

11th Commandment (Jesus In The Old Testament)

2 'If you buy a Hebrew servant, he is to serve you for six years. But in the seventh year, he shall go free, without paying anything. 3 If he comes alone, he is to go free alone; but if he has a wife when he comes, she is to go with him. 4 If his master gives him a wife and she bears him sons or daughters, the woman and her children shall belong to her master, and only the man shall go free. 5 'But if the servant declares, "I love my master and my wife and children and do not want to go free," 6 then his master must take him before the judges.[a] He shall take him to the door or the door-post and pierce his ear with an awl. Then he will be his servant for life. Exodus 21:2-6

The Basic Bible Truth

God's plan has not changed through all of the ages. Before time began, He knew what would need to happen and made it so. The Old Testament Mosaic Law was given to the children of Israel as a means of ordering their lives with safety, civility, and reverence towards God. From our vantage point, we see many of the laws as seemingly archaic or just plain odd. However, a closer study reveals that much of the Old Testament Law pointed toward the coming Christ Jesus. Jesus said that He came to fulfill the Law. He was what much of the Law foreshadowed.

The Object

(None)

The Lesson

Jesus said in the New Testament that He had come to fulfill the Law, not do away with it. That statement reinforces the idea that much of the Law pointed to, or foreshadowed, the coming Messiah. Most people have a familiarity with the Ten Commandments. Few realize what the "eleventh" was. Immediately following the first ten are the remaining laws. At first glance, it may appear peculiar, but the eleventh law addressed slavery. Our immediate thought trends toward the history of the United States and its involvement in slave trade. The practice of having slaves, as the Bible describes it, is remarkably different. An acceptable practice in those days, it should be described as being culturally similar to an employer/employee relationship. The technical points in this particular law allowed a servant to voluntarily become a permanent slave of his owner. Due to the way slavery was to be structured and practiced among the Israelites, this was not necessarily a repugnant idea, and so it was a very real possibility.

If a slave found himself in a particularly good household and treated well by his owners, he had some options at his disposal. First, he could simply serve until his 7th year came around when the master was obligated to set him free and give him what he needed to start out nicely on his own again. Or he could choose to stay with the owner forever. That meant that he could voluntarily identify himself with his master for life. He was forever bound to the master of the house. Imagine, for example, a very wealthy master, with all of the nice things that the world could afford, a generous man, willing to treat his slave in much the same way we might treat an employee. Wealthy slaves could and did own their own slaves at times, building up their own estates, and quite possibly living very well.

To be permanently bound to a particular owner required the piercing of an earlobe, and the slave was to repeat these words specifically—I love my master, I love my wife, I love my children. I have had students demonstrate this for the group in the past, and without fail, it soon becomes painfully obvious that it is

impossible to pierce an earlobe against a doorframe without the express cooperation of both parties involved in the piercing. It almost requires a contortionist to do it. And it is not mentioned in the Bible, but secular sources tell us that the bondservant would then wear an earring as an identifying symbol of the commitment he had made.

Let's move now to a New Testament thought. Jesus was voluntarily pierced for us. Jesus loves the Father, His master. He is forever bound to the Father through the bond of the Trinity, but He is also bound the same way that we are bound to God the Father. Jesus came as a human being in Matthew and Luke. I don't read anywhere in the Bible that He stopped being human at any point since that time. In fact, I believe that the Bible teaches quite the opposite, that Jesus is indeed a human who has gone on before us, showing us what we can expect in the future. He is still 100% God and 100% man.

He loves His wife, Israel. Israel has a very special place in the heart of God. They are a chosen people who assuredly failed miserably, but God is a forgiving God, willing that all should be eligible for forgiveness. Isaiah describes a day in the future when the entire nation of Israel will turn to Him and be saved in a single day! What a revival that will be! And they will again be placed in a position of honor and respect among the nations of the world. God has not forgotten His promise to Abraham, nor has He negated any part of the contract. Israel is still the apple of His eye, a special people chosen for a very special role in history.

He loves His children—us. All who come to a saving knowledge of Jesus and accept Him as Lord and Savior are His children. When Jesus stepped down out of Heaven, and arrived in the most humble circumstances in Bethlehem, He retained the title of God, but He voluntarily laid aside the prerogatives that His position in Heaven afforded Him. He went to the cross voluntarily and as the song says, "He could have called ten thousand angels, to destroy the world and set him free." But "He died alone for you and me." We do not have the capability to comprehend the immensity of the truth that Jesus stepped down out of Heaven in the body of a human being. The Creator of the entire Universe, who simply spoke everything into existence, laid aside all of the rights and privileges of His position as God while He was here for those 33 years so that we could see Him and know Him, and have a relationship with Him. And He has now taken every one of those prerogatives back up and when we see Him again, we will see the glory of God coming in the power of the Almighty—still a human, still a man, still like us. The choice to step into the form of a man was a permanent step. He is still, and will be the God/Man for all of eternity. I am in awe that God would do something that remarkable for me!