

# Colossians 3:22-4:1

**3:22** – “Bondservants, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord.”

|          |          |            |          |           |            |          |              |          |          |          |   |      |    |
|----------|----------|------------|----------|-----------|------------|----------|--------------|----------|----------|----------|---|------|----|
| 3588 [e] | 1401 [e] | 5219 [e]   | 2596 [e] | 3956 [e]  | 3588 [e]   | 2596 [e] | 4561 [e]     | 2962 [e] | 3361 [e] | 1722 [e] |   |      |    |
| Hoi      | douloi   | hypakouete | kata     | panta     | tois       | kata     | sarka        | kyriois  | mē       | en       |   |      |    |
| 22       | Οἱ       | δοῦλοι     | ,        | ὑπακούετε | κατὰ       | πάντα    | τοῖς         | κατὰ     | σάρκα    | κυρίοις  | , | μὴ   | ἐν |
| -        | Slaves   | obey       |          | in        | all things | the      | according to | flesh    | masters  | not      |   | with |    |
| Art-VMP  | N-VMP    | V-PMA-2P   |          | Prep      | Adj-ANP    | Art-DMP  | Prep         | N-AFS    | N-DMP    | Adv      |   | Prep |    |

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| 3787 [e]           | 5613 [e] | 441 [e]        | 235 [e] | 1722 [e] | 572 [e]   | 2588 [e]  | 5399 [e]    | 3588 [e] | 2962 [e]    |         |        |   |
| ophthalmoudouliais | hōs      | anthrōpareskoi | all'    | en       | haplotēti | kardias   | phoboumenoi | ton      | Kyrion      |         |        |   |
| ὀφθαλμοδουλίαις    | ὡς       | ἀνθρωπάρεςκοι  | ,       | ἀλλ'     | ἐν        | ἀπλότητι  | καρδίας     | ,        | φοβούμενοι  | τὸν     | Κύριον | . |
| eye-services       | as       | men-pleasers   |         | but      | in        | sincerity | of heart    |          | fearing     | the     | Lord   |   |
| N-DFP              | Adv      | Adj-NMP        |         | Conj     | Prep      | N-DFS     | N-GFS       |          | V-PPM/P-NMP | Art-AMS | N-AMS  |   |

1. “slaves” is *douloi*. This word is often translated “servants”. It refers to someone who belongs to another and is without any ownership rights of their own.
2. They could be in total bondage as a result of being captive of war or as a result of debt, economics or politics.
3. Paul looks beyond their situation and urges slaves to live Christ like.
4. The largest section of verses are dedicated to slaves (3:22-25) possibly because:
  - a. Large number of believing slaves at Colosse
  - b. Onesimus (in the letter to Philemon) may have been one of many revolting/fleeing slaves
  - c. Onesimus’ escape may have encouraged others to behave the same
  - d. “obey” is *hypakouo* not “submit” *hypotasso*.
5. Clearly, many of the members of the believing community in Colosse were slaves because of the large portion of text written to them. Many of the new believing Christians were slaves and servants:
  - a. 1 Corinthians 1:26-29 – “For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.”
  - b. James 2:5 – “Listen, my beloved brothers: Has not God chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom He promised those who love Him?”
6. Slaves time in the service or believing community was a unique time in culture where they were considered equals, brothers.
7. Their commitment to the Lord Jesus did not erase their temporal standing as servants with masters in this world. But, they could now serve with a higher calling and a new divine view of their life now and their life eternal.
  - a. Christianity was not a revolutionary movement to overthrow the world, but to invade the world with the philosophy, the life and the morals of a coming world (age or kingdom).

- b. Christianity was about transformation of individuals which would cause transformation of pagan societies in the present age. But, Christianity would never completely conqueror in this age because of the world, the flesh and the devil. Total overthrow would take place when the Lord Jesus returned.
  - c. Christians were never to be treasonous, but at times they would have to choose between serving the God or serving the world.
    - i. Acts 25:8 – “Then Paul made his defense: “I have done nothing wrong against the Jewish law or against the temple or against Caesar.”
    - ii. Romans 13:1-7
    - iii. 1 Peter 2:13-17
    - iv. Acts 5:29 – “Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, “We ought to obey God rather than men.”
8. It is hard for the Western mind which is based in materialism, success and living your best life now to comprehend God’s concern for the inner man’s fellowship with God, preparation for eternity and conforming into the image of Jesus.
- a. Conforming into the image of Jesus is opposite the “world system” controlled by Satan and his values.
  - b. Satan knows this age is passing away. He knows that what he has now in this temporal kingdom will eventually be lost for all eternity:
    - Rev. 12:12 – “Therefore, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!”
9. Slaves have a new attitude. No longer motivated by the world system and human approval.
- a. *Ophthalmodoulia* is a compound of:
    - i. *Ophthalmos* = “eye”
    - ii. *Doulos* = “service”
  - b. “Fear of the Lord” – *phobeomai* – reverence for the Lord is now their motivation to serve in this age. Think of:
    - i. Joseph
    - ii. Daniel
    - iii. Onesimus

**3:23** – “Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men,”

- 1. Slaves have a new reference point: The Lord
- 2. The Lord is the ultimate master of all
- 3. Work was not done for men, but in obedience and worship of the Lord
- 4. “work” is in the imperative or the mood of command
- 5. Here the word for “heart” or “heartily” is *ek psuche* which means “out of soul” and most likely refers to the physical effort that is manifested from the soul working through the body. This is in contrast to the inner attitude of 3:22 “sincerity of heart.”

**3:24** – “knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.”

- 1. Slaves have a new level of reward. No longer temporal and of this passing world, but eternal and of the Kingdom of God.

2. “reward” is the same one referred to in 1:12 – “Giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light.”

**3:25** – “For the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done, and there is no partiality.”

1. Three types of motivation are given in 3:24-35
  - a. Reward – an inheritance from the Lord. Here the doctrine of eternal rewards gets some life application.
  - b. The Lord – the slave’s service on earth was service to the Lord Christ.
  - c. Retribution – there will be vindication for anything the slaves do wrong or in rebellion.
2. Who is this verse warning: Slaves or Masters? This verse ends the words to slaves, but may introduce the words to the masters.
  - a. “Anyone who does wrong” – clearly “anyone” means anyone anywhere at any time. But, in context:
    - i. Slaves – are responsible to do what is right in the eyes of the master on earth and in heaven
    - ii. Masters – are responsible to do what is right in the eyes of their slaves on earth and their master in heaven.
3. “There is no favoritism” –
  - a. On earth and in this current world system there is favoritism. And, the favoritism of this age can confuse and deceive the people of this age.
    - i. The morality of this age is not always aligned with eternal morality
    - ii. The last of this age will be first and the first of this age will be last.
    - iii. Acceptance, fame and legendary status in this age does not translate into acceptance, fame and legendary status in the age to come
  - b. Masters and slaves will be judged by the same standard with no concern for their worldly status. There will be no worldly favoritism transferred into the eternal judgment or the eternal kingdom.
  - c. In Ephesians 6:9 the phrase “there is no favoritism” is explicitly applied to the masters: “Masters, do the same to them, and stop your threatening, knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and that there is no partiality with him.”

**4:1** – “Masters, treat your bondservants justly and fairly, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.”

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| 3588 [e] | 2962 [e] | 3588 [e]   | 1342 [e]       | 2532 [e] | 3588 [e]   | 2471 [e]   | 3588 [e] | 1401 [e] |
| Hoi      | kyrioi   | to         | dikaion        | kai      | tēn        | isotēta    | tois     | doulois  |
| 1 Οἱ     | κύριοι   | , τὸ       | δίκαιον        | καὶ      | τὴν        | ἰσότητα    | , τοῖς   | δούλοις  |
| -        | Masters  | that which | [is] righteous | and      | that which | [is] equal | to the   | slaves   |
| Art-VMP  | N-VMP    | Art-ANS    | Adj-ANS        | Conj     | Art-AFS    | N-AFS      | Art-DMP  | N-DMP    |

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| 3930 [e]    | 1492 [e]  | 3754 [e] | 2532 [e] | 4771 [e] | 2192 [e] | 2962 [e] | 1722 [e] | 3772 [e] |
| parechesthe | eidotes   | hoti     | kai      | hymeis   | echete   | Kyrion   | en       | ouranō   |
| παρέχεσθε   | , εἰδότες | ὅτι      | καὶ      | ὑμεῖς    | ἔχετε    | Κύριον   | ἐν       | οὐρανῷ . |
| give        | knowing   | that     | also     | you      | have     | a Master | in       | heaven   |
| V-PMM-2P    | V-RPA-NMP | Conj     | Conj     | PPro-N2P | V-PIA-2P | N-AMS    | Prep     | N-DMS    |

1. “righteous” – *dikaion* – correct, righteous. Treatment that keeps you innocent. Especially, just in the eyes of God.
2. “equal” or “fair” – *isoteta* – equality, equality of treatment, fairness

1. The World, the flesh and the devil – Ephesians 2:2-3 -

“You were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience — among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.”

- a. The **Father** opposes the world – 1 John 2:15-17 – “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.”
  - b. **Holy Spirit** opposes the flesh – Galatians 5:16-17 – “I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.”
  - c. The **Son** opposes the devil – 1 John 3:8 – “Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.” (and, Luke 4)
2. Truth, and deception - 2 Thessalonians 2:11 – “Therefore God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false, in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”
  3. Suffering –
    - a. 1 Peter 3:8-22

- b. 1 Peter 4:12-17
- 4. Deliverance –
  - a. 1 Peter 5:6-11
  - b. 2 Timothy 4:15-18

John 16:33 – “I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”

1 John 5:5 – “Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?”