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SILVER STAR BIBLE SCHOOL 1996

THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST IN THE LAW

Speaker: Bro. Colin Badger

Class #5

Principles of the Shepherd in the Law

Reading: None

Brethren and sisters,

Yesterday we were concentrating our attention on some important principles that can be derived from Deuteronomy chapter 15, especially towards the end of that session. Deuteronomy chapter 15, we noticed yesterday, outlines some information in the Deuteronomy account, of the year of 'release' or perhaps we might know it better as 'the sabbath year'. It of course, has a parallel chapter in Leviticus chapter 25, which we'll return to just momentarily. In particular yesterday, we were looking at verse 16 of Deuteronomy chapter 15; we were trying to look at that verse carefully, as a kind of cameo or a kind of parable of basic principles that highlight, the motive of love for service, as it was disclosed in Deuteronomy, in order to help God's people understand the real meaning and the real role of the schoolmaster, the Law of Moses.

Let's just read verse 16 again, and we'd like to look at it from a slightly different perspective this morning, than we were yesterday. Verse 16 of Deuteronomy 15, 'And it shall be, if he say unto thee'(that's the slave or the servant) 'I will not go away from thee; because he loveth thee and thine house, because he is well with thee; Then thou shalt take an awl, and thrust it through his ear unto the door, and he shall be thy servant for ever', we were highlighting yesterday, the point that from the motivation of love for his master, and it more clearly reads in the parallel account in Exodus 21, the servant was inspired to remain with his master. The Law of Moses, through the spirit rather than the letter of the Law, was encouraging of course, the principle from the master's point of view, to behave towards his servant in such a way that a loving response would be inspired, so that at the end of the six years the servant would be motivated, with that kind of response. We saw also that in turn it generates a love and a care for the master within the heart of the servant himself, who at the end of the six years, if he decided to exercise this option, of course, was from the human point of view, taking a kind of risk. For once this option had been exercised, there'd be no turning back, he would remain in the household of his master forever. And as the six years came by each time, he would realize that option wasn't to be exercised any longer.

So we also noticed yesterday, and we said it just in passing, that apart from the principle of love, there was the principle of faith, faith that the master would continue to behave this way, trust on the basis of the way the master dealt with him previously in the six years behind him. Here then, was an act of faith, and a response of love combined. Two very important elements that are so much apart of the Abrahamic promises and principles, or the New Covenant promises and principles. The point we want to look at from a slightly different angle this morning however, in verse 16, relates to the household.

It's easy to focus just on that one element, ever so important as it is, love between the master and the servant, but what of the household? It reads 'because he loveth thee (the master) and thine house'; love for the household, love for the master. The servant is being encouraged here, in these New Covenant principles, to have his love directed to the Father, the heavenly Father, which the parable was intended to teach in the ultimate application, and inspired to love his brethren. And you remember, brethren and sisters, that when we looked at Romans chapter 13 yesterday, the apostle Paul summarized the whole meaning of the Law, as he epitomized the Ten Commandments, as focusing on love for the Father with all one's heart, mind, soul and strength, and love for your brethren, the household, which of course, in the broader sense includes one's neighbour. How important it was, brethren and sisters, for the Jews to have 'love for their brethren', and how interestingly this particular law, if we might call it that, was intended to point beyond itself, not to just the letter, but to the spirit which gave it life and meaning. Now let's look at the parallel account, if you would, in Leviticus 25, which we said we would look at momentarily.

Leviticus 25 fills out a few extra details about this 'sabbath year' and some of the wonderful principles that emerged from it, that lifted a Jew, if he was discerning, far above just the letter, and just the principle of salvation by works. Leviticus chapter 25 verse 2, 'Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the land which I give you, then shall the land keep a sabbath unto Yahweh. Six years thou shalt sow thy field, and six years thou shalt prune thy vineyard, and gather in the fruit thereof. But in the seventh year shall be a sabbath of rest unto the land, a sabbath for Yahweh: thou shalt neither sow thy field nor prune thy vineyard. That which growth of its own accord of thy harvest, thou shalt NOT reap, neither gather the grapes of thy vine undressed: for it is a year of rest unto the land. And the sabbath of the land shall be meat for you: for thee and thy servant, and for thy maid, and for thy hired servant, and for thy stranger that sojourneth with thee. And for the cattle, and for the beast that are in thy land, shall all the increase thereof be meat'. Now here, brethren and sisters, is an interesting law; it would relate to the year of Jubilee in the 49th year, for the Jubilee is based on 7 sevens, that is seven sabbaths. But what would be true of the year of Jubilee, would be true each 7 years in this much, that in the sixth year they would harvest. That harvest would provide them seed and it would provide them, of course, the actual harvest of the grain and the fruits of the land. The fruits and the grains coming from that sixth year, would have to hold them over for how long? Well, the next year would be the 'sabbath year'; it would be a year of rest, no sowing, no harvesting. That which was to grow of itself, if you noticed (and we deliberately stressed that

particular small word, not) that which was to grow of itself, verse 5, 'thou shalt not reap' so allow there would be certain fruits and certain grains that would grow of themselves, NO, they weren't to harvest those. Then would come the eighth year where they would sow once again, have to wait until the harvest in that year, before they would once again, have the bounty of the land coming towards them. What an incredible law! What was it intended to teach? Surely, brethren and sisters, here, every seven years there was a challenge to all of Israel, to generate the fruit of the spirit. For, consider the implications; they would have to rely on Yahweh in the sixth year, to provide them sufficient harvest, not only to supply them with the food for that next coming year (as all harvest would) but enough seed that could be stored and used for planting in the eighth year. Moreover the food which they were to derive from the harvest in this year, would have to last them, well over a year, in fact, for they wouldn't finally realize harvesting until the season of harvest in the eighth year. It wouldn't come at the beginning of that year; here, brethren and sisters, was the test of faith.

What would inspire the Father to bless them with the bounty that was necessary, to provide not only the necessary seed for planting later down here in the eighth year, but also the food necessary to take them through this period? The Father would have to be bountiful; the Father would have to bless their increase; Yahweh would have to be inspired by His own love to provide them with that kind of bounty and care. They in turn, would have to respond faithfully, trusting that Yahweh would bless them with the bounty in that year, sufficient to carry them through with their needs until the eighth. You see, here in the Law of Moses, was the spirit of faith! Faith that would take a risk, we might say, faith in the unseen. Of course, there would be some tangible harvest, some tangible bounty, that would come there in the sixth year; but they wouldn't know that it would come, until finally they brought it in and looked at it, and saw, indeed, the Father had blessed them with what they need in that year, more than what we might have got in the fifth or the fourth or the third year. It was a belief that God was working in their life; it was based on a conviction moreover, that God could supply the bread for their table to give them life. It was to teach them moreover, that man didn't simply live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeded out of the mouth of the LORD, Who would have to, with the work of the angels, bless this harvest by His own power, by His own desire and commands, working providentially in every field of every Jew, who was faithful. God's word was providing them miraculously with an extra bounty, on the same principle as He provided them manna in the wilderness, or preserved their clothes so that they did not perish during those 40 years.

Brethren and sisters, it's incredible! Come down to verse 21, verse 20 perhaps, it helps for a better connection. Notice that certain thoughts are anticipated by the Father Himself, verse 20 of chapter 25, 'And if ye shall say, What shall we eat the seventh year? behold, we shall not sow, nor gather in our increase:(remember, they couldn't eat even what grew of itself). Verse 21, 'Then I (Yahweh) will command my blessing upon you in the sixth year, and it shall bring forth fruit for three years'. Now we can understand with the help of what we've just gone through on this little time line, how three years would be applicable.

YEAR OF JUBILEE

6th year growth of itself planting (Isa.37:32)

And verse 22, 'And ye shall sow the eighth year, and eat yet of old fruit (that's the old seed) until the ninth year, until her fruits come in ye shall eat of the old store'. So in fact, it's anticipated for certain types of harvesting, that it would actually take them in to the ninth year, before some of the final harvesting of that year's crop was gained and blessed with. You see, brethren and sisters, here was a tremendous challenge for faith! and it was the neglect, the neglect of the 'sabbath year of rest' that the Father used as the basis for sending them into Babylon for 70 years. The last book of Chronicles, the last chapter and the last few verses, makes that very clear that the 70 years in Babylon was to be based on the number of 'sabbath years' they had neglected. They were a faithless generation on that basis; they had not seen beyond the letter, they had not captured the spirit, and the opportunity to have their faith exercised and to trust in the Father's love.

Think now about that little parable of the master and the household. You see in that little parable the principles have a touchstone with what we are seeing here. The master was inspired to show love and kindness to his servant; the servant was encouraged to respond in love, and the courage to and the faith to 'trust', that once he put his ear to the doorpost of his master, the risk (if you want to call it that) would be worth it. In fact, it would not be a 'risk' if he truly believed in what he'd seen from his master. But he would have to have faith, and he would show that faith in his master, and his love for him and his household. But here, is the ultimate Master and His household. Here is the Father working parabolically with His own people, in the same kind of relationship. He will treat His people with love; He will bless them with bounty; He will expect that they will respond as a nation to Him, the whole household in love. They in turn will have faith, that during those years the Father will provide, first in that sixth year to carry them through those years. Faith and love working together! the higher principles to be inspired by the schoolmaster, by the pedagogue. But notice, look at verse 23. Have you noticed how this fits into the context and what it says to Israel? This is an incredible statement that we can miss the force of by just reading it in a cursory way; verse 23 of Leviticus 25, 'The land shall not be sold for ever'. Why not? 'For the land is mine' says Yahweh, 'for ye are strangers and sojourners with me. And in all the land of your possession, ye shall grant a redemption for the land'. Did you see that? Joshua had brought them in; the land had been divided by lot; every tribe had its territory; men and women had their farms or their residence in villages. But they were still on the Abrahamic principle and the Abrahamic way of life, to see themselves, although in the land, settled in the land, to be strangers and sojourners forever. In other words, they were not to see this as an end in itself, the Land of Israel with all its bounty and its blessings, was theirs but not really theirs. IT WAS YAHWEH'S, His on loan to them! He ran that land, controlled it, controlled the climate, blessed the skies, blessed the fertility; it was Yahweh's land and they, on the very same principle that the apostle Peter enjoins to the strangers abroad, they were to continue living as strangers and pilgrims like Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, who dwelt in tents before they ever possessed a foot of the

land. In other words, living in the land, continuing in villages, owning great lots of property, these were the principles still being lived out that were Abrahamic, New Testament principles. They were not to hold onto their land, not to look at their crops, not to look at their homes and their possessions as theirs forever. Why were they enjoined to look at life that way? Because it wasn't an end in itself, and because their tenure on that land was temporary. Because, brethren and sisters, there were better promises, there were more eternal inheritances to receive from the greater seed to come, who would give them that land and that inheritance for ever with eternal blessings, if they would rise above the Law and see the greater spirit of it, and respond to the Father in faith and love. That would finally give them the land and that would finally give them a city which had foundations, whose builder and maker is Yahweh. Here then, within the Law were statements and principles revolving around the sixth year, which were all intended to engender within them, the right attitude.

Let's go to Deuteronomy again, chapter 32. Here is one of the most important statements of a New Covenant or Abrahamic sort, in all of the book of Deuteronomy. Deuteronomy chapter 32, let's read verses 20 and 21; now remember, this is that part of Deuteronomy past 29, that is dealing and is concentrating especially on Moses' last words and his song and his blessings, on New Covenant connections and principles, as we saw earlier in the week how much this section is drawn from by New Testament quotation. Verse 20, 'And he said, I will hide my face from them, I will see what their end shall be, for they are a very froward generation, children in whom is no faith'. How could a Jew miss this? How could he think that salvation was by works, as he read his own five books? How could he miss the point, that the condemnation from the words of Moses here in 32, in his song, are pointing to failure on the basis of no faith? Children in whom is no faith. Now, look at verse 21, 'They have moved me to jealousy with that which is not God; they have provoked me to anger with their vanities: and I will move them to jealousy (how?) with those which are not a people, I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation'. Brethren and sisters, here's part of the gospel! This is you and I in verse 21, this is a prophecy of Romans chapter 11, that the branches would be temporarily cut off, the Jewish branches, in order to bring in the Gentiles, and by doing so, finally in the end, provoke Jewry to jealousy and bring them in the end. This is a prediction that blindness in part in Israel would be the basis for temporarily severing them from their own trunk, and bringing in, grafting in the Gentiles, you and I. And if you look at your bible margin, at the section in verse 21, 'I will move them to jealousy with those that are not a people', lo and behold, it is cited in Romans 10 and verse 10, that chapter by the apostle Paul that we've looked at, at least twice this week, that speaks of the righteousness of faith, coming from this section of Deuteronomy, as opposed to righteousness based on the works of the Law in Leviticus 18.

How incredible, that the stress on children not having faith is back to back with the prophecy, that the Gentiles would be brought in, and of course, what's the point? How would the Gentiles be brought in? Here are the New Covenant principles; how would He bring in a people that were not a people? How would He bring in (a righteous God, a just God), how would He bring in a 'foolish nation'? What would be the basis of their acceptance a Jew might ask? The basis of acceptance of the Gentiles, the basis of

them being grafted in would have to be, well, what does verse 20 tell us? It would have to be what the Jews were missing; the Gentiles in verse 21 will be brought in on the basis of faith. The children had no faith! The foolish nation, the foolish people in verse 21, would be brought in by having faith. You see, brethren and sisters, when the apostle Paul quotes this section in Romans 10 and verse 10 as our margin shows us, and develops it as part of his developing argument about the righteousness of faith being and speaking on this wise from Deuteronomy, the context is entirely appropriate. This section of Deuteronomy chapter 32 therefore, is a match to what we've just been looking at, FAITH AND LOVE WORKING TOGETHER AND DEMONSTRATING THAT FAITH AND LOVE WITHIN THE HOUSEHOLD ITSELF. Let's now take another look at this very same kind of section in Deuteronomy, from the point of view of a little book in the New Testament, that we'll discover draws very heavily from this part of Deuteronomy, that is the part that deals with faith and love working together, and especially in the context of the 'sabbath year'. I'd like you now to take these principles and come back again to Deuteronomy chapter 15. Once again we go back there; faith and love demonstrated to the master and the household, and faith being the basis of justification. Now why are we going back to Deuteronomy chapter 15? Well, this chapter and its surrounding context, partly into chapter 14, as we've just suggested, is the basis for some very important principles, that are described in the New Testament as 'the royal law'. The royal law! As we look here at Deuteronomy 15, I'd like you to notice the following.

THE ROYAL LAW OF JAMES IN DEUTERONOMY

James 1:5	<u>giveth to all men liberally</u>
James 1:22,23	<u>hearer, doer</u>
James 1:25,27	<u>law of liberty; blessed in his deed</u>
James 2:15	<u>naked, and destitute</u>
James 2:16	<u>give them not those things which are needful to the body</u>

The epistle of James, we'll discover momentarily I hope, draws heavily from the principles that we're now looking at, that revolve especially around Deuteronomy 15 and its related context. Think about what we know about James' epistle. If we were to summarize the meaning of James' epistle, perhaps we would summarize it as FAITH AND WORKS, or we might summarize it as the epistle that stresses PURE RELIGION AND UNDEFILED. Faith in action, faith towards the Father and faith towards our brethren, and those who are in need, the pure religion that is undefiled. James especially is expounding on the importance of faith towards God, but faith especially towards our neighbour, and faith towards the household therefore. Now, as you look at the wording, just by way of example, of James chapter 1 verse 5, where might this lead us to in the Old Testament? Verse 5, 'If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him'. Now bear in mind that James especially is writing to the 12 tribes. He seems to have a Jewish audience in mind especially, and from indications from within James, it would seem it was one of those epistles that was written fairly early, perhaps even before the Jerusalem conference of Acts 15, and it is especially, it seems an epistle that was

written for the Jewish believers in the area of Jerusalem or at least within Judah. Now, to a Jewish readership especially, which is indicated in the opening of James' epistle, where would their minds be directed to, in order to understand these principles already laid down by God? Look at the word links! Deuteronomy chapter 15, consider the following; verse 13 and 14 in the context of the sabbath year, we read the following in verse 13, 'When thou sendest him out free from thee, (who is this speaking about? It's the Hebrew man or Hebrew woman, verse 12, that might be sold unto thee and serve thee six years, and in the seventh year be given release) 'thou shalt not let him go away empty; Thou shalt furnish him liberally out of thy flock and out of thy floor, and out of thy winepress, of that wherewith Yahweh thy God have blessed thee, thou shalt give unto him'. Now brethren and sisters, it's easy to forget the implications and the demands of that Law. When would the Jew, when would a servant be released? Every six years. When was the master on that basis, to supply the servant that leaves with a liberal giving of his flock? a liberal giving of his winepress? The master would be giving that to him at the end of the sixth year, in the seventh year, the very year when the master would have the temptation to neglect 'liberality'. Why? Because it's the sabbath year, you see, and it's now going to go on until almost the ninth year when the master's store and provision is going to have to be dealt with very carefully. He's not going to be allowed to plant in the seventh year; he's not going to be allowed to harvest until well into the end of the eighth and maybe going into the ninth. In the very year when servants were liberated from the house, at the same time behind the scenes, was the temptation to be very frugal and to be pinchy. There was a demand, and intense demand to be very careful about how much you spend, how much you bake in the oven, how much you put out each day for the family; this has got to stretch over almost a year and a half. By the ninth year, if your servant wants to be liberated, and he's a Jew, you must let him go, and you will not let him go empty; you will not just given him the basics; in verse 14, if you are a faithful man and you believe in Yahweh and you believe He will bless your faith and trust, you the master will furnish him liberally out of thy flock and out of thy winepress. (Now watch!) 'Of that wherewith Yahweh thy God have blessed thee thou shalt give unto him. For thou shalt remember that thou was a bondman in the land of Egypt, and Yahweh thy God redeemed thee: therefore I command thee this thing today'.

Look at the demands, the challenge to faith, the opportunity to exercise it liberally. The man would did this as a master, would have to do it out of love for the Father, and out of faith and the Father working with him. When James says therefore, 'If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not', of all places in the Law of Moses here in Deuteronomy 15, would be the classic example, of the Father's liberality, and when he enjoins it to the master, he bases it in principle on verse 15, the Father's way of dealing with the nation when He brought them out of Egypt as servants, as slaves who had nothing! and He was going to bring them across the Red Sea, bring them into the wilderness, and how would they survive in the wilderness with only the clothes on their back and the shoes on their feet? How would slaves out of Egypt be provided for? The Best Western wasn't there; there was nothing in the wilderness like restaurants or fast foods; there were no looms, there were no sheep to draw from for their fleece and for weaving, how would they survive?

TRUSTING THE FATHER'S LIBERALITY! So the Father, when they came into the land and establish themselves, you see, it says 'trust; trust that I'll be liberal, loving and kind to you, and I've done it before when I took you out of Egypt. There's a basis for faith, it's not a blind faith; 'I did it before and I'll do it again, now you do it and put it into practice, in the very year when you're most likely to doubt and be taxed in your faith'.

James then, has principles that are based in the Old Testament. Now consider the following, James chapter 1 verses 22 and 23; where does this take us to in the Old Testament? 'But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass'. Deuteronomy chapter 15 verse 5, 'Only if thou carefully hearken unto the voice of Yahweh thy God to observe to do', hear and do. You must not only hear the voice of the living God, you must do. Not only listen to His commandments carefully, but put them into practice, and it's in the context of the household. Look at verse 4, 'Save when there shall be no poor among you; for Yahweh shall greatly bless thee in the land which Yahweh thy God giveth thee for an inheritance to possess it'. Verse 3 stresses the foreigner; it stresses in the context the poor man verse 7, 'if there be among you a poor man of one of my brethren (the household) within any of thy gates in thy land which Yahweh thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thine heart nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother: But thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need, in that which he wanteth'(liberality) That's what James is expounding; liberality based on the Father's example of liberality. This is the practical meaning of faith in action, not to the Father directly but to the neighbour, to the household, which the 'servant-slave parable' was but a cameo. 'I love my master and I love his house' was the inspired response of the slave or the servant who wished to donate his life permanently to his master's home, 'I love the master, I love the household'.

But that meant something practical in terms of the national application. James knows as he writes to the 12 tribes, that here in Deuteronomy, in the Law, was the spirit of Christ. Christ's face shining forth from these pages, engendering the spirit of faith in action, inspired by love. 'We love, said Paul, 'because He first loved us', and that principle is woven all through here. Hearers and doers, James however, brethren and sisters, continues to reach back into this very same context under inspiration, and draws from the principles. Consider this! this is incredible when you see how much sustains his connections to this same context. Verse 25 of James 1 and verse 27, 'But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed. Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.' Where would James' readers (Jewish especially) have their minds go, to try and understand what he meant by the 'law of liberty?' Well, here it is, Deuteronomy 15, it's the 'law of liberty'; verse 1 of Deuteronomy 15, the very same context that James has already drawn from. 'At the end of every seven years, thou shalt make a release (the Hebrew word means 'liberate' 'free', this is the law of liberation. Verse 2 of Deuteronomy 15, and this is the manner of the release; 'Every creditor that lendeth ought unto his neighbour shall release it; he

shall not exact it of his neighbour, or of his brother because it is Yahweh's liberation, it is Yahweh's release. Here in the chapter dealing with liberation, reflecting on their freedom from bondage as slaves, and God's liberality to them, we have developed in Deuteronomy 15, the principle of liberality and the principle of liberation, both together. Generosity and bounty given by the Father to His people when they had nothing; enjoining them to be liberal and generous in the seventh year when they were least likely to be so, and here the context is 'liberation to you, liberation to your fellow brethren who are poor and in need, to your sisters who are widows, to the fatherless, to the child who needs a home. Here the principles are all bound up.

Now, look at this phrase! James very carefully, by the spirit's guidance, has employed another phrase that we can skip over ever so easily. It's a funny little phrase, 'blessed in his deed', blessed in his deed, blessed in his deed, where do we find that? where does the echo lead us? Deuteronomy 14, in the context (remember there's no chapter divisions, of course, in the scroll, so it's the immediate context still, Deuteronomy 14 verse 28, look at this! In the immediate context, 'At the end of three years thou shalt bring forth all the tithe of thine increase the same year, and shalt lay it up within thy gates: And the Levite, (because he hath no part nor inheritance with thee,) and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, which are within thy gates shall come, and shall eat and be satisfied; that Yahweh thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hand which thou doest'. FAITH WITHOUT WORKS IS DEAD, don't be just a hearer, be a doer; care not for your own flesh and blood, but care for the Levite whose inheritance was in Yahweh. Care for the stranger, the Gentile, who will ultimately be brought in because of your faithlessness; care and love for the fatherless and the widow, and as a consequence, trust that Yahweh will bless thee in all the work. 'Whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberation and freedom, and continueth therein (you being freed by the spirit of Christ, who has liberated you as a slave to sin) you as a disciple being not now a forgetful hearer, because you have been delivered from Egypt, but a doer of the work, this man, this disciple will be blessed in his deed as a consequence of the liberation he gives to others and the liberation he appreciates as a result of his care and liberality to the household'. You see, brethren and sisters, under the Law the discerning Jew could be lifted above the letter of the Law and appreciate its spirit. The Jew on the basis of the way that God had dealt with him and his nation, was encouraged to deal with the household, and give them their due meat in season, to quote the language of the gospels, and he was to be concerned for the fatherless and the widow, which is exactly what James' epistle focuses on, practical religion, true religion. The religion of the Yahweh of Israel who cared for the destitute, cared for the fatherless, cared for the widow, cared for the poor, and cared for the Levite who was His special worker with no inheritance, save Yahweh. And as a consequence, this man shall be blessed in his deed; now notice! You can go over to Deuteronomy 15, the phrase is repeated; it's indeed, the context that the spirit has directed James to draw from.

Verse 10, 'Thou shalt surely give him' (now who's 'him'? Watch this!) verse 9 (backup). 'Beware, says the Father, (to the man who owns land), 'beware that there be not a thought in thy wicked heart, saying, the seventh year, the year of release (liberation), is at hand, and thine eye be evil against thy poor brother, and thou givest him nought; and

he cry unto Yahweh against thee, (when did we hear that phrase before? who cried unto Yahweh in destitution? who cried unto Yahweh being naked? who cried unto Yahweh with nothing in their hand, asking for help? It's the book of Exodus opening up and giving us the sound of that cry, of the whole nation of slaves, and now, 'If thy poor brother cry unto Yahweh against thee, it be sin unto thee; thou shalt surely give him and (watch the concern about the heart; don't just give him, give it for the right motive, the new motive), 'Thou shalt surely give him and thine heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him', in fact, it's 1 Corinthians 8 and 9. In those two chapters, where the apostle expounds liberality; 'thine heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him, because that for this thing, Yahweh thy God shall bless thee in all thy works'. Be generous because I have been generous to you; you continue to feed the household and be generous to your brethren, your master's children and I will continue to bless you'. This man shall be blessed in his deed (or in his works).

That's not all though! Look at this! James chapter 2 verses 15 and 16. Where does this come from? 'If a brother or sister be naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled, notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?' (How can you send them away empty? How can you do that if you have love and compassion and understand what Christ has done for you?) Deuteronomy chapter 15, here it is! We've already looked at this from another prospective before, now look at it from the prospective of these words in James; Deuteronomy 15 and verse 13, the man that exercises the option to leave his master's house, 'and when thou sendest him out free from thee (the law of liberty) thou shalt not let him go away empty; thou shalt furnish him liberally out of thy flock'. If a brother or sister be naked and destitute like the poor, like the fatherless and the widow, and one of you say, 'Shalom, all the best brother, all the best sister! We know you have nothing in your pockets and you've only got the shirt on your back, but all the best! It's the seventh year, I can't spare much, depart in peace, Shalom. Be ye warmed and filled (on what we don't know) but be ye warmed and filled', notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body, what doth it profit? 'Hope you enjoyed our bible class; hope you enjoyed the great bible discussion we had this week! Now, is that your bag? Oh, well let me just give it to you, good-bye! Oh, yes, we've given them spiritual things, they've done the readings with us for the week, but they leave our house with the shirt on their back and their stomach is empty and they don't know where they're going to go for the next night. But we've had a wonderful week of bible discussion; what about those things that are needful for the body? Are we, brethren and sisters, at times a little pinchy that way? Are we a little pharisaical? Are we so preoccupied with the 'manna from heaven' that we forget the practical needs of the body? Do we forget that the Lord Jesus Christ on one occasion, when he raised from the bed a sick little girl, who was virtually dying, having given her life once again, the first thing the Master said was 'give her some food'? Have we forgotten that He had compassion on the multitude besides teaching them from the Word of life, He gave them the bread that was necessary for the body?

This, brethren and sisters, is a piercing glance into every one of our hearts; this puts demands on Jewry, and James in his New Testament epistle, is clearly showing that the

principles were embedded there, the spirit of Christ was there in the Old Testament, and he's concerned now about New Covenant people neglecting the principles laid down in the Old. FAITH WORKING WITH LOVE, concern for the master, love for the master but love for the household, and this says James, is true religion undefiled. Let's go back to James now for a moment! This is Christ in the Law! I want to, in James, very quickly, capture some key phrases that we know so well, and identify with James. Look at this now, from the context of Deuteronomy 15 and Deuteronomy 14, how meaningful this is as a New Covenant principle, the new motive, a new commandment but not so new. Verse 25 of James 1, look at the careful wording here, brethren and sisters, and ask yourself with all these connections to Deuteronomy 15, to the law of liberty which that chapter was all about, why would James word it the following way? Verse 25, 'But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth thereon, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed'. He's referring to the law of liberty; whose law of liberty? Is it the law of liberty that brought Israel temporarily as mortals, out of Egypt? The word is perfect, that's the key word; this is better than Deuteronomy 15, brethren and sisters! This in fact is the spirit of the Law but it's actually higher, for this isn't release from temporary bondage. Not at all! James, with all of these concentrated connections to the context of the law of liberty in Deuteronomy 15 or Leviticus 25, now speaks of the perfect law of liberty, raising it above the law of Deuteronomy 15.

What's perfect about it? It's the law of liberty provided by Christ; it's not a liberation from jail, from chains and ropes, from bondage to bricks and mud and straw which is only temporary anyways. Christ has given us the perfect law of liberty; He has freed us from the dominion of sin; He has crucified the offender, sin has been destroyed in His own body. Christ has liberated us from that dominion and from the wages of sin which is death, and therefore, what does it say? IF, brethren and sisters, in Deuteronomy 15, Yahweh expected Israel because of temporal blessings, to be inspired to a love that worked by faith, and give temporal blessings to their families but especially by the principle of pure religion, to the household, to the neighbour, to the stranger, to the widow, to the destitute, IF ALL OF THAT WAS TO BE INSPIRED ON THE BASIS OF TEMPORARY BLESSINGS TO THEM AS JEWS, BECAUSE OF A TEMPORARY LIBERATION, AND A TEMPORAL LIBERALITY FROM THE FATHER, HOW MUCH MORE SHOULD DISCIPLES UNDER CHRIST, WHO'VE BEEN GIVEN NOT JUST TEMPORARY BLESSINGS, BUT SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS, NOT JUST TEMPORARY LIBERATION BUT TRULY ETERNAL LIBERATION, HOW MUCH MORE SHOULD THAT MORE PERFECT LAW OF LIBERTY INSPIRE IN US! What verse 27 says, it's the perfect law of liberty, how much more should we be inspired to show love and have our faith work in a practical way, so that pure religion for us and undefiled before God and the Father is this, 'to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.' HOW MUCH MORE, BRETHREN?

In chapter 2, is it any surprise here in chapter two that we find this in verse 5, in the context that he's been drawing from, verse 5, 'Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that (here it is!) love Him?' It's the servant who loves the master, not

simply because of temporary liberation, but because of perfect liberation. And look at this, look at this, verse 6, 'But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats? Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called?' (What name is that?) It's the memorial name on us through the Son; it's the name that showed itself to Moses, that was compassionate, loving, kind, merciful, gracious. It's that name, verse 8, 'by the which ye are called, IF ye fulfill the royal law'. What law's that, brethren? It's not the Law of Moses; it's the law of the King; it's the law of the King! It's Christ's law, whose principles were embedded indeed in Deuteronomy, but on a much higher plain, in fact, because there are better blessings, better promises, a better eternal inheritance and even greater love has been shown thereby.

If we were to love the Father for temporal blessings, how much more should we love Him for eternal blessings? So fulfill, he says, the royal law; well, what's that? According to the scripture and he quotes Leviticus 19 of all places, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, and if you do so you do well! But if you have respect to persons, he commits sin and are convinced of the law as transgressors'. Now, look at the principles drawn from the Law; if you're going back to the Law, and if you're going to think narrowly by the letter of the Law which killeth, very well. Verse 10, notice what's incumbent on you! 'For whosoever shall keep the whole Law and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all'. And now we repeat some of the Ten Commandments, but look at verse 12, 'So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty'. Here it is again, the law of liberty, the perfect law of liberty in chapter 1, the royal law of the king verse 8, for in verse 13, 'he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath showed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment. What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked and destitute of daily food, and

Now come to verse 21, these are Abrahamic principles, we come back full circle. It's not coincidence in this context therefore, that in verse 21 we come back to Abraham. Abraham who knew what faith was all about and how it was combined in action with love, 'Was not our father Abraham justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? (the principles that bro. Jim has been stressing from Psalm 22 and similar psalms) Verse 22 brethren, 'Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? How desperately we need to have these principles put into our hearts and minds more fully; how often we neglect the 'royal law', and how often we show our own lack of appreciation for the law of liberty; nay, the perfect law of liberty. How much He has done for us even greater than the Jews of Deuteronomy 15; how eternal are the promises and how everlasting are the blessings. Brethren and sisters, we need to be inspired by the spirit of Christ, by the King, whose spirit and whose face shines also from the Law.