

PRINCIPLED PATRIARCH #22 – HEBREW RIGHTS

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There are many who demand their rights, today. An accomplished patriarch only claims the rights the heavenly Father has given him. An untrained patriarch will tend to demand rights that have never been given him to claim. This is not only selfish, but rebellious. God will never support a man who demands anything, let alone “his rights.”

Synonyms for rights are privilege, prerogative, and birthright. These nouns apply to something, such as a power or possession, to which one has an established claim. *Rights* refer to a legally, morally, or traditionally just claim, master, or servant. “An unconditional right to say what one pleases about public affairs is what I consider to be the minimum guarantee of the First Amendment” (Hugo L. Black).1  *Privilege* usually suggests a right not enjoyed or embraced by everyone. An example: Christians have rights over the dominion of darkness and all of its possessions. *Prerogative* denotes an exclusive right or privilege, as one based on custom, law, or office of mastery: It is my prerogative as to the one in authority to change my mind. A *birthright* is any right or privilege, to which one is entitled by birth, such as an estate descendible by law to an heir, or civil liberty under a free constitution. It may be used in the sense of primogeniture (the privilege of the firstborn), but is applicable to any right which results from descent or direct decision of a father.

This lesson will help us delineate the “rights” of a slave from the Hebrew legal, moral, and traditions, which God the Father imparted to His people. It is essential for all patriarchs to understand this, in order to claim what is rightfully theirs and not claim prerogatives the devil would have them claim. Before we do this, take a few moments and answer the following questions.

As noted in the original Hebrew text, the Hebrew slaves fared far better than the secular Grecian, Roman, and other slaves of later generations. In general, the treatment they received and the rights they could claim made their lot reasonably good. Keep in mind that 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 satanic inhuman cruelty. It is true that certain rights were discretionary, but many Hebrew slaves enjoyed valuable individual and social privileges.

In this lesson, we will parallel the rights of the Hebrew slave with the same rights God the Father gives us as “bondslaves” of His domain. A righteous slave had the prerogative to function freely within the boundaries set forth in the concepts and privileges of the heavenly Father.

Scripture sheds light on the subject of the slaves in Old Testament times possibly claiming the following rights, namely:

**Right # 1 – Freedom**

*Freedom* is the condition of being free of restraints. It is liberty for a slave who finds peace in the midst of oppression and the exemption from an unpleasant condition: freedom from want. It is the capacity to exercise choice (what the world calls “free will”), even while under unreasonable authority (1 Peter 2:18).

The bottom line of true freedom refers to the power to act, speak, or think without externally imposed restraints. Freedom is the most general term, but *liberty* stresses the power of free choice. *License* denotes deliberate deviation from normally applicable rules or practices to achieve a desired effect or desire. In God’s reality, it denotes undue freedom.

When a servant functions within the boundaries of a master, he is free to live freely within those boundaries through the liberty of the “power” of choice. When a servant takes license and demands “rights” outside of the master’s boundaries, he steps into undue freedom or unreasonable bondage. The master is obligated to use the boundaries (rules) to put him back into submission. This is what causes the servant to “feel” mistreated.

When God transferred us from the slavery of sin (Satan) into the kingdom of God, as “bondslaves” of His service, the only difference was the severity vs. love. Satan uses the laws of God to beat us and shame us, in order to live a life motivated by guilt. God uses His laws (guidelines) to love and protect us. True freedom is resting within the boundaries of protection. True bondage is fighting the boundaries which are meant to preserve us.

**Right # 2 – Good Treatment**

“Thou shall not rule over him (Hebrew slave) with rigor (strictness or severity, as in temperament, action, or judgment), but shall fear thy God...You shall not rule, one over another, with rigor” (Lev. 25:43, 46, NKJV, parentheses for clarity).

The non-Hebrew (unsaved) seemed to be left unprotected. God put this stipulation on the Hebrew masters because He, God the Father, manages His “bondslaves” in the manner He required of the Hebrew masters. The Hebrew requirements have always been the guidelines that God Himself uses in handling His own people. God not only requires good treatment of His people, He demands it.

**Right # 3 – Justice**

An ancient writer raises the question of fairness to slaves. “If I have despised the cause of my male or female servant when they complained against me, what then shall I do when God rises up?” (Job 31:13, NKJV). No doubt, the true Hebrew master was considerate of the rights of his slaves. However, the very fact that the Hebrew master could punish a Hebrew slave, “to within an inch of his life,” gave ready opportunity for *sham* (something false or empty that is purported to be genuine; an imitation) justice. “And if a man beats his male or female servant with a rod, so that he dies at his hand; he shall surely be punished. Notwithstanding, if he remains alive a day or two, he shall not be punished; for he is his is his property” (Exodus 21:20-21, NKJV).

The Hebrew slave was given the right and prerogative to be given a just and right treatment by their master. Therefore, as the case of Christians having the right and privilege to be treated justly by God, they can rest in the truth that God will use justice in managing all of their affairs.

**Right # 4 – Family**

The slave might have his wife and children, before his release (Exodus 21:5). God, who is for the family, unites because He established the family model. One of the rights Christians can claim is: once the leader of a household becomes saved, he can claim the Salvation of the members of his household. “They (Paul and Silas to the jailer) said, ‘Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household’” (Acts 16:31, parentheses for clarity).

“And your household” (your family), in Acts 16:31, does not mean the man’s family would be saved simply by his believing; but that the offers to him, also referenced them, i.e. the family might be saved, as well as the father of the home. Therefore, His attention was called at once to his family (as every man’s should be). He was reminded his family also needed Salvation, and he was presented with the assurance they might unite with him as their father, or husband, in the peace and joy of redeeming mercy. Many Bible scholars believe this passage implies that the faith of a father may be expected to be the means of the Salvation of his family, which it often is. The direct meaning is that Salvation was offered to his family, as well as himself, implying that if they believed, they should also be saved. In any case, God the Father is actively pursuing the head of the home for Salvation, because He certainly knows that once the head is saved, the body will soon follow.

Faithful earthly fathers should feel free to claim the rights of having their complete household saved. This should give us clear understanding as to why the enemy works so diligently to distract and confuse the men in our culture. Satan is less threatened by the woman of the house becoming saved than he is by the head of the home. God’s promise comes through leadership.

**Right # 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; Deut.15:16). The traditional interpretation of “forever” in these passages is “until the next Jubilee year.”

Here is the parallel: the six years of bondage relates to the mark of man, the number six, and the period a person was not a Christian. The seventh year is related to the year of one’s Salvation. “Until the next Jubilee year” is eternity for the Christian. Heaven is an ongoing state of Jubilee (freedom). The right to pledge oneself is the individual’s right to choose to accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. The awl-pierced ear is a symbol of volunteering oneself to be a slave for the rest of eternity. Therefore, the critical point to remember is that even though we have been freed from the domain of darkness, we still become enslaved to the Kingdom of Light.

**Right # 6 – Money or Property**

The servant is given the rights and privileges of wealth in certain cases (Prov. 15:6). Today, many Christians are given the ability by the Father to prosper in a world that is temporarily under the service of a tyrannical leader, Satan (Lev. 25:49). Within this privilege, Christian servants can free others from earthly masters who are unfair, by using their resources to free them. God gives His servants the rights and abilities to prosper as much or more than those who promote wicked slavery. In fact, God uses the wealth of the “ungodly” to prosper the children of God (Isa. 60:5). God, the Father, wants His children to enjoy prosperity as servants – like a gift.

**Right # 7 - Elevation**

In some instances, a chance to rise and be promoted was allowable. Two examples are Eliezer (a foreign slave in a Hebrew household) and Joseph (a Hebrew slave in a foreign household). Each rose to a place of honor, power, and usefulness (Gen. 15:2; 39:4).

Many times in Scripture, we find that Father God promotes His servants within the wicked mastery of earthly leaders. Joseph was not only sold repetitively as a slave, but every time he was placed under a master, that master would prosper because of Joseph being with him. If we take this story literally, we will find that the ungodly masters used the prosperity and blessings placed upon Joseph to gain for themselves.

God didn’t seem to mind this because the story communicates that God used their usury to bring prosperity to His people who were suffering and to protect them from the wickedness of that particular master. If we look in our world today, we will find this practiced frequently.

**Right # 8 – Religious Worship**

After being circumcised, slaves were allowed to participate in the paschal (Passover) sacrifice (Exodus 12:44) and other religious occasions (Deut. 12:12). God has granted us, as His servants, the freedom to worship Him in different ways. Some children of faith sing with their hands lifted, while others lean more toward liturgical worship (preplanned worship by another leader). God doesn’t restrict Christian worship because it is one of the divine rights and freedoms given to us by our Master. The important thing here is He just wants to be worshipped - something the original leader of worship (Satan) would not do.

**Right # 9 – Gifts**

Slaves, upon obtaining freedom at the discretion of masters, were given supplies of cattle, grain, and wine (Deut. 15:13). The parallel here is once we become a “bondservant” of the Lord, He gives us blessings that come directly from wicked or masters of darkness (Gen. 31:16). Joseph’s life was a classic example of this. He became wealthy by the hand of the wicked ruler he served. God turned around and used this wealth to prosper His people. Today we find Christians being blessed by God for the same reason. When a Christian thinks his wealth is for his own prosperity, God will decrease his land. God simply prospers His servants to feed those who are in need. Wealth of a believer belongs to the Lord and His mission.

**The New Testament Conception:**

There were slaves during New Testament times, as there are in our culture today. To date, God has never given the Church the right to issue edicts sweeping away this custom of the old Judaism; but the Gospel of Christ with its warm, penetrating love-message mitigated the harshness of ancient times and melted cruelty into kindness. The equality, justice, and love of Christ's teachings changed the whole attitude of man-to-man and master to servant. Apostle Paul proclaimed this truth, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you all are one Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:28).

In Paul’s letter, Christian slaves and masters are both exhorted to live Godly lives and make their relations one to the other Christ-like, i.e. obedience to masters and forbearance with slaves. Bondservants are to be obedient to their masters, as bondservants of Christ. Masters are to give up threatening, as their Master is also in Heaven, and there is no partiality with Him (Eph. 6:5-6, 9).

Christ was a reformer, but not an anarchist (rebel). His Gospel was dynamic, but not dynamistic (philosophical). It is provoking, electric with power, but permeated with love. Christ's life and teachings are against Judaist slavery, Roman slavery, and any form of human slavery that replicates satanic slavery. Not once did He abolish or disregard the existing structures of mastery on the earth His Father created. He used His Gospel and the Light of His life to make worldwide human emancipation from satanic slavery, to obtain the opportunity to become slaves for Himself. “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” (1 Cor. 7:22).

1 Wikiquote contributors, "First Amendment to the United States Constitution," *Wikiquote,* <http://en.wikiquote.org/w/index.php?title=First_Amendment_to_the_United_States_Constitution&oldid=1686644> (accessed April 4, 2014).

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