their sins could be atoned for by offering a proper sacrificial animal, all of this of course ultimately pointing to the forgiveness of sins available only in the Messiah and His sacrifice as the Lamb of God (Jn 1:29+).

**THOUGHT** - Do we not see a similar pattern in the New Testament? I think we do. How do others owe us? If they have sinned against us, they in essence owe us a "debt." And yet what did Jesus tell us to pray? "Forgive us our debts, just as we have forgiven our debtors." (Mt 6:12+, Lk 11:4+). Of course the request to **forgive us our debts** (the fifth petition) does not mean that believers need to ask daily for justification, since believers are justified forever from the moment of initial saving faith (Ro 5:1, 9; Ro 8:1; Ro 10:10). Rather, this is a prayer for the restoration of personal fellowship with our Father when our fellowship has been hindered by our sin. Those who have received such forgiveness are (or should be) so moved with and motivated by gratitude toward God that they also (enabled by the Spirit giving us the desire and power - Php 2:13NLT+) are then able to forgive those who are their (sin) debtors. We see this pattern for forgiveness in Paul's command to "**Be (present imperative** see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, (HOW?) **JUST AS** God in Christ also has forgiven you." (Eph 4:32+, cf Lk 7:47+). Christ-followers should (and can, enabled by the Spirit) forgive others their (sin) debts against us, remembering how great was

out sin debt to God (unforgiven it would have taken us to eternal death and separation) which He has graciously forgiven us.

**Utley** on **end of every seven years** - Two things happened: (1) the land was to lie fallow as a symbol of God's ownership of the land as well as His care for the poor (cf. Exod. 23:10–13; Lev. 25:1–7). In Josephus' *The Antiquities of the Jews*, [XIII.8.1](#), we find a reference to the Jews' habit of letting the land rest and (2) here fellow Israelites were released from debts (cf. v. 2; 31:10). Seven was seen as the perfect number because of the six days of creation and the seventh day of rest in Gen. 1:1–2:3.

**Guzik** - In Israel, money was always loaned with the understanding that every seventh year, debts would be canceled. So there was no long-term debt in this sense—money could never be borrowed, or owed, for more than six years. ([Deuteronomy 15](#))

**Wiersbe** - the Sabbath Year involved much more than rest for the land (Ex. 23:10–11). It also meant canceling debts (Deut. 15:1–11) and setting free the servants who had served for six years (vv. 12–18). Bible students don't agree on whether the entire debt was cancelled or just the interest on the loan for that year (31:10). "He shall not require payment from his fellow Israelite or brother" (15:2, NIV). However, they could collect interest from foreigners. Since people weren't getting any income from their land, they wouldn't be able to pay their debts easily. But what was a test of faith for some would be an answer to prayer for the poor and the needy. They were permitted to eat freely from the fields and orchards and were given an extra year to raise money to pay their debts. ([Be Equipped](#))

**Remission** (08059)(**shemittah**) {shem-it-taw'} feminine noun meaning a remission, a release, a suspension. (1) letting drop of [exactions](#), (temporary) remitting, release (from debt) canceling debts, remitting of a debt, i.e., the act. of restraint from exacting an amount of money which is owed to a lender, so releasing a debtor from an obligation. Shemittah is attached to the designation of the seventh year of Sabbath, that is, the **year of remission** in which all debts were released (Deut. 15:1-2, 9; Dt 31:10). The [Year of Jubilee](#) was the forty-ninth year, the seventh of a series of seven Sabbath years. The fiftieth year was then hallowed, the fields were to be left fallow, all debts were to be released and every person would return to the property of his family. Thus, an Israelite could buy another's land for a maximum of forty-nine years and then must return it to the family (similar to a long-term leasing of land rather than a modern sales contract; see Ex. 23:10; Lev. 25:1–38). This word signifies the cancellation of a debt that was owed to another person. This was a debt which a person would, under ordinary circumstances, be obligated to pay back. In Israel, at the end of every seven years, the people were to **release and forgive** their fellow people from debts owed to them. The thought of forgiveness is significant as it is picked up in the Lxx's use of [aphesis](#) which speaks of forgiveness of our sin debt in the NT (cf uses in Mt 26:28; Mk 1:4; Lk 1:77; 3:3; 24:47; Ac 2:38; 5:31). This word was used in this context of the seventh year to show that the debtor was released from any obligation to pay back what had been loaned to him before that time (Deut. 15:1, 2, 9; 31:10). In the Old Testament, this noun was used only in the context of forgiving debts at the end of every seven years. Deut. 15:1; Deut. 15:2; Deut. 15:9; Deut. 31:10

**NET NOTE** The Hebrew term שְׁמִטָּה (shémittah), a derivative of the verb שָׁמַטַּ (shamat, "to release; to relinquish"), refers to the procedure whereby debts of all fellow Israelites were to be canceled. Since the Feast of Tabernacles/Booths celebrated God's own deliverance of and provision for his people, this was an appropriate time for Israelites to release one another. See note on this word at Deut 15:1 = The Hebrew term שְׁמִטָּה (shémittat), a derivative of the verb שָׁמַטַּ (shamat, "to release; to relinquish"), refers to the cancellation of the debt and even pledges for the debt of a borrower by his creditor. This could be a full and final remission or, more likely, one for the seventh year only.

**Shemittah** - Deut. 15:1; Deut. 15:2; Deut. 15:9; Deut. 31:10

---

#### QUESTION - [What is a sabbatical year?](#)

**ANSWER** - The [Sabbath](#) is the seventh day of the week, a day of rest for the Hebrew people under the Mosaic Law. But the Law also spoke of a sabbatical year. Leviticus 25:1–7 provides instructions for the sabbatical year to be observed after the Israelites moved into the [Promised Land](#).

Leviticus 25:3–5 explains what to do—or, rather, what *not* to do—on the sabbatical year: "For six years sow your fields, and for six years prune your vineyards and gather their crops. But in the seventh year the land is to have a year of sabbath rest, a sabbath to the Lord. Do not sow your fields or prune your vineyards. Do not reap what grows of itself or harvest the grapes of your untended vines. The land is to have a year of rest." Every seventh year, then, was to be a time of no planting or pruning of crops. The Sabbath day was a rest every week, and this rest was applied to farmland once every seven years (the sabbatical year is also mentioned in Exodus 23:10–11).

If the Israelites were not to plant during the sabbatical year, what were they to eat? Leviticus 25:6–7 explains: "Whatever the land

yields during the sabbath year will be food for you—for yourself, your male and female servants, and the hired worker and temporary resident who live among you, as well as for your livestock and the wild animals in your land. Whatever the land produces may be eaten.”

The food for the Israelites, their servants, and livestock was to come from harvesting the sabbatical year’s “volunteer” crop—reaping the harvest that grew on its own accord in the seventh year. Leviticus 25:20–22 anticipates the people’s question: “You may ask, ‘What will we eat in the seventh year if we do not plant or harvest our crops?’ I will send you such a blessing in the sixth year that the land will yield enough for three years. While you plant during the eighth year, you will eat from the old crop and will continue to eat from it until the harvest of the ninth year comes in.” In other words, the Israelites had no reason to worry. God promised to take care of them, if they would only trust Him.

Deuteronomy 15 also speaks of the sabbatical year. In this passage, a further command is given: forgive all debt and release all Hebrew servants. If the Israelites obeyed this command, they had another promise: “The LORD your God will bless you as he has promised, and you will lend to many nations but will borrow from none. You will rule over many nations but none will rule over you” (Deuteronomy 15:6).

Observing the sabbatical year was an important sign of trust in the Lord, and it was accompanied by great blessings. Refusing to obey this command, God warned, would lead to a curse: “I will scatter you among the nations and will draw out my sword and pursue you. Your land will be laid waste, and your cities will lie in ruins. Then the land will enjoy its sabbath years all the time that it lies desolate and you are in the country of your enemies; then the land will rest and enjoy its sabbaths. All the time that it lies desolate, the land will have the rest it did not have during the sabbaths you lived in it” (Leviticus 26:33–35).

Sadly, Israel failed to observe the sabbatical years. They continued cultivating and harvesting their land on the seventh year just as they had the other years. As a result of that and other sins, God brought the [Assyrians](#) and the [Babylonians](#) against Israel, and God’s people were removed from the Promised Land for a period of time. The biblical historian notes the significance of the deportations: “The land enjoyed its sabbath rests; all the time of its desolation it rested” (2 Chronicles 36:21). [GotQuestions.org](#)

#### Related Resources:

- [What is the Feast of Tabernacles / Booths / Sukkot? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What are the different Jewish festivals in the Bible? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What are the Lord’s appointed times \(Leviticus 23\)? | GotQuestions.org](#)

**Deuteronomy 15:2 "This is the manner of remission: every creditor shall release what he has loaned to his neighbor; he shall not exact it of his neighbor and his brother, because the LORD’S remission has been proclaimed.**

- **exact it:** Ne 5:7-11 Isa 58:3 Am 8:4-6 Mt 6:12,14,15 18:25-35 Lu 6:34-38 Lu 7:42 Jas 2:13
- Deuteronomy 15 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Amos 8:4-6 (THE RESULT OF NOT LISTENING TO THIS DIVINE INSTRUCTION) Hear this, you who trample the needy, to do away with the humble of the land, 5 saying, “When will the new moon be over, So that we may sell grain, And the sabbath, that we may open the wheat market, To make the bushel smaller and the shekel bigger, And to cheat with dishonest scales, 6 So as to buy the helpless for money And the needy for a pair of sandals, And that we may sell the refuse of the wheat?”

Colossians 3:12-13+ (NT APPLICATION OF FORGIVING DEBTS) So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; 13 bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.

## THE NATURE OF THE CANCELLATION

**This is the manner of remission** - NLT = "This is how it must be done."

**Every creditor shall release** (remit) **what he has loaned to his neighbor** - Now the qualifier is clearly stated - **EVERY creditor**. That means no exceptions, but whether this was a permanent release or temporary release is not known. **Creditor** is [ba'al](#) which

means in a sense he was master or lord of the loan, so that the lender-borrower relation was not one of equality. **Grant** adds "The lender was the master of the transaction and it was he alone who determined the terms. But overriding this was the right of the Lord. Just as the land at rest was an indication of submission to His word, so the treatment of debtors was to be a further acknowledgement of His Lordship." (WBT-Dt)

**NET NOTE** - Heb "his neighbor," used idiomatically to refer to another person.

**Kline** feels this is most likely permanent - 'The fact that the seventh year of release and the [Year of Jubilee](#) of liberty belonged to one symbolical unity indicates that a permanent cancellation of debts is meant.' In Ex 23:11 **release** is applied to the land in the sense of lying fallow. Hence the year of release is "a sabbath of rest unto the land" (Lev 25:4). Here it is applied to debts in the sense of remission.

**Creditor** (lord, master, owner, possessor) ([01167](#)) **ba'al** means lord, owner (Ex 21:22, 28, 29, 34, 36, et al), possessor, husband (Pr 12:4), master, leader (as of a city - Jdg 9:2, 51). This Hebrew word is often combined with another Hebrew word but the English translation only gives one word, so it can be confusing. E.g., in Pr 24:8 the word "schemer" is actually two Hebrew words - **possessor** (baal) of schemes. **Baker** - A masculine singular noun meaning lord, husband, owner, possessor, the title of a Canaanite deity (Baal). It can also denote rulers and leaders (Isa. 16:8). Commonly, it refers to legally owning something such as an ox or bull (Ex. 21:28); house (Ex. 22:8[7]; or land (Job 31:38). The word can also describe possessing a quality, attribute, or characteristic like anger (Prov. 22:24); wrath (Prov. 29:22); hair (2 Kgs. 1:8); appetite (Prov. 23:2); wisdom (Eccl. 7:12). When Joseph is called a dreamer, he is literally a possessor of dreams (Gen. 37:19). Further, the word can connote husband as used of Abraham (Gen. 20:3) and elsewhere (Ex. 21:3; Deut. 22:22). (The Complete Word Study Dictionary:OT) Deut. 15:2; Deut. 22:22; Deut. 24:4;

**he shall not exact it of his neighbor and his brother** - NET = "he must not force payment from his fellow Israelite." NIV = "Every creditor shall cancel the loan he has made to his fellow Israelite."

**because the LORD'S remission has been proclaimed** - NET = for it is to be recognized as "the LORD's cancellation of debts." The primary purpose was to help minimize poverty in Israel.

The LORD'S remission took on a greater meaning when the Lord Jesus made the following proclamation regarding the far greater release, the release from sin...

"THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME, BECAUSE HE ANOINTED ME TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE POOR. HE HAS SENT ME TO PROCLAIM RELEASE TO THE CAPTIVES, AND RECOVERY OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND, TO SET FREE THOSE WHO ARE OPPRESSED, 19 TO PROCLAIM THE FAVORABLE YEAR OF THE LORD." (Lk 4:18-19+)

**Guzik** - This was an important matter to God; the release was said to be the LORD's release. As Israel obeyed this command, there would never be a permanent under-class in Israel. Some might go through a bad period, but would have the opportunity to rebuild their lives financially on a regular basis. ([Deuteronomy 15](#))

**Keene** on why the remission was most likely permanent and not temporary - Several points favor this: (1) This view is more consonant with the generosity the Lord had expressed toward Israel. (2) It is more consistent with the statements in Dt 15:9–11. (3) The practice of canceling the entire debt permanently in the seventh year was evidently meant to prepare the Israelites for the extravagant practices commanded for the [Year of Jubilee](#) (50th) in which each one was to receive back "his family property" (Lev. 25:8–17). (4) Permanent cancellation of debts would help prevent poverty (Deut. 15:4a). (5) The potential for incredible wealth in the land of Israel also argues for the permanent cancellation of debts. Israel had the opportunity to be the richest and most prosperous nation on the face of the earth (He will richly bless you, Dt 15:4b; Dt 15:6a). This prosperity would be due not to any technological achievement on her part, but because of her wholehearted commitment to God ([Bible Knowledge Commentary](#))

---

**Grant** has a good summary of the significance of the sabbatical year - This act was the "Lord's release". Credit for it must not be given to the creditor but to the Lord, for it is He who had commanded it and it is His bounty for His people. There are a number of reasons and other issues that can be identified for this act.

1. The sabbath year was to be one of restful enjoyment of the bounty of God. It was not to be marred by concern regarding debts that had been incurred. Should such a burden remain the debtor would consider - that the command to refrain from sowing, and to gather in no harvest made it difficult, if not impossible, to honour the payments due to the creditor. The Lord would have His people with minds at peace so that the year of release could be one of enjoyment of His goodness without such cares burdening them. This would appear to be the significance of the opening words of v. 4: "Save when there shall be no poor among you". The AV margin has



it, "To the end that there be no poor among you", and the RSV renders this phrase as, "But there will be no poor among you". One of the reasons for the release, therefore, was that there would be no poor with financial worries during this year.

2. The Lord had promised to bless Israel greatly. This would give them the means to lend to those of many nations, but they should never put themselves into the position of being debtors to those of other nations (v. 6). If they "carefully hearken" (v. 5) to the Lord their God they will enjoy great prosperity, with an abundance greater than other people, and able to show the generous character of their God. Such prosperity would allow the "Lord's release" to be given without hardship. Obedience to the Word of God never results in poverty. The creditor would not be put into financial straits by heeding the Lord in this matter. This is key to understanding an act that would be regarded today in business circles as being financial folly. On the contrary it was an act guaranteeing that the creditor would continue to have enough to meet his needs and fulfil his responsibilities.

3. It would be a further mark of the separation of Israel from other nations. The use of the tithe of the third year to benefit the poor and the Levite (14:28–29), together with the Lord's release, would make them unique. The third year tithe was given by the Lord to help the poor and the Levite. With the Lord's example to follow in this seventh year act, the spirit of generous giving was to be a feature of a true Israelite.

4. Lest any consider that the loss incurred in cancelling the debt was unacceptable, they must recognise that those who obey will not suffer, but will indeed have guaranteed that they will not themselves fall into poverty. Some might consider refusing to lend because the year of release was not far off. If, for instance, the money had to be given in the fifth year of the seven year cycle it would only be possible to make one year's repayments, in the sixth year, before the debt was cancelled. That would appear to cause the lender grievous loss, but the Lord would take account of this in His dealings with the faithful lender, for "The Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou putteth thine hand unto" (v. 10). Take note that the Lord regarded any unwillingness to lend as coming from a "wicked heart" (v. 9), and a refusal would result in the needy soul crying to the Lord. The word "wicked" means "Belial", a worthless, useless, ungodly heart.

5. It could also lead to one deliberately asking a loan at a time when he would be aware of the fact that there would be little of it repaid before the seventh year. This would be equally regarded as being unacceptable to the Lord and would result in His taking a dealing with those of such a devious mind.

6. In all this it had to be remembered that the lending had not to be given with a grievous heart (v. 10), and that the lender should open his "hand wide" (v. 11). The heart was not to be hard in dealing with this matter, nor the hand to be shut. When a request was made the lender was not to give that which was insufficient to meet the need. He was to "lend ... sufficient for his need, in that which he wanteth" (v. 8). ([What the Bible Teaches - Deuteronomy](#))

**Deuteronomy 15:3 "From a foreigner you may exact it, but your hand shall release whatever of yours is with your brother.**

- De 23:20 Ex 22:25 Mt 17:25,26 Joh 8:35 1Co 6:6,7 Ga 6:10
- Deuteronomy 15 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **DEBT REMISSIONS NOT APPLICABLE TO FOREIGNERS**

**From a foreigner you may exact it, but your hand shall release whatever of yours is with your brother-** Foreigners were non-Israelites who lived in Palestine (Dt 14:21; 15:3; 17:15; 23:20; 29:22) and were granted limited civil rights and legal protection.

**Keil** - נֹכְרִי (*nokri*) is a stranger of another nation, standing in no inward relation to Israel at all, and is to be distinguished from גֵּר (*ger*) the foreigner who lived among the Israelites, who had a claim upon their protection and pity. This rule breathes no hatred of foreigners, but simply allows the Israelites the right of every creditor to demand his debts, and enforce the demand upon foreigners, even in the sabbatical year. There was no severity in this, because foreigners could get their ordinary income in the seventh year as well as in any other.

**Utley** - This care for the non-Israelite clearly showed: (1) the character of YHWH, (2) the inclusion possible and (3) the past experience of Israel in Egypt

**Release** (08058) (**shamat**) means "to release," "to let rest," "to drop." Cognates are attested in Middle Hebrew, Jewish Aramaic, Akkadian and Arabic. As the Israelites brought back the Ark of God from the house of Abinadab to Jerusalem, they placed it upon a cart drawn by oxen. This procedure was not appropriate according to the Law, since it was supposed to be carried on poles by Levites (Num. 4). As the entire

entourage processed in celebration, Uzzah, one of Abinadab's sons, put his hand on the Ark because the oxen stumbled (2 Sam. 6:6). The proper translation for "stumbled" is the oxen "kicked," which means they "were restive." Hence, the oxen became agitated or restive and moved recklessly or irregularly.

Shāmat also means "to cast," "to throw down," such as in the case of Jezebel, wicked wife of Ahab, who was thrown down from an upper story of her palace by command of Jehu (2 Ki. 9:33). The inhabitants of Judah, just before they were exiled to Babylon, clung tightly to their wealth for security and identity, rather than clinging to the Lord. Jeremiah's prophecy informed them that God, in punishment for their sins, was going to make all their wealth a spoil for their enemies: "You shall loosen your hand from your heritage which I gave you, and I will make you serve your enemies in a land which you do not know" (Jer. 17:4). The loosening of the hands pictures an object falling from a tight grip which has been released.

Using a similar figure of speech, the Lord commanded Moses and the Israelites to work their land for six years and then "drop" or "let rest" the land on the seventh year (Exo. 23:11). The Israelites were to leave it unattended, untilled, fallow. Likewise, the figures "open your hand to" and "shut your hand against" use the verb shāmat. Closing the hand indicates keeping the debt of someone. Opening the hand is remission of debt or alms for someone in need or giving a loan to someone. In Deuteronomy, the Lord commands that people must "open the hand" to help the poorer segment of the population, though the year of debt release (every seven years) is soon to occur. The person making the loan would not receive much from the person who received the loan since there would be only a few months left until release, but God commanded the people to extend loans anyway and He would bless them (cf. Deut. 15:1-11).

The Niphal form means "to be cast down," "to be precipitated," "to be thrown down," as a rock cast down and shattered on the ground, which is the fate of the wicked (Ps. 141:6). The Hiphil form means "to release," "to remit," used again to describe the actions required of Israelites at the time of the seven years' rest, when debts were to be remitted of fellow Israelites: "Of a foreigner you may exact [the loan] again: but that which is yours with your brother your hand shall release" (Deut. 15:3). ([Complete Biblical Library - Incredible Resource](#))

**Shamat** - let it rest(1), let go(1), release(2), threw her down(1), throw her down(1), thrown down(1), upset(2).  
Exod. 23:11; Deut. 15:2; Deut. 15:3; 2 Sam. 6:6; 2 Ki. 9:33; 1 Chr. 13:9; Ps. 141:6; Jer. 17:

**Deuteronomy 15:4 "However, there will be no poor among you, since the LORD will surely bless you in the land which the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance to possess,**

- **bless:** De 14:29 28:1-8,11 Pr 11:24,25 14:21 28:27 Isa 58:10,11
- Deuteronomy 15 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THE IDEAL NO POOR

**However, there will be no poor among you, since the LORD will surely bless you in the land which the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance to possess** - The ideal was that there would be no poor, but Jesus later said "you always have the poor with you; but you do not always have Me.(Matt. 26:11)

**Guzik** - However, Deuteronomy 15:11—just a few verses down—states: For the poor will never cease from the land. Is God contradicting Himself? Not at all. He knows that He has established a system where no one must be chronically poor, yet He knew that because of disobedience, some would, and there would always be the poor in Israel.. So, God did not guarantee prosperity for any one in Israel; but He did guarantee opportunity for prosperity for an obedient Israel. (Ibid)

**Wiersbe** - The blessing of God ought to motivate us to be a blessing and a help to others. Note how often Moses mentions the blessing of God (Dt 15:4, 6, 10, 14, 18). God has opened His hand generously to us, and we should open our hands widely to others (Dt 15:8). He blesses us so that we might be a blessing (Gen. 12:2). Not only must we have generous hands, but we should cultivate glad hearts as we share (v. 10). Giving is an occasion not for shrewd calculation (v. 9) but for jubilation! Paul may have had this verse in mind when he wrote "not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Cor. 9:7) (With the Word)

**Utley** - This chapter is characterized by the use of double VERBS:

1. Some are INFINITIVE ABSOLUTES and IMPERFECT VERBS of the same root (which is a grammatical form for intensifying the



meaning):

- a. "surely bless," v. 4, Piel
- b. "listen obediently," v. 5, Qal
- c. "freely open," v. 8, Qal
- d. "generously lend," v. 8,
- e. "generously give," v. 10,
- f. "freely open," v. 11,
- g. "furnish liberally," v. 14,

2. Some are the same VERB, used twice:

- a. "lend ... not borrow," v. 6, a Hiphil PERFECT and a Qal IMPERFECT
- b. "rule ... not rule," v. 6, a Qal PERFECT and a Qal IMPERFECT
- c. "set free ... free ... not send," vv. 12, 13, all three Piel IMPERFECTS
- d. "eat ... not eat," vv. 22, 23, both Qal IMPERFECTS

**Deuteronomy 15:5 if only you listen obediently to the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all this commandment which I am commanding you today.**

- De 4:9 11:13-15 28:1-15 Lev 26:3-14 Jos 1:7 Ps 19:11 Isa 1:19,20 Php 1:27
- Deuteronomy 15 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### **WARNING ABOUT OBEYING COMMANDS**

**if only you listen obediently to the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all this commandment which I am commanding you today - Listen obediently** is a double verb [shama](#) for emphasis ("if listening you listen to the voice of." where "listen to the voice" is an idiom for obey). This is the condition and the blessing mentioned in the next verse is based on their obedience.

**Deuteronomy 15:6 "For the LORD your God will bless you 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.**

- **you will lend to many nations:** De 28:12,44 Ps 37:21,26 112:5 Pr 22:7 Lu 6:35
- **you will rule over many nations:** De 28:13 1Ki 4:21,24 2Ch 9:26 Ezr 4:20 Ne 9:27
- Deuteronomy 15 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### **Related Passages:**

Deuteronomy 28:12 "The LORD will open for you His good storehouse, the heavens, to give rain to your land in its season and to bless all the work of your hand; and you shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow.

Deuteronomy 28:43-44 (CURSES FOR DISOBEDIENCE) "The alien who is among you shall rise above you higher and higher, but you will go down lower and lower. 44 "He shall lend to you, but you will not lend to him; he shall be the head, and you will be the tail.

Deuteronomy 28:13 The LORD will make you the head and not the tail, and you only will be above, and you will not be underneath, if you listen to the commandments of the LORD your God, which I charge you today, to observe them carefully,

### **OBEDIENT ISRAEL'S BLESSING: LENDER AND RULER**

**For the LORD your God will bless you 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** - Obedience brings blessing to the nation of Israel who

would be lenders and rulers over other nations. Israel would be richly blessed if she obeyed, but the converse would occur if they did not

The alien who is among you shall rise above you higher and higher, but you will go down lower and lower. 44“He shall lend to you, but you will not lend to him; he shall be the head, and you will be the tail. Dt 28:43–44

**Bless** (01288) **barak** is a verb which literally can mean to kneel (to go to one's knees - Camel in Ge 24:11, Solomon in 2Chr 6:13) as contrasted with standing position or even a bowing at the waist). And so barak can refer to an act of adoration sometimes on bended knee. To give divine blessings (Ge 1:22, 9:1-7) To esteem greatly or adore God for His blessings (Ge 24:48, Ps 103:1) To invoke blessings upon another (Ge 24:60, 27:4, 27) Inherent in the idea of blessing is the invocation of special favor on a person or object that is held in high esteem. The object of blessing in the Old Testament may be either divine or human, or that which belongs to either God or human beings. **Barak** in Deut - Deut. 1:11; Deut. 2:7; Deut. 7:13; Deut. 7:14; Deut. 8:10; Deut. 10:8; Deut. 12:7; Deut. 14:24; Deut. 14:29; Deut. 15:4; Deut. 15:6; Deut. 15:10; Deut. 15:14; Deut. 15:18; Deut. 16:10; Deut. 16:15; Deut. 21:5; Deut. 23:20; Deut. 24:13; Deut. 24:19; Deut. 26:15; Deut. 27:12; Deut. 28:3; Deut. 28:4; Deut. 28:5; Deut. 28:6; Deut. 28:8; Deut. 28:12; Deut. 29:19; Deut. 30:16; Deut. 33:1; Deut. 33:11; Deut. 33:13; Deut. 33:20; Deut. 33:24;

Did Israel obey? No, they did not keep the Sabbatical Year. So God punished Israel and they had to pay back 70 years which means they did not keep the Sabbatical Year for 490 years, not keeping one Sabbath Year every 7 years.

Furthermore, all the officials of the priests and the people were very unfaithful following all the abominations of the nations; and they defiled the house of the LORD which He had sanctified in Jerusalem. 15 The LORD, the God of their fathers, sent word to them again and again by His messengers, because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place; 16 but they continually mocked the messengers of God, despised His words and scoffed at His prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against His people, until there was no remedy. 17 Therefore He brought up against them the king of the Chaldeans who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion on young man or virgin, old man or infirm; He gave them all into his hand. 18 All the articles of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king and of his officers, he brought them all to Babylon. 19 Then they burned the house of God and broke down the wall of Jerusalem, and burned all its fortified buildings with fire and destroyed all its valuable articles. 20 Those who had escaped from the sword he carried away to Babylon; and they were servants to him and to his sons until the rule of the kingdom of Persia, 21 **to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed its sabbaths. All the days of its desolation it kept sabbath until seventy years were complete.** (2 Chr 36:14-21)

**Deuteronomy 15:7 "If there is a poor man with 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;**

- there be: Lest the preceding law might render the Israelites cautious in lending to the poor, Moses here warns them against being led by so mean a principle; but to lend liberally, and God would reward them.
- thou shalt: De 15:9 Pr 21:13 Mt 18:30 Jas 2:15,16 1Jn 3:16,17
- Deuteronomy 15 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### **A HARD HEART CLOSES ONE'S HAND!**

**Deere** points out that now "Moses left the realm of law for a moment to appeal to his fellow Israelites' hearts. The law of debt cancellation (vv. 1–6) was intended to instill a spirit of generosity within the Israelites and thus a freedom from the love of money and things." (Ibid)

**If there is a poor man with 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 - NIV "hardhearted or tightfisted"** **Brothers** refers to Hebrew kin. The failure to help the poor, the "have not's" around us is a reflection of heart failure of the "have's." In short it reflects a hard heart. How is your heart to the less privileged around you - soft or hard?

**Deere** - Being hardened or tightfisted meant he was not trusting the LORD to bless ... all his work. Solomon may have been

meditating on these words of Moses when he wrote, "One man gives freely, yet gains even more; another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty" (Prov. 11:24). (Ibid)

**Utley on one of your brothers** - The Mosaic Law shows YHWH's special concern about and mercy to: other poor covenant brothers/sisters, widows, orphans, alien residents and aliens. It is this compassion across socioeconomic lines that makes the Israeli legal code unique. The other ancient law codes favored the elite, the wealthy, and the royal. Israel favored the weak, socially and economically deprived, legally vulnerable, and disenfranchised!

**Wiersbe** - The Sabbath Year was a test of faith, but it was also a test of love (Deut. 15:7–11). Suppose a poor Jew needed a loan and the Sabbath Year was only two years away. The borrower would then receive an extra year for paying back the loan and the loaner would lose the interest for one year! If the loaner looked at the loan strictly as a business proposition, he would turn it down; but that's the very attitude the Lord wanted to correct. It wasn't a business proposition; it was a ministry to a brother. If the wealthier Israelite closed his heart and his hand to the needy man, he would hurt his brother and grieve the Lord who had given him all the wealth he had. Therefore, he was to open both his heart and his hand to help his brother, and the Lord would see to it that he was compensated for his generosity. See Proverbs 14:21, 31; 19:17; 21:13; 28:27; Ephesians 4:28; 1 Timothy 6:17–19; 1 John 3:14–18. ([Be Equipped](#))

**John Trapp** - Thou shalt not harden thy heart.] But "draw out thy soul to the hungry." {Isa 58:10} Many have iron bowels and withered hands.

Paul says we are first to help our brethren in Christ

So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith. (Gal 6:10+)

---

## Deuteronomy 15:7-11

### For The Poor

The man sits on the street corner day after day, begging for money. He's poor and desperate for a little cash to spend on food.

He's not alone. More than one-half of the world's people live below the internationally defined poverty line of less than \$2.00 a day. Poverty and hunger are such a big problem in our world that it's easy for us to feel helpless or to become hard-hearted and do nothing.

But God doesn't close His eyes to the plight of the poor. When He gave His people guidelines for living, He included instructions on ways to care for the needy (Deut. 15:11). He told His people, "You shall not harden your heart, nor shut your hand, from your poor brother, [but] open your hand wide to him and willingly lend him sufficient for his need" (Deut. 15:7-8).

God also commanded His people not to glean the corners of their fields so that the less fortunate could gather food (Lev. 19:9-10). And Jesus showed His compassion for the poor by His words and actions.

As Christians, we cannot ignore the plight of the poor today. Individuals and churches can join with Christian organizations working to combat poverty as they spread the Word. God has a heart for the poor. Do we? —Anne Cetas ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

The poor and needy everywhere  
Are objects of God's love and care,  
But they will better know His care  
As we seek ways that love to share.  
—D. De Haan

**God gives us all we need so we can give to those in need.**

---

## Deuteronomy 15:7-11 Open-Handed Help

A homeless man spends time in our local library. One afternoon, while I was writing there, I took a lunch break. After I finished the first half of a turkey and Swiss cheese sandwich, an image of the man's face came to mind. A few minutes later, I offered him the untouched part of my lunch. He accepted.

This brief encounter made me realize that with all that God has given me, I needed to do more to help those who are less fortunate. Later, as I thought about this, I read Moses' instructions on providing for the poor. He told the Israelites: Do not "shut your hand from

your poor brother, but ... open your hand wide to him" (Deut. 15:7-8). An open hand symbolizes the way God wanted His nation to provide for impoverished people—willingly and freely. No excuses, no holding back (v.9). God had given to them, and He wanted them to give generously enough to supply whatever was "sufficient" for the need (v.8).

When we offer open-handed help to the poor, God blesses us for our kindness (Ps. 41:1-3; Prov. 19:17). With His leading, consider how you might "extend your soul to the hungry" (Isa. 58:10) and freely give to help others in Jesus' name.— by Jennifer Benson Schultdt ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Grant us, then, the grace for giving  
With a spirit large and free,  
That our life and all our living  
We may consecrate to Thee.  
—Murray

**You may give without loving, but you can't love without giving.**

**Deuteronomy 15:8 but you shall freely open your hand to him, and shall generously lend him sufficient for his need in whatever he lacks.**

- Deuteronomy 15 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## OPEN HEART OPEN HAND

**but you shall freely open your hand to him, and shall generously lend him sufficient for his need in whatever he lacks-** Instead of [tightfisted](#) Israelites were to be [openhanded](#)! Note the word is "lend" not give. This dynamic implies that the recipient has some "skin in the game" so to speak. While there are times when one simply and purely gives, here we see the pattern for the poor among the Israelites was to **lend**. This would imply that in lending to him, he will at least potentially be able to pay back. It is almost like we hear today of someone giving "[seed money](#)" to someone to begin a business. Note also that this was not to be a token amount, but **sufficient for his need**. (cf. James 2:15–26+; 1 John 3:16–17+).

**Grant** - there are spiritual lessons to be learned for today. The generosity of the Lord that we have enjoyed should make us generous to others. This is vital in material matters. Where there are saints in straitened circumstances, those who have been blessed materially should be willing to help. In the contributions made to the work of the local assembly the offerings should reflect the willingness of the saints to give. The principle set out by Paul when dealing with giving, that "He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully" (2 Cor 9:6), should be recognised. It is not that those who give should do so with the motive of obtaining more of this world's currency. The lesson is that those who are liberal in giving can be confident that the Lord will meet their needs, just as they have been used to meet the needs of others. The writer of the Proverbs sets out the same principle when he states that "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty" (Prov 11:24). But let us not lose sight of the fact that the principle holds good also in spiritual matters. Those who spend time in ensuring that they have spiritual food for the Lord's people will find that they, also, are abundantly rewarded in spiritual wealth.

**Deuteronomy 15:9 "Beware that there is no base thought in your heart, saying, 'The seventh year, the year of remission, is near,' and your eye is hostile toward your poor brother, and you give him nothing; then he may cry to the LORD against you, and it will be a sin in you.**

NET Deuteronomy 15:9 Be careful lest you entertain the wicked thought that the seventh year, the year of cancellation of debts, has almost arrived, and your attitude be wrong toward your impoverished fellow Israelite and you do not lend him anything; he will cry out to the LORD against you and you will be regarded as having sinned.

- **Beware:** Pr 4:23 Jer 17:10 Mt 15:19 Mk 7:21-22 Ro 7:8,9 Jas 4:5
- **eye:** De 28:54-56 Pr 23:6 24:9 28:22 Mt 20:15 Jas 5:9 1Pe 4:9
- **cry:** De 24:15 Ex 3:7 22:23 Job 34:28 Ps 9:12 Pr 21:13 Jas 5:4

- **sin**: Mt 25:41-45 Jas 4:17 1Jn 3:15-17
- Deuteronomy 15 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### Related Passages:

Deuteronomy 24:15 "You shall give him his wages on his day before the sun sets, for he is poor and sets his heart on it; so that he will not cry against you to the LORD and it become sin in you.

Jeremiah 17:10 "I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give to each man according to his ways, According to the results of his deeds.

Matthew 15:19 "For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders.

Mark 7:21-22+ "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, 22 deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness.

## HEART CHECK-UP!

**Beware** ([shamar](#)) **that there is no base thought in your heart**- "Do not allow this mean thought in your heart." (Dt 15:9 NJB) **Beware** is a command to continually be on guard against this greedy thought entering one's heart. Hebrew is striking here - "word with thine heart of Belial" which is interesting as Belial ([beliyyaal](#) = worthless, thoughtless) is a name for the Devil in the NT (2 Cor 6:15). Coincidence? Note that the command to beware (watch, be careful) is a theme in this book - Dt 4:9, 15, 23; 6:12; 8:11; 11:16; 12:13, 19, 28, 30; 15:9; 24:8.

**THOUGHT** - The lesson for all of us is that we continually need to be guarding our hearts against entry of "Belial" thoughts. As Solomon wrote "**Guard** your heart with all vigilance, for from it are the sources of life." (Proverbs 4:23NET+)

**Utley** on **base** (hostile) **thought** - means "bad" or "evil." A similar idiom is used in Dt 28:54, 56. This same VERB is repeated in Dt 15:10, where it is translated "**grieved**." This idiom relates to an attitude which swells up in a person in certain circumstances and/or toward certain persons. Motives are crucial in both the OT and NT. God looks at the heart!

**Guzik** - The law of release in the seventh year was never to be used to discourage giving to those in need. The law might discourage lending to the poor, therefore God wanted Israel to be generous givers to those in need. (Ibid)

**Saying, 'The seventh year, the year of remission, is near,' and your eye is hostile toward your poor brother, and you give him nothing** - The logic is simple -- if I lend money now in the 6th year, I will have to remit this debt in the 7th year. In other words, a stingy creditor might be tempted not to lend to his poor brother when the seventh year was near because he would then have less chance of being repaid

**Then he may cry to the LORD against you, and it will be a sin in you**- Failure to forgive the debt was a sin.

**Utley** - The poor man's prayer does not make it a sin (i.e., illegal), but it highlights to YHWH the sin in the **heart** of the selfish, conspiring man (cf. Dt 24:18; Ex. 22:23). YHWH's blessings are conditional on appropriate covenant motives and actions. His people are to model His character!

**Deuteronomy 15:10 "You shall generously give to him, and your heart shall not be grieved 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.**

- **heart**: Mt 25:40 Ac 20:35 Ro 12:8 2Co 9:5-7 1Ti 6:18-19 1Pe 4:11
- **because**: De 15:4 Dt 14:19,29 Dt 24:19 Ps 41:1,2 Pr 11:24,25 Pr 22:9 Isa 32:8 58:10 2Co 9:8-11 Php 4:18,19 Heb 13:16
- Deuteronomy 15 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### Related Passages:

Matthew 25:40 "The King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.'

Acts 20:35+ "In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

2 Corinthians 9:5-7 So I thought it necessary to urge the brethren that they would go on ahead to you and arrange beforehand your previously promised bountiful gift, so that the same would be ready as a bountiful gift and **not affected by covetousness**. 6 Now this I say, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. 7 Each one must do just **as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.**

1 Timothy 6:18-19 *Instruct them* to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, 19 storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed.

2 Corinthians 9:8-11 And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed; 9 as it is written, "HE SCATTERED ABROAD, HE GAVE TO THE POOR, HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS ENDURES FOREVER." 10 Now He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness; 11 you will be enriched in everything for all liberality, which through us is producing thanksgiving to God.

Hebrews 13:16 And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

Deuteronomy 14:19 "And all the teeming life with wings are unclean to you; they shall not be eaten.

Deuteronomy 14:29 "The Levite, because he has no portion or inheritance among you, and the alien, the orphan and the widow who are in your town, shall come and eat and be satisfied, in order that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hand which you do.

Deuteronomy 24:19 "When you reap your harvest in your field and have forgotten a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it; it shall be for the alien, for the orphan, and for the widow, in order that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands.

## **A GENEROUS HEART NOT A GRIEVING HEART!**

**You shall generously give** (Hebrew verb used twice for emphasis) **to him** (your Israelite brother), **and your heart shall not be grieved when you give to him** - A generous **heart** gives with cheerfulness and not grudgingly nor under compulsion. It is the overflow of a **heart** filled with the recognition that Giver of all good things has given exceeding, abundantly beyond all we could ever ask or think. Generous giving is a beautiful reflection of the Father's heart and gives others a proper opinion of Him (cf Mt 5:16+).

This recalls Paul's exhortation to believers to begin charitable giving with our brethren in Christ and then to extend outward from them...

So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith. (Galatians 6:10+)

**because** - An encouraging, motivating term of explanation.

**For this thing the LORD your God will bless (barak) you in all your work and in all your undertakings** - Watch your motive here! Don't give with the goal to get. Give with the goal to do good and God in turn will do good to you. It is all about the heart and the motives of the heart. This reminds me of the words of Paul

Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes Who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and **disclose the motives of men's hearts**; and then each man's praise will come to him from God. (1 Cor 4:5+).

**Deuteronomy 15:11 "For the poor will never cease to be in the land; therefore I command you, saying, 'You shall freely open your hand to your brother, to your needy and poor in your land.'**

- **the poor:** Pr 22:2 Mt 26:11 Mk 14:7 Joh 12:8
- **You shall** De 15:8 Mt 5:42 Lu 12:33 Ac 2:45 4:32-35 11:28-30 2Co 8:2-9 1Jn 3:16-18



- Deuteronomy 15 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Matthew 26:11 "For you always have the poor with you; but you do not always have Me.

Mark 14:7 "For you always have the poor with you, and whenever you wish you can do good to them; but you do not always have Me.

### POVERTY IS A CONTINUING REALITY

**For the poor will never cease to be in the land; therefore I command you, saying, 'You shall freely open**(Hebrew verb [patah](#) = to loosen - used twice for emphasis) **your hand to your brother, to your needy and poor in your land.'**- This was a foreshadowing of Israel's failure to fully obey this command. Had Israel been faithful to follow this law of debt remission there were in fact poor in Israel. As indicated by the words of Jesus (see Related Passages above) this did not prove to be the case.

**TSK** - Although Moses, by the statutes relative to the division of the land, and inheritance, and the inalienable nature of it, had studied to prevent any Israelite from being born poor, yet he exhorts them to the exercise of the tenderest compassion and most benevolent actions; and not to refuse assistance to the decayed Israelite, though the sabbatical year drew nigh.

**Deuteronomy 15:12 "If your kinsman, a Hebrew man or woman, is sold to you, then he shall serve you six years, but in the seventh year you shall set him free.**

- De 15:1 Ex 21:2-6 Lev 25:39-41 Jer 34:14 Joh 8:35-36
- Deuteronomy 15 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Exodus 21:2-6+ "If you buy a **Hebrew slave**, he shall serve for **six years**; but on the **seventh he shall go out as a free man without payment**. 3 "If he comes alone, he shall go out alone; if he is the husband of a wife, then his wife shall go out with him. 4 "If his master gives him a wife, and she bears him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall belong to her master, and he shall go out alone. 5 "But if the slave plainly says, 'I love my master, my wife and my children; I will not go out as a free man,' 6 then his master shall bring him to God, then he shall bring him to the door or the doorpost. And his master shall pierce his ear with an awl (ANALOGOUS TO BLOOD SPILLED WHEN CUTTING A COVENANT!); and he shall serve him permanently.

Jeremiah 34:14 "At the end of seven years each of you shall set free his Hebrew brother who has been sold to you and has served you six years, you shall send him out free from you; but your forefathers did not obey Me or incline their ear to Me. (THEY BROKE THE COVENANT THEY HAD CUT WITH YAHWEH! - FOR CONTEXT READ Jer 34:8-20, esp Jer 34:18 = the ceremony ratifying the covenant)

### FREEDOM ON THE SABBATICAL YEAR

**If your kinsman, a Hebrew man or woman** (shows legal equality), **is sold to you, then he shall serve you six years, but in the seventh year you shall set him free** - **Sold to you** refers to indentured servitude (Lev. 25:39, 47, 48, 50). This command is simply a practical extension of Deuteronomy 15:1 which instructs Israelites "At the end of every seven years you shall grant a remission of debts." The seventh year here most probably did not correspond to the year of debt cancellation described in Dt 15:1–6, but simply the seventh year of that person's employment as their servant.

**Utley on kinsman** - This is literally "brother" (BDB 26), but used in the national sense of "covenant partner" or "kinsman" (cf. Lev. 19:17; 25:25, 35, 36, 39, 47; Deut. 15:12; 17:15). It emphasized a national unity vs. a tribal or family distinctiveness. This terminology and theology is similar to Gal. 6:10. **MAN OF WOMAN** - This shows legal equality (cf. v. 17, also note Gen. 1:26–27). Earlier law codes separated them (i.e., men—Exod. 21:2–6; women—Exod. 21:7–11). This was a radical departure from the Code of Hammurabi, a Babylonian legal document that predates Moses, and the cultural systems of the nations of Canaan. God's people were different!

**Guzik** - The slaves thought of here are those who have had to sell themselves into slavery because of their debt. This made certain that a "bankruptcy" did not harm an Israelite all their life. The worst that could happen is they would have to serve someone without pay for six years. (Ibid)

Is this truth not a beautiful foreshadowing of the liberation which Jesus gives to all who choose to become His bondservants by grace through faith in Him (Note the paradox - slaves become slaves to be set free!), for John records Jesus' words...

"If you continue ([meno](#)) in My word, then you are truly disciples ([mathetes](#)) of Mine; and you will know ([ginosko](#) - by experience) the truth, and the truth will make you free ([eleutheroo](#))."...The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever. So if the Son makes you free ([eleutheroo](#)), you will be free ([eleutheros](#)) indeed. (John 8:31-32, 35-36)

**THOUGHT** - Have you become a bondservant of the benevolent Master Jesus? If so you are free! Not free to live any way you want but empowered by the Spirit to live the way you should, in the way that pleases your Master.

**NET Note on Hebrew** - Elsewhere in the OT, the Israelites are called "Hebrews" (עִבְרִי, 'ivriy) by outsiders, rarely by themselves (cf. Ge 14:13; 39:14, 17; 41:12; Ex 1:15, 16, 19; 2:6, 7, 11, 13; 1 Sa 4:6; Jonah 1:9). Thus, here and in the parallel passage in Ex 21:2-6 the term עִבְרִי may designate non-Israelites, specifically a people well-known throughout the ancient Near East as 'apiru or habiru. They lived a rather vagabond lifestyle, frequently hiring themselves out as laborers or mercenary soldiers. While accounting nicely for the surprising use of the term here in an Israelite law code, the suggestion has against it the unlikelihood that a set of laws would address such a marginal people so specifically (as opposed to simply calling them aliens or the like). More likely עִבְרִי is chosen as a term to remind Israel that when they were "Hebrews," that is, when they were in Egypt, they were slaves. Now that they are free they must not keep their fellow Israelites in economic bondage. See v. 15.

**Deuteronomy 15:13 "When you set him free, you shall not send him away empty-handed.**

- Ge 31:42 Ex 3:21 Lev 25:42-44 Pr 3:27,28 Jer 22:13 Mal 3:5 Col 4:1
- Deuteronomy 15 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION

**When you set him free, you shall not send him away empty-handed** - Six years of bondage would mean he had virtually nothing of his own to leave with. Therefore freedom was to be accompanied by a full hand. Note the emphasis on **set him free** is repeated from v12! This is an additional stipulation to Exodus 21:2 If you buy a Hebrew slave, he shall serve for six years; but on the seventh he shall go out as a free man without payment." So here Moses says free him and supply him and not niggardly, but liberally (God is looking at their heart for generosity).

**TSK** - This is a most humane and merciful addition to the law in Ex 21:2-11; enforced upon the Israelites by the consideration of their Egyptian bondage. As a faithful servant has made no property for himself while honestly serving his master, so now, when he quits his service, he has nothing to begin the world with except what the kindness of his master may bestow upon him as a remuneration for his zeal and fidelity. Though what was to be bestowed upon servants is not fixed, yet they were to be liberally supplied. (ver. 14.)

**Deuteronomy 15:14 "You shall furnish him liberally from your flock and from your threshing floor and from your wine vat; you shall give to him as the LORD your God has blessed you.**

- the Lord: Ne 8:10 Ps 68:10 Pr 10:22 Ac 20:35 1Co 16:2
- Deuteronomy 15 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## SEND HIM OFF IN STYLE

**You shall furnish him liberally from your flock and from your threshing floor and from your wine vat; you shall give to him as the LORD your God has blessed ([barak](#)) you** - Giving was to be in light of the fact that all they had was from the Lord. They

were not to be niggardly when they released the slave.

**John Currid** - There is to be liberality in this giving. The verb translated 'load him up richly' derives from a Hebrew term that literally means 'to place an ornate necklace' on someone. The idea is that one person is to encircle another with lavish gifts, such as necklaces and garlands. (Ibid)

**Utley on furnish him liberally** - When a slave was freed after his six years of service, he was to be given all he would need to establish his family. "you shall furnish him liberally," This is another INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE and IMPERFECT VERB. It is a Hebrew idiom, literally, "you shall surely make a necklace for him." Notice the items to be given: from the flock, from the threshing floor, from the wine vat, added guidelines are given in Exod. 21:3-4; Lev. 25:41. This giving was to be done in the spirit and quantity that YHWH had shown to Israel, cf. Dt 15:4, 6, 10, 18 and why specifically in Dt 15:15 and Lev. 25:41.

**Deuteronomy 15:15 "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 today.**

- De 5:14,15 16:12 Ex 20:2 Isa 51:1 Mt 6:14,15 18:32,33 Eph 1:7 Eph 2:12 4:32 5:1,2 Tit 2:14 1Jn 3:16 4:9-11
- Deuteronomy 15 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### **MOTIVATED BY MEMORY OF YOUR MANUMISSION**

**Manumission** describes the act of freeing or setting free from slavery or bondage.

**You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt**- Let memory be your motivator for generosity by the slave owner.

**Keene** - Obedience to this command would serve the valuable purpose of reminding employers of the grace God had shown Israel in redeeming her from Egypt (cf. Deut. 24:18, 22). It would remind them that their own welfare also depended on that grace. (Ibid)

**Currid** - The slavery of Israel in Egypt as a prime motivator to obedience is one of the dominant themes in Deuteronomy (Dt 5:15; 16:12; 24:18, 22). (Ibid)

**And the LORD your God redeemed you** - Remember especially God's redemption to set you free.

**HCSB** - Referring to the exodus deliverance, Moses provided the motivation or justification for beneficent treatment of the poor debtor. The least a creditor could do was to release his Hebrew brother from his financial bondage and supply him with provisions sufficient for a new start in life. Even the Egyptians had done this much for their departed Hebrew slaves (Ex 12:35-36).

**Utley- the LORD your God redeemed you**" This is used several times in Deuteronomy, always referring to YHWH's gracious act of delivering Israel from Egyptian slavery (cf. Dt 7:8; 9:26; 13:5; 15:15; 21:8; 24:18). See Special Topic at 7:8. The OT is as much a witness to the initiating love and mercy of God as is the NT! Humans did not seek God, He sought and redeemed them! His initial acts and unchanging character are our great hope! The actions of the Messiah for all are foreshadowed in the actions of YHWH for Israel!

**Redeemed** (06299) **padah** means to redeem, ransom, buy and so to cause the freedom or release of a person from bondage or ownership, often implying a delivering or rescue of a person in distress. Padah is not used in Ruth. The basic meaning of the Hebrew root is to achieve the transfer of ownership from one to another through payment of a price or an equivalent substitute. Padah is used to depict God's act of redeeming; He redeemed His people with a mighty hand from Pharaoh and the slavery they were under in Egypt (Dt. 7:8; Mic. 6:4). Egypt was literally the house of slavery and became the symbol of slavery and oppression from which Israel was delivered (Dt. 9:26; 24:18). Uses in Deut - Deut. 7:8; Deut. 9:26; Deut. 13:5; Deut. 15:15; Deut. 21:8; Deut. 24:18

See Utley's topic [Ransom/Redeem](#)

**Therefore** - Term of conclusion, based upon what Yahweh has accomplished for you in the past

**THOUGHT** - Memory of past divine amazing grace should serve as an active motivator for ALL of us to show grace to others, however that grace needs to be manifest in our interpersonal relationships - financially, spiritually (e.g., forgiveness), our speech (Eph 4:29+), etc.

**I command you this today** - God's commands always come with His enablements and in this case with memory motivation!

**Wiersbe** - Jewish debtors unable to repay their loans could become indentured servants in the household of the man to whom they were indebted and in that way work off the debt. The Jews were not allowed to enslave their fellow Jews, although they could have slaves from other nations (Lev. 25:39–43). Male servants were to be released after six years of service, whether the seventh year was the Sabbath Year or not. This law assumes that the man's six years of service without a salary had adequately repaid the loan. But once again, the Lord commanded generosity, for the masters were to send their servants away bearing gifts that would help them start life over again, including livestock, grain, and wine. After all, when the Jews left Egypt, they received expensive gifts in return for their years of enslavement (Ex. 11:2; 12:35–36), so why shouldn't a Jewish brother be rewarded for six years of faithful labor to a fellow Jew? ([Be Equipped](#))

**Deuteronomy 15:16** "It shall come about if he says to you, 'I will not go out from you,' because he loves you and your household, since he fares well with you;

- Ex 21:5-6 Ps 40:6,8
- Deuteronomy 15 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### MOTIVATED BY LOVE

**It shall come about if he says to you, 'I will not go out from you,' because he loves you and your household, since he fares well with you;**

**Utley** - This verse is parallel to Exodus 21:5+. It illustrates a voluntary submissive relationship which reflects the faith/love/obedient covenant relationship between YHWH and Israel. The goal of the covenant is a loving, blessed life on earth followed by a continuation of an even more intimate relationship in the spiritual realm. The blessings are always a by-product of the relationship, never the goal!

**Keil** - Keil and Delitzsch remark, 'Manumission was only an act of love when the person to be set free had some hope of success and of getting a living for himself; and where there was no such prospect, compelling him to accept of freedom might be equivalent to thrusting him away.'

**Currid** - In our present text, the motivation is the slave's love for his master's family and the fact that he is well treated by them. An additional motivation is given in Exodus 21:5–6, in which the slave does not want to depart without his family. (Ibid)

**Trapp** - If we can bear reproach for Christ, it is an argument we mean to stick to him, as this bored servant to his master.

**Deuteronomy 15:17** then you shall take an awl and pierce it through his ear into the door, and he shall be your servant forever. Also you shall do likewise to your maidservant.

- **forever:** Lev 25:39-42 1Sa 1:22
- See Spurgeon's sermon [The Ear Bored with an Awl](#)
- Deuteronomy 15 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passage:

Exodus 21:5-6+ "But if the slave plainly says, 'I love my master, my wife and my children; I will not go out as a free man,' 6 then his master shall bring him to God, then he shall bring him to the door or the doorpost. And his master shall pierce his ear with an awl; and he shall serve him permanently.

### MARKED FOREVER WITH A SCAR

**Then you shall take an awl and pierce it through his ear into the door, and he shall be your servant forever**(slave's lifetime). **Also you shall do likewise to your maidservant** - This action would leave a scar on the slave's ear for the rest of his life and all could see the mark that bound him to his master. In many ways the act of piercing the ear and shedding blood is analogous

to cutting a covenant, for the cutting of covenant was generally considered to be a solemn, binding and perpetual action. This act reminds me of a passage in Galatians...

From now on let no one cause trouble for me, for I bear on my body **the brand-marks of Jesus**. (Galatians 6:17+)

**Brand-mark** is the Greek word *stigmata* which in Paul's case alludes to the scars he bore on his body for the sake of taking a stand for Jesus. There were five classes of persons who were branded, i.e. slaves (as a mark of ownership), soldiers (as a mark of allegiance), devotees (as a mark of consecration), criminals (as a mark of exposure), and the abhorred (as a mark of reproach). The "marks" of the Lord Jesus in the body of Paul were all these five in one!

**Guzik** - Pagans had a custom of branding the slave with the name or the sign of the owner; Paul refers to himself as just such a slave in Galatians 6:17

**Utley on pierce it through his ear into the door** - This has two symbols: (1) the ear was symbolic of obedience and (2) the door was symbolic of love for the home (TEV). This rite was done at home not at the sanctuary or city gate, depending on to whom Elohim of Exod. 21:6 refers. The Septuagint, Peshitta, and the Aramaic Targums understand it as "judges", which is a change from an earlier rite (cf. Exod. 21:1-6). This made him a permanent slave.

**Currid** - It is significant that this is carried out at the door of the house, since the slave is a servant of that house. In addition, this act is perhaps to remind the Israelites of their putting the **blood of the covenant** on their doorposts in Egypt. As I have stated elsewhere, 'The piercing of the slave's ear is also a bloody ritual **symbolizing a covenant, an oath between the Hebrew servant and his Hebrew master.**' (EPSC - Dt)

Here is **Currid's** comment on the parallel passage in Exodus 21

If this man truly loves his master, his wife and his children, then he shall allow his master to bring him before God. The term 'love' should not be over-sentimentalized because it carries the basic idea of 'declaring allegiance to'. In any event, he is brought 'to God'. On the basis of a comparison with Exodus 22:8-9, this probably means that the slave is brought before the formal authorities in Israel who represent God (i.e., the judges). The servant's decision to serve for life is symbolized by the piercing of an ear. This event is related in a construction involving a play on words that literally reads, 'His master shall pierce his ear with a piercing instrument.' This passage and Deuteronomy 15:17 are the only two places in the Old Testament where these related words are used. The act is carried out at the doorpost to recall Israel's putting the blood of the covenant on their doorposts in Egypt. The piercing of the slave's ear is also a bloody ritual symbolizing a covenant, an oath between the Hebrew servant and his Hebrew master. (Currid - A Study Commentary on Exodus)

**Guzik** - In this, he declared his love and devotion to his master—a willing slave, who was free to choose and yet chose his master.. Jesus is the great fulfillment of this willing slave. Jesus said prophetically in Psalm 40:6: My ears You have opened, it speaks of this "opening" of the ear in the bond-slave ceremony. He was the willing bond-slave of God the Father.. Isaiah 50:5-7 shows that Jesus' character as the willing slave was most perfectly shown in His sufferings at the cross: The Lord GOD has opened My ear; and I was not rebellious, nor did I turn away. I gave My back to those who struck Me, and My cheeks to those who plucked out the beard; I did not hide My face from shame and spitting. For the Lord GOD will help Me; therefore I will not be disgraced; Therefore I have set My face like a flint, and I know that I will not be ashamed. The Christian is also to be a willing slave of God. The common New Testament word *doulos* describes this kind of slave. Hiebert says of *doulos*, "a slave, a bondservant, one who is in a permanent relation of servitude to another ... Among the Greeks, with their strong sense of personal freedom, the term carried a degrading connotation." (Ibid)

There were special provisions from female slaves...

Exodus 21:7-11+ "If a man sells his daughter as a female slave, she is not to go free as the male slaves do. 8 "If she is displeasing in the eyes of her master who designated her for himself, then he shall let her be redeemed. He does not have authority to sell her to a foreign people because of his unfairness to her. 9 "If he designates her for his son, he shall deal with her according to the custom of daughters. 10 "If he takes to himself another woman, he may not reduce her food, her clothing, or her conjugal rights. 11 "If he will not do these three things for her, then she shall go out for nothing, without payment of money.

**NET NOTE** - When the bondslave's ear was drilled through to the door, the door in question was that of the master's house. In effect, the bondslave is declaring his undying and lifelong loyalty to his creditor. The scar (or even hole) in the earlobe would testify to the community that the slave had surrendered independence and personal rights. This may be what Paul had in mind when he

said "I bear on my body the marks of Jesus" (Gal 6:17).

**Wayne Barber** explains that ultimately **mark** on both Old and New Testament believers was not external but internal...

There was something in the heart of the people that was wrong and the **mark** that God always expected, both in the OT and the NT, was not just something external, but a **heart willing and wanting to obey God**... that is the **mark** of the person who has entered into agreement with the Lord God... this led to the promise of the New Covenant... you see in the Old Covenant, the people did not have a heart that wanted to obey God... The Law... exposed the fact that they did not have a heart, so therefore God had to promise a new one.

Jer 24:7 And I will give them a heart to know Me, for I am the Lord; and they will be My people, and I will be their God, for they will return to Me with their whole heart.

It is an attitude that God looks for--an inward, internal attitude of wanting to obey God which **marks** a person as being in Covenant with the living God. This is not just one act of obedience ([circumcision](#)), but a heart attitude of now wanting to obey God (cp Ezek 36:26, 27+) in contrast to the old attitude of wanting to disobey Him.

**Thayer** says "According to ancient oriental usage, slaves and soldiers bore the name or stamp of their master or commander branded or pricked (cut) into their bodies to indicate what master or general they belonged to, and there were even some devotees who stamped themselves in this way with the token of their gods...Paul Paul in Gal. 6:17 says he bears branded on his body, are the traces left there by the perils, hardships, imprisonments, scourgings, endured by him for the cause of Christ, and which mark him as Christ's faithful and approved votary, servant, soldier."

**THOUGHT** - Do you have any "stigmata" (primarily figuratively speaking) signifying that you belong to Jesus? Has it cost you anything to follow Christ?

**Ironsides** - Someone has said, "When we get home to heaven God is not going to look us over for medals but for scars." I wonder whether we have received any scars for Jesus' sake. Many of them are not physical scars, they are scars of the heart, but it is a great thing to have the brand-marks of the Lord Jesus.

**NET NOTE** - When the bondsman's ear was drilled through to the door, the door in question was that of the master's house. In effect, the bondsman is declaring his undying and lifelong loyalty to his creditor. The scar (or even hole) in the earlobe would testify to the community that the slave had surrendered independence and personal rights. This may be what Paul had in mind when he said "I bear on my body the marks of Jesus" (Gal 6:17).

**Amy Carmichael** wrote these piercing words that speak to the call on every follower of Jesus (2Ti 3:12<sup>+</sup>, Ro 8:17<sup>+</sup>, Php 1:29<sup>+</sup>, 2Co 4:17)...

**Hast thou no scar?**

No hidden scar on foot, or side, or hand?  
I hear thee sung as mighty in the land;  
I hear them hail thy bright, ascendant star.  
Hast thou no scar?

Hast thou no wound?

Yet I was wounded by the archers; spent,  
Leaned Me against a tree to die; and rent  
By ravening beasts that compassed Me, I swooned.  
Hast thou no wound?

No wound? No scar?

Yet, as the Master shall the servant be,  
And pierced are the feet that follow Me.  
But thine are whole; can he have followed far  
Who hast no wound or scar?

This truth of believers bearing the brand marks indicating we are no longer our own but serve our Master forever and ever reminds me of an old song by Wayne Watson....

[We Belong To Him](#)



How can we live in sin  
Knowing He died to free us  
From the chains within our soul

Let us give the Lord control  
Of all the things that quickly bind us  
And walk no longer in darkness

We belong to Him, we belong to Him  
Crucified right by His side  
Bought with a price through one sacrifice  
We belong to Him

Now is the time to understand  
That sin has no reign on us  
The power of life in Jesus Christ  
Has made us free from the ways of death

We belong to Him, we belong to Him  
Crucified right by His side  
Bought with a price through one sacrifice  
We belong to Him

Flesh of His flesh, bone of His bone  
Born of His blood, His very own  
We belong to Him

At Calvary God's Son was made an offering  
The price required, it was paid in full  
The Word of God was spoken  
The power of sin was broken  
God's chosen seed has been redeemed

We belong to Him, we belong to Him  
Crucified right by His side  
Bought with a price through one sacrifice  
We belong to Him

**Deuteronomy 15:18 "It shall not seem hard to you when you set him free, for he has given you six years with double the service of a hired man; so the LORD your God will bless you in whatever you do."**

- shall not: De 15:10
- a double: Isa 16:14 21:16 Lu 17:7,8
- Deuteronomy 15 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**It shall not seem hard to you when you set him free** - Don't grumble when you set him free for after all you have had his labor and only had to pay for room and board! "One should not be complaining when a slave is set free after six years of service." (Utley) It is fascinating that the same verb translated "set free" is the very verb [shalach](#) Moses used to describe God's demand of Pharaoh to "**Let My People go (shalach)**" (Ex 5:1, Ex 6:11, Ex 7:2, 14, Ex 8:1, et al). And how did Pharaoh respond? With a hardening of his heart, which God then hardened (Ex 7:3+). The same Hebrew word [qashah](#) used to describe Pharaoh's hardened heart is the word used here in the phrase "it shall not seem **hard (qashah)** to you." [Qashah](#) means to be difficult and conveys the idea of stubbornness. These parallels lead Currid to comment that "The reality is that Hebrew masters are not to treat their Hebrew slaves in the way that Pharaoh behaved towards his Hebrew slaves!" (ibid)

**Currid** goes on to apply this teaching - In this section we see the principle of imitative generosity. As Yahweh was compassionate towards his people in slavery in Egypt, so the Hebrew master is to be gracious and merciful to the Hebrew slave indentured to him. The Hebrew is required to care for the disadvantaged in a bountiful manner. We, as Christians, are to act the same way: God has delivered us from slavery to sin, and he did that in a most gracious way, by sending his only Son to die in our stead. Therefore, we

should also tend to the disadvantaged (both spiritually and physically) in an overwhelming show of generosity. And such generosity is not to be exercised in a grumbling manner, but with a loving heart. Warwick put it this way: 'As the Giver of all things, so each receiver loveth a cheerful giver. For a bargain is valued by the worth of the thing bought, but a gift by the party giving, which made the widow's mite of more worth than the riches of superfluity. I see then he gives not best that gives most, but he gives most that gives best. If then I cannot give bountifully, yet I will give freely, and what I want [i.e., lack] in my hand supply by my heart. He gives well that gives willingly.'

**for he has given you six years with double the service of a hired man** - NKJV "he has been worth a double hired servant" NRSV "worth the wages of hired laborers" TEV "at half the cost of hired servants" NJB "he is worth twice what a paid servant would cost you" NET Bible "twice the time of a hired worker"

**so the LORD your God will bless (barak) you in whatever you do** - Once again the blessing connected to obedience. And ultimately God is looking at their heart (loving, forgiving, helping) (cf 1 Sa 15:22).

**Keene** - Moses offered a double motivation to one who was perhaps too greedy to set his servant free. In fairness he should realize that it would have cost him at least twice as much if he had hired someone for six years. Second, if in faith he would obey the command to release his servant, the LORD would bless him in everything he would do. This promise of blessing in return for obedience is stated often in Deuteronomy, four times in this chapter alone (Dt 15:4, 6, 10, 18).

**NET NOTE** - The Hebrew term מִשְׁנֵה (mishneh, "twice") could mean "equivalent to" (cf. NRSV) or, more likely, "double" (cf. NAB, NIV, NLT). The idea is that a hired worker would put in only so many hours per day whereas a bondservant was available around the clock.

**Wiersbe** - Certainly there's a spiritual message here for God's people today. We should love our Lord so much that we should want to serve Him willingly and gladly all our lives. We must never look upon our service as "slavery" but as privilege. "I love my master and don't want to go free" is a wonderful confession of faith and love (Ex. 21:5). Granted, the servant's love for his wife and children entered into the picture, but even those blessings came because of his master's kindness, and the master was caring for them as well as his servant. What we all need is the open ear to hear God's will (Ps. 40:6-8; Isa. 50:4-5) and a pierced ear that announces we love Him and are ready to obey His every command. The emphasis in this section is on faith that produces generosity. If we are "hardhearted or tightfisted" (Deut. 15:7, NIV), it's evidence that we don't really believe that God keeps His promises and provides for those who give to the needy. Jesus became poor that He might make us rich (2 Cor. 8:9) and He blesses us that we might be a blessing to others. ([Be Equipped](#))

---

#### **Deuteronomy 15:18 Gracious Dealing** - Faith's Checkbook - Spurgeon

"And the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all that thou doest."—**Deuteronomy 15:18**

AN Israelitish master was to give his bond-servant liberty in due time, and when he left his service he was to start him in life with a liberal portion. This was to be done heartily and cheerfully, and then the Lord promised to bless the generous act. The spirit of this precept, and, indeed, the whole law of Christ, binds us to treat work people well. We ought to remember how the Lord has dealt with us and that this renders it absolutely needful that we should deal graciously with others. It becomes those to be generous who are the children of a gracious God. How can we expect our great Master to bless us in our business if we oppress those who serve us?

What a benediction is here set before the liberal mind! To be blessed in all that we do is to be blessed indeed. The Lord will send us this partly in prosperity, partly in content of mind, and partly in a sense of His favor, which is the best of all blessings. He can make us feel that we are under His special care and are surrounded by His peculiar love. This makes this earthly life a joyous prelude to the life to come. God's blessing is more than a fortune. It maketh rich and addeth no sorrow therewith.

**Deuteronomy 15:19 "You shall consecrate to the LORD your God all the firstborn males that are born of your herd and of your flock; you shall not work with the firstborn of your herd, nor shear the firstborn of your flock.**

- **the firstborn:** Ex 13:2,12 34:19 Lev 27:26 Nu 3:13 18:17 Ro 8:29 Heb 12:23
- **you shall not work:** De 12:5-7,17 14:23 16:11,14 Nu 18:15
- Deuteronomy 15 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### **FIRSTBORN MALE LIVESTOCK TO YAHWEH**

**Currid** has an interesting comment - A basic principle of the Sabbath is that there is a day set apart to Yahweh. This is a day in

which the believer performs acts of necessity, piety and mercy. He is not to work as he does the other six days. It is a day that is unique among the seven; it belongs especially to Yahweh. That principle weaves its way through all aspects of Israelite life, culture and society. In our present passage we see that the firstborn of Israel, whether of man or beast, have been especially set apart to Yahweh. They belong to him. (Ibid)

**Deere** - The law regarding firstborn animals may have occurred here in Moses' sermon because, like the laws of canceling debts and releasing servants, it involved giving up one's possessions. This law was first recorded in Exodus 13:11–15. It was pedagogical: sacrificing firstborn animals reminded the Israelites of their redemption from Egypt when all the firstborn Egyptian sons died. It was an occasion for the Israelites to teach their children about God's redemption of their nation. According to Exodus 22:29–30 the firstborn were to be sacrificed on the eighth day after birth. Firstborn animal sacrifices were also used to help support the priests (Num. 18:15–18). (Ibid)

**You shall consecrate** (set aside, devote) **to the LORD your God all the firstborn males that are born of your herd and of your flock** - God demands and deserves the best. Other variations of this law are recorded in Ex 13:11–16; Ex 22:29 and Nu 18:15–18.

**Guzik** notes three reasons for consecrating the **firstborn** to Yahweh - This was for three reasons. First, because Israel was God's firstborn (Exodus 4:22), and this honored that fact. Second, because the firstborn was thought to be the best, and the best was always given to God. Finally, it was to be a reminder to all generations of when God redeemed Israel, His firstborn.

**ESVSB** - Giving the firstborn is an expression of thanks and trust that more animals are to come.

**Utley** - This goes back to Exod. 13:2, which is the context of the plague of the death angel killing the firstborn of mankind and beast in Egypt and Goshen whose houses were not marked with blood. It was a symbolic way of showing God's ownership of everything (cf. Exod. 13:2; Lev. 2:14–16).

**THOUGHT** - The NT parallel is described by Paul in Ro 12:1+ "Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship." Wholly devoted (like the first born animals) to the Holy God, for His Holy use.

**Consecrate** (Sanctify) (06942) **qadash** means to set apart for a specific use. The root sense of this word group describes an act of setting something apart from profane or ordinary use. Removed from common use. To be holy. To show one's self to be holy. To consecrate or dedicate. To set apart a person or thing from all common or secular purposes to some religious use. Everything consecrated to God was separated from all profane use. Qadash signifies an act or a state in which people or things are set aside for use in the worship of God, i.e., they are consecrated or made sacred for that purpose. They must be withheld from ordinary (secular) use and treated with special care as something which belongs to God (Ex 29:21). Otherwise, defilement makes the sanctified object unusable (cf. Dt 22:9; Eze 44:19; 46:20). Uses in Deuteronomy - Deut 5:12; 15:19; 22:9; 32:51;

**you shall not work with the firstborn of your herd, nor shear the firstborn of your flock**(and goats in Nu 18:17) - Firstborn animals are to convey no benefit to their owners, but are to be solely for God. Don't try to use the firstborn livestock for any gain in any way, but give them wholly to the LORD.

**John Currid** - Throughout the Old Testament the position of the **firstborn** in a family is special. The firstborn is pre-eminent and privileged. He has the right of the firstborn, which includes a double portion of the inheritance (Dt 21:17) and leadership of the family when the father dies. He is also set apart to Yahweh in a special way (Exod. 13:2; Num. 3:13); the firstborn belong to him. In the New Testament, believers are called the 'firstborn' of God. The writer to the Hebrews says, 'But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven ...' (Heb. 12:22–23). Believers have been set apart to the position of firstborn because of the work of Jesus Christ, the firstborn Son of God. When God looks at Christians he sees Christ and the work of Christ on our behalf. He sees us as firstborn children who will receive the inheritance because of Jesus' work for us. We are special, because Jesus is special!

**Deuteronomy 15:20** You and your household shall eat it every year before the LORD your God in the place which the LORD chooses.

- De 12:5-7,17
- Deuteronomy 15 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Related Passages:**

Deuteronomy 12:5-7+ "But you shall seek the LORD at the place which the LORD your God will choose from all your tribes, to establish His name there for His dwelling, and there you shall come. 6 "There you shall bring your burnt offerings, your sacrifices, your tithes, the contribution of your hand, your votive offerings, your freewill offerings, and the firstborn of your herd and of your flock. 7 "There also you and your households shall eat before the LORD your God, and rejoice in all your undertakings in which the LORD your God has blessed you.

## ANNUAL MEAL IN GOD'S PLACE AND PRESENCE

**You and your household shall eat it every year before the LORD your God in the place which the LORD chooses** The text does not say when but presumably this would have been during one of the three annual feasts that took place at the Tabernacle or later at the Temple.

**Chooses** reflects God's omniscient sovereignty to do as He pleases and knows best for their (our) good and His glory. **Choose** is a **keyword** in Deuteronomy. And further, the **place** the LORD **chooses** is a **key thought** in Deuteronomy occurring 22 times! (Dt 12:5, Dt 12:11, Dt 12:14, Dt 12:18, Dt 12:21, Dt 12:26, Dt 14:23, Dt 14:24, Dt 14:25, Dt 15:20, Dt 16:2, Dt 16:6, Dt 16:7, Dt 16:11, Dt 16:15, Dt 16:16, Dt 17:8, Dt 17:10, Dt 18:6, Dt 23:16, Dt 26:2, Dt 31:11)

**Chooses** (0977) **bahar/bachar** in most contexts means to choose or to select, to take a keen look at, to prove, to . It denotes a choice, which is based on a thorough examination of the situation and not an arbitrary whim. Lot choose Sodom (Ge 13:11). Moses chose able men (Ex 18:25). "Theologically, bāchar asserts the sovereignty of God in all of life. It affirms divine omnipotence and capacity for choice and in so doing declares that purpose and personality, expressing itself in agape love, lie at the heart of reality." (Gilbrant) TWOT adds that bahar/bachar is often "used to express that choosing which has ultimate and eternal significance." "Bāḥar is used 30 times in Deuteronomy, all but twice referring to God's "choice" of Israel or something in Israel's life." (Vine) Bahar in Deuteronomy - Deut. 4:37; Deut. 7:6; Deut. 7:7; Deut. 10:15; Deut. 12:5; Deut. 12:11; Deut. 12:14; Deut. 12:18; Deut. 12:21; Deut. 12:26; Deut. 14:2; Deut. 14:23; Deut. 14:24; Deut. 14:25; Deut. 15:20; Deut. 16:2; Deut. 16:6; Deut. 16:7; Deut. 16:11; Deut. 16:15; Deut. 16:16; Deut. 17:8; Deut. 17:10; Deut. 17:15; Deut. 18:5; Deut. 18:6; Deut. 21:5; Deut. 23:16; Deut. 26:2; Deut. 30:19; Deut. 31:11;

**Deuteronomy 15:21 "But if it has any defect, such as lameness or blindness, or any serious defect, you shall not sacrifice it to the LORD your God.**

- De 17:1 Lev 22:20,24 Mal 1:7,8
- Deuteronomy 15 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## BLEMISH-FREE SACRIFICES TO JEHOVAH

**But if it has any defect, such as lameness or blindness, or any serious defect, you shall not sacrifice it to the LORD your God** - Only bring blemish-free sacrifices to Yahweh.

**Deuteronomy 15:22 "You shall eat it within your gates; the unclean and the clean alike may eat it, as a gazelle or a deer.**

- **the unclean:** De 12:15,21,22
- Deuteronomy 15 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## DON'T WASTE THE MEAT

**You shall eat it within your gates** (in your villages); **the** (ritually) **unclean and the clean alike may eat it, as a gazelle or a deer** - In other words the blemished animal was to be treated like wild game. Not suitable for sacrifice to Yahweh, but suitable for consumption by human beings.

**NET NOTE** - That is, the people, whether ritually purified or not, may eat such defective animals.

**Deuteronomy 15:23** "Only you shall not eat its blood; you are to pour it out on the ground like water.

- De 12:16,23-24 Lev 7:26 1Sa 14:32 Eze 33:25
- Deuteronomy 15 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Related Passages:**

Deuteronomy 12:16; 23-24 "Only you **shall not eat the blood**; you are to pour it out on the ground like water.... 23 "Only be sure not to eat the blood, for the blood is the life, and you shall not eat the life with the flesh. 24 "You shall not eat it; you shall pour it out on the ground like water.

**NO BLOOD WITH  
YOUR MEAT**

**Only you shall not eat its blood; you are to pour it out on the ground like water**- The life is in the blood (Lev 17:11) and the Jews were never to eat it with the blood.

**Utley** - "Only you shall not eat its blood" Blood was the symbol of life and life belongs to God (cf. Gen. 9:4–6; Lev. 1:17; 7:26–27; 17:10–16; 19:26; Deut. 12:16, 23–25; 1 Sam. 14:32–34). The symbols in the preceding verses show God's ownership of all creation, especially that which is alive.

**Related Resources:**

- [What does it mean that the blood is the life \(Deuteronomy 12:23\)? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Why did God prohibit eating meat with blood in it \(Genesis 9:4\)? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What does the Bible say about eating/drinking blood? | GotQuestions.org](#)