



BONDSERVANT

Slave to God

EXODUS 21

Slavery in the Bible



- ▶ Before we figure out how slavery in Bible times still relates to us today, we need to first understand both the **historical** and **spiritual** significance of slavery in Moses' time
- ▶ There were huge numbers of slaves in the Egyptian society (i.e. Exodus). Nevertheless it was not unique to Egypt. All the **nations** throughout the Biblical era (OT & NT) had vast numbers of slaves. **One third** of the Roman population were slaves at one point.

The Culture of Slavery



- ▶ During Moses' time and all the way to Paul's days, slavery was a "**normal**" thing like death and taxes. No one questioned it, unlike today.
- ▶ Sadly, a slave was a **commodity** and the **property** of the owner, treated like our appliances today. There were little to no rights for them.
- ▶ The number of slaves is a symbol of wealth and status in the antiquity (i.e. walked with the litter)

Slaves in the Bible

- ▶ First, the **temporary** state (6 years) as a slave was meant as a form of **redemption** rather than exploitation (i.e. debt and land) unlike all surrounding nations
- ▶ Second, “soul selling” was a **capital crime** in the OT (Exo. 21:16; Deut. 24:7; 1 Tim. 1:10)
- ▶ Third, the law has clear teaching on how slaves should be **treated** and protected.



God's Response to Slavery



- ▶ Although God hates slavery (1 Tim. 1:10, Rev. 18:13) yet he **restricted** and regulated it. There are several such things in the Bible, such as divorce, which He hates but did not ban it.
- ▶ Note: The law of Moses is not only a spiritual reflection of God's character and instruction on our approach to God, it is also a **civil legislation** for a nation of fallen people.

Slaves and Bondservants



- ▶ Why would someone choose to be a slave after 6 years? Because of **love** (v.5)
- ▶ He was **free** to go yet he **chose** to stay
- ▶ Note: “bore his ear” was a sign of **hearing** the master and being ready at the door always.
- ▶ The term “bondservant” in NT is referring to this
- ▶ A **bondservant** is willing to set aside all rights of his own and to serve His master—out of love

The Spiritual Significance

- ▶ Paul called himself a “bondservant” of Christ (Rom. 1:1; Titus 1:1) and Peter too (2 Peter 1:1)
- ▶ We are also **bought** with a great price (1 Cor. 6:20)
- ▶ What does it mean to be Christ’s bondservant?
- ▶ It must be a **choice**—“do you love Me more than these” (John 21:15)
- ▶ We are to **seek** God’s will in all things—are we willing to surrender our will & desire? (Rom. 12:1-2)



Conclusion

- ▶ Slavery in Exo. 21 is very **different** than the norm
- ▶ God **hates** slavery and restricted it with mercy
- ▶ Please take a moment to think on Christ and His **love** for you—how are you going to **respond** to His love? Are you **willing** to be His bondservant?
- ▶ Are you willing to **choose** Christ and to serve Him?
- ▶ Are you willing to **surrender** your will to God?

