

Deuteronomy Chapter 15

- 1** "At the end of every seven-year period you shall have a relaxation of debts,
- 2** which shall be observed as follows. Every creditor shall relax his claim on what he has loaned his neighbor; he must not press his neighbor, his kinsman, because a relaxation in honor of the LORD has been proclaimed.
- 3** You may press a foreigner, but you shall relax the claim on your kinsman for what is yours.
- 4** Nay, more! since the LORD, your God, will bless you abundantly in the land he will give you to occupy as your heritage, there should be no one of you in need.
- 5** If you but heed the voice of the LORD, your God, and carefully observe all these commandments which I enjoin on you today,
- 6** you will lend to many nations, and borrow from none; you will rule over many nations, and none will rule over you, since the LORD, your God, will bless you as he promised.
- 7** If one of your kinsmen in any community is in need in the land which the LORD, your God, is giving you, you shall not harden your heart nor close your hand to him in his need.
- 8** Instead, you shall open your hand to him and freely lend him enough to meet his need.
- 9** Be on your guard lest, entertaining the mean thought that the seventh year, the year of relaxation, is near, you grudge help to your needy kinsman and give him nothing; else he will cry to the LORD against you and you will be held guilty.
- 10** When you give to him, give freely and not with ill will; for the LORD, your God, will bless you for this in all your works and undertakings.
- 11** The needy will never be lacking in the land; that is why I command you to open your hand to your poor and needy kinsman in your country.
- 12** "If your kinsman, a Hebrew man or woman, sells himself to you, he is to serve you for six years, but in the seventh year you shall dismiss him from your service, a free man.
- 13** When you do so, you shall not send him away empty-handed,
- 14** but shall weight him down with gifts from your flock and threshing floor and wine press, in proportion to the blessing the LORD, your God, has bestowed on you.
- 15** For remember that you too were once slaves in the land of Egypt, and the LORD, your God, ransomed you. That is why I am giving you this command today.
- 16** If, however, he tells you that he does not wish to leave you, because he is devoted to you and your household, since he fares well with you,
- 17** you shall take an awl and thrust it through his ear into the door, and he shall then be your slave forever. Your female slave, also, you shall treat in the same way.
- 18** You must not be reluctant to let your slave go free, since the service he has given you for six years was worth twice a hired man's salary; then also the LORD, your God, will bless you in everything you do.
- 19** "You shall consecrate to the LORD, your God, all the male firstlings of your herd and of your flock. You shall not work the firstlings of your cattle, nor shear the firstlings of your flock.
- 20** Year after year you and your family shall eat them before the LORD, your God, in the place he chooses.
- 21** If, however, a firstling is lame or blind or has any other serious defect, you shall not sacrifice it to the LORD, your God,
- 22** but in your own communities you may eat it, the unclean and the clean eating it alike, as you would a gazelle or a deer.
- 23** Only, you shall not partake of its blood, which must be poured out on the ground like water.