

Ephesians 6:5-9

Slavery

1. Civilizations of Mesopotamia, Anatolia, Syria, Canaan, Egypt and the Aegean world had slaves. But, none of these would be called a genuine slave society.
 - a. A slave society has slave position in every occupation and at all economic levels.
 - b. Athens (Greek world) and Imperial Rome were to become genuine slave societies.
2. The Ancient Near East had slaves for huge agricultural operations and temple complexes. Two or three household slaves for aristocratic home used mainly for work, performing arts and household duties. Assyria and Babylon began to use slaves for industrial reasons (weavers, leatherworkers, gem-cutters, bakers, etc.)
3. In the ANE some slaves had their own cylinder and stamp seals to conduct business in their own signature. Elite slaves could even own their own slaves.
4. 1750 Code of Hammurabi provides many rules concerning the lives of slaves including regulating slave sale, slave marriage, movement of slaves. Kidnapping nationals as slaves was forbidden. Slavery for bondage to debt was limited
5. In the OT:
 - a. Slaves were acquired as prisoners of war (Deut. 20:11-14; 21:10-14)
 - b. Abram, Isaac, Jacob, Job had slaves. Sarah had a slave. Jacob's wives had slaves
6. Slave revolts or rebellions are not attested in the Bible. Three are mentioned from Rome before the NT, but none from Assyria, Babylon, Persia, etc. in the Ancient Near East. There were no slaves who turned to become abolitionists. There were these events:
 - a. 135-132 BC in Sicily led by Eunus a former slave claiming to be a prophet along with Cleon from Cilicia.
 - b. 104-100 BC in Sicily led by Athenion and Tryphon
 - c. 73-71 BC on mainland Italy led by the gladiator Spartacus who led thousands of slaves in central Italy and defeated several Roman legions.
7. "In Rome and Italy, in the four centuries between 200 BC and 200 AD, perhaps a quarter or even a third of the population was made up of slaves. Over time millions of men, women, and children lived their lives in a state of legal and social non-existence with no rights of any kind."
8. Slavery in the Roman Empire:
 - a. Slavery in Athens was not relevant to the NT
 - b. Athens followed Aristotle who taught the theory of "natural slaves" which meant some people types were designed for slavery. This is called the slave "law of nature."
 - c. Rome followed the slave "law of nations" which was based on the Stoic philosophy that all humanity had a common ancestry. This argued that slavery arises out of national failure (that could be reversed at any time) not God's or fates law of nature (that was irreversible).
 - d. Race was not a factor. Rome had slaves from Britain, Greece, Israel, Ethiopia, Spain.
 - e. This is proved by the fact that the Roman senate once debated a bill that would distinguish slaves from free people by their required dress. Meaning slaves were not recognizable by their national or cultural appearance. This was defeated in the senate when they realized the danger of making the great number of slaves in Roman society so obvious.
 - f. The prevailing attitude to slavery during the NT was indifferent acceptance rarely considering an optional alternative. Any official discussion revolve around how slaves

should be treated (Seneca, Ep. 47). There was no government in existence that considered doing away with slavery and any kind of slave rebellion was not aimed at the abolishment of the institution of slavery.

9. A slaves household experience or time in labor depended on the individual master.

10. Slavery verses:

- a. Parables of Jesus often included slaves and servants without questioning the morality of the position. In fact the slave in the parable was often the example of being the good and faithful slave or being the lazy and worthless slave
- b. **1 Timothy 1:10** considers slave traders as lawless -
“the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, **enslavers** (*this word refers to those who take someone captive in order to sell them into slavery*) liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine
- c. **Revelation 18:11-13** identifies the slave trade as immoral and a sin of the Babylonian world system whose fall is announced:
“And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn for her, since no one buys their cargo anymore, cargo of gold, silver, jewels, pearls, fine linen, purple cloth, silk, scarlet cloth, all kinds of scented wood, all kinds of articles of ivory, all kinds of articles of costly wood, bronze, iron and marble, cinnamon, spice, incense, myrrh, frankincense, wine, oil, fine flour, wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and chariots, and **slaves**, that is, **human souls** (or, “*slaves and human lives*”).”
- d. **Acts 16:16-21** – the slave girl
- e. **1 Corinthians 12:13** – “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.”
- f. **1 Corinthians 7:20-24** – “Each man must remain in that condition in which he was called. Were you called while a slave? Do not worry about it; but if you are able also to become free, rather do that. For he who was called in the Lord while a slave, is the Lord's freedman; likewise he who was called while free, is Christ's slave.”
- g. **1 Timothy 6:1-2** – “All who are under the yoke as slaves are to regard their own masters as worthy of all honor so that the name of God and our doctrine will not be spoken against. Those who have believers as their masters must not be disrespectful to them because they are brethren, but must serve them all the more, because those who partake of the benefit are believers and beloved Teach and preach these principles.”
- h. **Titus 2:9-10** – “Urge bondslaves to be subject to their own masters in everything, to be well-pleasing, not argumentative, not pilfering, but showing all good faith so that they will adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect.”
- i. **1 Peter 18-21** – “Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable. For this finds favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God a person bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly. For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God

Comments on Ephesians 6:5-9

- This is the third set of household pairs addressed:
 - Husbands and wives
 - Parents and children

- Masters and slaves
- These are descriptions of how the believer can live in wisdom (5:15-20) and produce the life that results from being filled with the Holy Spirit (5:18)
- Parallel in Colossians 3:22-25 and 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.
 - 3:23 - Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men,
 - 3:24 - knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.
 - 3:25 - For the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done, and there is no partiality.
 - 4:1 - Masters, treat your bondservants justly and fairly, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.”
- There are four descriptions of the service the slave is to provide for their “earthly masters”
 - “with fear and trembling in sincerity”
 - “not serving the eye as pleasing men”
 - “doing the will of God”
 - “wholeheartedly”
- and each of the directions is followed by a comparison which involves “as to Christ”, “as slaves of Christ”, “as serving the Lord”
- Slaves receive more instruction than the Masters. This may reflect the social conditions in the first century church. There may have been more believing slaves than believing masters.
 - 1 Peter 2:18-3:7 (household instructions) supports this because slaves are taught and encouraged, but the masters are completely ignored.
- Paul was not supporting slavery or making a stand against slavery, but addressing the current situation with the Word of God. He focused on freedom in Christ (Col. 3:11) and the social responsibility the slave has at that time (1 Cor. 7:21-24)
- These household instructional formulas were common in the Hellenistic world and the world of Judaism, but Paul’s household tables of information Christianize the material and actually addresses the slaves (the children, and the women). Traditionally the instruction was focused on the man and the master concerning how they should rule.
- There is a deliberate contrast with the use of the word *kurios* or “master”, “lord”. There is the earthly *kurios* and the heavenly *kurios*.

Ephesians 6:5 – **“Bondservants, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ,**

3588 [e]	1401 [e]	5219 [e]	3588 [e]	2596 [e]	4561 [e]	2962 [e]	3326 [e]	5401 [e]	2532 [e]
Hoi	douloi	hypakouete	tois	kata	sarka	kyriois	meta	phobou	kai
5 Οἱ	δοῦλοι	, ὑπακούετε	τοῖς	κατὰ	σάρκα	κυρίοις	μετὰ	φόβου	καὶ
-	Slaves	obey	the	according to	flesh	masters	with	fear	and
Art-VMP	N-VMP	V-PMA-2P	Art-DMP	Prep	N-AFS	N-DMP	Prep	N-GMS	Conj

5156 [e]	1722 [e]	572 [e]	3588 [e]	2588 [e]	4771 [e]	5613 [e]	3588 [e]	5547 [e]
tromou	en	haplotēti	tēs	kardias	hymōn	hōs	tō	Christō
τρόμου	, ἐν	ἀπλότητι	τῆς	καρδίας	ὑμῶν	, ὡς	τῷ	Χριστῷ
trembling	in	sincerity	of the	heart	of you	as	to	Christ
N-GMS	Prep	N-DFS	Art-GFS	N-GFS	PPro-G2P	Adv	Art-DMS	N-DMS

1. “Slaves” or “bondservants” translates *douloi* is plural form of **doulos** which means “slave”. Used as an adjective it means “enslaved”; used as a noun it means “a (male) slave”, but is used to refer to both male and female slaves. *Doulos* is:
 - a. someone who belongs to another
 - b. Bond-slave without any ownership rights of their own
 - c. Used to refer to believers in the NT who willingly live under Christ’s authority as a devoted follower.
2. “Obey” translates *hypakouete* comes from the combination of the words **hupo** meaning “under”, “by” and **akouo** meaning “to hear”, “to listen”. Together the word means to be under authority that you listen to, so *hypakouete* means “to listen” “to attend to” and is used to say “listen”, “hearken to”, “obey”, or “answer”
3. “according to flesh masters” refers to human masters in society at this time. This is in contrast with the master that is in heaven in 6:6.

Ephesians 6:6 – **“not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart,**

3361 [e]	2596 [e]	3787 [e]	5613 [e]	441 [e]	235 [e]	5613 [e]	1401 [e]
mē	kat’	ophthalmoudoulian	hōs	anthrōpareskoi	all’	hōs	douloi
6 μὴ	κατ’	ὀφθαλμοδουλίαν	ὡς	ἀνθρωπάρεςκοι	, ἀλλ’	ὡς	δοῦλοι
not	with	eye-service	as	men-pleasers	but	as	servants of
Adv	Prep	N-AFS	Adv	Adj-NMP	Conj	Adv	N-NMP

5547 [e]	4160 [e]	3588 [e]	2307 [e]	3588 [e]	2316 [e]	1537 [e]	5590 [e]
Christou	poiountes	to	thelēma	toū	Theou	ek	psychēs
Χριστοῦ	, ποιοῦντες	τὸ	θέλημα	τοῦ	Θεοῦ	ἐκ	ψυχῆς
Christ	doing	the	will	-	of God	from	[the] heart
N-GMS	V-PPA-NMP	Art-ANS	N-ANS	Art-GMS	N-GMS	Prep	N-GFS

Ephesians 6:7 – **“rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man,**

3326 [e]	2133 [e]	1398 [e]		5613 [e]	3588 [e]	2962 [e]	2532 [e]	3756 [e]	444 [e]
met'	eunoias	douleuontes		hōs	tō	Kyriō	kai	ouk	anthrōpois
7 μετ'	εὐνοίας	δουλεύοντες	,	ὡς	τῷ	Κυρίῳ	καὶ	οὐκ	ἄνθρωποις
with	good will	rendering service		as	to the	Lord	and	not	to men
Prep	N-GFS	V-PPA-NMP		Adv	Art-DMS	N-DMS	Conj	Adv	N-DMP

Ephesians 6:8 – “**knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a bondservant or is free.**”

1492 [e]	3754 [e]	1538 [e]		1437 [e]	5100 [e]	4160 [e]		18 [e]	3778 [e]
eidotes	hoti	hekastos		ean	ti	poiēsē		agathon	touto
8 εἰδότες	ὅτι	ἕκαστος	,	ἐάν	τι	ποιήσῃ		ἀγαθόν	, τοῦτο
knowing	that	each one		if	whatever	he might have done		good	this
V-RPA-NMP	Conj	Adj-NMS		Conj	IPro-ANS	V-ASA-3S		Adj-ANS	DPro-ANS

2865 [e]		3844 [e]	2962 [e]	1535 [e]	1401 [e]	1535 [e]	1658 [e]
komisetai		para	Kyriou	eite	doulos	eite	eleutheros
κομίζεται		παρὰ	Κυρίου	, εἴτε	δοῦλος	εἴτε	ἐλεύθερος
he will receive [back]		from	[the] Lord	, whether	slave	or	free
V-FIM-3S		Prep	N-GMS	Conj	N-NMS	Conj	Adj-NMS

Ephesians 6:9 – “**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.**”

2532 [e]	3588 [e]	2962 [e]	3588 [e]	846 [e]	4160 [e]	4314 [e]	846 [e]	447 [e]
Kai	hoi	kyrioi	ta	auta	poieite	pros	autous	anientes
9 Καὶ	οἱ	κύριοι	, τὰ	αὐτὰ	ποιεῖτε	πρὸς	αὐτούς	, ἀνιέντες
And	-	masters	the same things	them	do	toward	them	giving up
Conj	Art-VMP	N-VMP	Art-ANP	PPro-AN3P	V-PMA-2P	Prep	PPro-AM3P	V-PPA-NMP

3588 [e]	547 [e]		1492 [e]	3754 [e]	2532 [e]	846 [e]	2532 [e]	4771 [e]	3588 [e]	2962 [e]	1510 [e]
tēn	apeilēn		eidotes	hoti	kai	autōn	kai	hymōn	ho	Kyrios	estin
τὴν	ἀπειλήν	,	εἰδότες	ὅτι	καὶ	αὐτῶν	καὶ	ὑμῶν	ὁ	Κύριός	ἐστίν
the	threatening		knowing	that	also	of them	and	of you	the	master	is
Art-AFS	N-AFS		V-RPA-NMP	Conj	Conj	PPro-GM3P	Conj	PPro-G2P	Art-NMS	N-NMS	V-PIA-3S

1722 [e]	3772 [e]		2532 [e]	4382 [e]		3756 [e]	1510 [e]	3844 [e]	846 [e]
en	ouranois		kai	prosōpolēmpsia		ouk	estin	par'	autō
ἐν	οὐρανοῖς	,	καὶ	προσωποληψία		οὐκ	ἔστιν	παρ'	αὐτῷ
in	[the] heavens		and	partiality		not	there is	with	Him
Prep	N-DMP		Conj	N-NFS		Adv	V-PIA-3S	Prep	PPro-DM3S

Rebellion

- **Acts 4:19-20** – “But Peter and John answered them, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge, for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.”
- **Acts 5:29** – “We ought to obey God rather than men.”
- **John 19:10-11** – “So Pilate said to him, “You will not speak to me? Do you not know that I have authority to release you and authority to crucify you?” Jesus answered him, “You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above. Therefore he who delivered me over to you has the greater sin.”
- **Exodus 1:15-17** – “Then the king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was named Shiphrah and the other Puah, “When you serve as midwife to the Hebrew women and see them on the birth stool, if it is a son, you shall kill him, but if it is a daughter, she shall live.” But the midwives feared God and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but let the male children live.
- **Daniel 6:10** – “Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before.”
- **Daniel 3:14-18** – “Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.”
- **Hebrews 11** is filled with heroes who were involved with overthrowing oppressive situations

Obey Government

- **Mark 12:17** – “Jesus said to them, “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.” And they marveled at him.”
- **Romans 13:1-7**
- **1 Timothy 2:1-3** – “First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior.”
- **Titus 3:1** – “Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work.”
- **1 Peter 2:13-14** – “Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good.”