

## **(12/14) Deut 15,19, 24 “Peculiar People” - Handout<sup>10</sup>**

### ***Summary***

This weeks study looks at some examples of how God wanted Israel to live in peculiar ways implementing the social and ethical ideals and living other-centered lives.

### ***Deuteronomy 15***

15:1-6 introduces the idea of a Sabbath year protecting members of the society from life-long indentured servitude. Pay close attention to the principles and goals that God expresses in this section.

15:7-11 describes appropriate ways to distribute funds to others.

15:12-18 describes how a servant may remain in a family context.

### **Discussion**

1. What specific community goals appear in these sections?
2. Why can Israel feel secure in cancelling debts and being generous with the poor?
3. What guiding principles, goals and theologies are evidenced in this section?
4. Read 15:11 and reflect on the overall section. What is the purpose of saying, “there will always be poor people in the land?”
5. What goals for internal social justice should Christian communities have?
6. How can a church, a micro community live out these goals and principles?

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<sup>10</sup> Derived from Mark Hamilton, “Now Choose Life! Deuteronomy for a Renewing Church”, 2001.

## **Deuteronomy 19 & 24**

These two chapters describe different aspects of ethics and justice system in Israel. While the descriptions talk about specific “laws” or rules, consider the ideas, principles and motivations that serve as the foundations for these rules. Specific items addressed in these chapters include:

- Cities of refuge where people who innocently killed someone could find temporary protection from avengers.
- The requirement for two witnesses, especially in serious crimes involving physical punishment. 19:21 describes a principle of “do to him as he intended to do to his brother” as a means of enacting fairness and honesty in testimony and forcing the punishment to fit the crime.
- Divorce for irreconcilable differences (24:1-4)
- Exempting newlyweds from military service (24:5)
- Taking millstones as collateral (24:6)
- Defines kidnapping and forced slavery as capital offenses (24:7)
- Dealing with leprosy (24:8)
- Proper treatment of pledges (24:10-13, 17-18)
- Protection of economically vulnerable people (24:14f)
- Practical care for the poor (24:19-22)

### **Discussion**

1. How might these principles come to bear in a congregational setting?
2. What theological motives are mentioned that form the foundation of these societal rules?
3. Using these principles, how would we as a congregation deal with these specific cases:
  - a. A divorced woman with children who does not have a means of supporting her family?
  - b. A person in need of a loan to keep from losing their house or livelihood?
  - c. A person who cannot secure a job but is willing to work?