

# There is Safety in Slavery

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The early New Testament church, in many ways, was a mine field of trouble when you think about it. When you think about the fact that the Father was calling individuals who were steeped in Judaism to a completely new way. So that was problematic in itself, in the sense of changes that had to be made. Then eight years after the beginning of the New Testament church, the unthinkable happened to those Jews. Gentiles were being called into Jewish congregations; about 38 A.D. Here these Jews who had distanced themselves from the Gentiles who were now streaming into the congregations. Acts 11 tells us that many, many Gentiles were coming into the church.

There was also another enormous, big source of potential conflict at that time. It's an area that we probably haven't—I know I haven't—appreciated before, to the degree that we should. Masters of slaves were being called into the church. Just stop and think about when you were first called. You tried to convert everybody in sight—talk to everybody. If you were a slave master and had slaves, guess what you would do—preach the gospel to your slaves. Without a doubt that would happen. Then the masters would require their Gentile slaves to start keeping the Sabbath. Then slaves would talk to other slaves as they interacted back and forth. As a result, God called many slaves into the church. So now we have a situation where masters and slaves are coming together in the church on the Sabbath day.

In the modern world and certainly in the greater churches of God, we don't appreciate, we don't understand, the role that slavery played in the early New Testament church. There are two understandable reasons. One, slavery is not something we deal with on a day to day basis. We just don't think about it. It's not common to our experience. The second reason we in God's church don't appreciate it is that some Bible translations actually obscure the meaning of a single word. That word was translated as *servant* in the King James. We read right over it; we don't think about it. It says servant and we go on and think maybe it's a household servant or something like that. The New King James comes a little closer and translates it as bond servant. The New International gets it right and translates it as slave.

The Greek word translated *servant* in the King James and *slave* in the New International is Strong's #1401; just remember the number. It's the Greek word is *doulos* and its definition is "a slave, voluntary or involuntary". Remember that, it can be voluntary or involuntary. Zodiates in his Complete Word Study Dictionary of the New Testament says this about *doulos*:

*A slave; one who is in a permanent relation of servitude to another. His wellbeing altogether consumed in the will of the other.*

You don't exercise your own will; you do the will of your master.

*A slave as opposed to a free man.*

So, in the King James or the New King James, *servant* or *bond servant*, clouds or hides the true meaning of this word. Because of this choice that was made back in 1611 with the King James and because of our personal unfamiliarity with slavery, we don't fully comprehend the meaning in many of the New Testament scriptures in this regard.

This leads to what is an increasingly important subject for us today, given the dangerous conditions that we find ourselves in at this moment. It leads to today's title and it's also the conclusion—I'm going to state the conclusion in advance.

### There is Safety in Slavery

We're going to cover five points today. The first thing we want to do is:

#### **1. Set the background and examine slavery in the Roman Empire at the time of Christ and the Apostles.**

The Roman Empire reached its peak in 117 A.D. At that time, it stretched from what is Britain today, all the way to the Persian Gulf and totally surrounded the entire Mediterranean. At the time of Christ, it is estimated that there were about 54 million people in the Roman Empire. With the growth of the Empire, as rapidly as it was expanding, the number of slaves, of necessity, grew rapidly as well. Estimates run as high as 1/3 of the population around the Mediterranean being slaves. In Italy it was much higher. Some historians say the population of Rome itself was 75% slaves. This is incomprehensible to us today. We don't think about it when we read the New Testament scriptures.

There are several ways you could become a slave in the Roman Empire. The first one was that if you failed to repay a loan from an institution or individual then you became a slave of the one who you owed money to. A second way was failure to pay taxes. If the government found out you weren't paying taxes, then you became a slave to that government. You spent the rest of your days in slavery.

Poor people would often sell their children as slaves to wealthy families to give their children a better life or to put bread on their own table. That was just a fact, as abhorrent as that seems to us today.

By far the most numerous sources of slaves came from those who were defeated in battle. Victorious Roman generals would send back hundreds of thousands of captured soldiers as the Empire expand and they won battle after battle. They would send them back to be sold as slaves. For example, Julius Caesar's campaign in Gall—modern day France—from 59 to 51 B.C., during that eight-year period of time, captured over 1 million people who later became slaves after the battles. Slave traders would follow the Roman army on campaigns and they would buy defeated soldiers and the families of

defeated soldiers and would arrange for them to be sent back to Rome or other major cities in the Empire to be sold.

Prisoners were commonly taken to a slave market and the common practice was that they would be auctioned off before an audience. They were paraded naked, they had placards around their neck describing their best and worst qualities. In fact, if the information on the placard was incorrect or later found not to be true, the buyer could take the seller to court. It was a capital market, so the slave market depended on how many slaves were available at any moment in time. After a successful military campaign slaves would flood the market and slave prices were driven down. In a time of relative peace, without war, then the slave market began to dry up and prices increased.

To extend and maintain the Roman Empire, more and more Roman citizens were needed to administer and deal with the outlying lands—both administration and the military—and that left far fewer men available for manual labor such as mining, farming, road building, etc. So, it was a common practice in those days to have work teams of ten slaves. They were branded on the forehead and chained together and guarded by a foreman carrying a whip and had little chance of escape. They worked and worked and worked. The Roman government owned many, many slaves and they were used to provide public services. To build the famous Roman roads, the aqueducts and the bridges and the bath houses. They logged forests, quarried mines of iron, copper, silver and gold. All this labor was done by slave labor. The Roman Emperor himself routinely had over 20,000 slaves at his disposal to send wherever he wanted, to do whatever he wanted done.

Rich families in those times could afford slaves. For example, a wealthy land owner who had large tracks of land could own as many as 500 slaves; there are records of that. They were used as body guards, cooks, waiters, doormen, cleaners, gardeners, hair dressers, dress makers, maids and workers on the farm or in the vineyards—whatever it might be. In those days, Greek slaves were highly regarded because they were often very well educated. They were used by the rich as teachers, personal doctors, librarians, artists and musicians, but they were still slaves. Sadly, many young women who were slaves became concubines to their masters or to their master's sons; sad as that is.

Once bought, a slave was a slave for life. That was just a fact. The Greek philosopher, Aristotle, defines a slave as:

*One who does not belong to himself but to someone else.*

Think about that—belonging to someone else. Seneca, who was a Roman statesman, author and philosopher said:

*A slave was one who “does not have the power to refuse”.*

How would you like to live your life not having the power to say “No” to your master? There are only two ways slaves could get their freedom. One, if it was given by the owner. It was relatively common—certainly not by the majority—but occasionally it would happen that in the master’s will, after his death, he would will that his slave or certain slaves be freed. They would be granted freedom upon his death. The second way was if a slave bought his freedom. The rule of thumb back then was, if you wanted to buy your freedom you had to pay your master the amount of money that he had paid for you in the beginning. That was virtually impossible unless somehow you received outside help.

If a slave married and had children under a master, then those children automatically became slaves. Young children were sometimes killed by their parents so that they would not become slaves—if you can imagine that. The parents deemed that their lives were so bad that they would not want any children to suffer the way they were suffering.

Runaway slaves were punished incredibly harshly. If caught, the slave was legally guilty of theft, because by running away, the slave had basically stolen his master’s property, as the slave himself was the property of the master. If caught, they were brutally tortured to frighten other slaves and prevent them from running away.

Not all slaves were treated badly. A good master would take care of a good slave. In part just out of his own self-interest, because to replace a good slave might be hard to do or might be even more expensive. So, in the master’s best interest and because some masters were ethical and moral, they would treat their slaves well. For example, a master of an African slave named Terrence, was so impressed with his slave’s intelligence that he educated him and then set him free. Later Terrence became one of Rome’s most important writers. But he started off life as an African slave.

Some Romans believed that you would get more work out of your slaves if you treated them well; what a concept. What they would do is pay a small allowance into a fund so that when there was enough money in that fund, then the slave could buy his own freedom. So, the owner in that way was enticing the slave to do well. The owner could stop paying into the fund if that slave misbehaved or disappointed him. So that system was a good way of achieving complete obedience from your slaves.

As we wind up this first point, the bottom line about slavery in the Roman Empire was that the slave was the property of the owner. Just like a book, a piece of furniture or the house—the property of the owner. The economy of the Roman Empire would have completely fallen apart without slaves. But most importantly, Christians had slaves. Both masters and slaves were coming into the church. That was the reality when Christ walked the earth and when the New Testament church was formed and the apostles began to preach and people began to be called into the church.

That leads to the second point.

## **2. Yehovah addressed the conduct of slaves and masters in the New Testament.**

It was unavoidable. The Father inspired the New Testament writers to address both slaves and masters because he was calling both into the church, just as he did with the Jews and Gentiles. We understand the Jew and Gentile part; we don't think often about the slavery part.

Think about a master and imagine, one slave or two slaves, walk into church. The master is well dressed and the slave is trailing behind not nearly so well dressed. The wealthy master is given the best seat in the house and the slave is sitting on the floor, at somebody's feet. This fact had great potential for division in the churches of God. Because of this, slavery was addressed in letters to the churches of Corinth, Galatia, Colosse and Ephesus and it was addressed to the ministry. Slavery was addressed by Paul, Peter and James. So, this wasn't a small issue. When we read it in the King James and the New King James and just blow by servant or *bond servant*, it doesn't focus our minds to the reality of those days.

The New Testament authors addressed slavery—I read all the scriptures and there were four areas that they addressed. We will label those A, B, C, and D under this point.

## **2A. The Father told slaves to be obedient to their masters with a pure heart.**

Think about that—He didn't tell them to revolt or resist. He said to be obedient to your masters with a pure heart. Let's go to Colossians 3:22. I'm generally reading out of the King James so when we come to the word *doulos* or *servant*, I'm going to use the word *slave* and let you know that it is that word.

**Colossians 3:22** *Servants [doulos, King James translates as servants but it means slaves], obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as men pleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: (KJV)*

Think about that; you're a slave and that is the command from Paul to the church in Colosse and these letters were widely distributed. That was a command to a slave. Now let's go to Titus 2:9. It's hiding there in the New Testament—Titus is a small book. I'm going to read this out of the NIV.

**Titus 2:9** *Teach slaves [that's doulos, #1401] to be subject to their masters in everything, to try to please them, not to talk back to them ... (NIV)*

Remember this “try to please” them command, because that's going to come up later. So, slaves were not only told to do the minimum but they were told to “try and please” their masters. Be subject to them in everything. Now let's go to 1 Timothy 6—Paul had written a letter to Titus, now let's see what he said in the letter to Timothy. Again, talking about slaves and giving instruction to them.

**1 Timothy 6:1** *Let as many servants [doulos] as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed.*

*Set a good example for your master because they know you are a Christian and we dare not set a bad example.*

*2) And they that have believing masters [these slaves who have masters who are Christians, who believe], let them not despise them ... (KJV)*

The Greek word for *despise* means “disesteem, to look down on them in some way”.

*2 continued) ... because they are brethren; (KJV)*

Here’s a warning. Just because your master and you go to church every Sabbath and share the same beliefs, don’t become lax in your duties toward your master and become casual with your master because you share this common belief.

*2 continued) ... but rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit. These things teach and exhort. (KJV)*

Be thankful your master is a Christian. Don’t disesteem your master. Now let’s see what Peter has to say in 1 Peter 2:18. This point A of instruction to slaves about how they should behave in their new lives out of the New King James.

**1 Peter 2:18** *Servants [slaves], be submissive to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh. (NKJV)*

Think about that. That would take great character; that would take using the Holy Spirit to the utmost. If a master beats you and treats you harshly, you are still to be submissive to him. Now let’s go to Ephesians 6:5. Paul is writing instruction to the church at Ephesus, again out of the King James.

**Ephesians 6:5** *Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ;*

*6) Not with eyeservice, as men pleasers; but as the servants of Christ [slaves of Christ], doing the will of God from the heart;*

*7) With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: (KJV)*

You behave as though that master was Jesus Christ and you are working for Him.

*8) Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free. (KJV)*

Putting all these scriptures together—and there are obviously others—it’s very clear that a slave should be obedient, should be conscientious, should honor their master in the same way that he or she would honor Christ. This is understandably hard because slaves did have harsh, cruel masters. It took the Holy Spirit to obey with a pure heart.

As an aside, if that was the Father's instructions to slaves, you think maybe we ought to do that for whoever we work for—a boss, a supervisor—maybe we should do the same thing? It takes the Holy Spirit to do that.

The second instruction, point B.

## **2B. The Father told masters to treat their slaves fairly.**

We were in Ephesians 6 and we ended in verse 8, look at verse 9.

**Ephesians 6:9** *And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: [don't threaten them and be harsh and cruel] knowing that your Master [Jesus Christ of course] also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him. (KJV)*

As we will see, they should esteem their slaves as much as they esteem themselves. In Colossians 4:1 there is another instruction to masters.

**Colossians 4:1** *Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven. (KJV)*

You better be fair with them; you better not abuse them or be harsh with them. Converted masters were to treat their slaves as they wanted Christ to treat them. There was a burden on the master. If you want Christ to forgive you, if you want Christ to be gentle with you, if you want Christ to be understanding with you, then you better do the same with your slaves. It took the Holy Spirit for the masters to fulfill those commandments.

Now let's look at the third instruction, point C.

## **2C. The Father had to educate the church that slaves and masters were equal in His eyes.**

What a huge paradigm shift in the mind of the brethren of the church of those days to treat slaves and masters on an equal footing. That just didn't happen in that culture. Let's go to 1 Corinthians 11 because this became a problem at Passover. Begin in verse 18—we have covered 1 Corinthians 11 quite a bit over the last couple of years in studying the Holy Days. Read 1 Corinthians 11 from the standpoint of slaves and masters keeping the Passover in the same room. Paul is addressing a problem in the Corinthian church about Passover.

**1 Corinthians 11:18** *For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; (KJV)*

The Greek word for *division* is *schisma* and it means “tearing apart”. We get our English word schism from that.

*18 continued) ... and I partly believe it.*

*19) For there must be also heresies ... (KJV)*

The Greek word for *heresy* is *haireisis* and it means “a divergent opinion”.

*19 continued) ... among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you. (KJV)*

We have talked about it before, the Greek word for *approves* is *dokimos* and it was applied in those days to a coin. If the coin had the right material—copper, gold, whatever it was—in the right quantity and the weight was proper then that was a *dokimos* coin—a *legitimate* coin that could be used for trade. So, he is saying that those who are *legitimate*. Divisions occur so you can see those who are legitimate or approved Christians, may be made clear among you.

*20) When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper. (KJV)*

It's talking about Passover—it's very clear.

*21) For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: (KJV)*

Could that be a rich master before Passover having his normal, luxurious meal before coming to the Passover service?

*21 continued) ... and one is hungry ... (KJV)*

That would probably be a slave—maybe a slave that works in the mines and he came to Passover service dirty and not in any kind of finery. He's hungry and wasn't well fed—probably a slave.

*21 continued) ... and another is drunken. (KJV)*

Could that be a rich master—wouldn't be a slave—who had too much to drink with a nice meal before Passover?

*22) What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? (KJV)*

Who was most likely to have not? A slave.

*22 continued) ... What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I praise you not. (KJV)*



The better we understand slavery and the role of slavery in those times, the better we understand these verses. 1 Corinthians 12:13 now. Christ is trying to educate the church that slaves and masters were equal in His eyes.

**1 Corinthians 12:13** *For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. (KJV)*

It's very clear, masters and slaves were equal in our Father's eyes, just like Jews and Gentiles, just like men and women. Galatians 3:28 is a very familiar scripture. When we understand the role that slavery played in those days, it takes on new meaning.

**Galatians 3:28** *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. (KJV)*

There was to be no class system in God's church. Sadly, in the days of Worldwide we got completely away from that. There was a ministerial class and then there was everybody else. We got away from that. There is no class system—we are all one in Jesus. Let's go to the next letter, Ephesians 6:8. Here is a truism if there ever was one.

**Ephesians 6:8** *Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, [if we do good, we are blessed, if we do evil, we are cursed] whether he be bond or free. (KJV)*

It doesn't make any difference we are rewarded according to our works. Now let's go two books down, Colossians 3:11. The same message, over and over, from the apostles to the churches.

**Colossians 3:11** *Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all. (KJV)*

We see in this point C that Paul is instructing the four churches that God Almighty views slaves and masters exactly the same. That is a huge mindset change for people coming into the church. They had to completely change their thinking.

The fourth area where the Father addressed the brethren:

## **2D. The Father told the brethren to treat masters and slaves the same.**

Don't treat them any differently just because one is a master and one is a slave. Let's go to James 2:1; this is a very familiar scripture, we've read it many times before but read it with the idea of masters and slaves, because it is directed at masters and slaves.

**James 2:1** *My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons. (KJV)*

We've already heard, there is no respecting of persons with God.

2) *For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, [most likely somebody that rich in those days would be a slave owner] and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; [It could be a slave working in the mines.]*

3) *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:*

4) *Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts? (KJV)*

continuing in verse 8).

8) *If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well:*

9) *But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors.*

10) *For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. (KJV)*

Peter mentions this same situation of respect of persons in his first Epistle. No need to go over it because it's saying the same thing. We are not to show favoritism because of somebody's worldly status. Now let's go to Philippians 2 and we'll get to the heart of the matter. The heart of being a Christian in general but specifically as it refers to slaves and masters. This out of the New King James. We read these scriptures a lot and emphasize them a lot.

**Philippians 2:3** *Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. (NKJV)*

If you are a slave master and you read this, you have to esteem your slaves better than yourself. If you're a slave working under a harsh master, you must view your master better than yourself. Masters have to esteem slaves, better than themselves and treat them accordingly. Free brethren should esteem slaves better than themselves. You come into church, maybe you don't own a slave but are a free man or woman and there is a slave there, you look at that slave as highly as you would look at yourself. It's quite an attitude adjustment that's being instructed here. The lesson for us today is that we need to treat all of our brothers and sisters the same and never be a respecter of persons.

That ends point numbers two, talking about the Father's instruction to the churches, to masters and slaves. Now point 3; this is very important, especially for today.

### 3. The apostles did not get involved in speaking against or attempting to eliminate slavery.

As horrible as slavery is, the apostles did not give instruction to go fight it, overturn it, riot at the steps of the local government, petition, carry placards—do all that. We have to understand those times. There's an analogy between slaves and Christian households in those days and in England in the 1600 to 1800's, particularly when the King James was written. Servants in England were viewed much as slaves were viewed during the Roman Empire. They were servants but there was no way to escape, if you were a servant to a King of England or a land owner because you had no other options. The King James was written under those circumstances. England had nobility, then the merchant class, then they had slaves or servants—they weren't slaves but they might as well have been.

When King James translated *doulos* as *servant*, that status was taken for granted. That was the atmosphere in which the King James Version was translated. So, we see that slavery, back in the time of Christ and the apostles was a way of life just as servitude was a way of life when the King James Bible was written. It was taken for granted by the New Testament church—that's just the way life was. There is no New Testament record—you cannot find a record of the apostles attempting to overturn the curse of slavery. Some people would be mystified about that today, when everybody is campaigning about something. But the fact is, there is no record of the apostles trying to overturn slavery. They accepted it as part of the world they lived in and guess what? They had spiritual matters on their minds. They had salvation on their minds. That was their focus. They were not trying to right the wrongs of the present day—their present day. They were focused on salvation, they were focused on eternal life and preparing the brethren to be in the Kingdom of God.

Let's go to 1 Corinthians 7:21. Some people would find this shocking to read this scripture, given today's attitude that we find in the world, especially in this country.

**1 Corinthians 7:21** *Were you called while a slave? Do not be concerned about it [don't let it bug you, is what we would say]; but if you can be made free, rather use it. (KJV)*

The apostles accepted the fact that the world they grew up in was not the Father's world. Just as we have to accept the fact, as much as it grinds us sometimes, that this is not the Father's world. They did not fight against it; they did not rebel against it. That is totally counter to today's spirit of protest. Today, somebody is always demanding their "rights". Somebody is always demanding that, "I am entitled to this" or "I am entitled to that". The apostles never even considered that; they were concerned with spiritual matters.

I get emails about people asking why aren't we doing something to change the government, or praising the Republicans and skewering the Democrats—why don't you

do that? Or stand in the gap as a patriot; I've heard that several times. They want you to write letters or send chain emails or start petitions and that the Pacific Church of God should go on this crusade to do this particular thing. We can't forget one simple fact. It applies to my getting upset about current events and I have to remind myself of this simple fact found in Daniel 4. We can't forget this simple fact about today's world and it applied to the world back when the apostles were walking the earth and when Christ walked the earth. We're breaking into the context of Daniel revealing Nebuchadnezzar's dream—the meaning of his dream. I'm going to read this out of the New International Version.

**Daniel 4:17** *The decision is announced by messengers, the holy ones declare the verdict, so that the living may know that the Most High is sovereign over all kingdoms on earth and gives them to anyone he wishes and sets over them the lowliest of people.* (NIV)

This says that God Almighty is sovereign and He gives rulership of various countries and nations to whomever He wishes and because of man's rebellion, He will set over them the lowest of men and it is apparent that it is coming true before our very eyes this day.

Just think, how would you like to be an Afghan Christian right now? Who is over you? The Taliban and what they do to people. That is the lowest of men. You have others that are even more ruthless that blow up schools and kill children. They rape young girls in the name of dominance. This is not our Father's world—it's just not.

What did Christ say about fighting against the Government? The leaders of the Jews of that day tried to trap Him to go against Rome. In Mark 12:13 they were trying to get Christ to say something that would get Him into trouble with Rome and get Him killed.

**Mark 12:13** *And they send unto him [Christ] certain of the Pharisees and of the Herodians, to catch him in his words.* (KJV)

To trick Him, trap Him.

*14) And when they were come, they say unto him, Master, we know that thou art true, and carest for no man [In other words, You don't respect anybody's office]: for thou regardest not the person of men, but teachest the way of God in truth:* (KJV)

They are doing this to suck up to Him, to get Him to let His guard down. They were using a human trick which obviously didn't work.

*14 continued) ... Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar, or not?* (KJV)

To the government or not?

15) *Shall we give, or shall we not give? (KJV)*

We would say, do we pay our taxes or not? After all, look at the evil in the world and the governments evil so should we really take our hard-earned money and give it to these people?

*15 continued) ... But he, knowing their hypocrisy, said unto them, Why tempt ye me? bring me a penny, that I may see it.*

*16) And they brought it. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? And they said unto him, Caesar's.*

*17) And Jesus answering said unto them, Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's. And they marveled at him. (KJV)*

They marveled at His wisdom, because they didn't have a comeback to that. Christ's message is very clear; do what Caesar requires as long as it does not conflict with God's law. Christ had the perfect opportunity to condemn the Roman government but He did not and neither did the apostles. There is no record of that. He could have incited revolt against Rome or said something negative against Rome or Caesar or against the local Roman administration; He did not and neither did the apostles. Frankly, neither should we. As frustrated and angry as we get, we should not be part of trying to overthrow the government, storming the capital and all the stuff that has happened in the last couple of years.

If God Almighty wants this or that person in office, that is precisely and exactly what will occur. We should not attempt to involve ourselves with worldly government, to get what we want or to have them get whatever it is we think is right. If they want to put a freeway through your house, then go stand before the city council and have your say. But it's not like we are being part of the government to try and rule and run things.

Closing out this third point, the lesson for us today, as with the apostles, our concerns should be on spiritual matters. Not with making this world right; this is Satan's world, not our Father's world.

The fourth point, now we get closer to home.

#### **4. Our Father uses slavery to teach us about our relationship with Him and His Son.**

The Father uses the concept of slavery to teach us about Himself and His Son and our relationship to Them. In order to understand that, it's important that we understand Roman culture. The master owned the slave; the slave was the master's property. He wasn't a paid worker, he was property.

Before we were called, we were slaves to sin. We didn't know it, we didn't understand it but we were slaves to sin. Let's go to Romans 6:16. We're receiving instruction here from Paul, using the concept of slavery to get us to understand what we have been

enslaved to and what we are enslaved to now. The church of Rome was very familiar—there were more slaves in Rome than anywhere else, probably in the entire world.

**Romans 6:16** *Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants ...* (KJV)

England had servants but they might as well have been slaves when the King James was translated.

*16 continued) ... to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?* (KJV)

Paul is saying you are a slave either way.

*17) But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.*

*18) Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants ...* (KJV)

Now this is Strong's—instead of #1401—is #1402 which is *douloo* which is just a different version of #1401.

*18 continued) ... of righteousness.*

*19) I speak after the manner of men [meaning he is using the analogy of slavery] because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants [doulos] to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.*

*20) For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness.* (KJV)

Didn't even know what it was.

*21) What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?* (KJV)

Dr. Phil would say, "How did that work for you?"

*21 continued) ... for the end of those things is death.*

*22) But now being made free from sin, and become servants [this is #1402, douloo] to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.* (KJV)

You see when the brethren read this letter in their day—they knew exactly what Paul was talking about. They knew exactly what was meant by *doulos*—it wasn't *servant*, it was *slave*. But once we are called and repent and are baptized, we become voluntary slaves of our Father and His Son.

All of those in the Roman Empire, they were involuntary slaves. In the time the King James was written, in the servant class, they were involuntary slaves. Once we have been called and baptized and receive the Holy Spirit, we are voluntary slaves of our

Father and His Son; we are Their property, They own us. There is a huge difference between a voluntary slave and an involuntary slave. Remember Zodiates definition of *doulos*—voluntary or involuntary—we are voluntary slaves.

Let's go to 1 Corinthians 7, we read this earlier and now we are going to continue on. We are now slaves belonging to the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ.

**1 Corinthians 7:21** *Art thou called being a servant? care not for it: but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather.*

22) *For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise, also he that is called, being free [this would refer to the masters or non-slaves coming into the church], is Christ's servant.*

23) *Ye are bought with a price;* (KJV)

What was that price? The death of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Just like a master would buy a slave, you are bought with Christ's death.

*23 continued) ... be not ye the servants of men.* (KJV)

To do the will of men; the will of men is the will of Satan. Don't do that, he is saying. Christ set the example when He said—we won't turn there; we've read it many times—

*I came from heaven not to do My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.*

That's in John 6. Remember in the garden of Gethsemane when He was kneeling and praying and He said,

*Father if you're willing, please remove this cup from Me, nevertheless not what I want, what My will is, but Your will be done.*

That's in Luke 22. The apostles followed that same example. Let's see it clearly in Philippians 1:1 Paul is introducing this letter to the Philippians but noticed the context under which he introduces this letter.

**Philippians 1:1** *Paul and Timotheus, the servants [slaves, doulos] of Jesus Christ, to all the saints ...* (KJV)

That's what it literally means, it's not servants of Christ, we are the slaves of Jesus Christ, we have been bought by His blood, by His death. Remember Zodiates' definition of *doulos*, I'll read it again:

“One who is in a permanent relation of servitude to another; his will being all together consumed in the will of the other.”

Once we have been called and baptized and received God's Spirit then our will—we are consumed with the will—of the Father. Remember in Titus 2:9, we read earlier that Paul

said to teach slaves to please their masters. Our job is to please our Masters; we are slaves to the Father and Son and we need to please them. Understanding slavery in Christ's day and in the apostles' day, teaches us about our relationship with our Father and His Son. We are to be in subjection to them, we are to please Them because we are slaves to Them and They are our masters.

The fifth and last point.

## **5. In these end times, what is a huge lesson for us, regarding slavery?**

What does it teach us in these very end times? We all know—one thing we've learned in the last decade or two, in the church, is that we have learned the hard way that apart from Almighty God, we are nothing. As slaves we are bought by Christ and we are owned by Christ and we are owned by His Father. We know their nature—we've talked about this many times in trying to understand the Father and Son more fully. It is described by the fruits of the Holy Spirit listed in Galatians 5.

*Love, joy, peace, gentleness, faith, meekness and temperance*

And we know we are to become like them.

In these perilous times, think about this one concept. This is a dangerous world—things have changed radically in the last year. It's become far more dangerous. Whether it's the invasion from the south of the cartel influence with drugs or what's happening in Afghanistan or this worldwide covid and the restrictions and all of this stuff—the fires, droughts and all of that—the world is a more dangerous place. Think about this concept:

Under the Father and His Son as our slave Masters, there is  
***safety in slavery.***

There is safety in the fact that we are slaves of the Father and the His Son. In fact, that is the only safety on the face of this earth; being a slave under the protection of the Father and His Son.

With that in mind let's go to Deuteronomy 1:6. As you know, Moses wrote this at the end of his life and he is speaking to ancient Israel and giving them instruction before he dies. These are some of his last written words. He is addressing this to Israel, we are spiritual Israel, he is addressing it to us today. Actually, The Father is.

**Deuteronomy 31:6** *Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them [all the adversaries they would encounter, going into the Promised Land; we are going to encounter adversaries going into our Promised Land]: for the LORD thy God, he it is that doth go with thee [He will always be with us]; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. (KJV)*

Now go to verse 8.



*8) And the LORD, he it is that doth go before thee; he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed. (KJV)*

Now let's turn to Isaiah 41 where we see, instead of Moses speaking, Yehovah is speaking—God Almighty, the Most High God. Isaiah 41:10; He is not only speaking but He is also promising.

**Isaiah 41:10** *Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. (KJV)*

Continuing in verse 17)

*17) When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the LORD will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them. (KJV)*

If the Father could make that promise to a physical nation, would He not make the same promise to a spiritual nation which is destined to become His children eternally? Now let's go to the New Testament, 2 Corinthians 1:1. When troubled times come, we have an enormous advantage of being a slave to God Almighty and to the Redemption of us—Jesus Christ.

**2 Corinthians 1:1** *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia:*

*2) Grace be to you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.*

*3) Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort;*

*4) Who comforteth us in all our tribulation ... (KJV)*

That is a promise. No matter what lies ahead, we will be comforted in all our trials.

*4 continued) ... that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble [today and in the future], by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. (KJV)*

Those that are on the update list, those that are facing horrible trials, we can do our part to comfort them as the Father and the Son comfort us. All the world's societies and institutions are collapsing right around us, right now. It's just amazing. We need to take comfort in the fact that because we are slaves of the Father and of His Son, there is great safety in being a slave to God Almighty; think about that. They own us. Christ has paid the price and They will protect us and save us because of that calling, because the

price has been paid and because we will be loyal, faithful, slaves of the Father and His Son.

Let's wrap this up now. What is the relevance of slavery in the church of God today? In the early New Testament church, they would read these scriptures—these letters, they read them as letters—and they had great meaning because they were surrounded by slavery. They knew the meaning of the word *doulos*. They knew precisely what was meant when *doulos* was used. Today, because of our culture, where there is no slavery in that sense, these scriptures convey far less meaning than they should because of the environment we grow up in. From now on, when you read the scriptures about slavery, let's remember the context of what was actually happening when those scriptures were written in the early New Testament church.

Most importantly, let's use this understanding to better comprehend our relationship with our Father and His Son. We are Their slaves. Also, better understand the blessing of being Their slaves because we are safe under their care. In addition to that, to being slaves, let's be thankful that we are more than slaves. Let's go to a final scripture in John 15:15. Christ is speaking this on the night He was betrayed, when He was last with the disciples as a physical human being.

**John 15:15** *Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; (KJV)*

The Greek word for *friends* is Strong's #5384, it's *philos* and it means "loved and dear". So, He is saying He is calling us "loved and dear slaves of mine".

*15 continued) ... for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you. (KJV)*

And that same information is being made known to us by the very Bibles on our laps. We need to be eternally thankful that Christ bought us with His life, which has made us slaves to the Father and to His Son, calling us "loved and dear friends", with the promise that They will protect us no matter what happens, going forward. From all the evil, all the tribulation, all the trouble that is to come. In these end times, let us take great comfort in these scriptures that we have read because they come from our slave Masters, the Father and the Son.