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From the Editor

This issue of the ACE Journal produces the three remaining papers presented at the Tyndale Fellowship Ethics group's conference this year (the previous issue having reprinted the other two papers). We are grateful to the editor of the Anchor Bible Dictionary (forthcoming, 1992) for permission to reproduce Christopher Wright's most helpful paper on 'The Jubilee'.

The 1990:2 issue will appear early in 1991, after which the (long run equilibrium?!) service of two issues per year will resume. Offers of papers are always, of course, most welcome.

Subscriptions

We are moving from a calendar year to an academic year basis. Those who have already paid for 1990 will be deemed to have paid for 1990/91. If you have not yet paid for 1990, a reminder is enclosed for 1990/91.

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THE JUBILEE

yobel, *s nat hayyobel* (Lev. 25:13, 'the year of jubilee'). The word is etymologically uncertain. The commonest view is that it means 'ram' (Phoenician), since ram's horn was used for trumpets and the year of jubilee was announced by the blowing of the trumpet, though the word used in the instructions of Leviticus 25:9 is the commoner *sopar*. Elsewhere, however, *yobel* or *qeren hayyobel* (the horn of the ram), or *sop rot hayyob lim* (trumpets of rams) are expressions used for trumpets (e.g. Ex. 19:13, Josh. 6:4-8, 13). The word 'jubilee', derived from *yobel*, is etymologically unconnected with the Latin *jubilare* and its English derivative 'jubilation'.

The year of jubilee came at the end of the cycle of seven sabbatical years. Leviticus 25:6-10 specify it as the fiftieth year, though some scholars believe it may have been actually the forty-ninth - i.e. the seventh sabbatical year. In this year there was a proclamation of liberty to Israelites who had become enslaved for debt, and a restoration of land to families who had been compelled to sell it out of economic need in the previous fifty years. Instructions concerning the jubilee, and its relation to the procedures of land and slave redemption are found entirely in Leviticus 25. But it is referred to also in Leviticus 26 and 27 in other contexts.

OUTLINE OF ARTICLE

A. SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

1. Israelite kinship structure
2. Israelite land tenure

B. THEOLOGICAL BASIS

1. Theology of the land
2. The status of the Israelites

C. EXEGETICAL OUTLINE

D. HISTORICAL QUESTION

E. ETHICAL DEVELOPMENT

A. SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

The jubilee was in essence an economic institution. It had two main points of concern: the family and the land. It was rooted, therefore, in the kinship structure of Israelite society and the system of land-tenure that was based upon it.

1. *Israelite kinship structure.* Israel had a three tier pattern of kinship, comprising the tribe, the clan, and the household. Gideon's modest reply to his angelic visitor shows us all three: "Look at my *clan* - it is the *weakest* in the *tribe* of Manasseh; and I am the least in my *father's house*" (Jdg. 6:15). The last two smaller units had greater social and economic importance than the tribe in terms of benefits and responsibilities relating to individual Israelites. The father's house was a place of authority, even for married adults like Gideon (Jdg. 6:27, 8:20). It was also the place of security and protection (Jdg. 6:30ff.). The clan was a larger grouping of a number of father's houses and an important sub-unit of the tribe. The clans were named after the grandsons of Jacob, or other members of the patriarchal family tree (see Num. 26 and 1 Chron. 4-8), thereby acknowledging that they were units of recognizable kinship. But sometimes the clan name was attached to the territorial area of their settlement, such as a village or group of villages. The clan had important responsibility in the preservation of the land allotted to its constituent households. The jubilee was primarily for the economic protection of the smallest of these units - the father's house, or the extended family. However, in Leviticus 25, it is interwoven with the economic practice of the redemption of land and persons, and those redemption procedures were primarily for the protection of, and the responsibility of, the clan. The two sets of provision were complementary,

as we shall see. (See 'FAMILY' for full description of Israel's kinship terminology and structure.)

2. *Israelite land tenure.* Whatever may have been the process by which Israel emerged in Canaan, once they were able to establish control over the land (which was not everywhere, of course, for quite a long time - especially in areas of Canaanite city domination), they operated a system of land-tenure which was based on these kinship units. Thus the territory was allotted to tribes, 'according to their clans', and within the clans each household had its portion or 'heritage'. Judges 21:24 describes the Israelite soldiers returning each to his tribe, his clan, and to his (household) inheritance. This system had two features that stand in complete contrast to the preceding pattern of Canaanite economic structure.

a) *Equitable distribution.* In Canaan the land was owned by kings and their nobles, with the bulk of the population as tax-paying tenant farmers. In Israel the initial division of the land was explicitly to the clans and households within the tribes, under the general rubric that each receive land according to size and need. The documentary evidence for this is to be found in the tribal lists of Numbers 26 (especially note 52-56) and in the detailed territorial division of land recorded in Joshua 13-21, where the repetition of the phrase 'according to their clans' indicates the intention that the land should be distributed throughout the whole kinship system as widely as possible.

b) *Inalienability.* In order to protect this system of kinship distribution, family land was made inalienable. That is, it was not to be bought and sold as a commercial asset, but was to remain as far as possible within the extended family, or at least within the circle of families in the clan. It was this principle which lay behind Naboth's refusal to sell his patrimony to Ahab (1 Kgs. 21), and it is most explicit in the economic regulations of Leviticus 25.

B. THEOLOGICAL BASIS

The land shall not be sold permanently, for the land belongs to me; for you are 'guests' and 'residents' with me (Lev. 25:23).

This statement, at the heart of the chapter containing the jubilee, provides the hinge between the social and economic system described above and its theological rationale. Having stated the inalienability rule, it goes on to present the two basic factors in the theological context of the jubilee and related laws: the theology of the *land* and the status of the *Israelites*.

1. *The theology of land.* One of the central pillars of the faith of Israel was that the land they inhabited was Yahweh's land. It had been his even before Israel entered it (Ex. 15:13,17). This theme is found often in the prophets and Psalms, as part of Israel's cultic tradition (cf. von Rad, 1966). At the same time, although ultimately owned by Yahweh, the land had been promised and then given to Israel in the course of the redemptive history. It was their 'inheritance' (Deuteronomy *passim*), a term which points to the relationship of sonship between Israel and Yahweh.

This dual tradition of the land - divine ownership and divine gift - was associated in some way with every major thread in Israel's theology. The promise of land was an essential part of the patriarchal *election* tradition. The land was the goal of the *exodus redemption* tradition. The maintenance of the *covenant* relationship and the security of life in the land were bound together. *Divine judgement* eventually meant expulsion from the land, until the restored relationship was symbolized in the *return* to the land.

The land, then, stood like a fulcrum in the relationship between God and Israel (cf. its position in Lev. 26:40-45). It was a monumental, tangible witness both to that divine control of history within which the relationship had been established, and also to the moral and practical demands which that relationship entailed. For the Israelite, living with his family on his allotted share of Yahweh's land, it was the proof of his

membership of God's people and the focus of his practical response to God's grace. Nothing that concerned the land was free from theological and ethical dimensions - as every harvest reminded him (Deut. 26).

2. *The theological status of the Israelites.* The Israelites are described in two ways in this chapter.

a) 'You are *guests and residents* (RSV), *aliens and tenants* (NIV) with me' (v.23). These terms, *gerim w toshabin*, describe a class of people who resided among the Israelites in Canaan, but were not ethnic Israelites. They may have been descendants of the dispossessed Canaanites, or immigrants. They had no stake in the tenure of the land, but survived by hiring out their services as residential employees (labourers, craftsmen, etc.) for Israelite land-owning households. Provided the household remained economically viable, its resident alien employees enjoyed both protection and security. But otherwise, their position could be perilous. Hence they are frequently mentioned in Israel's law as the objects of particular concern for justice because of their vulnerability.

The Israelites were to regard their status before God as analogous to that of their own residential dependents to themselves. Thus, they had no ultimate title to the land - it was owned by God. Nevertheless, they could enjoy secure benefits of it under his protection and in dependence on him. So the terms are not (as they might sound in English) a denial of rights, but rather an affirmation of a relationship of protected dependency.

The practical effect of this model for Israel's relationship with God is seen in vs. 35, 40 and 53. If all Israelites share this status before God, then the impoverished or indebted brother is to be regarded and treated in the same way as God regards and treats all Israel.

b) 'They are *my slaves* whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt' (vs. 42 and 55). Three times in this chapter the exodus is mentioned, twice more in the following chapter (26:13, 45). It was regarded as an act of redemption in which God had 'bought' Israel for himself. Freed from slavery to Egypt, they were now slaves of God himself. There-

fore, nobody could now claim as his own private property a fellow-Israelite who belonged by right of purchase to God alone. The exodus redemption thus provided the historical and theological model for the social and economic practice of redemption and jubilee. Those who are God's freed slaves are not to make slaves of one another (25:39, 42).

This weight of theological tradition concentrated into 25:23 gives a seriousness to the economic measures outlined in the rest of the chapter.

C. EXEGETICAL OUTLINE

Leviticus 25 is a complex chapter in which several different economic practices have been thrown closely together, along with parenthetical sections and exceptive clauses. Source critics have come to no kind of consensus over alleged documentary division of the material, and the multiplicity of theories is little help in understanding the chapter. However, in its present form, the text has some definable paragraphs (as can be seen in the RSV and NIV), which guide us through its provisions.

a) *vs. 1-7* The chapter opens with the law of the **SABBATICAL YEAR** (q.v.) on the land. This is an expansion of the fallow year law of Exodus 23:10f. which was also further developed in Deuteronomy 15:1-2 into a year in which debts (or more probably the pledges given for loans) were to be released.

b) *vs. 8-12* The *jubilee* is then introduced as the fiftieth year to follow the seventh sabbatical year. V. 10 presents the twin concepts that are fundamental to the whole institution, namely *liberty* and *return*. Liberty - from the burden of debt and the bondage it may have entailed; Return - both to the ancestral property if it had been mortgaged to a creditor, and to the family which may have been split up through debt-servitude. It was these two components of the jubilee, freedom and restoration that entered into the metaphorical and eschatological use of the jubilee in prophetic and later NT thought.

c) *vs. 13-17* The financial implications of a recurring jubilee are then spelt out. The apparent sale of a piece of land really amounted only to a sale of the use of the land. So an approaching jubilee diminished the cost for the purchaser, inasmuch as he was buying the number of harvests until the jubilee restored the land to its original owner.

d) *vs. 18-22*. At this point some exhortation is inserted to encourage the observance of the sabbatical regulations, by promising special blessing in the preceding year. The theological principle was that obedience to the economic legislation of Israel would require, not prudential calculations, but faith in the ability of Yahweh to provide through his control of nature as well as history.

e) *vs. 23-24* These central verses in the chapter constitute a heading to the remaining paragraphs which are primarily concerned with the economic redemption of land and persons, interwoven with the jubilee. We have already noted the major theological traditions embodied in them.

f) *vs. 25-55*. We come now to the practical details of redemption and jubilee. In these verses there are three descending stages of poverty with required responses, interrupted by parenthetical sections dealing with houses in cities and Levite properties (29-34) and non-Israelite slaves (44-46). The stages are marked off by the introductory phrase, 'If your brother becomes poor' (25, 35, 39 and 47). Probably this phrase introduced an original series of redemption procedures, unconnected with the jubilee. The addition of jubilee regulations complicates matters in places, but, as we shall see, functions as a necessary complement to the effects of redemption.

Stage 1 (25-28). Initially, having fallen on hard times (for any reason: none is specified), the Israelite land-owner sells, or offers to sell, some of his land. To keep it within the family, in line with the inalienability principle, it was first of all the duty of the nearest kinsman (the *go'eI*) either to pre-empt it (if it was still on offer), or to redeem it (if it had been sold). Secondly, the seller himself retains the right to redeem it for himself, if he later recovers the means to do so.

Thirdly and in any case, the property, whether sold or redeemed by a kinsman, reverts to the original family in the year of jubilee.

Exception (i): (29-31). The above rules did not apply to dwelling places in the walled cities. This was probably because the primary intention of the redemption and jubilee provisions was to preserve the economic viability of families through the secure possession of their inherited land. City houses were not part of that productive economic base, and so need not be subject to indefinite redemption rights or jubilee return to seller. However, village dwellings were treated as part of the rural scene, and therefore were included.

Exception (ii): (32-34). This is a rider to exception (i). Since the Levites as a tribe had no inherited share in the land but were allotted certain towns, their dwellings in them were to be subject to normal redemption and jubilee provisions.

Stage 2 (35-38). If the poorer brother's plight worsens and he still cannot stay solvent, presumably even after several such sales, it then becomes the duty of the kinsman to maintain him as a dependent labourer, by means of interest-free loans.

Stage 3a (39-43). In the event of a total economic collapse, such that the poorer kinsman has no more land left to sell or pledge for loans, he and his whole family sell themselves to, i.e. enter the bonded service of, the wealthier kinsman. The latter, however, is commanded in strong and repeated terms, not to treat the debtor Israelite like a slave, but rather as a resident employee. This undesirable state of affairs is to continue only until the next jubilee - i.e., not more than one more generation. Then the debtor and/or his children (the original debtor may have died, but the next generation were to benefit from the jubilee, 41,

54), were to recover their original patrimony of land and be enabled to make a fresh start.

Exception (iii) (44-46) This is a reminder that the redemption and jubilee provisions applied to Israelites and not to foreign slaves or resident aliens. This reinforces the point that they were primarily concerned with the distribution of land and the viability Israelite families, neither of which applied to the non-landowning population.

Stage 3b (47-55) If a man had entered this debt-bondage outside the clan, then an obligation lay on the whole clan to prevent this loss of a whole family by exercising their duty to redeem him. The list of potential kinsman-redeemers in vs. 48f. shows how the responsibility moved outwards from the nearest kinsman to the extent of the clan itself ('family' in RSV v. 49, is misleading; the Hebrew is *mispahah* - clan). The whole clan had the duty of preserving its constituent families and their inherited land. It also had the duty to see that a non-Israelite creditor behaved as an Israelite should towards an Israelite debtor, and that the jubilee provision was adhered to eventually.

From this analysis of the chapter, it can be seen that there were two main differences between the redemption and jubilee provisions: (a) Timing. Redemption was a duty that could be exercised at any time, locally, as circumstances required, whereas jubilee was twice a century as a national event. (b) Purpose. the main aim of redemption was the preservation of the land and persons of the clan, whereas the main beneficiary of the jubilee was the extended family, or 'father's house'. The jubilee therefore functioned as a necessary over-ride to the practice of redemption. The regular operation of redemption over a period could result in the whole territory of a clan coming into the hands of a few wealthier families, with the rest of the families in the clan in a kind of debt-servitude, living as dependent tenants of the wealthy - i.e. precisely the kind of land-tenure system that Israel had overturned. The jubilee was thus a mechanism to prevent this and to preserve the socio-economic fabric of multiple house-

hold land tenure with the comparative equality and independent viability of the smallest family-plus-land units.

Now these household units held a central place in the experience and expression Israel's covenant relationship with God, as can be seen from their role in social, military, judicial, cultic and educational spheres (see FAMILY). In the light of this centrality of the family, the jubilee can be seen as more than merely an economic regulator (and certainly more than the utopian measure of social justice it is sometimes portrayed as). In attempting to maintain or restore the viability of such households it was in fact aimed at preserving a fundamental dimension of Israel's relationship with Yahweh. We noticed this already in considering the weight of theological tradition packed into v. 23. It is also underlined three times in the reminders of the exodus and its implications (36, 42, 55). This in turn explains why the neglect of these institutions, bemoaned in the following chapter, Lev. 26, led not merely to economic distress but also to a broken relationship and eventual exile - a connection also very clearly perceived by the prophets.

D. HISTORICAL QUESTION

But did it ever happen? Were the jubilee regulations real and practicable legislation, or were they academic and utopian? The fact is that, while there is evidence that kinship-redemption was practised (e.g. Jer. 32, Ruth 4), there is simply no evidence of a national jubilee in the extant historical documents of Israel (though some would discern an allusion to a jubilee year in Isa. 37:30, where a double year of fallow seems to be envisaged; but it may refer merely to the disastrous effect of invasion). This silence does not, of course, prove that it never did happen. Nor can we say that it was economically impossible and so *could* not have happened, because there is evidence from other ancient Near Eastern civilizations of periodic nationwide remissions of debt in connection with the accession of a new king. And this ANE evidence comes from centuries earlier than the origins of OT Israel (See: Gordon, Finkelstein, Lewy).

Nevertheless, scholars are divided: some see the law as a late, idealistic, formulation from the same period as the Holiness Code within the Priestly

compilation to which this part of Leviticus is usually assigned (e.g. Ginzberg, De Vaux, Westbrook). Others regard the jubilee as part of Israel's earliest, pre-monarchic, laws, which fell into disuse. This latter position is more commonly held by those scholars who have done most research into the ANE parallels and the sociological background (e.g. Schaeffer, Jirku, van der Ploeg, Stein, North, Wildberger, Van Selms. Gottwald regards the redemption provisions, but not the jubilee, as reflecting 'old conditions' p.264).

We have seen that the aim of the jubilee was to maintain or restore the socio-economic basis of the nation's covenant relationship with God. This would reduce the likelihood of its being an exilic invention in view of evidence that there developed in the later period a loosening of the ancient family-land basis in the future vision of an expanded people of God that would include foreigners and eunuchs, (cf. Isa. 54:1, 56:3-7). Israel's identity and relationship with God would no longer be so closely tied to a social system in which kinship and land ownership were determinative of one's standing within the religious community. It is hard to see what purpose would have served by framing new idealistic legislation designed to preserve those very things. Conversely, it makes sense to see the jubilee as a very ancient law which fell into neglect during Israel's history in the land, not so much because it was economically impossible, as because it became irrelevant to the scale of social disruption. The jubilee presupposes a situation where a man, though in severe debt, still technically holds the title to his family's land and could be restored to full ownership of it. But from the time of Solomon on this must have become meaningless for growing numbers of families as they fell victim to the acids of debt, slavery, royal intrusion and confiscation, and total dispossession. Many were uprooted and pushed off their ancestral land altogether. After a few generations they had nothing to be restored to in any practicable sense (cf. Mic. 2:2,9, Isa. 5:8). This would explain why the jubilee is never appealed to by any of the prophets as an economic proposal (though its ideals are reflected metaphorically). The only occasion when a slave release is mentioned by a prophet, in Jeremiah 34, the law appealed to was the sabbatical year release of *Hebrew* slaves (Ex. 21:1-7, Deut. 15:12ff.) - not the jubilee. The people in question were fellow Judaeans, but they were effectively landless (a definitive feature

of the 'Hebrew' class), not mortgaged debtors who could be restored to their property. The story shows how fragile and transient their actual release was.

E. ETHICAL DEVELOPMENT

1. *In the Old Testament*

We have seen that the jubilee had two major thrusts: release/liberty, and return/restoration. Both of these lent themselves readily to the process of transfer from the strictly economic provision of the jubilee itself to a wider metaphorical application. There are allusive echoes of the jubilee particularly in later Isaiah. The mission of the Servant of Yahweh in Deutero-Isaiah has strong elements of the restorative plan of God for his people, aimed specifically at the weak and oppressed (Isa. 42:1-7). Isaiah 58 is an attack on cultic observance without social justice, and calls for liberation of the oppressed (6), specifically focussing on ones own kinship obligations (7). Most clearly of all, Isaiah 61 uses jubilee images to portray the one anointed as the herald of Yahweh to 'evangelize' the poor, to proclaim liberty to the captives - using the word *d ror* which is the explicitly jubilary word for release, and to announce the year of Yahweh's favour - almost certainly an allusion to a jubilee year. The idea of redemption and return are combined in the future vision of Isaiah 35, and put alongside a transformation of nature itself. Thus, within the Old Testament itself, the jubilee attracted an eschatological imagery, which, however, went along with an ethical application in the present. That is, it could be used to portray God's final intervention for messianic redemption and restoration; but it could also support ethical challenge for justice to the oppressed in contemporary history.

2. *In the New Testament*

Jesus announced the inbreaking of the eschatological reign of God. He claimed that the hopes of restoration and messianic reversal were being fulfilled in his own ministry. The 'Nazareth manifesto' (Lk. 4:16-30) is the clearest, programmatic statement of this, and quotes directly from

Isaiah 61, which is strongly influenced by jubilee concepts. Scholars are agreed that Jesus made use of jubiliary imagery, though there is division over exactly what he meant by it. Some have argued that Jesus called for a literal enactment of the levitical jubilee (Trocme, Yoder). Others, noting that Jesus used the prophetic texts and not the levitical law, argue that he was merely using jubiliary language as a way of showing the kind of response required by the arrival of the kingdom of God, without intending an actual national jubilee. Sloan notes that Jesus' use of *aphesis* carries both the sense of spiritual forgiveness of sin and also literal and financial remission of actual debts. Thus, the original background of *economic d ror* has been preserved in Jesus' challenge concerning ethical response to the kingdom of God. Ringe traces the interweaving of major jubilee *images* into various parts of the Gospel narratives and the teaching of Jesus (e.g. the beatitudes, the response to John the Baptist [Matt. 11:2-6], the parable of the banquet [Lk. 14:12-24], various episodes of forgiveness, teaching on debts [Matt. 18:21-35 etc.]). The evidence is broad, and conforms to the pattern already set in the Old Testament - namely, the jubilee as a model or image for the kingdom of God embodies both eschatological affirmation and ethical demand. Likewise, in Acts, the jubiliary concept of eschatological restoration is found in the otherwise unique idea of *apokatastasis*. It occurs in Acts 1:6 and 3:21, related to God's final restoration of Israel and all things. Significantly, the early church responded to this hope at the level of economic mutual help - thus fulfilling the sabbatical hopes of Deuteronomy 15 (Acts 4:34 is virtually a quotation of Deuteronomy 15:4).

3. *Contemporary application*

Without envisaging any literal enactment of its provisions, the jubilee still remains a powerful model in formulating Christian biblical ethics. Its primary assumptions and objectives can be distilled and used as a guide and critique for our own ethical agenda in the modern world.

Economically, the jubilee existed to protect a form of land tenure that was based on an equitable and widespread distribution of the land, and to prevent the accumulation of ownership in the hands of a wealthy few. This

echoes the creation principle that the whole earth is given by God to all humanity, who act as co-stewards of its resources. There is a parallel between the affirmation of Leviticus 25:23, in respect of Israel, that 'the land is mine', and the affirmation of Ps. 24, in respect of humanity as a whole, that 'the earth is the Lord's and everything in it, the world and all who live in it'. The moral principles of the jubilee are therefore universalizable on the basis of the moral consistency of God. What he required of Israel reflects what in principle he desires for humanity - namely broadly equitable distribution of the resources of the earth, especially land, and a curb on the tendency to accumulation with its inevitable oppression and alienation. The jubilee thus stands as a critique not only of massive private accumulation of land and related wealth, but also of large scale forms of collectivism or nationalization which destroy any meaningful sense of personal or family ownership.

Socially, the jubilee embodied a practical concern for the family unit. In Israel's case, this meant the extended family, the 'father's house', which was a sizeable group of related nuclear families descended in the male line from a living progenitor, including up to three or four generations. This was the smallest unit in Israel's kinship structure, and it was the focus of identity, status, responsibility and security for the individual Israelite. It was this that the jubilee aimed to protect and periodically to restore if necessary. Notably, it did so, not by merely 'moral' means - i.e. appealing for greater family cohesion or admonishing parents and children - but by legislating for specific structural mechanisms to regulate the economic effects of debt. Family morality was meaningless if families were being split up and dispossessed by economic forces that rendered them powerless (cf. Neh. 5:1-5). The jubilee aimed to restore social dignity and participation to families through maintaining or restoring their economic viability. The economic collapse of a family in one generation was not to condemn all future generations to the bondage of perpetual indebtedness. Such principles and objectives are certainly not irrelevant to welfare legislation or indeed any legislation with socio-economic implications.

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Theologically, the jubilee was based upon several central affirmations of Israel's faith, and the importance of these should not be overlooked when

assessing its relevance to Christian ethic and mission. Like the rest of the sabbatical provisions, the jubilee proclaimed the sovereignty of God over time and nature, and obedience to it would require submission to that sovereignty, hence the year is dubbed 'holy', 'a sabbath to Yahweh', to be observed out of the 'fear of Yahweh'. Furthermore, observing the fallow year dimension would also require faith in God's providence as the one who could command blessing in the natural order. Additional motivation for the law is provided by repeated appeals to the knowledge of God's historical act of redemption, the exodus and all it had meant for Israel. And to this historical dimension was added the cultic and 'present' experience of forgiveness in the fact that the jubilee was proclaimed on the Day of Atonement. To know yourself forgiven by God was to issue in practical remission of debts and bondages for fellow Israelites. And, as we have seen, the inbuilt future hope of the literal jubilee, blended with an eschatological hope of God's final restoration of humanity and nature to his original purpose. To apply the jubilee model, then, requires that people face the sovereignty of God, trust his providence, know his redemptive action, experience his atonement, practise his justice and hope in his promise. The wholeness of the model embraces the church's evangelistic mission, its personal and social ethics and its future hope.

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ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS ON JUBILEE AND ECONOMIC ETHICS

1. How radical actually was it? The land was returned to original owners, but was it an entirely free gift at that point? Mason suggests that, in the light of the redemption regulations, the original owner's family would be expected to pay whatever had been accumulated towards the repurchase price.
2. Jubilee as a long-term, systemic instrument of economic restoration and balance. Not just short term poverty relief. Not merely voluntary charity, but part of civil law and presumably supervised by the elders of the community. i.e. it was a measure of community intervention "market forces".
3. It embodies a major concern to prevent the dangers of concentration of productive property and resources.
 - Relevance? Critique of state ownership
 - Critique of massive privatization
 - Importance of monopolies and competition legislation
4. Also embodies a major concern for families: to assure them of a sound, privately owned productive base on which their autonomy and viability within the community could be founded.
 - Modern equivalents? Home ownership? (Griffiths)
 - Wider access to equity capital? (Griffiths)
 - Education? (Mason)
5. What was restored was a productive resource (land), that needed to be worked. Not just a hand-out, or instant wealth. Jubilee restored potential and resources, not a redistribution of wealth only. Called for responsible family initiative.
 - Relevance?
6. Emphasis is not merely on the relief of poverty which can keep the poor patronized and marginalized, but rather on the restoring of the poor to full participation in the community, i.e. to dignity and standing in society. "Strengthen the hand of the poor" is the characteristic phrase.
 - Relevance to social welfare schemes? Charity or justice?
7. The broader hermeneutical issue: How do we move from ancient agrarian economics to modern applications for which we can claim scriptural authority? In small steps or giant leaps?

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