

Understanding slavehood

Understanding the scriptural teaching on *slavery* is fundamental to the Christian faith. We read in Paul's letter to the Romans that we have 'been freed from sin and *enslaved to God*'. If we don't properly embrace our slavehood of Jesus Christ, we cannot proceed to inherit the glorious liberty of our sonship. Though we are familiar with the term 'slavery', we must measure our historic mindset by virtue of our culture, psychology and education, against the scriptural proposition of slavehood. Have we accepted that we are *slaves* of righteousness?

The history of America and England has influenced our psyche towards slavehood, including the very translation of the Scripture itself. The American Emancipation Proclamation, now accounted in the American Constitution as the Thirteenth Amendment, has made all actions of slavehood illegal in America. Similarly, the Slavery Abolition Act of 1833 prohibited all slavery in England. Now, as a result centuries later, enshrined in our society and reinforced by the education system shaping our children, is the belief that every individual has the right and freedom to choose what they want, when they want it, and how they want it. And the law operates to protect this freedom of every individual.

We need to understand slavehood from a biblical perspective, not revert to images of chains, picks and forced labour! The Hebrew concept of a slave is governed by love, not mistreatment and animosity. Of Jesus, the Bible says, 'He opened their *minds* to understand the Scriptures'. We need to understand slavery from a scriptural perspective. And, likewise, we must become slaves of Jesus Christ so that we can understand the Scriptures! Ultimately, the revelation of Jesus Christ and, therefore, the hope of His calling for every believer, is only given to His slaves.

References:

Rom 6:18
Rev 1:1
Rom 8:21

Further Study

Rom 6

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 29

Slavehood in the Scriptures

The notion of slavery is incongruous with modern society. In the aftermath of the American Civil War, we can imagine the societal pressure against the New American Standard Bible translators to avoid any reference to 'slaves'. Accordingly, the NASB does not translate the Greek word '*doulos*' as 'slave' when it applies to the apostles, to Moses, to Old Testament figures and to Jesus Himself. '*Doulos*' is translated 'bond-servant'. The publishers are trying to convey the notion of 'captive', but have a fundamental bias against the concept of slavery. This is understandable because their civil history was built on the freedom of people, and the delivery of slaves from servitude against their will. Similarly, not once in the New Testament does the King James Bible translate '*doulos*' as 'slave'. We must not overlook the fact that history and Bible translations have impacted the attitude of Christians on this subject.

Interestingly, concerning the theme of 'slave', the classic Greek English Lexicon by Arndt and Gingrich points out that it is only in *Christian* interpretation and early American writing that the word '*doulos*' is translated 'servant'. In all secular usage of the word '*doulos*' in Koine Greek, it was translated 'slave'. We cannot embrace Christianity and accept the Scripture, without negotiating that we are indeed *slaves of Christ*.

We read in the parable of the wedding feast and the parable of the vine-growers, that messengers were sent out to do a work. In both these cases, the Greek word for those sent out is '*doulos*'; that is, 'slave'. Many believers' hearts are stirred by the thought that Jesus would send them to do His work of gathering in those who are called to attend the wedding feast. But we note that only those who have appropriated slavehood to Christ are appointed and sent out in His name.

References:

Php 2:7
Eph 6:6
Luk 20:9-12
Mat 22:3-4, 8-10

Further Study

Mat 22

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 30

The love slave

Within the Hebrew process of acquiring a slave, the intent and initiative was completely in the jurisdiction of the one becoming a slave. We can immediately relate this to the onus upon us to obey the proclaimed word. No one comes to us and issues directives for our lives. But as a messenger proclaims the word, the word compels us to obedience from the heart. We, of our own volition, must respond as slaves to the word, saying, 'Speak Lord for Your slave is listening'.

A Hebrew who fell on hard times would voluntarily sell himself to a fellow countryman who was willing to mercifully pay a ransom price equal to the debt the Hebrew owed. The action of paying the ransom price, rescued the unfortunate Hebrew from the peril of his circumstances and delivered him to be the possession of the master who had paid the ransom price. The goal was that at the end of six years of service, in the sabbatical year when a slave was free to leave, he would instead choose to serve his master forever. If the slave said, 'I love my master, my wife and my children; I will not go out as a free man', then his master would bring him to the door of his house and pierce his ear with an awl, to symbolise he would remain in his house forever.

The only concept the Scripture teaches concerning 'slavehood' is that of a 'love-slave'. Like the Hebrew who, on the first account, volunteered to sell himself, and then on the second account, chose to remain with his master, we choose Jesus Christ as our Master. After a symbolic 'six year' season, there will be a crisis as we confess we love the Lord and desire to dwell in His house forever.

References:

1Sa 3:9 Exo 21:5-6
Isa 50:4-5 Rom 6:17
Lev 25:35, 39-40

Further Study

Exo 21

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 1

No man is free

In his letter to the Romans, the apostle Paul made the point that every man is a slave of something. He wrote, 'Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness?' The person claiming to live according to the freedom of their own desires and choices, is presenting their members to sin. This results in an illusion of freedom, when in reality, they are a slave of sin. The person presenting their members to God is exercising himself in offering, according to the work assigned to him in his slavehood. By this means, he proves the good, acceptable and perfect will of God.

Paul declared that we have been bought with a price. We were once dead in sin and enslaved to men, but we have been made alive in Jesus Christ as slaves to God. Deliverance from the curse of sin and the curse of law is possible when we appropriate the *ransom price paid for us* and become the possession of Jesus Christ. The prophet Jeremiah wrote, 'The Lord has *ransomed* Jacob'. And the prophet Micah wrote, 'The Lord has ransomed Jacob from the house of slavery'. You cannot be a Christian unless you have been ransomed to become a slave. The book of Revelation continues to declare this reality, 'You have been purchased from among men *for* God'. The Lord declared through the prophet Malachi, 'You shall be Mine in the day that I make up My jewels'. Those who choose to become love-slaves will be jewels in the Lord's crown.

References:

Mal 3:17 Rom 6:16
 Rom 12:2 Gal 3:13
 Mat 20:28 Mar 10:45
 1Ti 2:6 Jer 31:11
 Mic 6:4 Rev 5:9
 Ps 114:1 Is 52:1

Further Study

Tit 2

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 2

Called by name

For those who believe in the Lord, but have not appropriated slavehood, they may attend a church, but sin and Sheol still reign over their lives. They have turned back to the weak and worthless elemental things, by which they are enslaved all over again. We can only conclude that they have not heard the sound of the Lord calling them by name; or, otherwise, having heard their name, they have continued to live as a self-defining slave to sin. No one can become a son of God, unless they are firstly a slave. But no one becomes a slave unless they hear the call of their name from the beginning. The Lord calls their name and desires to *purchase* them for Himself! We are charged to serve in the Father's house because we have a Master who loves us.

We are becoming a son because we are obeying, by *slavehood*, the word of our name. Jesus said, 'If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you'; that is, according to your name. He continued, 'My Father is glorified by this'. The Father is glorified because as a slave of Jesus Christ hears and obeys, the Father is receiving that one as a son. Slavehood is the response of obedience toward that which is laid down to us. Jesus said, 'You have not chosen Me, I have chosen you'. This literally means, 'I have laid it down to you'. We are not self-defining when it comes to our work. When the word is proclaimed, we hear our name, our calling, our work and our election being laid down to us. And as we choose to participate in our election, we begin to find the glorious liberty of our name.

References:

Gal 4:9
Isa 40:26
Joh 15:7-8, 16
2Pe 1:10

Further Study

Isa 45

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 3

Emptying is the action of a slave

In his letter to the Philippians, Paul wrote that God the Son 'did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but *emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave*'. The definition of 'emptying yourself' is 'to pour out to an end point'. Emptying enabled God the Son to receive the word of the covenant and create room for a multitude of sons. Are you a slave? Have you emptied yourself in offering so that you can receive the word being laid down to you? Jesus said, 'You have not chosen Me, I have chosen you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit'. Jesus is defining the reality of life for a Christian who has negotiated the ground of slavehood. We are not our own. We are bought with a price and He is laying down to us, by a word, the authority to be priests to His God and Father.

Every slave has a work to do. It is the work of our house, and in His house, according to the word of sonship laid down to us. We can rejoice because that which He lays down to us is an easy yoke. It is easy because our work is equal to our name. We need to be continually listening for our name. Then our work is done from our house and into the world because we are to be the petals of the flower in a lampstand administration. We are reflecting the light of the lamp into the world, as slaves who are anointed with the sevenfold Spirit of Yahweh. As this light shines forth, it is revealing the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. We empty ourselves to become slaves of Jesus, revealing and manifesting His name. When those in the world are illuminated concerning His name, they begin to hear the call of their own name which is only found in Him.

References:

Php 2:6-7 Joh 15:16
Mat 11:30 Joh 10:11
1Co 6:20 Rev 4:5

Further Study

Php 2

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 6

Knowing our name

It is a sobering reminder of how imperative it is that we know and obey our name when we read Jesus' words, 'I never knew you; depart from Me.' He was not speaking about flagrant, rebellious opposition to the gospel, but rather, those who performed many miracles in His name. How can the Creator say, 'I never knew you'? He wrote our name in the Lamb's book of life. But if we are living according to another name then He will not know us. This will be the evidence that we were never willing to be redefined as a slave against our will. There are many people, both believers and unbelievers, who insist on their right to be *self-naming* and *self-defining*. They will not hear the word being laid down to them. But while our society glorifies the *self-made* man, the only truly successful person is the person who fulfils the name that the Father has given them. The process of finding our name begins when we become a love-slave of Jesus Christ.

If we are not walking out the calling and name He has purposed for us, then we are 'under the sun'. 'Under the sun' describes the condition of a person whose life is subject to time and chance. When the apostle Paul said, 'All things work together for good', it is for those who love Him, and those who are *called* according to His purpose. It is possible to profess a love for the Lord, but at the same time, refuse to walk in the integrity and truth of our name and calling. If we are not obedient to our name, we are *corrupting* ourselves. We can only be, in life, the individual who God the Father has *named* us to be, that Jesus Christ is *commanding* us to be, and the Holy Spirit is *empowering* us to be.

References:

Mat 7:23
Rev 3:5
Ecc 4:1, 3-4, 7-8
Rom 8:28

Further Study

Joh 10

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 7

Leading you in all truth

The book of Revelation records the way Jesus Christ addressed the church in Sardis. 'You have a few people who have not soiled their garments.' The Greek word for 'people' is 'nomos', which means, 'names'. Ultimately, we soil our priestly robe when we fail to obey our name. Jesus said, 'If you abide in Me [remain as a slave in the house of God], and My words abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it will be done for you'. Furthermore, the Father knows our need before we ask. But He gives us precisely what we need, according to the authority of our name.

James addresses this point from the negative perspective, saying, 'You do not have because you do not ask ... you ask and do not receive because you ask with the wrong motives'. He is explaining the outcome when we do not ask according to our name. The Father will not meet us while we ask amiss. Often times, people who refuse obedience will become disillusioned with God and blame others. But we *can* obey our name. The word is laid down to us 'new every morning'. And there is a provision of grace coming with the revelation of our name so we can bring forth fruit. All we need to do is *hear* it and have an attitude to *receive* and *obey* it.

Jesus said, 'It is to your advantage that I go away ... for the Holy Spirit will come to you ... and He will guide you into all truth'. This is not only the truth concerning Christ; it is the revelation of the mystery of our unique name and the works of our sonship. By this means, we are directed and enabled to fulfil our name so that the Master can say of us, 'Well done, good and faithful slave'.

References:

Rev 3:4 Joh 15:7
Mat 6:8 Jas 4:2-3
Lam 3:23 Joh 16:7, 13
Mat 25:12, 23 Luk 18:17

Further Study

Joh 16

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 8

Redemption

An important distinction must be made between our preconceived view of redemption, and our understanding of ransom. Many Christians have understood redemption, but they have not appreciated ransom. We cannot be redeemed unless we are firstly ransomed, because there is no redeemed position unless we accept we are the possession of the One who paid the ransom! We do not become Christians by merely saying, 'Jesus Christ is Lord'. And we are certainly not redeemed for ourselves. The singular reason that Jesus paid our ransom is so we become a slave in the house of God. And having come into His house, He begins to give us redemption, and hope toward the day of redemption.

In the Old Testament, the concept of redemption was 'to act as kin' for a 'generous reacquisition'. The process was founded on a ransom price being paid to buy back the property, including the wife, of a kin or relative. For us, the heavenly Father has acted as kin, and initiated the process of redemption. And Jesus has acted as kin, as a brother to us. The goal of the ransom paid was to deliver the Hebrew from the *penalty* that was falling upon them. This is the fundamental concept of the cross, concerning the penalty of sin, because we were dead in our trespasses and sins.

The Old Testament bears witness that redemption was established in Abraham. The prophet Isaiah wrote, 'I have ransomed Abraham *in the matter of Jacob*'. We recall that God sent Jacob down into Egypt and then ransomed him back. Hence, Isaiah does not say that God *ransomed* Abraham. The significance of Jacob being ransomed was that Abraham received his inheritance in the land according to lineage. Abraham was not going to inherit the land unless a ransom brought the Israelites up and gave him the land as the *context* of redemption.

References:

Isa 29:22 Isa 41:8-9
Isa 44:21-26 Deu 32:9
Lev 25:47-49

Further Study

1Pe 1

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 9

Redemption and adoption

On the night of the first Passover when the nation of Israel escaped captivity in Egypt, they were being ransomed. By the application of ransoming blood to their doorposts and lintels, redemption was being activated. As long as they remained in the house, every son was being restored to their place, according to their name. The Scripture accounts that the angel of death 'passed over' each house upon which God saw the blood. God was not paying a ransom price to Satan, but rather, He saw the blood and would not let the angel of death come into the house.

We must be clear, like the children of Israel, that we were ransomed from certain death, from the grave, by the blood of Jesus. He ransomed us, redeemed us, and began to restore us to everything that was lost to us on account of our sin. This is the inheritance of our sonship which is only found in the house of God. Hence, when He ransomed us, He took us from one house of slavery and released us into another house of slavery. The nation of Israel were brought from Egypt to be His 'own possession'. That is the core meaning of 'redemption'. It means 'to be loosed, set free and released'. Ultimately, we are not set *free* until the day of resurrection, when we will know the glorious liberty, or freedom, of being sons of God forevermore. Many language commentators agree that 'redemption' is equal to the 'adoption'. When we were ransomed, the blood of Christ was metaphorically applied to the doorposts and lintel of our houses, so that we could literally be accepted, or adopted, as a member of His house. 'He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father.'

References:

Exo 19:4-6
1Pe 2:9
Exo 12:13, 23
Rev 1:6

Further Study

Eph 1

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 10

The fullness of ransom

The *ransom* price which is paid to buy us back from the death of sin, grants us *deliverance*. This is what happened to the children of Israel. A *ransom* is the only thing that delivers us from Sheol and death. If we desire eternal life then we must *appropriate* the fullness of 'ransom', through the process of redemption, to our adoption. This is the only means by which we will have a resurrection body.

The prophet Hosea wrote, 'The iniquity of Ephraim is *bound up*; his sin is *stored up*. The pains of childbirth come upon him; he is not a wise son, for it is not the time that he should delay at the opening of the womb. Shall I *ransom* them from the power of Sheol? Shall I *redeem* them from death?' The apostle Paul quotes this verse in his first letter to the Corinthians in relation to the resurrection, 'O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?' The *full* ransom has been paid. We have been completely delivered from the penalty and incarceration in death. And we wait eagerly for the redemption of our body in the resurrection at the last day.

In the New Testament, there are two Greek words translated 'redemption'. The first is the word which is more accurately translated 'ransom' and it means 'to release' or 'to set free'. We have been ransomed by the precious blood of the Lamb. Jesus' blood was shed, and it gave us a place in the house as a slave with no rights and no benefits. The second word used for 'redemption' means 'full ransom' and it is used in the context of the *day* of redemption. It refers to the *full ransom* when our redemption is made complete.

References:

Hos 13:12-14 Heb 9:28
Luk 1:68 Eph 4:30
Eph 1:14
1Co 15:54-56

Further Study

1Co 15

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 13

Another's possession by ransom

The first proposition of slavehood is that we become another's possession by ransom. A fundamental tenet of the gospel is that every individual who is ransomed, becomes the possession and the slave of the One who paid the price for them. When the ransom price was paid for us, it did not emancipate us to freedom. In the first case, the blood of Jesus Christ was not delivering as we interpret deliverance, but rather, it was ransoming to make us the possession of the One paying that price. It is only a secondary statement that we were set free by the blood of Jesus Christ.

Lawlessness is established by those who take hold of the ransom price of Jesus Christ and, by it, deliver themselves to freedom. They deliver themselves to a freedom which simply becomes an opportunity for the flesh because it is not governed by slavehood. In fact, we can see that many of the effects of the charismatic renewal upon the church, in all its proclamation of freedom, have established the ground of lawlessness. Why is this? Because the ransom price has become the means of attaining liberty for the one ransomed, not the possession of a slave for the one ransoming!

The apostle Paul declared that Jesus 'gave Himself for us, so that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people'. We generally consider that we were redeemed by blood. However, a thorough examination of language commentaries reveals that 'redemption' is the state or position of one who has had a price paid for them; that is, the one who has been purchased by ransom. In this way, we understand that the ransom is the step before redemption.

References:

Tit 2:14
Isa 43:1
Deu 7:6
Rev 5:9

Further Study

1Co 6

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 14

We are His possession

We ought not to fear slavery because if we are a slave in the Father's house, then our house is protected by ransoming blood, giving to us a position of redemption. If we want protection and safety for ourselves and our households, then we must come by ransom into His house. The Lord instructed Moses to say to the children of Israel, 'You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you to Myself'. This was the work of the Lord of hosts with God the Father, by the Holy Spirit. The Lord then identified the condition upon which they had been ransomed. He continued, 'Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine'.

The apostle Paul was evidently committed to be a slave of Jesus Christ, and he urged those to whom he was ministering to likewise humble themselves to the position of a slave. He rejoiced over his beloved brothers, Epaphras and Tychicus, whom he called 'faithful slaves' and 'faithful deacons'. Paul understood that to be a slave is to be the possession of another, just as God declared to the children of Israel, 'You shall be My possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine'. It is incumbent upon us to understand that, firstly, we attain slavehood by a ransom for our life. And accordingly, we become the possession of the One who ransomed us. There is no invitation extended to us. There is a call to come because He ransomed us. And when He paid the ransom price, we became His possession. We are undeniably, unequivocally, His possession!

References:

Exo 19:4-5
Col 1:7
Col 4:7, 12

Further Study

Isa 43

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 15

A slave in His house

Our position as a slave gives us a place in the house of the Master. Only those ransomed come into the house, and when He put you in the house of slavery, He assigned to you a work according to that slavery. You cannot be a son of God unless you firstly become a slave. And you cannot find your sonship in God unless you become a deacon of the work to which you are enslaved. Wherever your slavehood is, and whatever the work is that's being assigned to you, you can rejoice, knowing that it is actually the blueprint of your sonship. He's making you a son. You will never lose your identity by becoming a slave. As you lose your life to become a slave, you actually find your sonship! You receive eternal life as a son of God in Jesus Christ, who is the Son.

We read in the book of Revelation that the promise of sonship is to 'him who overcomes'. The Father declares, 'He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son'. This is one of the most succinct statements in the Scripture concerning the predestination of mankind. We are predestined to become sons of God, but we never become God. Those who overcome in this life proceed to inherit 'all these things' in the age to come; meaning, everything that belongs to the glorious liberty of the sons of God. The key here is that only a slave can overcome, and it is only overcoming slaves who receive the inheritance of sons. Paul explained to the Galatians that while an heir is waiting to inherit, he is no different from a slave. He was not in any way demeaning slavehood. Rather, Paul was explaining that we can only attain the inheritance of our sonship through slavehood.

References:

1Co 4:1
Rev 21:7
Gal 4:1, 7

Further Study

Rev 21

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 16

Slavehood in administration

Our slavehood is to the ascended Christ in all the expressions of His grace and authority. Many Christians are comfortable, in theory, with the proposition of slavehood to Christ. However, there are many who will profess to be His slave while refusing to be the slave of any man. This is an evangelical Christian view, which the apostle Paul clearly contradicts when he writes, 'We are proclaiming Jesus Christ, and we are your slaves for Jesus' sake'. Paul was delighted and inspired by the proposition of slavehood. He rejoiced that he could be the slave of Jesus Christ, but also that he could be the slave of another. Furthermore, in his letter to the Ephesians, he addressed the proposition of slaves who have human masters, saying, 'Slaves be obedient to your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ; not by way of eye service, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ'.

There is a false gospel that is preached in many churches today, promising that God will elevate you further and further and guarantee you success. On the contrary, the only thing the gospel guarantees you is the position of a slave when you render obedience to the One who paid the ransom price for you. Jesus explained to the disciples, 'The greatest among you must be a slave'. In this way, Paul called himself the least of all apostles. He wrote to the Ephesians, 'To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ'. The more a person is honoured by grace, the greater the obligation of slavehood becomes upon them. Paul said in another place, 'For though I am free from all, I have made myself a slave to all'.

References:

1Co 9:19

2Co 4:5

Eph 6:5-6

Mat 23:11

Eph 3:8

Further Study

1Co 9

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 17

Called as a son in His house

King Solomon wrote, 'He who pampers his slave from childhood will in the end find him to be a son'. This literally means that he who 'carefully brings up' a slave will find him to be a son. And the Hebrew word 'son' is equally translated 'heir' or 'resprout', which signifies new germination, new foliage, and new life. Bearing this in mind, we read in the fifteenth chapter of the Gospel of John, that Jesus addresses the proposition of slavehood, accounting for the fact that we have not chosen Him, but rather, He has chosen us and laid it down to us, so that *we can bring forth fruit*. We can joyfully dispel any notion that being a slave of God equals harsh, indifferent treatment. The Father desires to carefully bring every individual slave up so that, ultimately, we bring forth the eternal fruit and glory of our sonship.

In this same discourse, Jesus expresses His desire to call us His friends. 'You are My friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends.' Predicated upon our obedience as slaves, is Jesus' intent to call us His friends. The defining character of 'the friend' is that they know what the master is doing. The friend has had their ear opened as a slave, and is accustomed to listening to the master. 'I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you.' The moment we accept the proposition of ransom and come into the house, redemption in Abraham applies to us. God desires to lead us forward to our inheritance. He addresses us as His sons, contingent upon us continuing to do our work as slaves.

References:

Pro 29:21
Isa 50:4-5
Jas 2:23-24

Further Study

Joh 15:15-16
Joh 15
Isa 29:22

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 20

The ransom price

The book of Hebrews tells us that a death must take place to authenticate a ransom. It is for this reason that Jesus Christ is ‘the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead’. The apostle John continues by attributing glory and dominion to Jesus for ransoming us by His blood saying, ‘To Him who loves us and *released us*’. Since a death has taken place for the ransom of our transgressions, we have been released from our captivity to sin and brought into the Master’s house. He has made us to be a kingdom of priests to His God and Father.

Matthew writes, ‘Jesus called them to Himself and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to be great among you shall be your servant [deacon], and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served [deaconed], but to serve [deacon], and *to give His life a ransom for many*”.’ Jesus was using His obedience to the Father’s will as an example of laying down our lives as slaves. He was the first to empty Himself and become a slave. And His unique work was to give His life as a ransom for us. His life was the ransom price. And it had to be His life because unless there was a *death*, there would have been no blood, and the covenant would not have been activated. The blood was the agency of *deliverance* and the *ransom* availed the blood! When the apostle Paul wrote, ‘Now that you have come to know God, *or rather to be known by God*’, he was reminding us that the ransom price was necessary to bring us back from the land of forgetfulness; that is, from death itself.

References:

Heb 9:15 Col 1:18
 Rev 1:5-6 Luk 22:42
 Gal 4:9
 Mat 20:25-28

Further Study

Isa 53

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 21

Purchased from among men

We will consider three elements of 'ransom'. Firstly, it is the blood of the Lamb applied to the doorposts and lintel. This is the blood of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God. Secondly, it is the price of all the firstborn Egyptian lives lost as part of the nation of Israel's deliverance from incarceration. And thirdly, it is the ongoing commitment to ransom from every house, in every year.

The apostle Peter reminds us that we were not ransomed with perishable things like silver or gold, but with precious blood as of a Lamb, the blood of Christ. The blood of the Lamb was the singular price paid to make you the possession of God the Father and the Son. When we read of the one hundred and forty-four thousand in Revelation chapter fourteen, we note that they have been purchased from among men for God as firstfruits. And in Revelation chapter five, the testimony of the four living ones, and the twenty-four, is that the Lamb purchased men for God, by His blood.

Also in the book of Revelation is the interesting description of those purchased from the earth singing 'the song of Moses, the slave of God'. We could ask, 'Why the song of Moses?' This was the song of deliverance the nation of Israel sang as they passed through the Red Sea. The song of Moses is the testimony of those who have come out of the slavery of sin, and into the house of God as slaves of righteousness. The lesson we learn when God ransomed the nation of Israel from Egypt is that a price was paid. And the price of the ransom was *the life of the One ransoming*. Nevertheless, the process of being ransomed is going to cost *the life of the one being ransomed!*

References:

Isa 43:3 Joh 1:29, 36
 1Pe 1:18-19 Tit 2:14
 Rev 14:3 Rev 5:8-9
 Rev 15:3 Exo 15:1-18
 Exo 12:7, 22-23

Further Study

Rev 15

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 22

Egypt as your ransom price

When the nation of Israel was ransomed from the house of slavery in Egypt, there was a price paid by the Egyptians. The Lord declared through Isaiah the prophet, 'I have given Egypt as your ransom'. There are two sides to the action of the angel of death moving throughout Egypt at the first Passover. The angel of death passed over every house that had taken and applied the ransom price, the blood of a lamb. But everyone outside of the house - that is, all of the lives of the firstborn Egyptians who were lost - became part of the ransom price to deliver Israel from their incarceration. The Scripture accounts, 'There was a great cry in Egypt, for there was no home where there was not someone dead'.

This establishes the principle of eternal judgement. Anyone who is not part of the house of God, ultimately, becomes part of the ransom price. They are simply suffering the *consequences* of life outside the house. We note this same sentiment in the parable of the wedding feast, where those who were called to come into the house, instead 'paid no attention and went their way'. The king responded by saying to his slaves (those who had negotiated the ransom price paid for their place in the house), 'Those who were invited were not worthy'. Accordingly, the slaves went out and called as many as they found to come and partake of the wedding feast. We can only conclude that the price paid for those who were called and invited on the second occasion, was the place forfeited by those who refused to come into the house on the first occasion. Every person who does not obey the gospel becomes part of the ransom price for the lives of those who respond and are saved.

References:

Isa 43:3
Mic 6:4
Mat 22:5, 8
Exo 12:29-30

Further Study

Exo 12

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 23

The continuance of the ransom

The book of Exodus accounts that when a census of the sons of Israel was taken, 'Each one of them shall give a ransom for himself to the Lord ... so that there will be no plague among them'. We take note that the nature of this offering, the half shekel according to the shekel of the sanctuary, was not voluntary. The unnegotiable, compulsory nature of this offering symbolises the *continuance of the ransom*, taken by those who had become slaves in the house of God. It was the statement of the continual commitment of every member in the house to remember that they *were* slaves, and were *still* slaves. They were previously slaves in Egypt and they were now slaves of the Lord of hosts.

We can transpose the imperative of this *ongoing commitment* to the working of the cross in our lives. Having taken the blood of Christ, who gave Himself a ransom for many, we must deny ourselves, and take up our cross daily if we wish to follow after Him. The decision to deny ourselves is our commitment to reveal the Master, as His slaves. And 'taking up our cross daily' means we are keeping the work of our slavehood before our eyes. If we desire to continue being numbered as part of the ransomed of the Lord, then we must accept the *ongoing cost* of being a slave. The apostle Paul testified, 'I die daily'.

We need to ask ourselves, are we keeping the Feast of Passover? Are we keeping the Feast of Unleavened Bread? And are we continually committed to purging leaven from our houses? Is our *culture* to purge leaven? If it is, then we have embraced the culture of the house of the God.

References:

Exo 30:12, 15 Luk 9:23
Exo 38:26 1Co 15:31
1Co 5:7-8

Further Study

Gal 2

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 24

Illumination is only given to slaves

The book of Revelation opens with the statement, 'The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His slaves'. This is an absolutely fundamental proposition with respect to illumination. Jesus Christ gives revelation, He gives illumination, He gives insight, *only to slaves*. We do not receive illumination because of the ransom paid. We were *loosed* and *delivered* by the ransom. And then, as we proceed in slavehood, we receive illumination. Failing to recognise this distinction was the problem for many of the Israelites of old. When they came up out of Egypt, they had appropriated the blood of ransom and found deliverance from slavery; but they did not embrace their slavehood to God. They grumbled and complained as they journeyed through the wilderness; hence, they did not receive any illumination concerning what the Lord was doing. They did not understand that the Lord of hosts was bringing them into a land flowing with milk and honey so that they could bring forth the fruit of their sonship.

Jesus said, 'No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you'. The privilege of this illumination is the amazing honour and dignity bestowed upon a slave in the Lord's house. Abraham was 'called the friend of God' for this very reason. He was a slave to whom the Lord progressively revealed His eternal purpose for mankind. If you want to know what the Lord is doing, do not depart from being one who is enslaved to God. This will mean you are a slave among your brethren, the friends of Christ, in the specific and definitive work of your slavehood in His house.

References:

Rev 1:1

Num 14:2

Exo 3:8

Jas 2:23

Joh 15:15

Further Study

Rev 1

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 27

Obedience to the covenant

The condition upon the deliverance of the children of Israel, coming up out of Egypt, was obedience to what the Lord calls 'My Covenant'. The Lord said to them, 'If you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine'. Our participation is in the Everlasting Covenant, but our obedience is fundamentally to the Covenant of Yahweh. It is the Covenant of Yahweh that reveals the fundamental nature of Their life and fellowship. It reveals the fellowship of offering between Father, Son and Holy Spirit; the fellowship of laying life down, emptying, and revealing another. These are the fundamental parameters of the Covenant of Yahweh. And this is what love is!

The apostle John declared, 'The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love'. And equally he said, 'By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments'. Like the nation of Israel, we must obey His voice and keep His Covenant. Our capacity to love and obey - that is, to be a love-slave - is founded upon the proposition that we have accepted the ransom price paid for us. But more than this, it means that we have accepted the *conditions* of that ransom. If we will not be a slave, we have not appropriated the conditions of ransom; therefore, we *cannot* be a Christian. The apostle Paul understood the conditions of the ransom when he said, 'Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel'. He did not mean, 'Woe to me; I will be full of woe and sadness'. He meant, 'Woe to me; I am under the *judgement* of the ransom price if I do not fulfil the condition of the ransom'.

References:

Exo 19:5 Eze 16:60
 1Jn 4:8 1Jn 2:3
 Joh 15:13 1Co 9:16

Further Study

1Jn 2

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 28

Activating the covenant

The process of redemption as it applied to Israel was not just the purchase price of those who were in captivity in the house of slavery. It was the activation of the whole covenant process of Yahweh by which He would now recover the names of His foreknown kin; that is, the names of a multitude of sons written in the Lamb's book of life. Remember, it was within the fellowship of the covenant of Yahweh that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit discussed our names and the works of our sonship. Ultimately, our obedience is to our name discussed in that covenant.

The process of recovering us, and recovering us to our name written in the Lamb's book of life, is the activity of the covenant in ransom. The ransom price activates the Covenant of Yahweh toward us, which is the covenant that He established with Abraham as an Everlasting Covenant. We recall the Lord said to Abraham, 'I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you'. Further to this, we read in the book of Isaiah that the Lord 'redeemed Abraham concerning the house of Jacob'.

When the blood was being applied to the doorposts of all the houses of the Israelites in Egypt, all of those people were being ransomed and delivered to be redeemed. The Lord was recovering the 'house of Jacob' that went down into Egypt according to the redemption promised to Abraham. The life of every firstborn son in Egypt was part of the ransom price. But more than this, the covenant was being activated and Yahweh was saying, 'Israel is My son ... let My son go free'.

References:

Rev 13:7-8 Rev 20:12
Gen 17:7 Isa 29:22
Exo 4:23-24

Further Study

Heb 9

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 29

Our unique slavehood

The apostle Paul began his letter to the Philippians, ‘Paul and Timothy, *slaves* of Jesus Christ’. He introduced at least half of his letters with a statement concerning his slavehood. Paul does it, Peter does it, Titus does it, and James does it. They all call themselves ‘slaves of Jesus Christ’. They had been sent as slaves with a unique grace to do a particular work. In all of Jesus’ parables, whenever He spoke of those who are sent to do His work, He nominated them as ‘slaves’. He sent slaves to bring in the harvest. He sent slaves to *call all* who had been named *before* in the covenant, to come down to the wedding feast. This is the work of what we could call a ‘messenger-slave’ or a ‘slave-proclaimer’.

Likewise, in all the parables, Jesus spoke of giving gifts to slaves. Not every slave has the same work. Grace is given to each slave for the unique work that is being given to them according to their name. This grace never belongs to them. It belongs to Christ, but it is given to them to steward in His house for the sake of others. Jesus said, ‘Whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your deacon, and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be the slave of all’.

Each one of us has a unique and particular slavehood in the administration of Christ. In the first case, this slavehood is against our will. Paul testified, ‘If I do this willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have been entrusted with a stewardship’. Your *slavehood* is leading you to a stewardship. It means that you have joined the faith of Jesus Christ in the garden of Gethsemane, when He said to the Father, ‘Not My will, but *Yours* be done’.

References:

Luk 22:42 1Co 9:16-17
 Php 1:1 Mat 22:8
 Mat 21:34
 Mar 10:43-44
 Mat 25:14-15

Further Study

Rom 12

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 30

His slaves will priest Him forever

We need to encourage one another toward the function of our priesthood. Nevertheless, if we are not slaves then we have no access to the house of God as a priest. We are reminded of the words of the Lord to Joshua the high priest, 'If you walk in My ways, and if you will keep My command ... I will give you places to walk among these who stand here'. The apostle Paul admonishes us, 'Present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead'; that is, as those who have been ransomed by the Lord. He continued by saying that this will involve presenting ourselves to *someone* as a slave for obedience. Our slavehood must have real and tangible relational implications; otherwise, it is merely an illusion.

When we present our bodies as a living and holy sacrifice, in the place where the Lord has planted us, we begin receiving grace for our particular work in the body of Christ. By this means, we are proving the good, acceptable and perfect will of God. As we are faithful in that which is least, and faithful in that which belongs to another, we begin to understand the nature of our name and work for eternity. It is important to remember that our priestly work in this age, as slaves of God, is training us for the age to come. In the end of the book of Revelation, the apostle John declared that 'His slaves will priest Him' forever. This is our work for the new heavens and new earth. The Scripture clearly reveals that our slavehood is an eternal reality. It is not merely a means to an end. Our slavehood is the foundation of our eternal priesthood as sons of God according to the order of Melchizedek.

References:

Zec 3:7 Rom 6:13-16
Rom 12:1-2 Luk 16:10, 12
Rev 22:3 Rev 7:15-17

Further Study

Rev 22

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 31