









































































































































































































































































































































































































ordered their society. For instance, the Jubilee legislation can help us think about what it means to be a community that helps its neighbor rather than thinking of a neighbor as an object to be exploited. In a similar fashion Ed. A-s can help us ask the question of the appropriate use of political power: is it there to be used by those to maintain or gain a coveted position of power?

With regards to debt, the ancient Near Eastern tradition of debt-forgiveness should make us consider the role of debt in modern societies. First, the distinction between investment debt and consumption debt focuses on necessity. Consumption debt in the ancient Near East dealt with the basic necessities of life, which does not typically apply to modern consumption debt (credit cards, home equity loans, car loans, mortgage loans, etc.).<sup>70</sup> But what types of debts should be forgivable and how easily should they? Should debt-forgiveness apply to nations as well as persons? Is it just for wealthy nations to continue to force poor nations to pay their debts when they cannot afford to pay for basic needs of their own people? On the other hand, is it just for poorer nations to borrow from wealthy nations in order to pay for benefits for their people that they cannot afford and cannot repay?

In short, the ancient Near Eastern tradition of debt-relief does pose a number of insightful questions with regards to modern problems with debt. More research needs to be done on the questions above but they do pose two direct challenges to our modern culture. First, what does it mean to be a community and how should we interact? Second, if a debtor continually curses the creditor, as the slave contends in the Dialogue of

---

<sup>70</sup> Although all of these forms of debt can be used to finance the basic necessities under times of economic hardship. However, the normal use of these debt-instruments is to fund discretionary consumables, which can become burden-some if not used wisely.





















