

"The Problem of Biblical Slavery"

Leviticus 25:35-55

- Two ways to look at the issue of slavery:
 - Slavery is morally reprehensible in *ALL* situations; the Bible allows for slavery, therefore, the Bible is an unreliable moral guide.
 - The Bible is a reliable moral guide; the Bible allows for slavery, therefore, slavery cannot be morally reprehensible in *ALL* situations.
- Unpacking Biblical Slavery:
 - All men are created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27) and all ethnicities find their origin in Adam and should be protected from injustice based on the reality that they are image bearers of God (Genesis 9:6).
 - Man stealing is outlawed in Scripture and punishable by death in the Old Testament. It is also punishable by death to own someone who was stolen and sold into slavery (Exodus 21:16; Deuteronomy 24:7). We also see it called sin in the New Testament as well (1 Timothy 1:8-10).
 - People would sell themselves into slavery when they were unable to pay a debt or financially support themselves (Deuteronomy 15:11-15; Exodus 21:2-6; Leviticus 25:44-46). Thieves could also sell themselves into slavery to pay off their debt (Exodus 22:3).
 - (Exodus 21:1-11) At the end of the six years the servant went out with what he came in with. If the master provided a wife (and therefore children), the wife and children had to stay with the master until they had fulfilled their obligations or could be redeemed (Leviticus 27:3-8) In verse 7 it refers to a girl who is sold by her father, not for slavery, but for marriage. The origin of the custom was probably to avoid paying a higher bride-price at a later age, and to rear the future daughter-in-law within the family, ensuring that she 'fit in'. Such an attitude to slaves abolishes slavery, except in name. In ancient societies (including sometimes among the Hebrews), a child might be sold as a slave in light of a debt or, especially in the case of a female slave, in a dowry arrangement to satisfy a debt.
 - In neighboring nations there were no laws for the treatment of slaves. Slave masters could do as they wish to their slaves with no repercussions.
 - There are restrictions on the amount of time that someone is allowed to have someone serve them, (Deuteronomy 15:1-2; Exodus 21:1-3) unless they choose to serve them indefinitely (Deuteronomy 15:16-18). Slaves were also supposed to observe the Sabbath Day (Exodus 20:10) just like everyone else.
 - The Bible condemns mistreatment of slaves. The Bible treats slaves as image bearers, not as simply property (Leviticus 25:43; Exodus 21:26-27; Colossians 4:1; Ephesians 6:9).
 - The Bible makes it incredibly clear that both masters and slaves are equals and behavior should coincide with this reality (Deuteronomy 15:11-15; Ephesians 6:5-9; Galatians 3:28).
 - Just because someone has spiritually been set free does not mean they should expect to be set free from their debts. He also encourages them, as Christians, not to sell themselves into servitude (1 Corinthians 7:20-24).
 - Corporal punishment (physical punishment for breaking the law) has been a normal practice for most of human history (Proverbs 13:24 & 29:15; 1 Peter 2:20; Proverbs 14:3 & 26:3). But there are limits to corrective behavior biblically (Exodus 21:20-21 & 26-27; Leviticus 25:43).
 - Paul seems to support the idea of redeeming a brother from their debt (Philemon 1:17-20).
 - The Greatest servitude is a servitude motivated by love. This is the way we serve Christ with joy, not in trying to pay off our debt but because of our love for the Master (Exodus 21:1-5).

Worship: There is a Fountain (Citizens)

Be Thou My Vision (Norton Hall Band)

Service Times: Sundays: Prayer 4:30/Church 5:30; Tuesdays:(In-Home) Bible Study: Women 6:30/Men 7; Thursdays: Prayer 6:20/Church 7