

Beulah Baptist Church
Rev. Jerry D. Black, Pastor

Sunday School Lesson
January 30, 2022
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Lesson—Justice and the Marginalized

Text: Deuteronomy 24:10-21

I. Aim for Change/Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, we will...

1. EXPLORE God's standards for justice;
2. APPRECIATE how God loves those who are poor and marginalized; and
3. SHARE love with those who are rejected by others.

Key Verse— *“But thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt, and the LORD thy God redeemed thee thence: therefore I command thee to do this thing.”*
(Deuteronomy 24:18, KJV)

Lesson Song of Praise and Worship: *Heaven Help Us All, by Stevie Wonder*

II. People Places and Times

In chapter 24, the Israelites are introduced to a set of miscellaneous laws. It speaks to the understanding of marital commitments for grounds for divorce and remarrying after divorce (vv. 1–4). Verse 5 explains why newly married men are absolved of military duty for one year.

III. Background

God wanted Israel to be a theocracy, where His people would live in a manner that would reflect His government. In this transfer of power, Moses stood as the intermediary serving as prophet and judge. In the book of Deuteronomy, God restates and reaffirms to a new generation the decrees and ordinances given to Israel, starting in Exodus with the Ten Commandments to the laws written in the books of Leviticus and Numbers. Kidnapping to sell someone as a slave was forbidden (v. 7). Verses 8–9 are not laws, but reminders of the priestly directives on how to deal with those who have leprosy (Leviticus 13–14). Their understanding and their ability, or inability, to appropriately practice these laws would have societal and divine consequences (Deuteronomy 24:15). These laws are not directed only to those who were wealthy, but are equally important for those who were poor.

IV. The Lesson At-A-Glance...

1. *The Debtors (Deuteronomy 24:10–15)*
2. *The Disassociation (v. 16)*
3. *The Destitute (vv. 17–21)*

V. In Depth with More Light on the Text

1. The Debtors (Deuteronomy 24:10–15) The theme of loans and collateral, initially sketched in verse 6, resurfaces in more detail in verse 10. Most often, debtors are viewed as being at the disadvantage of the loaner. Although in debt, the debtor should not lose their dignity or self-respect. The loaner oppressing the debtor or ignoring the debtor's family's needs is outlawed. The loaner's job was not to intimidate or humiliate because someone owed a debt. As a symbol of good faith, the debtor was to initiate their repayment methods. Conversely, the loaner could not dictate what was to be used as collateral or payment. Further, he was not permitted to enter the debtor's home to demand his preferred method of payment.

2. The Disassociation (v. 16) Moses reiterates that each person is to be treated individually. This means there is no generational penalty, where the children pay for the crimes of the parent or vice versa (Jeremiah 31:29; Ezekiel 18). Imposing a cumulative punishment would present unjust repercussions and unfair retaliation for offenses not committed by the person receiving the punishment.

3. The Destitute (vv. 17–21) Moses continues his dissection of the have and the have nots. He goes into further detail on how one must handle the disadvantaged. The imagery and remembrance of Israel being slaves are brought into focus. In Moses' use of the word slave, he does not want Israel to never forget how they too were disenfranchised in Egypt, classless and poor. Taking care of your neighbors is something we should all do, especially the privileged. Gleaning—the process of sharing with the poor—is not only appropriate, but showcases true love for humanity. Their surplus is to serve as manna from heaven for the needy.

Liberating Lesson— See Sunday School Book...

Application for Activation— See Sunday School Book...

Food for Thought and Questions for Consideration (from the Application for Activation)?

1. *How do you treat church members / folk who owe you money?*
2. *In 2022, is it a good idea or personal policy to lend to other church members?*

Vocabulary-New Words

Hired Servant (Deuteronomy 24:14) *sakir* (Heb.)—A paid employee, contracted for a certain number of years

Pervert (v. 17) *natah* (Heb.)—Turn aside, repel, or decline