



Rev

Adult Education Lesson

Humility - being humble Philippians 2:5-11

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Phi 2:5-11



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Much of this tract is commentary - don't take it as Gospel. It is here to encourage meditation and study. Use your gift of discernment, to find the truth.

As humble as a Slave

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: [here follows the prayer]

Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a **servant**, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:

That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

(Phillips NT) Let your attitude to life be that of Christ Jesus himself. For he, who had always been God by nature, did not cling to his privileges as God's equal, but stripped himself of every advantage by consenting to be a **slave** by nature and being born a man. And, plainly seen as a human being, he humbled himself by living "a life of utter obedience, to the point of death, and the death he died was the death of a common criminal. That is why God has now lifted him to the heights, and has given him the name beyond all names, so that at the name of Jesus "every knee shall bow" whether in Heaven or earth or under the earth. And that is why "every tongue shall confess" that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Servant
1401. δουλος doulous doo'-los; from [1210](#); a **slave** (literal or figurative, involuntary or voluntary; frequently, therefore in a qualified sense of subjection or subserviency):--bond(-man), servant.

J.B. Philips (below) translates it as slave, which keeps the meaning better, as *servant* also is used for the King's governmental officials, and of other wealthy people in the employ of a ruler.

The servant is in the employ of the master, and he can leave any time, switch allegiance etc. A slave belongs to his master, and his allegiance is to his master alone. He may become very intimate with his master's affairs, and very important to his master's plans. (see page 2)

In St. Paul's theology, a servant is described as someone who has no idea what is the purpose behind his master's actions, whereas a friend does. So, he considers it better to be a friend to God than a servant to God.

The KJV never uses the word **slave**. for a person! This despite the fact that in some places 30% of Christians were slaves.

Whereas in the NKJV slave occurs 31 times. And in the NRSV it occurs 142 times.

Bibles that translate δουλος as *slave*

NKJV but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a **bondservant**, and coming in the likeness of men.

NRSV but emptied himself, taking the form of a **slave**, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form,

Philips NT 1972 but stripped himself of every advantage by consenting to be a **slave** by nature and being born a man.

NASB 1995 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a **bond-servant**, and being made in the likeness of men.

NAB (Papal approval) ... taking the form of a **slave** ...

Vulgate (transl.) ... taking the nature of a **slave** ...

The idea of being a "servant or minister of God" would not express that, for this is a term which might be applied to the highest angel in heaven. (Barnes notes)

... the Son took the 'form of a servant,' or 'slave.' (J.A. Beet).

You know that I prefer the KJV translation most of the time, but here is a good example of where the translators used the wrong word and caused readers to misunderstand the text. The RSV followed the lead of the KJV and has the same error. The Vulgate was correctly translated c. A.D. 450, and the later Catholic Bibles followed this, but the Protestant Bibles contained the error from the publication of the KJV. It went uncorrected until the publication of the Philips NT in 1948. You should discuss the difference in meaning between the two English words. Perhaps you will see more clearly how Jesus expected his 1st. c. converts to behave.

We look at Philippians 2:5-11, where the KJV/RSV use "**servant**" for the translation of the Greek δουλος (**doulos**)

For some reason the KJV and the RSV which follows it, never use the word **slave** in reference to a person, and avoids also "bond servant".

Jesus, according to the earliest theologians in the 3rd. c. and according to the Church in the 5th c. was both human, and divine. Yet He relinquished his godly power, in order to become like man ^A, except he has a divine nature and is without sin. He often said that He could do nothing without the Father, and He wanted us to understand that we are also totally dependent on the Father. This is the sense of the meaning of **slave**, who waits **patiently** for the master's instruction.

The NJBC (see book ref. below) has: "Christ freely rendered himself powerless, exactly as a slave is powerless, adopting the condition of a slave." (P 794 - 48:21)

^A ...the Eternal Son entered a life subject to human limitations; and that in order to do this, while retaining in full exercise the infinite love which is the essence of God and which could not be even for a moment inoperative, the Son deliberately laid aside, by an influence upon Himself which no creature can exert, the full exercise of His divine powers, thus permitting them to become for a time latent. (J.A. Beet Commentaries)

Why did the KJV and the RSV avoid any mention of a slave, or bond servant, yet the word slave occurs 31 times in the NKJV and 142 times in the NRSV?

Someone else has thought of this - here are his comments

One example of this, is the word 'ebed'. This Hebrew word means 'slave', and is equivalent to the Greek word 'doulos' in the New Testament. Now, despite their clear meaning in the Hebrew and Greek lexicons, the actual word 'slave' is found only one time in the entire Old Testament, and nowhere in the New Testament; ...

Why is this? Might it have something to do with the fact that England was heavily involved in slave trade, and so using the correct word 'slave' might have been a bit offensive to King James? In other words, 'We all know that we practice slavery, but let's use a softer, more polite word in our translation, in order to not offend the king'. From: <http://www.endtimeprophecy.net/EPN-1/Articles/Articles-AKJV/kjvhist2.html>

And another comment from a dictionary

However, the Hebrew word `ebhedh, in the Old Testament and the Greek word doulos, in the New Testament more properly might have been translated "slave" instead of "servant" or "bondservant," understanding though that the slavery of Judaism was not the cruel system of Greece, Rome, and later nations. The prime thought is service; the servant may render free service, the slave, obligatory, restricted service.

<http://www.searchgodsword.org/enc/isb/view.cgi?number=T82>
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Re:slaves being important to the master

A chance to rise was allowable in some instances, e.g. Eliezer, a foreign slave in a Hebrew household, and Joseph, a Hebrew slave in a foreign household. Each rose to a place of honor and usefulness (Genesis 15:2; 39:4).

Other references regarding slavery in the 1st. c.

Nowack, Hebrew Arch.; Ewald, Alterthumer, III, 280-88; Grunfeld, Die Stellung des Sklaven bei den Juden, nach bibl. und talmud. Quellen, 1886; Mielziner, Die Verhältnisse der Sklaven bei den alter Hebrdern, 1859; Mandl, Das Sklavenrecht des Altes Testament, 1886; Kahn, L'esclavagedans la Bible et le Talmud, 1867; Sayce, Social Life among the Assyrians and Babylonians; Lane, Manners and Customs of Modern Egyptians, 205; Arabian Nights, I, 64; Thomson, LB; McCurdy, HPM, 1894; Trumbull, Studies in Oriental Social Life, 1894. There is a wealth of material in the Talmudic tractate Kiddushin (pp. 17-22).

And From:http://lastdaysministry.com/slaves_of_christ.htm

Much misapprehension of the truth that Christians are slaves of Christ could have been avoided if the translators of the King James Version had correctly translated the Greek noun doulos "slave" instead of "servant." The NASB renders doulos "slave" or "slaves" more than ninety times, and "servant" only once. The King James II Version (KJVIV) renders doulos "slave" in virtually every case.

Paul wrote, "They which live should not...live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them..." (2 Cor. 5:15). And according to the KJVIV, we can see Paul's view in this regard in his greetings to various churches: To the Romans, "Paul, a slave of Jesus Christ" (Rm. 1:1). And to the Philippians, "Paul and Timothy, slaves of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:1). And to Titus, "Paul, a slave and an apostle of Jesus Christ" (Titus 1:1).

Paul and Timothy were not the only ones who saw themselves as slaves of Christ. Again, in the KJVIV, James wrote, "James, a slave of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ" (James 1:1). Also, the apostle Peter wrote, "Simon Peter, a slave of Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 1:1).

I think, but have not the time to research it just now, that in the 1500's the slave trade was under heavy criticism by the English Parliament, and so as not to lend any support for this type of business, nor provide anyone with a biblical statement about slavery that might be used to justify the continuing use of slaves; the committee for the KJV under advice from the Crown, perhaps, undertook to freely translate the Hebrew and Greek word for slave into the word "servant".

Much before, the Council of London, in 1102 passed this law. 27. Let no one presume for the future to enter into that nefarious business by which they were accustomed hitherto to sell men like brute animals in England.

4. Rights of Slaves:

Hebrew slaves fared far better than the Grecian, Roman and other slaves of later years. In general, the treatment they received and the rights they could claim made their lot reasonably good. Of course a slave was a slave, and there were masters who disobeyed God and even abused their "brothers in bonds." As usual the unfortunate female slave got the full measure of inhuman cruelty. Certain rights were discretionary, it is true, but many Hebrew slaves enjoyed valuable individual and social privileges. As far as Scripture statements throw light on this subject, the slaves of Old Testament times might claim the following rights, namely:

(1) Freedom.

Freedom might be gained in any one of the above-mentioned ways or at the master's will. The non-Hebrew could be held as a slave in perpetuity (Leviticus 25:44-46).

(2) Good Treatment.

"Thou shalt not rule over him (Hebrew slave) with rigor, but shalt fear thy God. Ye shall not rule, one over another, with rigor" (Leviticus 25:43,46). The non-Hebrew seemed to be left unprotected.

(3) Justice.

An ancient writer raises the query of fairness to slaves. "If I have despised the cause of my man-servant or of my maid-servant, when they contended with me; what then shall I do when God riseth up?" (Job 31:13). No doubt the true Hebrew master was considerate of the rights of his slaves. The very fact, however, that the Hebrew master could punish a Hebrew slave, "to within an inch of his life," gave ready opportunity for sham justice. "And if a man smite his servant, or his maid ("bondman or bondwoman"), with a rod, and he die under his hand; he shall surely be punished. Notwithstanding, if he continue a day or two, he shall not be punished; for he is his money" (Exodus 21:20).

(4) Family.

The slave before his release might have his wife and children (Exodus 21:5).

(5) Voluntary Slavery.

Even when the seventh year came, the slave had a right to pledge himself, with awl-pierced ear, to perpetual service for his master (Exodus 21:5; Deuteronomy 15:16). The traditional interpretation of "forever" in these passages is "until the next Jubilee year" (compare Kiddushin 21).

(6) Money or Property.

Some cases at least indicate that slaves could have money of their own. Thus, if a poor slave "waxed rich" he could redeem himself (Leviticus 25:49). Compare 1 Samuel 9:5-10, where, however, the Hebrew throughout calls the "servant" na`ar, "a youth," never `ebhedh.

(7) Children.

If married when free, the slave could take wife and children with him when freedom came, but if he was married after becoming a slave, his wife and children must remain in possession of his master. This law led him often into perpetual slavery (Exodus 21:3).

(8) Elevation.

A chance to rise was allowable in some instances, e.g. Eliezer, a foreign slave in a Hebrew household, and Joseph, a Hebrew slave in a foreign household. Each rose to a place of honor and usefulness (Genesis 15:2; 39:4).

(9) Religious Worship.

After being circumcised, slaves were allowed to participate in the paschal sacrifice (Exodus 12:44) and other religious occasions (Deuteronomy 12:12).

References

(10) Gifts.

Upon obtaining freedom, slaves, at the discretion of masters, were given supplies of cattle, grain and wine (Deuteronomy 15:13).

5. Rights of Slave Masters:

The rights of a slave master may briefly be stated as follows:

(1) to hold as chattel possession his non-Hebrew slaves (Leviticus 25:45);

(2) to leave such slaves as an inheritance for his children (Leviticus 25:46);

(3) to hold as his own property the wife and children of all slaves who were unmarried at the time they became slaves (Exodus 21:4);

(4) to pursue and recover runaway slaves (1 Kings 2:39-41);

(5) to grant freedom at any time to any slave. This is implied rather than stated. Emancipation other than at the Sabbatical and Jubilee years was evidently the right of masters;

(6) to circumcise slaves, both Jew and Gentile, within his own household (Genesis 17:13,23,27);

(7) to sell, give away, or trade slaves (Genesis 29:24. According to Torath Kohanim a Hebrew servant could be sold only under certain restrictions. See 1, (1));

(8) to chastise male and female slaves, though not unto death (Exodus 21:20);

(9) to marry a slave himself, or give his female slaves in marriage to others (1 Chronicles 2:35);

(10) to marry a daughter to a slave (1 Chronicles 2:34);

(11) to purchase slaves in foreign markets (Leviticus 25:44);

(12) to keep, though not as a slave, the runaway slave from a foreign master (Deuteronomy 23:15,16. See 3, (5));

Amori Christi et Ecclesiae –
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The Views expressed here are strictly those of the author and probably disagree with what you have previously thought. Read other commentaries - meditate on the original KJV.

References

From:
<http://www.searchgodsword.org/enc/isb/view.cgi?number=T8230>

(13) to enslave or sell a caught thief (Genesis 44:8-33; Exodus 22:3);

(14) to hold, in perpetuity, non-Hebrew slaves (Leviticus 25:46);

(15) to seek advice of slaves (1 Samuel 25:14; but the reference here is open to doubt. See 4, (6));

(16) to demand service (Genesis 14:14; 24).

Throughout Old Testament times the rights of both slaves and masters varied, but in general the above may be called the accepted code. In later times Zedekiah covenanted with the Hebrews never again to enslave their own brothers, but they broke the covenant (Jeremiah 34:8).

Recommended Books

ISBN

The New Jerome Biblical Commentary	Brown, Raymond	Prentice Hall	0-13-614934-0