



The Son of God - The Hebrew Servant

(Exodus 21.2-6)

- The Surety
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“If thou buy an Hebrew servant, six years he shall serve: and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing. If he came in by himself, he shall go out by himself: if he were married, then his wife shall go out with him. If his master have given him a wife, and she have born him sons or daughters; the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself. And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free: Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an aul; and he shall serve him for ever” (Ex 21:2-6).

A blessed insight into God's ways in grace and our Lord's servant character and calling is found in the Hebrew servant who chose perpetual service. He was bound under the law to his master, intimating the obligation of the heavenly Servant, "born of a woman", and "born under the law, that he might redeem them which were under the law" (Gal 4.4, RV). His was an obligation of holy pleasure - "I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart" (Ps 40.8). The heavenly Man fulfilled the law's every demand revealing His perfect manhood. "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do" (Jn 17.4). Seemingly He could go out free. But He did not, for His Master had given Him a wife - the Church, comprising the children born in Him.

The Surety

Four things were required for the Hebrew servant's perpetual service. First, he had to furnish a *surety*. This constituted a moral attribute, enjoined by the law but conceived outside of it and opposed to his liberty. The law was fulfilled. Liberty is his for the taking, but he chooses perpetual service. Why? *Love!* Love's threefold chord - love for his master, his wife, and his children negated personal freedom. The Servant-Son's love for His Father is scented in His prayer, "...not my will, but thine be done"; its priority scribed in His proclamation, "I must be about my Father's business" (Lk 2.49). The first man was given a wife because it was "not good for man to be alone". His love for the Giver was flawed which led to failed responsibility. The Second Man was given a Bride. He too was not to be alone. His love for His Master was complete for He loved His bride and children with sacrificial perfection. "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it" (Eph 5.25). Adoring children confess that He "loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gal 2.20). He gave *Himself*. Precious truth!

The Hebrew Servant's giving streamed from love's eternal spring, withstanding the strong bulls of Bashan, even the assembly of the wicked, to fulfill love's desire concerning His own, that "where I am, there ye may be also" (Jn 14.3). What present comfort and prospective joy is ours because He did not go out alone! He pledged more than service. Love required *self-sacrifice*. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (Jn 12.24). Love which "seeketh not her own" led Him obediently to "the death of the cross". He is the true Antitype of the Hebrew servant, having authority to lay His life down and take it up; "this commandment have I received of my Father". "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life" (Jn 10.18,17). How precious that we are and will always be in the affections of the One who chose not to go out alone. Infinitely precious, too, is that the Servant-Son is loved by the One prefigured by the master, and that we are loved not according to our love for Him, but "as the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you". The towelled Servant washes our feet meeting a need. That need will cease. Christ will fashion our bodies "like unto his glorious body" and receive us unto Himself. Then the Hebrew Servant's ministry unto His own will, in perpetuity, be rendered wholly on account of love.

The Seal

Second, the *seal* of his perpetual service. The master brings his servant before the judges to witness his surety of love. The divine counsels in eternity past witnessed the love-bond of the Servant-Son. He was the Lamb "foreordained before the foundation of the world". Divine love which needs no impetus throbbed in the bosom of the eternal Son and foreordained His service unto His Father. Those same counsels in the "day of his espousals", even "the gladness of his heart", witnessed His love for His wife and children who were chosen in Him "before the foundation of the world". "My delights were with the sons of men." But what of the master? Love's confirmation before the bar marks his delight in his *servant* and in his *service*. How true of the Servant-Son. The door of heaven's court of approbation is flung open at the Son's baptism, and we hear the joyful expression of delight in the Servant: "Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased". Then again upon the Mount of Transfiguration we hear heaven's delight in His service:

"This is my beloved Son: hear him". "Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth" (Mk 1.11; 9.7; Lk 9.35; Is 42.1).

The Sphere

Third, the *sphere* of perpetual service. Love has its object and its sphere of expression. The servant was taken to the door of his master's house. He abode within attending to his master's household. The Servant-Son on earth was a homeless Stranger, rejected even by the house of Israel. Now He is forever "an high priest over the house of God" - "whose house are we". Moses was a servant *in* God's house. Here is One who is a servant *over* God's house for He is the Son. Its interests are secured in the Servant-Son, whose joy over it is sequestered by His Father and sealed in their divine equality. "My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one" (Jn 10.29-30).

The Hebrew servant, by not going out alone, brings his own into a new and blessed union with himself and into a new relationship with his master. So too the heavenly Hebrew Servant who did not go out alone; His Bride will reign with Him, and His children will in perpetuity share with Him, as "heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ". What a privileged household! We boast in gracious adoption - "the lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage". How precious! It is not so much here the duties our Lord took on under the *law* of the kinsman-redeemer having to *come in* alone, partaking of flesh and blood; rather the obligations of *love* He undertook because He could not *go out* alone, on account of His flesh and blood. He condescended to become Man and a Bondman in perpetuity. "For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church" (Eph 5.29).

The Sign

Fourth, the *sign* of perpetual service. It was a bored ear - not a collar, anklet, ring, nor bracelet. The mark of perpetual service was to be engraved upon his very person. It was a sign of *affliction* lovingly endured. The boring pleased the master because it testified to his servant's loving self-*abnegation*. The bore was worn with *adoration* signifying the servant's *affection* for his master, his wife, and his children, and that he could not go out alone. His love was not secreted in his heart but *announced, assayed, and assured*. All this speaks of the Servant-Son, "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree". His riven side, nail-pierced hands and feet, bear eternal and eloquent testimony of the awl of His affliction - "rich wounds, yet visible above, in beauty glorified". The declaration by the Hebrew servant of his love for his master, his wife, and his children is a beautiful anticipation of the depth of the love of this unique Servant.

The bored *ear* signified that every sense of the servant was subject to the master's word. The heavenly Hebrew Servant knew nothing of an independent spirit - "mine ears hast thou opened"; "I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge" (Ps 40.6; Jn 5.30). Note only *one* ear was bored intimating that "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other" (Mt 6.24). The Lord is never the servant *of* man. He is the Servant of God *unto* man. And here is another blessed truth – love secures faithful service. He is the Man loved by the sons of God, because He alone could claim that "all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you" (Jn 15.15). Blessed assurance! Every divine counsel concerning us has been devotedly communicated – nothing missed, mistimed, or muted by the Hebrew Servant-Son, whose ear is awakened by the Lord God "morning by morning". But He is also a "Man approved of God", for in the face of every contradiction to His glorious Person and work He was the Father's true Servant – Jesus Christ "the faithful witness", "who was faithful to him that appointed him". Observe further, the faithfulness of the servant's own is not brought in. The Hebrew Servant's love for His own is unconditional, unrequited, even vouchsafed amidst unfaithfulness. "Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none" (Jn 18.9). O how precious! May our hearts, which are all too often circumscribed by faithlessness, be liberated by the Spirit unto unceasing praise for the heavenly Hebrew Servant who did not go out alone.

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