

## **1870 - 1 Tim 6:1,2 - SERVING GOOD & BAD MASTERS**

PRELIMS. Paul has been teaching about the eldership, especially those who preach. He has told Timothy not to lay hands on anyone too early, he must have a proven track record with no conspicuous sins. Paul now turns to servants - ie, employees how they should serve non-Xn employers and Xn employers.

### **GENERAL REMARKS**

The way we live our lives from Monday to Saturday is actually **more important** than the way we live out lives on Sunday! Sunday is the day we **learn** from God how we should live, Monday to Saturday is the time when we **demonstrate** if we are Xns or not! God is not just watching us on Sundays but throughout the whole week.

You see, the Xn **example** is a **powerful means** which God uses in the '**conversion**' of unbelievers! Seeing someone living out the Xn life (which is **so different** from the world's) is such a **testimony** that it **appeals** to all and sundry. Even the **most wicked** of people cannot help but be **affected** by a godly life of honesty, holy living.

Now, verses [1,2] amaze many people. It talks of *all who are under a yoke as slaves to regard their own masters as worthy of honour* [1]! Paul even has the tenacity to **add** *Teach and urge these things* [2c] as if to **emphasise** his words! Why does Paul mention slavery **without** stating that slavery is **evil**! Why does Paul (and the NT) not condemn slavery out and out? Simple answer! The 'slavery' Paul speaks about is **not** the slavery you and I have in our minds!

The Bible (or rather the AV) **never** uses the word 'slavery'! And both 'slave' and 'slaves' appears only **once!** (ESV by 133 times!!) But there is only **one** mention in the Bible of the **concept** of what we today would call 'slavery' and it is in connection with **pagans** and 'Israel's jubilee land tenure laws' [Lev 25:44-46]. These laws have been **annulled** by X in His famous 'Jubilee Release' sermon 'setting captives free' *Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing* [Luke 4:16-21]! Jesus' fulfilled the terms of the Jubilee Year and abolished the OT code of practice for many of the laws in the OT.

The Bible uses the word *bondservant* or slave **not** in the sense of the ‘**American Negro Slave Trade**’ movement, as we might be inclined to think of slave, but rather in the sense of a servant ‘**bound**’ by a **contract** to which he has ‘agreed’ - either willingly or unwillingly! Some people unwillingly take a job! Bondservants/slaves in Bible are today much more **like employees** who are bound by their employer by a ‘**Contract of Employment**’! As **footballers** who have ‘signed-on’ until 2014 - or some payment to ‘buy them out’ is agreed!

There are **reasons** why someone would be bound by such a contract – apart from being the means of earning a living. These reasons are: **(1) Debt** because the slave has got into debt and needs to **earn** a living to pay the debt! Maybe he got into debt by **over-spending** or maybe as a result of a storm that damaged his house or an accident in which he did not have the money to repair the damage caused by the accident. So he would **negotiate** with a Master a Contract for money which he in turn would serve the Master for an agreed period. \*Now God gave rules/conditions for the payment of such debt. It was **more expensive** (longer hours, more years) to pay debt that was through **carelessness** than it was for **misfortune** such as a storm!!

The **(2)** reason why a person may become a slave was for a **Loan** of money, not for some debt they got into, but for **some other purpose**. Borrowing for whatever! Now the **terms** for borrowing money for pleasure and not unfortunate debt was **much higher**. God’s law ensured that the unfortunate were protected from excessive charges! \*Now under Hebrew law [**Ex 21:1-6**] the **maximum** number of years for ‘indentured servitude’ (the proper name) was **6 years** and *on the seventh he shall go out **free** he shall pay **nothing**’!* Plus some other ‘conditions’ too many to go into just now.

The **(3)** reason for a man becoming a slave was for a **crime**: When found guilty of a crime, the criminal had to **pay the victim restitution**. Hebrew law made sure that the **victim** was compensated **fully**, including any loss of earnings/profits through the injury, thus Nicodemus’ *I restore fourfold* [Luke 19:8]! Note: the **victim** should be compensated! If someone **stole £1,000 from me** and was found guilty, the law does not provide for me getting my £1,000 back! This

is **anti-biblical**. The victim should be reimbursed fully with loss of 'profits'. It seems that under **human** systems of **justice**, as distinct from God's Jewish Law, the victim is **always** the **loser** - and if he is a **tax-payer**, he pays for the **upkeep** of the criminal! Under **God's** rules of **justice**, the victim is fully compensated. Usually the only way a criminal could find some way to pay back the debt was to 'sell' his labour. \*Now, the laws regarding 6 year maximum was for **charitable loans** only – they were **not** for criminal restitution payments which had to be fully met! God's Law took into consideration 'unfortunate/accidental' circumstances, but it **never subsidised** evil! It was meant to discourage evil, not encourage it!

God's laws are not as 'severe' as man's laws, ask Soviet Union subjects! Eg, an **eye for an eye**, seems 'so severe' today – but really it very seldom happened – because there **was** an alternative! God's law actually **provided** for an **alternative** payment "in lieu of physical mutilations"! Monetary substitution! I want to read from a "Traditional Jewish explanation" of this 'eye for eye' written by **Nachmanides** in the 13<sup>th</sup> century - [Read p419 North in 'Tools...']! That's why we can read *he shall pay as the judges determine* what is an 'equal amount' for the injury caused! [Exod 21:22]! Thus God's law is not as bad as many make it out to be – especially when you think of all that is happening in non-Xian countries today!

### **SERVING an UNBELIEVING BOSS (or an 'Unreasonable/Unfair' Employers**

Xns are to **regard their own masters worthy of all honour!**[1] Peter says *Servants be subject to your masters with all respect not only to the good/gentle but also to the unjust!*[1P2:18] This situation is a **wonderful opportunity to shine bright** for the **Lord** –without being a Bible-thumper! *what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. For to this you have been called* [1P2:19cf]! The 'world' really **admires** people who hold to their principles even when it hurts! *Christ also suffered for you leaving you an example so that you might follow in His steps*[1P2:21] **APP** Count it a **privilege** to be put in a situation where you can

'lose' for X's sake! God **only** asks those to 'suffer' whom **He** wants to honour – but in a real sense it is **up to us** if **we** want to be honoured! Look at **Joseph**. Twice double-crossed! Cheated! Think of the **stigma** that stuck to Joseph re Potiphar's wife! Yet God honoured him **because** he did **not** harbour **resentment/vengeance!**

Paul to Ephesians *Slaves, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling with a **sincere** heart, as you would Christ, **not** by the way of **eyeservice**, as **people pleasers** but as servants of Christ doing the will of God from the heart rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man [Eph 6:5cf]. APP Have **you** a 'hard' boss? Are you *under a yoke*? Have you ever been hard-done by? How have you responded? **More good** is done by **our attitude** towards unfair treatment, than by anything else! If we fail to respond as Xns, God's Name and the **doctrine** will be cursed/insulted! The **whole Xian Cause** will be disadvantaged! Xians should be **sought after** because of their honesty, reliability, punctuality, conscientiousness, thoroughness! Your daily policy should be 'Do as **much** as you can, as **best** as you can - **not** as **little** as you can **get away with!**'*

## **SERVING a XIAN EMPLOYER**

It was possible in Paul's culture to have a 'slave' who was an elder in the church, and a master who was a young Xn! It might be that the elder slave would administer the Lord's Supper to his young Xn master! That would be a **reversal** of the **roles** in the house! (In fact the slave might be an elder judging new converts who were masters!) \*Some Xns feel that Xn employers should show Xn employees **favour** and 'overlook' some of their failings! That is **not right!**

For Xianity is **not** like **Freemasonry!** We ought **not** to expect 'perks' or special treatment because we have the same Lord! The New Living Translation = *if your master is a Christian, that is no excuse for being disrespectful. You should work **all the harder** because you are helping another believer by your efforts* ![NLT, v2] **APP** Again, be punctual, be conscientious, don't take advantage, cooperate! Remember you are doing what you do, for **Christ!** That should **not** be an excuse for neglect, but a stimulus for service!