

Sermon Handout
Slavery and the Bible
Exodus 21:2-11

- I.** Slavery among the pagan nations
Endemic in Africa, N. America, Meso-America and elsewhere
Frequently based on ethnicity (tribes raiding other tribes)
The sons of Jacob were perpetual slaves in Egypt
Slave trade in Africa, esp. to Moslems (very ancient)
Europe became involved later, including Caribbean & N. America
- II.** Israel forbidden to take slaves by theft or in perpetuity Ex 21:16; 21:2; Dt 15:12-15
- a. Kidnapping for slavery was a capital crime Ex 21:16
 - b. Temporary servitude for debt Lev 25:39-42; Ex 22:3; Dt 15:12a; Ex 21:2
Exception: pagan aliens (from war) can be held for life Lev 25:44-46
 - c. Freedom in the 7th year & at Jubilee Ex 21:2; Dt 15:12-15; Jer 34:13-14
Release w/o wife & children (v. 4) – his 7 years up before his wife’s
Applies also to those sold to pagans & redeemed Lev 25:47-52
 - d. **Voluntary** servitude for life is allowed Ex 21:5-6
Mutual oath involved; master incurs obligations as does the servant
- III.** Treatment of bondsmen – justice required
- a. They must not be mistreated Lev 25:46; Ex 21:20; Eph 6:9; Col 4:1
“Remember your own servitude” Ex 22:21; 23:9; Lev 19:33-34; Dt 10:17-19
Dt 24:14-15, 18 – “Thou shalt not oppress . . .”
Payment for damage to a servant is required Ex 21:26-27, 32 *cf.* v. 20
 - b. He is not to be sent out uncompensated 21:2; Dt 15:13-15; 24:14-15
If he chooses not to wait for his family, he shall be permanently employed
Options: wait or earn enough to buy her freedom (redemption)
 - c. Special provisions for female bondservants Ex 21:7-11 (*see* Prov 31:15-16)
 - i. Cannot be sold outside the household of faith nor released as men are
The latter is for her protection – not to be dumped “on the street”
 - ii. She has the status of wife/daughter – to the master or his son vv. 8-9
If she is not accepted – redeemed by her family (not sold to pagans)
 - iii. If she is not provided for, released to her family w/o payment v. 11