

# JUBILEE IS TIMELY AND REAL

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For you shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing; and all the trees of the fields shall clap their hands. (Isa. 55:12 WEB)

As the Bible verse above indicates, Biblical Jubilee is a time of release from bondage and rejoicing over that deliverance. It is system-wide and even world-wide in its final fully developed and implemented appearance. It is as real as the sunrise and is needed now as never before. Yes, and even the trees will clap their hands in joy!

### Anthropologist

David Graeber's 2014 book entitled Debt: The First 5,000 Years, chronicles the institution of debt from its beginnings in tribal social indebtedness on through its long sordid development into a vehicle not only to bind peasants to landlords and kings, but also as an avenue of oppression eventually bringing entire nations into bondage as serfs, indentured servants, and wage slaves. All this because some forward-thinking power figures took it upon themselves to issue money, figure interest, and create a situation where more was owed than was borrowed, with debt repayment then made into a moral imperative and slavery as the only option for unpaid debt.

### In his last

chapter entitled "The Beginning of Something," Graeber comes to a remarkable conclusion: "In this book I have largely avoided making concrete proposals, but let me end with one. It seems to me that we are long overdue for some kind of Biblical-style Jubilee: one that would affect both international debt and consumer debt. It would be salutary not just because it would relieve so much genuine human suffering, but also because it would be our way of reminding ourselves that money is not ineffable, that paying one's debts is not the essence of morality, that all these things are human arrangements and that if democracy is to mean anything, it is the ability to all agree to arrange things in a different way (p. 390).

So the ravages of debt over humans, institutions, nations, and the entire earth does not "have to be," it just is because we cannot or will not institute new ways of accomplishing financial and societal goals. Jubilee is an old, but also new way since it was never fully implemented in ancient Israel because it wasn't in God's near future timetable. Jubilee is taught in the Pentateuch, or first five chapters of the Bible; argued for by the prophets, especially Isaiah, Amos, and Micah; taught and modeled by Christ; used in the first church of Acts; found in the teachings of the Apostles; and concluded in Revelation as Babylon (God's characterization of the world system of evil) is destroyed as God's earthly kingdom emerges.

If Jubilee is so prominent in Scripture, why is it so little-known among Christians? Part of the problem is that the main exposition of Jubilee (Lev. 25) is quite archaic in language and hence rather difficult to fully comprehend. It also is nestled in a mostly-rural, primitive society and so the applications don't fit modern times and situations. But if you look for basic socio-economic principles you'll likely get a new meaning for it.

The seven basic principles of Jubilee are (1) God mandates periodic recuperative rest for man, beast, and the land, (2) The earth belongs to God and cannot be permanently sold, (3) Periodic redistribution of wealth, (4) Protection for debtors, (5) No interest to Israelites, (6) No slavery or involuntary servitude among Israelites, (7) National rejoicing in thanks for deliverance of all kinds. These principles essentially form the building blocks of a socio-economic operating system for God's people and their nations. Thousands of lesser laws and judicial decisions would be needed to put Jubilee into operation, but they can be decided as needs arise, much as law does today to enable our basic economic and social principles.

The fullness and completion of Jubilee is not off somewhere in heaven, but is right here on earth. God will not "pass by us again," because things have gone too far. If you think these principles of justice would create too much chaos if implemented, please consider the current and near future costs of not using God's system. The present massive shaking of most human institutions will soon create a crisis in which we will have no choice but to do things God's way.