***“Perspective – Law Life or Low Life”***

Exodus Chapter 21 Verses 1 – 2

* One of the ***great controversies*** of scripture that is announced often by critics of the Bible is what we just read. You may have heard this, *“If your God is a God of love, then why does He promote slavery?”* There is a **very simple** answer to that question once you’ve studied your Bible. **He doesn’t.**
* In ancient Israel, as was in the entire ancient world and *still prevalent* in some societies, there were people who worked for others, **hired in**, as servants. The *issue* is that this Hebrew word for servant or slave is mentally linked to what we know in our nation’s past as ***slavery*** and there is absolutely ZERO commonality other than the word.
* ***Neither God nor the Bible ever condones or commands or approves in any way the stealing of people from one nation to become the property of another.*** There were no labor unions. There were no corporations. There was no unemployment. There was no government assistance. And so if you did not have sustenance, you would find someone who did and you would serve them to share in their provision. ***That is called a servant.*** That is completely different than the slavery this nation knew.
* Here’s the facts. ***The Bible and God specifically are responsible for the elimination of slavery, not its establishment!*** It is significant and should be noted that the first words of the civil laws of God given after the Ten Commandments deal with how God wanted His people to respect the rights and dignity of servants. And notice finally, these servants are not foreign to God’s people, they are Hebrews. Now that we are sorted out on the matter, you can answer that objection ***confidently and readily.***
* And one other thing, how is it that I think in any way that I am not a ***servant*** even though we have changed the title to *“employee?”* Whether you are entry level or CEO, you are still ***“employee.”*** Even if you own your own business, you are **servant** to your customers. We just dress it up in a new robe and stand high and mighty over it. Make no mistake…we’re just Americans with huge egos and human rights tatted on our chests like badges but if you strip away all of the hype and pride, if you’re employed then ***you are an employee and an employee is simply in its purist definition….a servant.*** So when that question comes, ask the hater…do you work? **Slave!** HA!!!
* God says here, if you make a contract for them to work for you and for six years you give them room and board and food and even pay, on the seventh year, if they want to leave, even though you have given them so much…even if they haven’t been the best of servants, ***let them go…they owe you nothing.*** No matter the reason for the servitude. I say that because according to Exodus 22, a person could become a servant if they stole something and could not repay. ***The whole premise is liberty.*** The idea is that after 6 years, knowing that’s your *“term”* you would learn enough or obtain enough to make it on your own after that…*(There’s also an eschatological parallel here…)*

Exodus Chapter 21 Verses 3 – 6

* The wife and the children are considered, in a way, **the family of the master**…so the servant would either have to pay for them or just decide to stay. Depending on what happened during the servant’s time of service, in this case the male servant was provided a wife by his master and as a result has gained an entire family, the servant could make the decision to stay. Was it ***so good*** serving their master who provided for them, created a family for them…would you just rather stay…
* If so, there would be a life-long commitment made by both the servant and the master. The servant would commit to serve forever and the master would commit to having them forever in their home. This commitment, I love this, was not motivated by debt or obligation whatsoever, but was ***only motivated by love for the master***, and the good things that the master had done. Essentially it would be made public, in front of the *“judges,”* and the servant’s ear would be pierced with an awl. Sounds like that hurts, **HA!!**
* But here’s the thing, all of this, as does ***every single little bit of the Bible***, all of this speaks of Jesus Christ. He loves the Father, He loves His bride, He loves His children…and so He has made a forever commitment *to intercede, to pray, to comfort, to counsel, to serve* each and every one of us forever. They would take the servant to the doorpost…that speaks directly to the Passover, and they would pierce the servant through his flesh…which speaks directly to the cross.
* Jesus has become for you and for me, *for my salvation, for my hope, to provide me a home*, He has become and remains the **perfect bond-slave.** Turn over to Philippians 2:5-11! Jesus has taken an oath to create a home for His bride and children and that oath is two things…**forever**, cannot be reversed AND based on no other motivation or obligation other than **love!**

Exodus Chapter 21 Verses 7 – 11

* Ok, this one sounds odd but selling your children as servants was an entirely ***every day thing*** in ancient cultures including ancient Israel. There were no elementary schools, middle schools, etc. ***The kids were taught until they could work and then they were taught to work.*** And so sons and many times daughters would go to work at a super early age…5, 6, 7 years old. As soon as they could help provide for the family.
* Now, we don’t have a section about selling your son as a servant so what’s going on here. This appears to be linked to a commitment of marriage…so it’s somewhat of a betrothal. Again, not something our culture ***understands*** but if you barely make it and can barely feed your family and there is a rich single man or rich man with a son, and they are a good family, you’d perhaps **want** to set this up. Again, completely foreign to our culture and *I get it* but I also can get past my own shock to see what’s going on here in this culture…And so this basically lays out, if you do this with your daughter or if you accept a young female servant into your home, these are the rules, for her protection and provision.

Exodus Chapter 21 Verses 12 – 14

* There are at least three places in the Bible, two in the Old Testament and one in the New Testament that essentially **commands capital punishment** but it’s interesting to me that God instructs the judges of Israel to ***seek out circumstance.*** If there was *malice, intent, premeditation, treachery*…that is to be dealt with one way…if there is a circumstance of accident, that is to be dealt with in another way.

Exodus Chapter 21 Verses 15 – 17

* Ok obviously this is the Law of Moses and not the Law of God. I’ve said this before that the Law of God is relevant to us, applicable to everyone but the Law of Moses was ***specific to the Jewish people*** BUT we can ***observe the heart of God through these commandments!*** These are the words of the Lord and oh my, the importance that God places on obedience, respect and reverence to your father and mother!!
* The punishments are severe but **the goal is not the punishment**…***the goal is the avoidance of the sin!*** Do you see that? If that is the punishment and it is sure…I mean you can track them down and take them anywhere it says in the previous verses…then the likelihood of the offense occurring, ***knowing*** the surety of the consequence…see what I’m saying!? If you’re getting *hung up* on the punishment or consequence to the point where you are beginning to disagree…then may I suggest that you’re *looking at it wrongly?*
* What if every sin, every disgruntle, every poor attitude, what if it all had on it a **price tag**. We use the word *cost* and we use the word *consequence* all the time…but just lately I’ve been thinking about the flesh in terms of the **price tag**. That’s kind of the thing but you look at ***before you buy***…***I wonder if we knew the price and considered that if we’d spend so much of our potential, our joy, our love, our peace on trinkets of the flesh…?***

Exodus Chapter 21 Verses 18 – 23

* ***The answers to every life issue, you can find it in the Word of God.*** Here we have *God’s perspective* on essentially unborn babies being killed in the womb. If the mother is harmed and yet the baby doesn’t die, her husband decides the offender’s fate. If the baby dies…you die. If that perspective of God was respected, in this country alone, 55 million lives would have already been saved. ***Perspective.*** If we took 10 seconds of silence for every one of those lives…**we’d be silent for seventeen and a half years…**

Exodus Chapter 21 Verses 24 – 36

* Notice, the price of a servant…***thirty pieces of silver***. Significant… Matthew 26:14-15. The price paid for Jesus…thirty pieces of silver.