

Pro 22:7 *The rich ruleth, mawshal-has rule), or power, over the poor, and the borrower is servant (ebed in bondage) to the lender.* Borrower is servant –ebed in bondage, to the lender. There is in human nature a natural divide between the rich and poor in that the rich are placed on a pedestal so that they look down upon the poor and the poor look up to the rich and thus that there is as an unwritten contract/agreement between them. And this is even more so where borrowing takes place.

The borrower becomes obligated to the lender and this is particularly so with written contracts of lending, where a time factor is involved; it is worse where interest is involved. There is more in The Proverbs concerning this

Pro 18:23 *The poor useth intreaties; but the rich answereth roughly.* But there is deep significance in this for the children of God and more proverbs of relevance to note which makes this study so important and draws us to be mindful of the ever watching eyes of The Lord.

Pro 14:31 *He that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his Maker: but he that honoureth him hath mercy on the poor.*

Pro 22:16 *He that oppresseth the poor to increase his riches, and he that giveth to the rich, shall surely come to want.*

Pro 18:23 *The poor useth intreaties; but the rich answereth roughly,* thus showing that riches warp the blind the mind from seeing a man for what he truly is-dust and ashes, and all both rich and poor have the same fate.

James warned of this

Jas 2:1-5 *My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons. For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool: Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts? 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 love him?*

And James' words are invaluable to us as he continues in the rest of that chapter and in chapter 5 warning those who seek to be rich in this world's goods.

And Jesus Mat 5:3 *Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.* The poor in spirit are those waiting upon God, praying always and getting no satisfaction from the material things of this life but having their minds set upon the Kingdom of God.

These words in Proverbs are ascribed to Solomon or perhaps another of that time about 1000 years before Christ and under inspiration; also significantly at the time when Israel, the people of God, were under the Law of Moses. Also Jesus in answering a lawyer about which is the great commandment:

Mat 22:37-40 *Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.*

Thus we must bear this in mind when considering matters of the Law of Moses and this is seen in the following words relevant to our study:

Ex 22:25-27 If thou lend money to *any of* my people *that is* poor by thee, thou shalt not be to him as **an usurer**, neither shalt thou lay upon him usury. If thou at all take thy neighbour's raiment to pledge, thou shalt deliver it unto him by that the sun goeth down: For that *is* his covering only, it *is* his raiment for his skin: wherein shall he sleep? and it shall come to pass, **when he crieth unto me, that I will hear**; for I *am* gracious. We see that the spirit of Christ was in the Law in this matter

This situation was declared to be so in Israel also and it was to be a test of their beliefs and their love for God. But if they were obedient when they came into the land everyone would prosper.

Deu 15:1-6 *At the end of every seven years thou shalt make a release. 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 called the LORD'S release. Of a foreigner thou mayest exact it again: but that which is thine with thy brother thine hand shall release; Save when there shall be no poor among you; for the LORD shall greatly bless thee in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance to possess it: Only if thou carefully hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all these commandments which I command thee this day. For the LORD thy God*

blesseth thee, as he promised thee: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, but thou shalt not borrow; and thou shalt reign over many nations, but they shall not reign over thee.

Deu 15:11 ***For the poor shall never cease out of the land:** therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land.*

Yet if they were perfect before God when they came into the land then there would be no poor

Deu 15:4 *Save when there shall be no poor among you; for the LORD shall greatly bless thee in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance to possess it:*

A perpetual law was made that if lending other than to a non Israeli they must not make a profit, apply interest or usury

Deu 23:20 *Unto a stranger thou mayest lend upon usury; but unto thy brother thou shalt not lend upon usury: that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all that thou settest thine hand to in the land whither thou goest to possess it.*

But even this was superseded by the Law of Christ

Mat 5:43-48 *Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.*

But going back-

In the days of Amos about 760 BC the prophet is shown the punishments to come upon Israel because of their lack of love for their fellow brethren-

Jesus has shown us that we must go much further than this as we have seen:

Amo 2:6-8 *Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Israel, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they sold the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of shoes; That pant after the dust of the earth on the head of the poor, and turn aside the way of the meek: and a man and his father will go in unto the same maid, to profane my holy name: And they lay themselves down upon clothes laid to pledge by every altar, and they drink the*

wine of the condemned in the house of their god.

Also Amos 4vs1-5; 5 v11&12 and 8 vs 4-6

Then about three hundred years later:

But even in this they failed as Nehemiah found to his disgust. That was about 440bc

Neh 5:7-10 Then I consulted with myself, and I rebuked the nobles, and the rulers, and said unto them, Ye exact usury, every one of his brother. And I set a great assembly against them. And I said unto them, We after our ability have redeemed our brethren the Jews, which were sold unto the heathen; and will ye even sell your brethren? or shall they be sold unto us? Then held they their peace, and found nothing *to answer*. Also I said, It *is* not good that ye do: ought ye not to walk in the fear of our God because of the reproach of the heathen our enemies? I likewise, *and* my brethren, and my servants, might exact of them money and corn: I pray you, let us leave off this usury.

But the Law was clear

Deu 15:2-11 *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 called the LORD'S release. Of a foreigner thou mayest exact it again: but that which is thine with thy brother thine hand shall release; Save when there shall be no poor among you; for the LORD shall greatly bless thee in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance to possess it: Only if thou carefully hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all these commandments which I command thee this day. For the LORD thy God blesseth thee, as he promised thee: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, but thou shalt not borrow; and thou shalt reign over many nations, but they shall not reign over thee. If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren within any of thy gates in thy land which the LORD 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. Beware that there be not a thought in thy wicked heart, saying, The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand; and thine eye be evil against thy poor brother, and thou givest him nought; and he cry unto the LORD against thee, and it be sin unto thee. Thou shalt surely give him, and thine heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him: because that for this thing the LORD thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hand unto. For the poor shall never cease out of the*

land: therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land.

That God is concerned for the poor of His Flock is shown in His sending Elisha to the widow woman in 2 Kings 4 and this is confirmed to us in Heb 13:5 *Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*

We see then that our studies of the Word are not merely academic no matter which part of the scripture they come from

2Ti 3:16-17 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.

And there are warnings to those who would be rich even by the Lord Jesus Himself in Luke 16vs19-31 which was primarily to the Jewish leaders of His time but it is also for us to have a correct perspective on money matters James 5 vs1-7.

We have the indisputable evidence of the Hand of God working with Israel through the prophet

Isaiah24v1 on Behold, the LORD maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof.

Isa 24:2 And it shall be, as with the people, so with the priest; as with the servant, so with his master; as with the maid, so with her mistress; as with the buyer, so with the seller; as with the lender, so with the borrower; as with the taker of usury, so with the giver of usury to him. which time we look up and lift up our heads Isa 24:23 Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the LORD of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously and none of the cares of this life will matter ever again to those counted worthy.

Psa 15:5 He that putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent. He that doeth these things shall never be moved.

And as Jesus said Mat 5vs 43-48 we are to love our enemies and do good to all.

Our concern is the situation within the Truth, believers. Outside of the truth people who have a weakness for gambling get on the losing side and what has been honestly earned can be lost. Then the loser gambles with borrowed money and makes his debt greater. But even more we see in the news the rich falling out with those who once they loved and keeping the lawyers in business.

But there are situations where honest people find themselves in debt because they have fallen on hard times. Indeed God declares that among the people of God as Jesus said when He was anointed with costly ointment Mat 26:11 *For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always.*

It is for us then to rightly divide the word of truth and act accordingly.

Love to all in Christ Brother Ken