

The Lord's Release

Deuteronomy 15:1-2



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FOCAL Read Responsively Deuteronomy 15:1-2 At the end of every seven years thou shalt make a release. {2} **And this is the manner of the release: Every creditor that lendeth ought unto his neighbor shall release it; he shall not exact it of his neighbor, or of his brother; because it is called the LORD's release.**

When God first called Israel His people to salvation she was not the greatest of people. Of all the nations of the world she was the weakest. She had no standing army, meager possessions, and only lived at the whim of her captors the Egyptians. Israel was truly enslaved. Her children were not born free, but were also bound to Pharaoh's throne. Mothers and fathers had to watch helplessly as their children were beaten until they drug huge stones one on top of another as monuments called "pyramids" were raised to dead kings. The Israelites had no hope of bettering themselves, of getting out of this terrible slavery on their own. God reminded His people:

Deuteronomy 7:7-8 The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: {8} But because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

God saved Israel for two reasons, neither of which had to do with their own intrinsic value. He saved Israel **because He loved her,** and He saved Israel because **He**

made a promise to Abraham many years before.

Israel did nothing to earn nor deserve her salvation – it was all of Grace.

As Israel entered the Promised Land God wanted the people that He had so richly blessed to be a blessing to others. The Lord knew that this **“land filled with milk and honey”**, this Canaan, would be a prosperous land. The Lord did not want those whom He had saved to idolize the land nor the riches that they were about to receive. As the Lord had been good to His people, He wanted them to be good to others. Israel received God's good Grace, so He wanted His people to mirror His loving hand every seven years. On the seventh year the creditor was required by God to release his brother from debt. **“It is the Lord's release”**. After **seven sevens** or **seven releases** the Lord proclaimed a **fiftieth year, a year of Jubilee (Leviticus 25:10-12)** where all debtors were released and the land itself was not to be tilled nor worked.

Imagine that! An entire year of rest, where God's people were to feast on the Grace of God as He provided their every need. God wanted His people to trust Him in every circumstance, and in every way. The Lord wants His people to be like Him. The laws given to the believing were *not* given to the unbelieving – the Moabites, the Edomites, or the Egyptians would have mocked the Lord's Release. “Release a slave – how foolish! I'll do no such thing until I extract the uttermost farthing!” God's people were not to be so crude. Loved, they are to love. Released from debt, they are to be willing to release others. Blessed, they are to be a

blessing to others. As God released Israel from slavery and gave her riches besides, God's people were to give abundantly to the released. The Lord said:

Deuteronomy 15:13 ... when thou sendest him out free from thee, thou shalt not let him go away empty:

Not only was the debt to be forgiven, but the released was to be **“furnished liberally from out of the flock and out of the threshing floor”**.

Dear Christian, money and possessions must never become our gods and goddesses. There is something terribly wrong with the person who claims to be saved, but who is ungenerous in their own lives. Jesus told His disciples **“freely ye have received, freely give.” (Matthew 10:8)**. As you have been blessed, bless others. As God has abundantly given to you, give to others. Give love, though the other be unlovable. Give of the rich bounty that the Lord has given you. That prince of preachers **C.H. Spurgeon** once said¹:

“You who are of the blood royal of heaven, princes in God's kingdom, will you behave yourselves like paupers? You who have been redeemed with blood, whose every fetter has been struck off, will you act like slaves? Let it not be so. Rise to your true dignity. Act worthy of your privileges, and accept with joy of your Father and your King a law which others cannot understand, and which they would think unreasonable and impracticable.”

¹ In his sermon *Forgiveness, Freedom, Favor*, October 2, 1892

We who are Christ's are commanded:

Matthew 5:48 Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

Do as your Heavenly Father has done to you. Let the love of Christ flow from you hearts and to your neighbors whether that love be deserved or not. Look with kindness on the scornful and the fallen sinner, and speak words that will not drive them away from their only hope – **salvation by faith in Jesus Christ**. You are the only Bible that many will ever read. Can people see the Word of Life in you, or is Christ held up to open ridicule? If God has saved you from Egypt, reach out to others in Christ's Name and try to bring them into the Family of God. Stinginess and meanness belongs in the house of Pharaoh, but the House of God's crest is all of love. God stands ever ready to redeem the lost and to restore the fallen, but they will never hear if they do not see Christ in you. Go the extra mile. If you have called on the Name of the Lord Jesus and have been saved, as you have been loved so love others.

Walk in His steps, and so win the world for the One Who loves you.

1. God's People Forgive As God Has Forgiven Them

FOCAL Deuteronomy 15:2 .. **Every creditor that lendeth aught unto his neighbor shall release it; he shall not exact it of his neighbor, or of his brother; because it is called the LORD's release.**

What does God require of His believers? Simply that **we are to forgive our debtors**. God warned His Israel that such forgiveness was to be *as God forgives*. He told Israel:

Deuteronomy 15:9-10 Beware that there be not a thought in thy wicked heart, saying, The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand; and thine eye be evil against thy poor brother, and thou givest him naught; and he cry unto the LORD against thee, and it be sin unto thee. {10} Thou shalt surely give him, and thine heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him: because that for this thing the LORD thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hand unto.

The seventh year was the Lord's Release.

The Lord does not want His people *looking for loopholes* in the Law - or the Word - that He gave them.

If a poor person came forward in the sixth year and asked for help, the creditor was not allowed to harden his heart and say “I cannot do it, for next year is the Lord's Release – and I will lose the money”. Unbelievers deal with money and possessions in this way. The Lord's people are to give freely, as they have received so they should give.

Think of it this way: God is **all powerful, all seeing, and all knowing**. God knows you. The Bible says:

1 John 3:20 ... God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.

God knows you, and knows your heart. **He is greater than our heart.** Nothing is hidden from God. We are told:

Hebrews 4:13 ... all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

And the Psalmist David said:

Psalms 139:1-4 ... O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me. {2} Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. {3} Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. {4} For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether.

There is nothing that God does not know about you. He called you to salvation *warts and all* knowing there were going to be times when you would fail Him. He knew that you would not obey Him fully and, though His knowledge certainly does not relieve us of responsibility – God *knew you would fail Him*. God knew that Israel would fail Him when He called her out of Egypt and sent her to the Promised Land. Yet the Lord “**set His love on her**” regardless of that knowledge. In the same way He does not want His people whom He has loved and whom He has saved to look at another and harden their hearts because *they might be unprofitable servants*.

We do not have the right to withhold forgiveness because we *know* that the gift will be misused. As God has given, His people are to give. This is a Biblical principle.

What did Jesus teach us to pray? He said we should:

Matthew 6:12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive² our debtors.

God forgave you and I, though we neither earned nor deserved it. We are to forgive others on the same basis.

The Greek word for “forgive” means not only to forgive, but it also means “to lay aside, to give up, to release, or to put away”. As we have been released from debt by God we are commanded to release others.

This is very important. God has forgiven you, so must you forgive others. If you belong to the Lord, if you have been **redeemed with that which is more precious than silver or gold, redeemed with the precious Blood of Christ (1 Peter 1:19)** then you are called to forgive. Your forgiveness cannot just be *in word only*. Look at the context:

2 G863, ἀφιῆμι, *aphiēmi*, *af-ee'-ay-mee*, From G575 and ἵημι *hiēmi* (to send; an intensive form of εἶμι *eimi* (to go)); to *send forth*, in various applications: - cry, forgive, forsake, lay aside, leave, let (alone, be, go, have), omit, put (send) away, remit, suffer, yield up.

FOCAL Deuteronomy 15:2 ... **he shall not exact it of his neighbor, or of his brother;** because it is called the LORD's release.

We who belong to Christ forgive others *for His sake* – whereas the unbeliever only forgives those who seem to warrant forgiveness.

The moral claim might be on the heart the heart of the one forgiven, and a true believer might want to return that which was owed to the creditor regardless of the seventh year. Yet the creditor was to take no action whatsoever to get back whatever was owed. **“You shall not enact it”**. Insofar as God's Law was concerned the debt was gone. The believing creditor was not to do this because of the debtor, but *for the Lord's sake*. The Bible says:

FOCAL Deuteronomy 15:2 ... **because it is called the LORD's release.**

“It is the Lord's Release”. We do what we do “For Jesus' sake”. We turn the other cheek to the smiter, we lend to those who cannot give back, we do good to those who do evilly to us, we love the unlovable. Why? For the Lord's sake - **“it is the Lord's Release”**. Jesus taught us:

Luke 6:27-36 **But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, {28} Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you. {29} And unto him that smiteth**

thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloak forbid not to take thy coat also. {30} Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again. {31} And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise. {32} For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them. {33} And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same. {34} And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again. {35} But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil. {36} **Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.**

Was Jesus just joking when He told us to turn the other cheek? Was that a teaching only for them and not for now? What do you think?

Mercy and not Law should direct the hand and the heart of the Christian, for God showed mercy to you. Neither you nor I have received what we deserve – therefore we should give as we have been given. Let the selfish leave this life and enter condemnation – those who belong to Jesus belong to Love. We will one day walk streets of gold in a Heavenly City because God richly loved and blessed us for Christ's sake. We are to do the same for others. Jesus tells us:

Matthew 25:34-40 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: {35} For I was hungry, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: {36} Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. {37} **Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee hungry, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? {38} When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? {39} Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? {40} And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.**

The heart of Christ-likeness is that we forgive the unforgivable, we release the debtor from recompense. God is love and indwells us. Can we do any less than love?

We do not justify sin in any – EVER – but we forgive offenses against our person for Christ's sake. We give to the undeserving, for we were undeserving. This is what is emphasized in our context. God said:

FOCAL Deuteronomy 15:15 **And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the LORD thy God redeemed thee:**

therefore I command thee this thing today.

Remember where you came from. Remember the days before you met Jesus Christ as Savior, the days when you were a slave in bondage to sin. Remember when you were an idolater, a liar, an adulterer, a thief. Remember that you were not worthy of salvation but that the Lord “**set His love upon you**” - not because of your worth – but because He loved you and He made a promise to another. When Adam led the world into sin by his foolish choice the Lord promised Eve:

Genesis 3:15 **And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.**

God promised Eve that one of her Children would bruise that old devil's head. God promised Abraham that:

Genesis 12:3 ... in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

God promised Jacob that a **Star and Scepter** would rise:

Numbers 24:17 ... there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Scepter shall rise out of Israel ...

out of Israel, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Time and time again God promised His people that Messiah would come and save His people from their sins. The Bible tells us that:

Galatians 4:4-7 **But when the fullness of the time was**

come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, {5} To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. {6} And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. {7} Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

We who are saved have neither deserved nor earned what has been given us. We are therefore to love as Christ loved, to forgive as Christ forgave, to release as Christ released – and to do it for His sake and His sake alone.

2. Have You Experienced The Lord's Release?

FOCAL Deuteronomy 15:2 ... he shall not exact it of his neighbor, or of his brother; because it is called the LORD's release.

If you have never experienced the Lord's Release – if your sins have never been pardoned – if you have never called on the Lord Jesus Christ and been graciously saved- then you will never understand what I talked about today. You see, the Scripture says:

Ephesians 4:32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

The type of behavior that God mandates, He

mandates on those who have been forgiven –
released by God.

God did not expect the Egyptian to release his slaves, though God demanded that release many times. Greed is ingrained into the unbeliever, as greed is a part of the Old Sin Nature. You cannot **forgive one another, as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you** if you have not experienced the forgiveness of Christ. Those whom God forgives He forgives completely. The Apostle wrote:

Romans 8:32-34 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? {33} Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. {34} Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

You who are saved *are forgiven completely and adopted into the Family of God without reservation* for Christ's sake. God now lives with you, and intercedes *for* you – praying for you – at all times. You are loved with a mighty love.

God has **ten black soldiers – Ten Commandments – that can slay the unbeliever: but they have no effect on the believer in fellowship with God.**

Guilt is gone because of the Blood of the Old Rugged

Cross. Have you been freed from Egypt? Have you been taken out from under the bondage of guilt and sin, and brought into the glorious light that is Christ? The Christian, freed from Egypt, is rich beyond measure. Some people think that God saves grudgingly – but the Lord never levies more on us than He does on Himself. The Lord said:

CONTEXT Deuteronomy 15:10 Thou shalt surely give him, and thine heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him: because that for this thing the LORD thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hand unto.

The Lord told His people **not to be grieved in releasing the servant**. If God does not want us to be grieved, do you think He is grieved when He saves a soul? Some people go to the altar and *tarry, begging God to save them, begging God to release them from sin*. Where in the Scripture do you find such an abominable teaching? What does the Bible say?

Isaiah 53:10 Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin ...

“It pleased the Lord to bruise Jesus” for us. God's hand was not forced, neither was Jesus dragged to the cursed tree. The Savior said:

John 10:15, 18 As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. ... {18} No man taketh it from me, but I lay it

down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.

Jesus was not *murdered* – He willingly went to that Cross for all who would be saved.

He died on Calvary that “**whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life**” (John 3:16). Jesus paid the ultimate price for “**whosoever**” - and there is none lost who cannot be saved by faith in Him. As the song says:

**Why do you tarry when Jesus is pleading?
Pleading for you and for Me?
Why do you linger and heed not His mercy?
Mercy for you and for me.**

Salvation is freely given to all who will come – but you must come. Will you come and surrender your lives unto Jesus? Oh, that every person here today would freely say “I am Thine, O Lord. I will trust and obey in You and You alone.”

May God touch your hearts with His Word.