

Slavery and the Sh'mita

In Deuteronomy 15

ANE Concept Block

What exactly is a “slave”

- Let's not impose our modern culture on ancient cultural understanding
- *Slaves and Households in the Near East* by Laura Culbertson pg 9-11
- *Slavery in the ANE* by Isaac Mendenhall pg 14-18
- **Slave** = entered into a work agreement due to a debt. They became part of the family thus change their identity (Exod 12:43-45) (Lev 25:39-41)
- **Hired labor** = no debt, worked for day's wages, not part of the family

Redemption

- *Property and Family in Biblical Law* by Raymond Westbrook
 - pg 60 (indented block)
 - Pg 61 speaking of change of masters
- The purpose of kinsman redemption was to restore the soul back to the family unit, thus maintaining homeostasis. The indebted slave would then serve out his term as a slave of his kinsman redeemer (who would probably be a better master anyways)

The King's Justice

- *Everyday Law in Biblical Israel* by Raymond Westbrook and Bruce Wells
 - pg 120 social equilibrium was important to kings.
 - Pg 121 it was common for a limit to be set on term of service for a debt slave.
 - Pg 121 (#3) periodic cancellation of all debts and restoration of property to families.