

# Kingdom Report

Week of 15 December 2018

## Part 3 Rebuilding Economic Waste Places: Retirement and the Jubilee Year

Jesus began His ministry by laying out His Kingdom agenda from Isaiah 61. Part of that agenda was good news to the poor...."*the acceptable year of the Lord.*" Neither the Church nor Israel has ever to my knowledge either preached or practiced the "*acceptable year of the Lord.*"...and therefore the poor remain poor.

There is one whole scripture in the gospels that I have never heard preached or practiced in all my many years of church attendance or biblical research. It is Luke 4: 19 which simply reads as follows:

Lu. 4:19 "*To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.*" That's it.

That one verse is the reason people are poor. That one verse is never preached as God's plan to end poverty....which is why this is good news (or gospel) to the poor but the people are still poor. The reason it is not preached is firstly because preachers don't understand it and secondly they think they have a better way to preach prosperity: Tithing, or "seed faith giving" or many other variants of instant miraculous wealth and ways of turning stones into bread.

So let me explain to you what "the acceptable year of the Lord" means, why it is the answer to poverty and how we can do it. Warning: It isn't easy, it will take time and it will take the whole church to join in to make it happen. Which is why Israel in all its history never tried it nor have the church either preached it or practiced it.

Here goes....

As you may have guessed from my title of the blog I am saying that the "acceptable year of the Lord" is what is commonly known as the Jubilee Year. Now let me clarify for you what the Jubilee is not. It is not what everyone who uses the term "Jubilee" means. Every time you have heard the word 'Jubilee' you have also heard "debt forgiveness" as in "we need a Jubilee debt forgiveness" or variants of that.

That is not what scripture says is a Jubilee year. Now granted if you were to forgive all the poor people their debts then that would certainly be good news to the poor. But they would still be poor.

The Bible does have a law for debt forgiveness. In Deuteronomy 15:1-2...  
***"At the end of every seven years you shall make a release. And this is the manner of the release; every creditor that lends unto his neighbor shall release it..."***  
Every seven years there is to be a debt forgiveness. And verse 15:4 says the reason..."***To the end that there be no poor among you for the Lord shall greatly bless you in the land which the Lord your God gives you for an inheritance to possess it.***"

Here the Lord gives the first step to prosperity...debt limitation! You are not to have an economic system in which debt is perpetual and compounded to bring people into perpetual bondage.

But this is not the Jubilee, the Jubilee is a 50 year event. Here is what scripture says of the Jubilee or 'the acceptable year of the Lord'....Leviticus 25:10....

***"You shall hallow the 50th year and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a Jubilee unto you and you shall return every man unto his possession and you shall return every man unto his family."***

What happened here was that there were to be a cycle of 7 X 7 years, or 49 years of work...and at the end of this work cycle there is to be a certain result in the 50th year...the Jubilee year...Liberty throughout the land. The fiftieth year was to start on the day of atonement with a loud trumpet blast (which was "the last trump" of the seven week of the feast of trumpets!)....verse 9

***"You shall cause the trumpet of the Jubilee to sound on the 10th day of the month in the day of Atonement (Yom Kippor) shall ye make the trumpet to sound..."***

Now let me point out the purpose or the expected result that the Lord is laying before Israel and the Church with the idea of the 50th year Jubilee.

Note above in Deuteronomy 15:4 that the end result of what the Lord wants is that there be no poor in the land...so He says I am going to give you the land that I am sending you to for an inheritance....but....and here is the big BUT....you must "possess the land". That is even though it is your inheritance, you are not going to get it handed over to you....you must possess it because there are squatters sitting on your land inheritance.

Then 50 years later when the Jubilee trumpet sounds the great rejoicing says "every man return to your possession". Meaning in the intervening time the people have moved from "promised land" to "possessed land".

Now I am going to give you an example by what the Lord means as the difference between an inhabitant of the land as opposed to a "possessor" of the land. And believe me it is the difference between being poor and being prosperous.

Here is an interesting report from "The Daily Reckoning" that I picked up on the internet about the retirement crisis in America and can I say, this crisis is a world wide crisis. What makes the report from America so compelling is that this surely is the exceptional land that millions of migrants want to invade for a better life...yet how good is the life in America after a lifetime of work?

Quote....

*"Once again we bear grim news....millions of Americans may have to delay retirement for years - if not permanently....80% of American workers have under one year's salary salted away for retirement. This we learn from a recent report issuing from the National Institute of Retirement Security. We are further informed that over 100 million working age Americans own no retirement accounts whatsoever....Meantime*

*77% of Americans fall woefully behind even the most conservative targets for their age....The facts are clear, the typical working American has zero, zilch, nothing saved for retirement. The American dream of a modest retirement after a lifetime of work is now a middle-class nightmare."*

And I can repeat that report not only for South Africans but for all countries around the world. We are heading into a demographic crisis of an aging "baby boomer" generation retiring on nothing and a shrinking tax base of too few young workers able to not only pay for the retirement of the older generation but to keep government tax revenues coming and also pay for the mountain of unpayable debt the previous generation left them.

In short we are facing an economic waste land ahead that is going to require the Church of Jesus Christ to start preaching the real Jubilee for the coming world poverty crisis.

What does this mean practically?

It does not take an economic genius to very quickly see that the reason we are facing a middle-class retirement nightmare is that for the most people of the world, after a lifetime of work they reach old age with no productive assets to support them with income when they are no longer able to work.

And that is what the Bible says about what "the land" meant to the people of Israel. In those days owning property in the form of land was to own a productive asset. 90% of wealth creation in those days was food and clothing and housing production...that was the economy. And the resources for food, clothing and housing came from the land. To own land meant owning productive assets. Which is why in various scriptures we have the vision that God gave to Israelites that each will sit under his own fig tree and under his own vine. Those were productive assets that took years to cultivate and invest in to get a return on investment.

Today there are many different classes of productive assets. And God's plan for all His people that each church that exists in each nation of the earth needs to have a plan of action whereby its people become prosperous through the acquisition of productive assets. Each nation of the world has different assets. But the Lord wants us to "possess the land" that we are sent into.

This is no get rich quick scheme. The Bible gives us a 49 year work cycle to accomplish a Jubilee year. It goes like this...

In the old testament we have the work, saving and investment cycle that leads to prosperity and freedom. It goes like this....

6 years you are to work but in the 7th year you are to let the land rest in order for it to be productive again. Which is why you work 6 days and rest the 7th. But what does that mean for us. I am not a farmer. I don't know how to make a farm more productive. But let me give you what I believe is the biblical principle. For an Israelite farmer who knew nothing about fertilizer the idea was make the 7th year an

investment into productivity increase. If you do this, the next 6 years will give you a greater output than just never investing in the land.

Here is my biblical advice to you. You are the most productive asset you possess. Invest in your productivity. That means increase your ability to produce more value from your work time. That means throughout your work life, take time for more education and more skills development.

If you follow the biblical cycle of work and rest, and rest here meaning time spent in increasing your skills...you will spend 42 years on work and 7 years on education. And not all at once by the way. You will also follow the Biblical prescription of debt limitation which means lower your consumption to what you can afford and accumulate investment assets throughout your life.

The result? You will retire in comfort and as the Bible's plan is for you and your family "A righteous person leaves an inheritance to his children's children". Meaning you leave an asset base for your children and grandchildren for them to build families and increase family assets. Blessings upon blessings generation for generations.

But the Jubilee plan is not just for individuals as a plan for prosperity. It is also a plan for the Church to "redeem the poor".

If you have been in church for any number of years you have heard a sermon on "the kinsman redeemer" story of Boaz and Ruth, how Boaz redeemed Ruth and Naomi out of debt because he was their nearest kinsman and the application how Christ is our "kinsman redeemer" buying us out of debt to sin.

But this is not just a nice preaching story. This is also God's plan for His Church. Using the Jubilee program to "redeem" the poor of the land, setting the captives free. That is the challenge that Jesus gave us. And it is time to be practical. Let me give you the definitional difference between a slave, a peasant and a freeman from ancient times....

A slave: The slave was the property of the master. The productivity of slave was as follows: 50% of what a slave could produce out of human labour went to his master, the other 50% of his labour was needed for the upkeep of the slave to keep him alive.

A peasant: Or a serf. This was a worker on a lord's estate with the following injunction: The peasant can work the lord's assets such as his land but one third of his production went to the lord but two-thirds he could keep himself.

A freeman: This was a new development in feudal times as a result of the rise of cities. A city was chartered by the king as a place where free men could own assets like houses and practice a trade in guild like tannery, or blacksmith or baker. They get to keep all their income as long as they paid a tax to the king (and not to a local lord).

Most people today are wage slaves. That means that most of their productive work output goes as profits to the company or tax to the government. What remains for themselves is just enough to keep alive but too little to save and accumulate assets.

The benefit of being a slave in ancient times is that at least in old age when the slave could no longer work the master took care of them. Today you get fired in old age and you must find a way to survive. Even today the wage peasants and slaves find that as old age approaches, they have nothing from a lifetime of work.

The church faces a huge challenge in the years ahead. We face the challenge on "how do we redeem the poor?" Meaning how do we bring the wage slaves out of poverty and give them the hope of "the acceptable year of the Lord?"

These are people who have no hope of starting their own Jubilee work cycle of life. It is too late. And here I include the challenge of the poor in our churches who have been obedient about tithing and giving but face an old age of poverty.

The only thing I know of is the Church in cities across the land starting to work together with a vision....lets possess the land! What do I mean?

I mean....

- Start a Jubilee cycle...set a vision ahead that all of us working together commit ourselves to a 49 year Jubilee work and investment cycle whereby we set a goal to buy up the productive assets of the land and thereby redeem the poor by giving them a stake and shareholding in productive national assets such as factories, retail, farming, and all other asset classes.

- Don't tell me it cannot be done! Have you seen what Warren Buffet has done in 50 years to accumulate assets for Berkshire Hathaway. Or here in South Africa study what someone like Brian Joffe did since 1988 to build up Bidcor to a corporate empire starting with a R20 million loan from Investec, or what Janie Mouton did with PSG after listing in 1995. I am not talking 50 years here.

- What do you think the Church of Jesus Christ can do here in South Africa if we can control just the savings of God's people and direct it into mutually owned enterprises in banking, insurance, food processing, manufacturing etc.

- Who do you think are the top skilled people in this nation that have the skills, pay the taxes, obey the laws, produce the innovations, start the businesses...most of them are evangelical Christians from all our churches.

Our problem is that our assets of people, finances and skills which sit unused in our church pews on a Sunday morning are used by the world's agenda on Monday morning....because there is no vision for the Kingdom of God in the church. We love to preach the first verse of Isaiah 61 that Jesus quoted...."The Spirit of the Lord is upon me to...."

But we never get to Luke 4:19.."to preach and plan and enact the acceptable year of the Lord. To declare a Jubilee vision....to win the assets of our nation within 49 year for the use of God's kingdom.

And yet sitting there in our pews are people whom the Lord wants to say ***'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me to declare and enact a Jubilee plan for South Africa to set the debt captives free and give hope and prosperity to the poor.'***