

Clough Deuteronomy Session 36

Deuteronomy 15:7-18; Israel's Distinctive Theocentric Faith in God's Economic Order-Part 3

Fellowship Chapel; 16 November 10

Tonight we want to see if we can pretty well finish the 15th chapter; we won't get to the firstborn animal thing but I want to get firstborn animal thing but I want to get down to verse 18 and complete this section that has to do with the sabbatical rest and how they dealt with poverty in the nation. Again, by way of review, if you'll look at the slide and also on the notes, I want to make very, very clear, over and over again, that the discrimination that you see between the Israelites, the ger, the resident alien, the nokree, the foreigner, is not based on economics. It's based on their relationship to Yahweh and the controlling measure, the yardstick that the rule that measures that real is their commitment to the berith, the Mosaic Law code.

And on the first layer, the Israelite family was fully responsible for obedience to Yahweh's law out of gratitude for his deliverance from Egypt. That's something that people who casually read the Old Testament don't have a sensitivity to. The Law isn't just all law, there's a gracious element in the Old Testament, and God appeals to them, look, I've done this for you, now you owe Me, it's a gratitude thing. And so they were to recognize this and they had full inheritance rights. So these people were given inheritance rights and the widow and the orphan become kind of a subset here but they've become a subset because they are broken elements from a family unit. And the title of property was in the family through the Son, from father to son, father to son, father to son. And so the widow and the orphan, both of them, the orphan because he had no parents, he wasn't in a functional family, and the widow because her husband died, they were in a tenuous situation. So God knew that and this is why, not only do you have the Law, even though they lacked inheritance title they had to be recipients of God's grace through the covenant structure. And the prophets, later on, Isaiah, Jeremiah, the Minor Prophets, they really go after the nation because the widows and the orphans were neglected, for the same reason they're neglected today, they're the people who don't have (quote) "political clout," who can't articulate their positions and wind up losers oftentimes. And so the prophets would go back to the Mosaic Law and argue that by neglecting them you have neglected the whole spirit of the Mosaic Law code.

And then the ger, the resident aliens, they were Gentiles who voluntarily... voluntarily, they weren't conquered, they voluntarily wanted to join Israel and they lived among the Jewish people. And so they also, because they did voluntarily choose to live in Israel and they submit to Yahweh's rule, they may lack inheritance title, because they were not sons of Jacob, but nevertheless, they were recipients of some of the grace that was in the contract, the Mosaic contract. The nokree, on the other hand, was not in allegiance to Yahweh, so because he wasn't in allegiance to Yahweh... he probably was a traveling businessman, he was a Gentile, and we don't know all of what they were involved with but these men weren't just traveling through and stopping at a bed and breakfast. The nokree would be a businessman who might be involved in trade, he might come to the port cities and he's involved in an export trade through his country or something like that. So he would live in the land but he

wasn't interested in submitting to Yahweh's rule, as such, and so he could not be considered a ger. So just be careful of the use because I show you this chart again and again because it's fashionable now, even in evangelical circles, now that we have all of this socialism coming in, to claim that this is an economic thing. Yes, there is an economic dimension to it but that's not why these people are being classified the way they are.

Then part B, Israel was to be a witnessing culture. That's the whole point of the Mosaic Law, that the allegiance to Yahweh should be visible in the culture around the people. And so that's why the first half of the book of Deuteronomy is dealing with "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart," and then the second part is "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy soul," nephesh, which are the details of life. And so the first half of Deuteronomy gives you the principles of heart and then the second part is giving you the application of these things and what they look like in the details of culture.

So we have, so far we've looked at, death treated as a temporary abnormality, not an everlasting sorrow of life. And this is very important, this is a fundamental thing, why at a funeral we often hear, "Sorrow not as others who have no hope," in this world we have to keep thinking... that chart that I show time and time, over and over and over, where I bound evil between the fall and the judgment, evil is bounded and that means that within that period of history good and evil are mixed. And when we see death, of course, our soul intuitively knows there's something wrong here, this is not the way life should be.

We had an interesting example of this on how children will pick this up and my wife, somehow we got this little book called Children's Letters to God and there's really some cute stuff in there, they asked children to write a letter to God, and they come up with the most interesting things, but listen to what some of these kids, these are first, second graders, but it shows you that children that young are already asking profound questions. Here's a cute one. And then I want to read one that our granddaughter put in here. "Dear God, Maybe Cain and Abel would not kill each other so much if they had their own rooms; it works with my brother. Another thing," again, this is a little kid aged 9, "Dear God, I wish that there was no such thing of sin, I wish there was no such thing as war," so they're sensitive to this. And so we asked our granddaughter, why don't you write something in here. So here's what she wrote: "Dear God, I am so happy you made the earth and the houses and the families and the friends but why did you create the animals to eat each other."

See, kids understand when they see death and they see suffering, they're already asking these basic questions. They already are, so this is what's so tragic with a secularized educational system, because they can't discuss this. What are you going to do if you're a teacher of a 9 year old and you want to... you know, you may be a Christian in the school system, you want to discuss this with the kid because you know it's on their heart, they're thinking about this but you can't do it because, you know, it's the rule now, we can't mention God. Well, what you've done by that rule is you've trivialized the education because you never can get down to the crucial issues.

So anyway, in Israel's culture as well as in Christian culture death should be treated as an abnormality; one day it's going to be all over with. Food from animals is treated as, because remember, every time they killed an animal they had to drain the blood, it was a pause, there was almost like a ceremony that after you killed an animal to eat you stopped and there was just that pause and then you drained the blood and the draining of the blood back to the earth is that a life was given that you may live. And I take that as the fact that these animals, when we kill them, from the flood forward, in one sense that process of eating animal flesh, a carnivorous diet, is an everyday reinforced picture of substitutionary atonement.

And then, wealth and property were treated as owned under the stewardship of God; it was never considered in Israel to be an absolute right, private property is not an absolute right, but today we have that but it's secularized. Anybody know what the law is that says that the state can come in and take y our property? [someone answers] Yeah, eminent domain means that you and I really don't own our property, the state has the final say. Now they're supposed to give just compensation but if they want to run Interstate 88 or something through your backyard they have a right to take your backyard, offer you a payment and you have to suck it up. Now that's because the state is the ultimate arbiter in the Gentile world of property. In Israel God was; God had given title to the land so it was absolutely His.

Finally, death is treated as something endangering life's purpose to be free and therefore responsible to God to produce something, fruit.

Now I want to show by way of review, I was trying to think of a way how to illustrate this Sabbath principle because it comes up again, whether it's the Sabbath Week, whether it's the Sabbath Year or so forth. So on part C on our review, look at Sabbath as a comprehensive economic rest for the land, and that means several things. First of all, in Israel, and Israel alone, there was a Sabbath principle. Now what's interesting is tithing preceded the Law, but there's not a shred of evidence that anywhere, any place, any time before 1400 BC that anybody was observing the Sabbath. There seems to be an innovation from Mount Sinai forward in time and it makes it a unique thing to Israel. And one of the things that it witnessed to was the accomplishment of labor in the creation week. So you have God working labor and the idea of the Sabbath there is the work is finished. It's over, it's been accomplished, it doesn't go on and on and on and on endlessly. So that's kind of, in the essence, in a simply way what that picture is, that work is to be toward a goal. It's not just for work's sake, it's work to get to a goal and then rest.

And then Sabbath also, we see, is a memory of the Egyptian sojourn and the Exodus. Here it was labor but this was labor for a socialist government. Egypt was basically a socialist state, they owned everything. And people worked for the government, everybody did. That's what the slaves were employed for, they made pyramids. Then when the Exodus happened, they came out of that, they had been given some of the back wages, reluctantly by the Egyptians, but they basically were paid for their pyramid labors and that was the starting money to generate and initialize the economy of the nation. And so they're free now. And so there's an idea behind the

Sabbath that the work is finished but there is a liberation to that, that somehow I'm not in bondage to slavery, to work.

And then we covered the Hebrews 4 application that we are, in the Christian life we're urged to abandon the idea of working to generate merit before God, and to rest in His finished work. And that's Hebrews, enter into His rest. And that's something that's very nice to think about in this high pressure culture we live in. And I ran across this statement by Dr. Beisner, and I thought it was so succinct, and I think I put it in the handout: "By resting when God tells us to rest, we testify that we serve a Master who takes care of His servants." I think that is so neat, how he phrases that, that when we rest, when He tells us to rest, it's testimony that we serve a Master who takes care of His servants. The resting really is a part of the Christian life.

And then we said at the end of the Sabbath Year there was a national Bible conference described in Deuteronomy 31, and I infer, and this is my inference, that that Bible conference that's talking about freedom, rest and the Sabbath, was the particular seventh year of the Feast of Tabernacles that happened when John chapter 8 and the Gospel was written, because if you remember, in John 8, and everybody quotes John 8, "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free," the theme there was freedom, and I think it's interesting that if we... we know it's the Feast of Tabernacles in John 8 but was it the Feast of Tabernacles on the seventh year, and I can't prove that but I'm just throwing that out as a possibility and that would explain this big long discourse that goes on there in the 8th chapter of the Gospel of John and it culminates in Jesus saying, "Know the truth and the truth shall make you free," and then He's saying to the Pharisees that you aren't free people, you're in bondage and I'm here to bring freedom.

So in part D, then, the Sabbath Year... oh, and one other thing, with the land out of production economic charitable loans were ended, this idea apparently led to what we call today the bankruptcy laws. I found that in my reading and research, that some think, again it's not 100% provable, but the concept of bankruptcy in our Western culture, that idea of giving relief to people in debt, deep debt, actually grew out of this Sabbath principle here, the release in the seventh year. Another example, that that is true, of the deep and profound influence, the Bible, particularly the principles the Mosaic Law has had in our legal structures.

Now we come to part D, the Sabbatical year was part of God's total economic program... back in the blank, John 8, it was "freedom from guilt and sin." The idea there is it's a spiritual counterpart to the economic principles. The economy, I guess one of the ideas I'm trying to communicate here is that economic structures that we all encounter, business, money, wealth, all this area we call the economy itself has a design to it. It's not random, there's a design of cause/effect in the area of business and economics and because our God is sovereign and He's Creator, what we see in these areas corresponds to His spiritual principles. And this is why economic terms are brought over into the soteriology of the Scriptures. That's why we have the word "redeemed," that's why we have the word "impute," and so forth, that those words that we all know from economics, it's general revelation, everybody bumps against these words in their life and God deliberately designed our

circumstances that way, so that when the Apostle Paul and others take words to describe this invisible spiritual soteriological program of God we know what they're talking about because we see the economic analog.

So, the Sabbatical year was part of God's total economic program of providential control; whereby in the Abrahamic Covenant He wanted to bless the entire world through Abraham. And I have part 1 and part 2 because this is the role of God's sovereign promises versus man's responsible volition. And the two are embedded here. This is why, looking at Deuteronomy 15:4, remember what it says here, it says, verse 4, keep doing this until "there may be no more poor among you; for the LORD will greatly bless you in the land which the LORD your God is giving you to possess as an inheritance." There's the promise of God's Word. He flings down that promise and says you anchor yourself on that promise. Now there's the promise, but unlike some of our Calvinist friends who believe that somehow perseverance is automatic, what does the next verse say? "Only if you carefully obey the voice of the LORD," so there's to parts to this, there's God and Israel's unique relationship with promised blessing but they are conditioned upon every response. Just like salvation, Jesus Christ dies for the sins of the world but they have to be appropriated by faith, and maybe some will appropriate it and some won't. There's no guarantee here.

Now we're ready to go on to Deuteronomy 15:7-11; this section, from verses 7-11 is an amplification of the bare naked law over in Exodus and I'll show you how this works out. Remember when I started the book of Deuteronomy one of the warnings or the tips I gave to you on understanding this book is that this book, unlike Exodus, unlike Leviticus, wasn't addressed to the priests; it wasn't addressed to the elite; Deuteronomy was addressed to the men, the women, the children. Moses is talking to people, it's a town meeting, so to speak. This is addressed to what we would call the lay people and so we want to pay attention to Deuteronomy because Moses gives us the spirit, the intent of the laws; not just the hard-nosed law, but he's telling us the heart attitudes that are to accompany this. Now what he's doing in verses 7-11 is he's trying to deal with the mental attitude problems that the Sabbatical Year is going to create. Moses isn't... you know, he's went with these people for forty years and he knows what's happened. So he says look, I know that you've got a deal here, that on the seventh year you're going, to the poor people that you've loaned money to, you're going to lose it, whatever they owe you're going to lose it. Now this is going to create some heartburn. So now let me deal with this. This is an exquisite example in Scripture of how God knows the trials we face and He addresses them, He gives us the tools to work through our thinking.

So we want to remember that when we talk about poor, because in verse 7, "If there is among you a poor man of your brethren," so that defines what we're talking about, it's a Jewish, it's an Israelite, it could be a man or woman, it's an Israelite who is poor. When we think of poor today, again because we live in this culture of ours what we think is poverty income level, because it's defined, if you take the bell-shaped curve of everybody or everybody's plot on a graph, everybody's salary, you get the people over here and they make very, very little, and then you have minimum wage, and then you come up and then there's the people in the lower middle class, the middle class, the upper middle class, and then

there's very few wealthy people out here in the other wing. And what is done in the poverty program is they've chopped that bell-shaped curve on this side so that everybody in that tail is considered to be poor. The problem with this, it's mathematically nice and clean to do it that way, but here's some of the problems.

One of the problems is that people are treated completely on the basis of one statistic; there's no individuality. You can have somebody that's just absolutely lazy, a moocher who is borrowing money hand and foot, wanders around from church to church, milks every welfare program to the bottom, and he's in that poverty. On the other hand, there could be somebody that's just lost their job and gone through their savings, and they are also in that tail. Now how can you say that person A and person B are the same kind of persons. You see, the statistic, the mathematical statistic doesn't describe the situation to the people, there's no individual accounting of that because it's all invisible, it's just chopped and it's mathematically made and so that's it, under the poverty level. Well, that's not how the Bible portrays it, and that's why I wanted to emphasize, when you come to the Bible don't read modern welfare into it. Poverty is defined traditionally, before the 20th century poverty was defined in an absolute way of the fact that somebody is unable to support themselves and their life is at stake, they're starving.

And we have the New Testament Greek verbs, there are two of them, penes and ptochos, and ptochos is the word there that is really poor and Romans 15:26 gives you an example of it. Some, not all, but some of the Christians living in the city of Jerusalem were ptochos, that means these poor people had nothing and apparently they were either sick, they were weak, they were older people that couldn't work, something kept them from even laboring. Whereas the other person, penes, if you look carefully at that 2 Corinthians passage, chapter 9, it's talking about giving, it's clear there in that context that God gives to the poor. It says that, God gives to the poor. And then later Paul defines what he means by God giving to the poor, He says He gives seed to the sower. In other words, the idea that God provides a means of that person laboring who does want to labor, they just haven't got a job, they haven't got the tools to labor and God supplies. So that kind of a person is not the same as the other kind of a person.

And see, the way we treat it in modern life is your personal character is invisible, it's just arbitrary classifications. And then we have 2 Thessalonians 3 which shows you the early church, in dealing with poverty had filters so that the money wasn't squandered on ne'er-do-wells that were just too lazy to do anything; they would not help themselves.

Okay, that's the poor and in verse 7 that's what is meant by "If there is among you a poor man of your brethren, within your gates in your land which the LORD is giving you." Now he comes to grips with the mental attitude problem because Moses knows this is going to happen. And see, if this were a government program he wouldn't be dealing with the heart. This is charity, this is not some socialistically coercive thing where wealth is confiscated by force from the so-called wealthy and redistributed to the so-called poor. That's not charity, that's compulsive force of law. So this, you can tell, this is charity, this is a heart thing. And so what Moses says, don't "harden your heart nor shut your hand from the poor brother, [8] but you shall open your hand wide to

him and willingly lend him sufficient for his need, whatever he needs." Now it's not talking about buying him a Cadillac car here, this is talking about the things he needs to become functional again so he can live, so he doesn't starve, so he has a second chance in life.

And these verbs that are in this passage, many of them, as I point out in the outline, Deuteronomy 15:8, in the Hebrew there's the verb and then there's an infinitive, and when you wanted to intensify the mood of the verb you put an infinitive after the verb. It's called the infinitive absolute. Here's what the grammar does. What that syntax does, it amplifies the power of the mood of the verb. Now what do I mean by mood of the verb; I don't mean the tense, past, present, future, we're not talking tense of the verb, we're talking the mood. There's an indicative mood to a verb, that means I declare something is true or false. Then there's an optative mood, I wish this were so. There's the contingent mood, if this happens, boom. So now in verse 8 you have the infinitive absolute construction and if I translate this in a mechanical way, a non-literary it's not literary, it's rugged, it's jerky, but here's what it would say: "You shall not harden your heart or shut your hand," see the verb "shut," "shut your hand," with the infinitive absolute it means you will surely not shut your hand. In other words, Moses is making a very strong point in these verbs, I don't want you to do this. And he's not just saying don't shut your hand, he's saying you'd better certain you don't shut your hand.

Every parent knows what intensifying the mood of a command verb is, if he's ever had children. And that's what Moses is saying here, don't shut your hand, [8] "but you shall open your hand wide to him," and then he adds, you will "willingly lend him sufficient for his needs, whatever he needs." And then he goes on further. He says, [9] "Beware lest there be a wicked thought in your heart," and in the outline I've kind of translated it again in a sloppy jerky way, but just to kind of show you how its structured, "take care lest there be a word," it's the word we would say in the Greek would be logos if it were translated, "let there be a word," or "thought in your heart, a worthlessness," it's a noun, "a worthlessness, saying," see, he knows the human heart and he knows what's going to happen. "Beware lest there be a wicked thought in your heart, saying, 'The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand,' and your eye be evil against your poor brother and you give him nothing, and he cry out to the Lord against you, and it become sin among you."

So he knows, the people can do math and if this person needs, say a hundred dollars and you want to loan it to him in the first year, and say he can pay back twenty dollars a year, well, you're okay because you can compute and say well, the first year, twenty dollars, that's only five years, he'll pay it off. But then if this situation happens in the second year, now let's see, you've got year two, three, four, five and six, you're still okay. But now it's the third year, now oops, I've got the fourth year, fifth year, sixth year, oh-oh, I only have three payments and it's going to take five, I've got a problem here. So that's what he's talking about, as w oouch toward the end of that sixth period, then he says you're going to have a "wicked thought in your heart, The seventh year, the year of release [is at hand], and your eye be evil," that's what he's arguing about, he's dealing with mental attitudes and that's where the battle always is; it's not the overt stuff, it's those in the head,

it's those in our hearts because this is the calculation, we automatically do the math. And so Moses knows that, and so he says it.

[10] "You shall surely give to him, and your heart should not be grieved when you give to him," so you see, he's taken two whole verse to deal with this thing. Now in the outline here, remember the interest rate chart we showed last time and we dealt with risk, and remember we said that risk is built into interest rates, if you are a banker you've got to deal with risks; if you're going to loan somebody some money you've got to figure out the risk that you're undertaking. It's your money and your risking it loaning it to somebody and your interest rate is your compensation for risk. And so he said there are three risks here; there's the risk of default, a person just... you know, he can't pay it so all the money is gone; there's the forfeiture of the present use of the money, that requires on your part a futuristic attitude that you don't mind not buying something today, putting off the purchase, and using the money on a loan that you'll make the purchase later. So it's a future orientation. And then, inflation premium, if the currency is going to be debased and the guy is going to come back to you four years later with dollars that are worth less than the dollars you loaned him, you're going to require more dollars. So as interest rates have to deal with inflation, as inflation goes up interest rates are going to go up.

Now of these three, which one is Moses dealing with right here now; I'm not talking about interest rates because they are all zero, but the thought of risk is there. So is it number one, number two or number three? It's number one, risk of default in the sense that at the sixth year, seventh year, boom, it all disappears. So there's a risk there and that's what Moses is dealing with. This is one of the reasons why I love the work of the Old Testament because it deals with these little details of life and I always walk away from the text saying Lord, You understand me... You understand exactly what's going on here because He doesn't just outline the abstract principle, He deals with all the stuff that goes on in our head.

Now look what he also says will happen. He says that if you withhold from the poor man is going to cry out to the Lord against you, and it becomes sin among you. Now he's talking to the group here, in other words he's saying that this person is going to cry Lord, You've got to provide for me. Now it doesn't necessarily mean that that poor man is going to say, Boy, Mr. Jones over there, he didn't give me, I want you to blast him God. That's not, I don't think, what's going on here in the text; what he's saying is Lord, You know, I'm sitting here, I've got nothing and I just need something, that kind of a prayer and God says I hear that and I've already told you how I want you to deal with that situation so I don't want to get any... it's like God is saying I don't want to hear that prayer, I don't want to hear those kinds of prayers coming up from you people when I've told you how to deal with the problem. Now you say well, yeah Lord, but what about me, you know it's my money that's going down the toilet here. So what's in it for me, I mean, the faith-rest life has to have an anchor somewhere and we can't just walk around in fantasy land. God knows this so keep reading in the text and look what happens.

[10] "You shall surely give to him, and your heart will not be grieved when you give to him because for this thing," now "this thing" is interesting vocabulary because verse 10 here, the word that's translated "for this thing" is the exact term that occurs back in Genesis 39:5 when God blesses Pharaoh "for this thing," and there, in Genesis 39:5 "this thing" is Joseph, because Joseph is helping Pharaoh God blesses Pharaoh, not because of Pharaoh but because Joseph is there and Joseph is God's man of the hour, and so that nation, the whole nation gets blessed because of a few believers in key positions. And I think, frankly, the only reason this nation continues to be blessed is that we have a small remnant of believers who are praying, who are trying to live godly lives, some of whom are actually in the government trying to do a job day after day and getting resistance, and getting flack. Carol and I have talked to a gal that's in Maryland state government and she says, you know, this is like being the Lone Ranger here, the lobbyists come in and the lobbyists visit all the whole new class of Congress people, you know, men and women elected in this election, they go down inside the beltway and the first thing that's going to happen is you're going to get invited out to this dinner, to this party, and boy, we want this presentation. There are probably ten lobbyists for every member of Congress. Millions of dollars in lobbying pressure. So a Christian involved here is besieged with this tremendous pressure every single day.

But anyway, Joseph was able to resist that pressure and God reward Pharaoh and the whole Egyptian government because of Joseph. So now that principle in verse 10 is the answer to the tension going on, you know, gosh, I'm going to have to loan this money out and you know, we could use the money here, we could use the money there, and it's going to be gone because two years from now it's the seventh year, and it's going away, and you know, I want to help the person but golly Lord. So here's what the Lord says, "You shall surely give to him," you won't be grieved in your heart, "for this thing the Lord your God will bless you, and look at the a-1-1 word occurring twice, "the Lord will bless you in all your works and in all to which you put your hand." Now what do you suppose that promise is referring to? The economic side of his life. Look what he says, He "will bless you in all your works," he's talking about labor there, he's talking about effort, and then "in all that you put your hand to," he's talking about manual labor which was the labor of that kind of economy, the Lord will bless you.

So God isn't asking these people to themselves become poor by loaning to the poor. He's saying you trust Me, you loan to them and I'm going to repay you. "For," now we have a seeming conflict and critics love to pick up verses like this one and pit it against verse 4, ah ha-ha you got a conflict in your Bible, like Moses was so stupid when he was talking he didn't know that he conflicted verse 11 with verse 4 but verse 4, "the poor will never cease from the land, therefore I command you, saying, 'You shall open your hand wide to your brother, to your poor and your needy, in your land.'" Now that verse, verse 11, isn't preceded or followed by an if clause. Verse 4 is followed by an if clause. So in verse 4 there's the promise and verse 5 is the condition. So obviously the promise of verse 4 is conditioned on the condition of verse 5, which is obedience to Yahweh. All you have to do is read the next verse. Then when you come down to this verse, verse 11, what do you suppose this is saying? Well, it's saying what? It's basically a prophecy that they will never meet the conditions

of verse 5. God says I know, you're going to have to listen to Me about this, because I know you guys and I know you well enough to know that you're not going to do this, and so your poor are always going to be with you.

Now there's another example of the fact that attainment in the Christian life is not a guarantee. And we have people that are almost like fatalists that believe in perseverance of the... I'm not excusing carnality and I'm not trying to excuse failure, all I'm trying to say is that realistically on the part of the Scriptures you're going to have people that bomb out, you're going to have people that fail and that's why we have the Bema Seat. There's no guarantees of absolute success because that's why they're imperative verbs. If it was guaranteed we wouldn't be having imperative verbs saying do this, do this, if you don't do this this is going to follow. All of that to say verses 7-11, I think you can see is really an exposition of how to mentally cope with the Law. See, God not only gave them law but He told them here are the battles you are going to face in your mind.

Now we come to the next section, verses 12-18 and this section is another one that deals with mental attitude. Now to show you this, turn to Exodus 21:1-6. Flip over to Exodus because in Exodus 21 and this passage we're covering exactly the same thing but notice the way it's covered. And by flipping and contrasting Exodus 21 with Deuteronomy 15 you'll see what I mean by the difference between bare naked legal literature and the discourse that he's giving to the people.

Exodus 21:1-6, "Now these are the judgments which you shall set before them," so now we're talking about case law here. These are strict legal principles. [2] "If you but a Hebrew servant, he shall serve six years; and in the seventh year he shall go out free and pay nothing. [3] If he comes in by himself he shall go out by himself, if he comes in married then his wife shall go out with him. [4] If his master has given him a wife, and she has borne him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall be her master's and he shall go out by himself. [5] But if the servant plainly says, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free, [6] Then is master shall bring him to the judges. He shall also bring him to the door, or to the doorpost..." and so forth. Okay, now that's the law.

Now if you go back to Deuteronomy 15, there's a difference in the way he's talking here. In verse 12, "If your brother, a Hebrew man, or a Hebrew woman, is sold to you and serves you six years, then in the seventh year you shall let him go free from you." Well, so far it's the same thing. Now let's go to the next verse. [13] "And when you send him away free from you," look at the clause, "you shall not" what? "you shall not let him go away empty-handed; [14] you shall supply him liberally from your flock, from your threshing floor, and from your winepress. From what the Lord has blessed you with, you shall give to him. [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 thing today" Now that you don't read in Exodus 21 do you? See the difference. In Exodus 21 you have the requirement of the Law but then here there's a tender personal dimension to this thing. This shows you the heart of God. See, if you see this you'll never be tempted to think that the God of the Old Testament is some

scrooge; the God of the Old Testament is as merciful as Jesus and it shows in the way He structures this.

So look what he says; he says, verse 13, obviously verse 14 and verse 15 are three out of five verses that deal with an explanation of graciousness to these folks. He shall say, you shall supply him liberally from your flock," now why do you suppose that's in there? Because if you just had the Law, the bare naked Law, you were obligated to let this guy go in the 6th year.

I'm going to give you an example from modern life, one that I got involved with in the ministry to prisons in Pennsylvania, and it's the same thing in Maryland. Here's a guy who's in prison; okay, five, six years, ten, fifteen years. Okay, now he's a felon. What do you think the chances are of him getting a job outside right away? Not much, right. Not only is that a problem, but we saw cases where a person was arrested in Philadelphia, in a suburb of Philadelphia for dealing drugs in a gang, well, he goes to prison, and guess where he has to go when he comes out of prison? Back to the same neighborhood. I think come on people, now we've got people over here that are willing to give him some jobs, a Christian businessman, and you want to put him back over in the same neighborhood where he got in trouble with the gangs and the drugs and he's a felon and he can't get a job; what do you think he's going to be doing two weeks from now to feed his face. I mean, come on. But this is the policies that are involved in this. Now here's twenty-five... you've been in jail for eight years, here's twenty-five dollars, find a job. That's the law. Now when Christians are involved to deal with incarceration, one of the biggest problems in the Christian ministry to the incarcerated is re-entry because the jail, the department of corrections, DOC, it's a joke. There's no correction going on, you're caging people, men and women, like they're animals, and I'm not saying these people don't deserve to be in prison, that's not my point. My point is that these guys are costing us \$40,000 a year per inmate out of your and my wallets. So maybe we ought to think about reducing costs a little bit and you could reduce the cost if you did correct some of their behavior so they became productive people. Now only would you save your \$40,000 a year but they'd actually earn money and you could tax them and get some money back. But we don't think that way.

So in Christian work in incarceration re-entry is a tremendous problem. You get one of these people you have to have a mentor to be with them so they understand, you've got to walk them through life, you've got to tell them, you know, basically how to eat, how to deal with people, because they're not getting those skills in the prison. And then you have to make sure they're accountable to somebody. And gee, you know what, when Christians do that the recidivism rate goes down. I wonder why? Is it a magic pill? No, it's just human nature. And this is part of the way God says in this person, you're going to dump him out in society at the end of six years? Look, the guy...why did he come into slavery? Because he was poor, so now you throw him out the door in the sixth year; what do you think he's going to do, he's going to become poor and he's going to be in for another six years. So you haven't solved the problem, you've just got a revolving door; you think you've solved the problem. You're not solving it, it's not going away. So that's why God adds verses 13 and 14, "when

you send him away," for heavens sakes, get him something that he can start with and get his life back in order.

And then, [15] "You shall remember," this is not psychology involved, God says, in verse 15 he calls history to account and he says look, he says "You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God redeemed you; therefore I command you this thing today." So see, that goes back to that sabbatical principle of... it's a memory of freedom. Now one of the structures, one of the ideas that I'm trying to get across here in the Mosaic Law Code is the divine institutions. Now this is a word Col. Thieme in Houston coined but I think it's a good word. There are divine institutions or designs in society. These are not the result of man thinking about how he can organize himself. These are not out of traditions; these are rooted deeply in how God has made us.

First of all, God has made us responsible. So number 1 is called volition or whatever, I kind of dump everything into it, thought, speech and action, Genesis 1 and 2. He has made us with responsibility. That means we're accountable. That means that when we choose things there are going to be consequences and we have to answer to the consequences. So responsibility, this is a radical idea, by the way, because today you have this image that it's society's responsibility. God didn't give society any responsibility; He gave a responsibility to individuals, not to society. That's a joke, that society has an obligation. No, people have an obligation. It's just a vacuous term thrown around because it sounds good, but if you think about it more than three minutes you say wait a minute, how can a society be responsible? It can't be unless the people of the society are responsible. So this is a basic fundamental point and it's not going to go away. It's not going to go away all the way to the judgment seat of God, the Great White Throne Judgment, when unbelievers who have tried to generate human merit by their own good works are going to find out their good works don't fit God's righteousness.

So, we have on the outline, the power of divine institution four which I'm going to get to here in a minute. Divine institution #2 is marriage, Genesis 2, and He didn't make it for Adam and Steve; God made it for male and female, and guess what, He designed our anatomy a certain way. And you know what? Congress and the Supreme Court can't change human anatomy, male and female He made us. And there's a reason for that, so that when we have a family we have divine institution #3, there's a division of labor. Men and women think differently, we have to have each other. And when you have all men, or the men dominate completely, as they do in Islam, look at what you've got; you've got absolute violence and tyranny, upset, all the rest of the stuff, you don't have homes. We have people, Muslims by the tens of thousands are calling into Christian radio stations to find out, the women are, to find out how they can raise their kids, because they're not taught. Carol and I were up in Connecticut at a conference there, and there was a lady, a black lady married to a white fellow and they lived in New York City, he's an artist and they have a few kids and they were in a neighborhood that's becoming progressively Muslim. And she says you know what, I have Muslim women coming to me all the time wondering how to discipline their kids because it's just dysfunctional. Where are the men? Oh, the men are out there, after they get off work, they're out in the street talking to each other, they never deal with

issues in the home. So we now have this dysfunction, and it shows up in a society.

So divine institution #2 and divine institution #3 are not going to go away. And we know why marriage is not only grounded on the anatomical and psychological differences between man and woman but it's deeper even than that because in Ephesians 5 what is marriage a picture of? The Lord Jesus Christ and the Church. So here again we have something physical, something we observe empirically, something we live through, but it is a design that is a mirror of something even greater, the church of Jesus Christ and it's relationship with the Lord. So there are reasons why society has these structures in it. These aren't arbitrary, you can't change these by legislation and court decisions. You can try it, but you're going to pay a price for it because whenever you interfere with these things there is a tremendous economic and psychological damage that is done at an enormous economic cost.

Finally we come to civil government and when we define civil government in Genesis 9 it's the only one of the divine institutions that's after the fall. You know what means? The government is not a tool of redemption; the government is a tool to restrain sin. That's why the image of the government in the Scriptures is the sword; the sword is a lethal weapon. If man takes man's life by man it shall be taken, and it's precisely the reverse of the argument you hear, oh, it's so unethical for capital punishment because it's taking life. What do you think the homicide was? The homicide was against someone made in God's image and God doesn't like that. So instead of God doing a judgment He's delegated to man so government's function is to restrain evil, period. It is not to undergo tower of Babel projects or great building programs that aren't generating wealth, just slave labor, so in our outline this is the point about Egypt and what God wants them to remember, your slave labor in Egypt.

The power of divine institution #4, coercive lethal force designed to restrain evil becomes prostituted into a social redemption scheme like Babel. Babel is one of the great historic examples of socialist government at work, where it is being misused; instead of being a negative restraint it becomes a positive attempt to bring in the kingdom of some sort. Pyramids and other building projects that cost the labor and death of thousands of slaves. There is a novel written by a Christian in which he interacted with the Chinese, and in this example, this man from Harvard University visits China and he marvels, he talks to this Chinese believer, a humble Chinese believer persecuted by the government, and he says to him, oh, what a wonderful wall the Chinese wall is. And the Christian Chinese guy looks up at him and he says yeah; he says do you know how many tens of thousand Chinese slaves died making that wall? So this is the point that these great projects... what did they build in Egypt? They were building pyramids; the pyramid is a religious symbol. If you want to see and grasp what the religious symbol of a pyramid is visualize a pyramid. Okay, we all know what a pyramid is. In the Western hemisphere the Aztecs, the Incas built pyramids too. What did they do on top of them? They worshiped. I believe they're just derivative architecture from the tower of Babel. Okay, now think of the pyramid, get it in your mind. Now that picture, I haven't got it tonight, where did God speak to the nation from? The top of a mountain, but the mountain He made; He came down to speak on that mountain, it wasn't man going up to the pyramid to

go into heaven. There's a totally different thing here and you can see it physically, the difference between a pyramid and Mount Sinai. So that was Egypt.

And my point in illustration these things, my point is that wherever you have a violation of God's divine institutions you have suffering, you have economic costs, you have unnecessary debt. Marxism, the state of the USSR, that was a dream of American intellectuals. You can't understand that the whole New Deal in 1930, when Franklin D. Roosevelt came into power, the people around him were all people who had gone to Russia after 1917 and thought that the Soviet Union was the finest thing going. The couple that started the Thebian Society in Britain went through the Ukraine and they said, oh, what a wonderful thing that's happened here, there's no starvation, they said. Baloney there wasn't. Hitler killed all the productive farmers in the Ukraine, the Ukraine had been the bread basket of Europe but because the farmers were independent and they loved freedom, they resisted Stalin and his answer was to kill them. But guess what happened when you kill your experienced farmers. Oops, now nobody knows how to grow food. So now Russia imports food because the fools turned the bread basket into a disaster by an arrogant government.

And then we have the modern socialism perverts the forth divine institution into a vehicle of alleged redemption by legalism. That's basically what goes on and if you think about it's legalism, isn't it. We pass a rule, we pass a law, we're going to force something to happen. It doesn't work. Leveling economic status by forcible confiscation of wealth and redistribution, enslaving the entire population by inflating the money supply, and arrogantly assuming that an elite few know more about productivity than the laboring population. Do we really think that some 25 year old bureaucrat from the government can tell GM how to build a car. Now come on, it doesn't work, everybody knows that.

So anyway, God wants the people to know He liberated them. And then he says after that, verse 16, the personal termination of this section of Scripture, he says, "And if it happens that he says to you, 'I will not go away from you,' because he loves you and your house," see, that language isn't the same as Exodus 21, "since he prospers with you," that isn't in Exodus 21, [17] "then you shall take an awl and thrust it through his ear to the door, and he shall be your servant forever. Also to your female servant you shall do likewise. [18] It shall not seem hard to you when you send him away free from you; for he has been worth a double hired servant in serving you six years. Then the Lord your God will bless you in all that you do." There's the promise again, God will bless you in all that you do. See how He's caring for the people. And do you notice the little personal thing in verse 18, he says here's a thought that will make it easier for you to think this through in your heart. Just think about that servant, he worked twice as much as an employee would have worked; you had a deal with this guy, think about the deal you got. So I hope that this passage, as we've gone through it, shows you the heart of God, how He does want the culture to be a testimony to His righteousness, but He also knows our hearts and the struggles that we face.

So in conclusion: Poverty and indebtedness are part of the abnormality of the fallen world; they are "damaged states of being" from what God originally created man for. They are economic pictures that correspond to

elements in God's plan of salvation. Poverty pictures unsaved mankind before the Great White Throne of God, it pictures unsaved mankind before the Great White Throne of God without any works of value, totally in debt, nothing to show God but a bunch of dirty works of human good. Such tragedy for one who does not trust in the Lord Jesus Christ's finished work. Indebtedness pictures unsaved mankind under the dominion of Satan, the world and the flesh. The idea there being that the unsaved, the debtor is in debt to the lender, and Satan is the god of this world.

Finally, Christians ought to oppose poverty and indebtedness in areas where they can control and make a difference. And the key is wisely help the poor to fulfill their created potential. The missions that are doing a great job today, there's one in the Uganda area that is a fantastic case, what they're doing is they're going... more missionaries are seeing this now because if our dollar collapses our missionaries aren't going to be able to make it, they're going to be coming home, so that's one of the economic ramifications of the economic policies, but what they're realizing is, you know what, we lead these people to the Lord but they've got to live somehow. We've got to teach them, we've got to show them how to drill a well for water, or help them drill a well for water, and they have to show them how to... Di Matthews and her husband working to teach these people how to take chickens and make hens out of them so you can have eggs so you can eat protein, and it's those basic skills that are needed. And so that's how you deal with poverty, you don't do it by just dropping money on them, you have to take them by the hand and show them what it means to work in this world that's designed this way. Now that you know Him, through the Lord Jesus Christ, watch your Father's designs and live accordingly.