

SLAVERY IN NEW TESTAMENT TIMES
AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR
SPIRITUAL SERVITUDE

by

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Theology in
Grace Theological Seminary
May 1980

Title: SLAVERY IN NEW TESTAMENT TIMES AND THE IMPLICATIONS
FOR SPIRITUAL SERVITUDE
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Date: May, 1980
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The believer as a slave to Christ is an important concept for the Christian community to understand and obey. Positionally believers are slaves to Christ; since He purchased them with His own shed blood. Experientially, believers are either faithful or unfaithful slaves.

Unfortunately, slavery which existed in the early nineteenth century America is the main hermeneutical base for interpreting New Testament slavery. However, it is the purpose of this thesis to prove that Roman slavery is the basis for the biblical metaphor--a slave of Christ. Both biblical and extra biblical writers present slavery as a typical situation in the Roman Empire.

Rome had inherited slavery from the Greeks because of her historical conquest. Thus the city of Rome became the center of slave exploitation. During New Testament times, the Roman Empire was a major slave society with approximately 35% of the population slaves.

A slave was legally the property of another man with no citizen rights nor personal privileges nor family relationships. Slave children belonged to the master. When taxation was introduced into the Roman Empire, slaves were part of the tax base.

The two main sources of Roman slaves during New Testament times were war captives and breeding. Slaves were sold at slave markets located at most major Roman cities. The cost of slaves was high due to a decline in supply and an increase in demand. The Roman slave performed tasks in agriculture, industry, homes, education and government. Their jobs ranged from servile to responsible.

Even though Israel was under the domination of Rome, slavery existed in the Jewish economy. Old Testament law commanded the fair treatment of slaves, gave them religious privileges and freedom after six years of toil. The Jewish slave never lost his citizenship. Also he retained control of his family. The Jewish slave was only sold to another Jew and never outside of the land of Judea.

The primary word for slave in the New Testament is $\delta\omicron\upsilon\lambda\omicron\varsigma$. The Gospels indicate that slavery existed in Palestine. Jesus mentioned slavery in the majority of His parables. The majority of the slavery in the New Testament is in reference to Roman slavery.

It is within this background that the biblical writers introduce and discuss the metaphor on spiritual slavery. Christ is the believer's master. It is the slave's function to serve. It is the conclusion of this writer that the characteristics of a faithful slave of Christ are total fulfillment of the task, complete obedience to Christ and a humble and kind attitude to all. The purpose of spiritual servitude is progressive sanctification in the area of service.

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in partial fulfillment of requirements for the degree
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS	viii
PREFACE	ix
INTRODUCTION	1
The Popular Concept of Slavery	1
The Importance of the Study	1
The Thesis Stated	2
The Approach to the Study	3
The Primary Sources Identified	4
Greek Writers	4
Primary	4
Aristotle	4
Secondary	5
Aristophanes	5
Homer	5
Roman Writers	6
Historians	6
Josephus	6
Tacitus	7
Suetonius	8
Dio Cassius	8
Literary letter writer	9
Writers of satire	10
General authors	13
Other authors	15
Biblical Writers	19
The Definition for Ancient Slavery	19
The Sources of Scriptural References	20
Chapter	
I. THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF SLAVERY	21
Slavery in the Ancient Near East	21
Slavery in the Greek World	24
The Mycenaean Age, 1600-1200 B.C.	25
The Dark Ages, 1100-700 B.C.	25
The Age of Expansion, 700-500 B.C.	26
The Classical Age, 500-323 B.C.	27
The Hellenistic Age, 323-30 B.C.	29
Summary and Conclusion	31

II. THE IDENTIFICATION OF ROMAN SLAVERY	33
Historical Evidence	33
Source of Slaves	37
Cost of Slaves	39
Primary Slave Markets	41
Population of Slaves	42
Positions Held by Slaves	43
Economic Implications	49
Sociological Practice	52
Legal Provisions	53
Slave Conditions	56
Slave Masters	59
Discontent Among Slaves	60
Procedures for Freedom and Citizenship	61
Decline of Slavery	64
Summary and Conclusion	66
Historical background	67
Characteristics of Roman slavery in New Testament times	67
III. THE DISTINCTIVENESS OF JEWISH SLAVERY IN NEW TESTAMENT TIMES	69
Jewish Servitude Under Rome	70
Jewish Jurisdiction	71
Jewish Slaves	71
Jewish Law	73
Source of Slaves	78
Jerusalem Slave Market	79
Cost of Slaves	79
Positions Held	80
Slave Population	80
Conditions of Slaves	82
Sociological Practice	83
Slave Masters	83
Limitation of Service	84
Redemption	85
Gentile Slaves in Judea	85
Revolt Against Rome	86
Summary and Conclusion	87
A Comparative Chart on the Major Differences Between Roman and Jewish Slavery During New Testament Times	88
IV. THE ESSENTIAL GREEK TERMINOLOGY OF SLAVERY	89
Primary Words in Early Greek Usage	89
δμῶς and δοῦλος	89

δοῦλος	90
παῖς	90
οἶκος	90
οἶμα	91
Primary Words in Contemporary	
Extra Biblical Writings	91
δοῦλεύω	92
δουλεία	93
δοῦλος	93
Primary Words in the New Testament	94
Principal word group	94
δοῦλος	94
δοῦλη	96
δοῦλεύω	96
δουλεία	96
δουλόω	96
Additional Greek words	97
ἀνδραποδόν	97
καταδουλόω	97
οικέτης	97
παιδίσκη	98
παῖς	98
συνδoulos	98
οἶμα	98
ὑπηρέτης	98
Summary and Conclusion	98
V. THE NEW TESTAMENT EVIDENCE OF SLAVERY	100
Evidence of Slaves in Jerusalem	100
Evidence of Slaves in Galilee	101
Evidence of Slaves Outside Palestine	103
Biblical Illustrations Involving Slaves	105
Selected Parables Employing Slaves	107
Characteristics of Slaves Identified	109
Faithful and Unfaithful Slaves Contrasted	111
Biblical Recommendations for	
Proper Slave Conduct	112
Evidence of Slave Punishment	114
Biblical Evidence of Manumission	115
Biblical Recommendations for	
Proper Master Conduct	115
Biblical Exhortation Against	
Evil Slave Practices	116
Christian Church's Response to Slavery	117
Slave's Response to the Message of	
the Christian Church	117
Summary and Conclusion	118

VI. THE INTERPRETATION OF SPIRITUAL SERVITUDE . . .	120
The Scriptural References to Spiritual Servitude	122
The Types of Spiritual Slaves	123
The Lord Jesus Christ as the Example of Spiritual Servitude	124
The Identification of Spiritual Servitude . .	124
The Lord Jesus Christ as the Master	125
The believer as the slave	125
The service of the faithful spiritual slave	126
Performance	126
Conduct	127
Attitude	127
The purpose for spiritual servitude	128
The ultimate service by the slave of Christ	129
The Summary and Conclusion	131
CONCLUSION	133
APPENDIX--Chronological Table of Major Slave Events During Roman Times	136
BIBLIOGRAPHY	138
SUBJECT INDEX	156
SCRIPTURE INDEX	160

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Chart	Page
I. The Population of Two Slave Societies	42
II. A Comparative Chart of the Major Differences Between Roman and Jewish Slavery During New Testament Times	88

PREFACE

The believer as a slave to Christ is an important concept for the Christian community to understand and obey. Positionally the believer is a slave to Christ and this requires absolute obedience. The Lord Jesus Christ became the supreme example as a slave of Jehovah. Spiritual servitude is part of God's program of progressive sanctification.

Slavery was a major institution in the New Testament world. Approximately twenty-five per cent of the population of the Roman Empire during the New Testament period (in the first century A.D. the population is estimated at about fifty to sixty million people¹) were slaves.² In the New Testament, there are more than 190 instances of Greek words referring to slavery or slaves.

Current concepts about negro slavery in the nineteenth century have definitely distorted the general reader's comprehension of slavery in other periods and cultures. Also our modern society is lax in obedience. Group participation and communication predominates within our culture. Therefore, it is difficult for the believer to understand

¹Keith Hopkins, Conquerors and Slaves, Vol. I of Sociological Studies in Roman History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), p. 1.

²Ibid., p. 69.

the role of a slave. Yet without this insight, a believer will not know how to function as a slave to Christ.

In this paper, Roman and Jewish slavery is identified and explained. Then based on this study, spiritual servitude will be defined in detail.

The writer wants to extend his sincere thanks to the following professors for their assistance in the preparation of this thesis:

Dr. D. Brent Sandy, who introduced the writer to the subject and assisted the writer in the research; and Professor Ivan French and Dr. Homer A. Kent, Jr., faculty advisors, who spent much time guiding the writer in the systematic development and completion of this thesis.

INTRODUCTION

The Popular Concept of Slavery

Slavery which existed in the early nineteenth century America is the primary hermeneutical base for interpreting New Testament slavery. Modern day Christians consider the uneducated and unskilled negro slave performing menial agriculture and household tasks to be indicative of the slave mentioned in the New Testament. Westermann cautions against this type of interpretation.

Comparisons and inferences taken from modern slavery are dangerous and misleading, particularly in view of the christian-moralistic attitude which became dominant in the anti-slavery discussion of the nineteenth century. Slavery was in antiquity purely a practical problem.¹

The Importance of the Study

First, it is important to understand the institutions of the New Testament world. Bartchy emphasizes the prominence of slavery in the Roman world. "No aspect of ancient culture can be fully understood without reference to the institution of slavery."²

¹William Linn Westermann, The Slave Systems of Greek and Roman Antiquity (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1955), p. 1.

²S. Scott Bartchy, Μ Α ΛΛΟΝ ΧΡΗΣΑΙ: First-Century Slavery and the Interpretation of I Corinthians 7:21 (Missoula, Montana: Printing Department, University of Montana, 1973), p. 30.

Approximately twenty-five per cent of the Roman population were slaves.¹ Slavery affected every aspect of Roman life--social, economic and political. Israel was a client kingdom of Rome paying tribute until A.D. 6 when she became a province of the Roman Empire.² However, the Jews also owned slaves. Knowledge of Roman and Jewish slavery is necessary for a proper interpretation of biblical slavery.

Second, it is necessary to translate the Greek word δοῦλος with the best English term so as to accurately convey the meaning. This is an important Greek term since it appears 127 times in the New Testament. It has primarily been translated servant which causes the word to lose much of its original significance.

Third, the believer needs to know how to function as a slave of Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ is the example. God requires a certain life style and the performance of a specific service. This is part of God's program of progressive sanctification and church mission. The believer needs to know this teaching and obey it.

The Thesis Stated

It is the thesis of this writer that the slave terminology of the New Testament, primarily the Greek word

¹Hopkins, Conquerors and Slaves, p. 69.

²Edward Nicolai Luttwak, The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), p. 9.

group δοῦλος , has as its historical background the Roman institution of slavery. Understanding this institution becomes the basis for the interpretation of the slave of Christ with the emphasis on the price paid, absolute obedience to the master, responsible positions and a permanent servitude. The English Bible primarily translates the word δοῦλος as servant. However it is the contention of this writer that the word should be translated slave. The extra-biblical and biblical writers both wrote about slavery and used δοῦλος as the primary word for slave. The biblical writers were exposed to Roman slavery in Hellenistic Galilee and in Jerusalem. Many of the Lord's parables involving slaves were presented in Galilee. Because of this, it will be shown that Roman slavery is the basis for the biblical metaphor--a slave of Christ.

The Approach to the Study

First, the development of slavery in the ancient world up to the time of the Roman Empire will be discussed. Next, an in-depth study of the institution of slavery in the Roman Empire will be presented. Then the distinctives of Jewish slavery will be identified. Primary Greek words in biblical and extra-biblical literature will be defined. Last, the biblical concept of slavery as spiritual servitude will be explained. Primary sources (contemporary writers of the Roman Period) will be utilized as much as possible.

The Primary Sources Identified

To understand fully the importance of slavery as an institution and its meaning, it is necessary to be familiar with the ancient writers and their works. The Greek writers precede the New Testament period by several hundred years. However, they provide the foundation for this study. The Roman writers are mainly contemporary with the biblical writers. Along with the Bible, these are the primary sources for direct information on slavery in New Testament times.

Greek Writers

Primary

Aristotle

Aristotle (384-322 B.C.) was born at Stagirus in Chalcidice.¹ His father was a physician. Aristotle's interest in physical science was probably the result of his father's influence. At the age of 17 he entered Plato's school at Athens and there he remained till the death of Plato in 348-347 B.C.² In 345 B.C. Aristotle married Pythias and lived on the island of Lesbos. In 343-342

¹Gwilyn Ellis Lane Owen, "Aristotle," in The Oxford Classical Dictionary, ed. by N. G. L. Hammond and H. H. Scullard (2nd ed.; Oxford: At The Clarendon Press, 1970), p. 114.

²Ibid.

Philip of Macedon invited him to come to Pella to act as tutor to Alexander.¹ In 335 B.C. he went to Athens where he founded a school. Aristotle died at Chalus in 322 B.C. of a disease of the digestive organs. Diogenes Laertius has preserved his will in which he makes careful provision for his relations, secures his slaves from being sold, and arranges for the freeing of some of them. His major work is Politics.²

Secondary

Aristophanes

The greatest poet of the old attic comedy, he was born around 475 B.C.³ Eleven of his plays survive. Aristophanes died around 385 B.C.⁴

Homer

It is generally agreed among scholars that Homer composed both the Iliad and the Odyssey.⁵ Very little is known about his life. However he was contemporary with the

¹Ibid. ²Ibid.

³Kenneth James Dover, "Aristophanes," in The Oxford Classical Dictionary, ed. by N. G. L. Hammond and H. H. Scullard (2nd ed.; Oxford: At The Clarendon Press, 1970), p. 113.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Cecil Maurice Bowra, "Homer," in The Oxford Classical Dictionary, ed. by N. G. L. Hammond and H. H. Scullard (2nd ed.; Oxford: At The Clarendon Press, 1970), p. 524.

Trojan War (1194-1184 B.C.).¹

Roman Writers

Historians

While there are many historians in the first century A.D., Jackson and Lake indicate that the primary writers of the historical accounts of governmental Rome and Palestine are Josephus and Tacitus, while subsidiary evidence comes from Suetonius and Dio Cassius.²

Josephus

Josephus, the historian of Judaism, was a contemporary of the period of Acts. He was born at Jerusalem in the year 37 or 38 A.D.³ His father, Matthias, was a priest and his mother was of royal blood, being a descendant from the Hasmoneans.⁴ For three years, Josephus studied with the Essenes.⁵ Also, he was an understudy with the Pharisees and Sadducees. He participated in the Jewish revolt serving

¹Ibid.

²F. J. Foakes Jackson and Kirsopp Lake, eds., "The Acts of the Apostles, Vol. I," in The Beginning of Christianity, Part I (London: MacMillan and Co., Ltd., 1939), p. 445.

³Flavius Josephus, The Works of Flavius Josephus, trans. by William Whiston (Philadelphia: The International Press, n.d.), p. 1.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

as a commander in Galilee and was captured at Jotopata.¹ Immediately he espoused the Roman cause and was assigned to the command post of Vespasian and Titus. With them Josephus witnessed the terrible destruction of Jerusalem and the enslavement of the Jewish people.

The two main extant works which mention slavery are The Jewish War, written before A.D. 79 and Archaeology (Antiquities) completed in A.D. 93.²

Tacitus

Tacitus was born about 56 A.D. probably of Gallic or north Italian stock. His official career began under Emperor Vespasian (69-79 A.D.).³ His major work, Annals, is a history of the events of Rome, activities of the Emperor and provincial affairs presented in a systematic year record.⁴

¹Josephus, "The Life and Against Apion," trans. by H. St. J. Thackeray, of The Loeb Classical Library, ed. by E. Capps, T. E. Page and W. H. D. Rouse (London: William Heinemann, 1926), p. ix.

²R. H. Barrow, Slavery In The Roman Empire (New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1928), p. 233.

³Martin P. Charlesworth and Gavin B. Townend, "Tacitus," in The Oxford Classical Dictionary, ed. by N. G. L. Hammond and H. H. Scullard (2nd ed.; Oxford: At The Clarendon Press, 1970), p. 1034.

⁴Ibid.

Suetonius

Gaius Suetonius Tranquillus, born about 69 A.D. was the son of a Roman soldier belonging to the thirteenth legion.¹ His grandfather was associated with Caligula's Court (37-41 A.D.), one of the emperors during the apostolic period. Suetonius had a series of appointments to the palace culminating in three secretarial posts.² His only extant work is The Lives of the Caesars which is a biography of twelve emperors from Julius Caesar to Domitian.³ The author mentions the imperial policy toward slaves, the emperors' attitudes toward slaves and positions held by slaves within the palace.⁴

Dio Cassius

Dio Cassius of Nicaea (c. 155-230 A.D.) was the son of Cassius Apronianus who was governor of Cilicia and Dalmatia.⁵ Dio held various positions in the Roman government. He was a senator. In 194 A.D., he became Praetor. Twice Dio was made consul which was the supreme civil and military

¹Ibid., pp. 423-24. ²Ibid.

³Robert O. Hoerber, "The Decree of Claudius in Acts 18:2," Concordia Theological Monthly, XXXI:11 (November, 1960), p. 690.

⁴Barrow, Slavery In The Roman Empire, pp. 237-38.

⁵Alexander Hugh McDonald, "Dio Cassius," in The Oxford Classical Dictionary, ed. by N. G. L. Hammond and H. H. Scullard (2nd ed.; Oxford: At The Clarendon Press, 1970), p. 345.

magistrate of Rome.¹

His work, Roman History, which was ten years in preparation and took twelve years to write, originally was in eighty volumes.² It began with the landing of Aeneas in Italy who founded Rome and continued to the time of Dio's second consulship in 229 A.D.³ He records imperial regulations and attitudes concerning slaves during the New Testament period.⁴

Literary letter writer

Pliny the Younger

Gaius Plinius Caecilius Secundus (c. A.D. 61-c. 112) was a son of a landowner of Comum and later was raised by his uncle, the literary equestrian Pliny the Elder, who adopted him.⁵ He studied advocacy in the schools of Quintilian and Nicetes at Rome. He served in the Roman Senate and practiced successfully in the civil courts.⁶ Pliny the Younger held the usual annual offices, becoming praetor in

¹Ibid.

²Hoerber, "The Decree of Claudius in Acts 18:2," p. 690.

³Ibid.

⁴Barrow, Slavery In The Roman Empire, p. 238.

⁵A. N. Sherwin-White, "Pliny the Younger," in The Oxford Classical Dictionary, ed. by N. G. L. Hammond and H. H. Scullard (2nd ed.; Oxford: At The Clarendon Press, 1970), p. 846.

⁶Ibid.

93 A.D. and consul in 100 A.D. He is the best documented example of a civilian administrator during the Imperial period.

Pliny published nine books of literary letters. These letters resemble short essays, character sketches, miniature histories and topographies. The letters vividly portray the high society of Rome, both at the capital and in its provinces. They censure the cruelty of slave masters, the dodges of legacy hunters and the meanness of the wealthy.¹

Writers of satire

Horace

Horatius Flaccus Quintus was born at Venusia in Apulia in December 65 B.C. and died on November 27, 8 B.C.² He had his schooling under Orbilius of Rome and attended the University at Athens.³ He served under the rebel Brutus until his defeat at Philippi. He became a part of a selected group of writers who were supported by the Emperor Augustus. Horace called his work Satirae but sometimes referred to them as sermons, odes and epistles.⁴ He

¹Ibid.

²Gordon Willis Williams, "Horatius Flaccus Quintus," in The Oxford Classical Dictionary, ed. by N. G. L. Hammond and H. H. Scullard (2nd ed.; Oxford: At The Clarendon Press, 1970), p. 527.

³Ibid. ⁴Ibid.

mentions the cruel punishment of slaves, speaks concerning slavery and freedom, discusses enslavement and employment, and identifies his own slaves.¹

Martial

Marcus Valerius Martialis was born at Bilbilis, Spain in 40 A.D. and died in 104 A.D.² He was educated in Spain and went to Rome in 64 A.D.³ Martial was brought into contact with all classes from the Emperor and his court downward to the slave. He recorded concisely every type of man and woman. He documented the treatment of slaves, price of slaves, nationality of slaves in Rome and manumission.⁴

Juvenal

Decimus Iunius Iuvenalis was the last great Roman satiric poet.⁵ He was born about 60 A.D. and lived in Aquinum. He published his first extant satires when he was middle-aged (around 110 A.D.). He wrote about the

¹Barrow, Slavery In The Roman Empire, p. 239.

²John Wight Duff, "Martial," in The Oxford Classical Dictionary, ed. by N. G. L. Hammond and H. H. Scullard (2nd ed.; Oxford: At The Clarendon Press, 1970), p. 652.

³Ibid.

⁴Barrow, Slavery In The Roman Empire, pp. 71, 239.

⁵Gilbert Highet, "Juvenal," in The Oxford Classical Dictionary, ed. by N. G. L. Hammond and H. H. Scullard (2nd ed.; Oxford: At The Clarendon Press, 1970), p. 571.

corruption of Rome.¹ He identified the nationality of slaves and emphasized the cruelty of slaves.²

Petronius

He wrote around 1 A.D.³ and his book is full of information about slaves and freedmen.⁴ He mentions the tax on manumission, the price of slaves, the sale of slaves, the nationality of slaves, the number of slaves, the various activities of slaves, the law related to slaves and the punishment of slaves.⁵

Persius

Persius Flaccus Aulus, 34-62 A.D. was a stoic satirist.⁶ Stoicism was primarily a great ancient pagan system of thought. The scholars of this system vehemently opposed Nero's rule because of their ethical philosophy.⁷ Persius

¹Ibid.

²Barrow, Slavery In The Roman Empire, p. 239.

³Martin Stirling Smith, "Petronius Arbiter," in The Oxford Classical Dictionary, ed. by N. G. L. Hammond and H. H. Scullard (2nd ed.; Oxford: At The Clarendon Press, 1970), p. 805.

⁴Barrow, Slavery In The Roman Empire, p. 240.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Gilbert Highet, "Persius Flaccus Aulus," in The Oxford Classical Dictionary, ed. by N. G. L. Hammond and H. H. Scullard (2nd ed.; Oxford: At The Clarendon Press, 1970), p. 571.

⁷Ibid.

was a rich Etruscan knight and he had many influential associates. In one of his satires, he indicts mankind who allow slaves for vice when they could be freed by virtue.¹

General authors

Apuleius

He was born of wealthy parents at Madaurus, Africa in 123 A.D.² He was educated first at Carthage, later at Athens and at Rome. Apuleius then moved to Carthage and became the chief priest of the province. He was known as a poet, philosopher, and rhetorician.³ His primary work, The Metamorphoses (better known as The Golden Ass) is a Latin novel which is humorous and imaginative.⁴ It is about Lucius who turns into an ass and observes life. Metamorphoses has many illustrations of slaves.

Pliny the Elder

Gaius Plinius Secundus (A.D. 23/24-79) was born at Comum and educated at Rome.⁵ He served in the Roman Army at the Rhine. Under Vespasian he held several procuratorships.⁶ In his comprehensive extant work Naturalis Historia

¹Ibid.

²Harold Edgeworth Butler and Martin Stirling Smith, "Apuleius," in The Oxford Classical Dictionary, ed. by N. G. L. Hammond and H. H. Scullard (2nd ed.; Oxford: At The Clarendon Press, 1970), p. 88.

³Ibid. ⁴Ibid. ⁵Ibid., p. 845. ⁶Ibid.

there are many references concerning slavery.¹

Seneca

Lucius Annaeus was born at Corduba in southern Spain between 4 B.C. and A.D. 1 into a wealthy equestrian family of Italian stock, was trained in Rome and was influenced by the Stoic philosophers.² He was appointed tutor to young Nero.³ With Nero's accession in 54 A.D., Seneca exchanged the role of tutor for that of political adviser.⁴ After disagreeing with Nero's policy, he withdrew from government service. In 65 A.D. Seneca was forced to commit suicide for his participation in the unsuccessful Pisonian conspiracy.⁵ His extant works contain ten ethical treatises, four prose works and nine tragedies.⁶ All the works contain references to slaves.⁷

¹Barrow, Slavery In The Roman Empire, p. 240.

²A. Ker and Leighton Durham Reynolds, "Seneca," in The Oxford Classical Dictionary, ed. by N. G. L. Hammond and H. H. Scullard (2nd ed.; Oxford: At The Clarendon Press, 1970), pp. 976-77.

³Ibid. ⁴Ibid. ⁵Ibid. ⁶Ibid.

⁷Barrow, Slavery In The Roman Empire, pp. 241-42.

Other authors

Appian

Appian was born in Alexandria during the reign of Domitian.¹ He held office in Alexandria and later moved to Rome where he obtained citizenship. Appian became Procurator under Antoninus Pius.² He mainly wrote about Roman Conquest and his most valuable work is Civil Wars.³

Cato

Marcus Porcius Cato was born of peasant parents at Tipiculum in 234 B.C.⁴ He fought as military tribune in the Second Punic War. Cato became praetor in Sardinia in 198 B.C. In 195 B.C., Cato was consul with Valerius Flaccus. He took over the province of Spain and initiated Roman administration.⁵ In 160 B.C., he wrote De Agri Cultura which explained vine, olive and fruit-growing and grazing for a profit in Latium and Campania.⁶ Cato died in 149 B.C.

¹Alexander Hugh McDonald, "Appian," in The Oxford Classical Dictionary, ed. by N. G. L. Hammond and H. H. Scullard (2nd ed.; Oxford: At The Clarendon Press, 1970), p. 87.

²Ibid. ³Ibid.

⁴Alexander Hugh McDonald, "Cato," in The Oxford Classical Dictionary, ed. by N. G. L. Hammond and H. H. Scullard (2nd ed.; Oxford: At The Clarendon Press, 1970), p. 215.

⁵Ibid. ⁶Ibid.

Columella

Lucius Iunius Moderatus Columella was a successful practical farmer who was deeply concerned over the decline of Italian agriculture. He was from a Spanish family and contemporary with Seneca.¹ As a young man he served as a tribune with Legio VI. Columella owned estates in various parts of central Italy.² Around 60 B.C., he wrote a treatise on agriculture in twelve books entitled De Re Rustica.³ In it, Columella deals extensively with duties of slaves.

Epictetus

He lived in Hieropolis, Phrygia and later became a Stoic philosopher.⁴ He was born about 55 A.D. and died around 135 A.D.⁵ Epictetus grew up as a slave of Epaphroditus and was eventually set free.⁶ He then began to teach philosophy in Rome. However in 89 A.D., Domitian banished all the philosophers from Rome.⁷ Epictetus went to Nicopolis where he continued to teach until his death.

¹Christian James Fordyce, "Columella," in The Oxford Classical Dictionary, ed. by N. G. L. Hammond and H. H. Scullard (2nd ed.; Oxford: At The Clarendon Press, 1970), p. 268.

²Ibid. ³Ibid.

⁴Kurt von Fritz, "Epictetus," in The Oxford Classical Dictionary, ed. by N. G. L. Hammond and H. H. Scullard (2nd ed.; Oxford: At The Clarendon Press, 1970), p. 390.

⁵Ibid. ⁶Ibid. ⁷Ibid.

Justinian

Flavius Petrus Sabbatius Justinianus was born c. 490 A.D. at a village near Naissus.¹ In 518 A.D. his uncle became emperor. Justinian held several legal positions, becoming Consul in 520. He was crowned as Emperor Augustus on April 4, 527. Justinian appointed several commissions to codify imperial law. The first Codex Justinianus was issued on April 7, 529 which codified all valid imperial constitutions from Hadrian to his time. Next the Digest was published on December 16, 533 which codified the works of the classical jurists. Then the Codex Justinianus was revised on November 16, 534.

Macrobius

Ambrosius Theodosius Macrobius may have been a pro-consul in Africa.² In his writings, he admits that he was not from Italy. Macrobius wrote Saturnalia which was an academic symposium in seven books.³ The subjects are primarily philological, historical, antiquarian, and scientific instruction, thereby casting much light on the period.

¹Arnold Hugh Martin Jones, "Justinian," in The Oxford Classical Dictionary, ed. by N. G. L. Hammond and H. H. Scullard (2nd ed.; Oxford: At The Clarendon Press, 1970), p. 571.

²Roland Gregory Austin, "Macrobius," in The Oxford Classical Dictionary, ed. by N. G. L. Hammond and H. H. Scullard (2nd ed.; Oxford: At The Clarendon Press, 1970), p. 635.

³Ibid.

Pomponius

Sertus Pomponius was a Roman jurist during the time of Emperors Hadrian and Antonines.¹ He appears to have been a teacher. Pomponius was one of the most productive legal writers during the Roman period. Pomponius was primarily a compiler of Roman legal literature. By the order of Hadrian, he prepared a commentary on the Edict.²

Strabo

Strabo was a Greek historian and geographer.³ He was born about 64/63 B.C. and lived until 21 A.D. He spent time in Rome and Alexandria.⁴ Strabo wrote for the political leadership at Rome. His Geography which consists of seventeen books survives.⁵

Varro

Marcus Terentius Varro became a praetor in public life.⁶ He fought as a partisan of Pompey in Spain in 49 A.D.

¹Adolf Berger and Barry Nicholas, "Pomponius," in The Oxford Classical Dictionary, ed. by N. G. L. Hammond and H. H. Scullard (2nd ed.; Oxford: At The Clarendon Press, 1970), p. 859.

²Ibid.

³Eric Herbert Warmington, "Strabo," in The Oxford Classical Dictionary, ed. by N. G. L. Hammond and H. H. Scullard (2nd ed.; Oxford: At The Clarendon Press, 1970), p. 1017.

⁴Ibid. ⁵Ibid.

⁶Petrus Johannes Enk, "Varro," in The Oxford Classical Dictionary, ed. by N. G. L. Hammond and H. H. Scullard (2nd ed.; Oxford: At The Clarendon Press, 1970), pp. 1107-08.

but without success.¹ Caesar restored him to favor and appointed him keeper of the future public library in 47 A.D.² After Caesar's death he was outlawed by Antony in 43 A.D., but escaped death. When the Civil War was over Varro was allowed to devote himself entirely to peaceful study. He wrote fifty-five books, but only two survive. One of the books is entitled Rerum rusticarum libri III which was written in 37 B.C. and deals with agriculture during that period.³

Biblical Writers

All the New Testament writers refer to slavery in their writings. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John refer to actual slaves and use illustrations involving slaves. Paul, James and Peter also refer to slaves. In addition, they discuss Christian master-slave relationships. These relationships become the basis for their presentation of spiritual servitude.

The Definition for Ancient Slavery

Slavery is a social status which carries with it a series of limitations upon the options, or choices, permitted to the individual. In ancient Greece the slave had no legal personality which was the peculiarity of the citizen. Schlaifer emphasizes this aspect.

¹Ibid. ²Ibid. ³Ibid.

The slave has none of the privileges, rights and immunities of the citizen and in this he is exactly like the foreigner. Hence the foreigner in becoming a slave, lost nothing, but merely came under the physical control of a master.¹

Hopkins stresses the source of slaves. "Slaves were forcibly imported aliens who were exploited to a degree and in a way which citizens would not allow."²

Aristotle in his Politics defines the ancient concept of a slave as follows:

Hence we see what is the nature and office of a slave; he who is by nature not his own but another's man is by nature a slave; and he may be said to be another's man who, being a human being, is also a possession. And a possession may be defined as an instrument of action, separable from the possessor.³

Thus a slave is the property of another man; he has no citizen rights, and he is usually a conquered foreigner.

The Sources of Scriptural References

All scriptural references will be taken from the New American Standard Bible and the Nestle Greek New Testament.

¹Robert Schlaifer, "Greek Theories of Slavery from Homer to Aristotle," Slavery In Classical Antiquity, ed. by M. I. Finley (Cambridge: W. Heffer & Sons, Ltd., 1960), p. 110.

²Hopkins, Conquerors and Slaves, p. 112.

³Aristotle, Politics, trans. by Benjamin Jowett (New York: Carlton House, n.d.), I. 4. 13-18.

CHAPTER I

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF SLAVERY

Slavery in the Ancient Near East

A developed institution of slavery was part of the legacy which Greece transferred to Rome. However, Greece had in turn inherited the practice of slavery from the ancient Near East. There is literary evidence for slavery existing in Sumer, Egypt, Babylonia, Israel and Assyria.

In the Sumerian Period of Mesopotamia during the Sargon Dynasty about 2300 B.C., there is textual evidence of slavery. A text which comes from the archives of the conquerors of Akkadian Susa reports 300 slaves living in a public household.¹ Gelb suggests that these are captives of war. "We may assume that these 'slaves' were recently captured P.O.W.'s in the possession of the royal establishment."² In the Third Dynasty of Ur around 2000 B.C., excavated texts make reference to male and female slaves within the royal household of Ur.³

In the ancient near east, armies used to kill their prisoners. Yet when the first conqueror's hand was stayed

¹I. J. Gelb, "Quantitative Evaluation of Slavery and Serfdom," in Cuneiform Studies in Honor of Samuel Noah Kramer, ed. by Barry L. Eichler (Germany: Verlag Butzon & Bercker Kevelaer, 1976), p. 195.

²Ibid. ³Ibid.

to spare his foe, the vast history of slavery was initiated. To grant life instead of destroying it was a mark of progress, even though the life spared was to be dragged out in bondage. Slavery enabled the conqueror to reap the labor from the conquered and it also served as a punishment for taking up arms. Enslavement was a concession. From that first act, whether motivated by mercy or self interest, a human institution was born.

The first biblical reference to gentile slavery is incorporated in the Abrahamic Covenant.¹

And every male among you who is eight days old shall be circumcised throughout your generations, a servant who is born in the house or who is bought with money from any foreigner, who is not of your descendants. A servant who is born in your house or who is bought with your money shall surely be circumcised; thus shall my covenant be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant (Gen. 17:13-14, italics mine).

Actually the word servant should be translated slave. Keil and Delitzsch, in their commentary, use the word slave instead of servant in Genesis 17:13. Circumcision was offered even to the slave.

It was to be extended not only to the seed, the lineal descendants of Abraham, but to all the males in his house, even to every foreign slave not belonging to the seed of Abram, whether born in the house or acquired (i.e. bought) with money.²

¹Refer to Chapter III for the discussion concerning the distinctiveness of Jewish slavery.

²C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, The Pentateuch, Vol. I, trans. by James Martin, Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, n.d.), p. 224.

Abraham owned foreign slaves which had been purchased in the slave market of Haran.

And Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his nephew, and all their possessions which they had accumulated, and the persons which they had acquired in Haran, and they set out for the land of Canaan . . . (Gen. 12:5, *italics mine*).

According to Keil and Delitzsch, אֲנָשֵׁי רַעְיָא, שְׂפָדָה, should not be translated "the persons which they had acquired," but "the male and female slaves that Abram and Lot had acquired."¹ It is the opinion of this writer that Abraham's slaves were prisoners of war. The Mesopotamia area was in a constant state of warfare and the primary source of slaves in ancient times was prisoners of war.

The Abrahamic covenant intended to provide spiritual benefits for the slaves of Abraham. This covenant begins a long list of biblical exhortations concerning the spiritual and physical treatment of slaves. In the Jewish economy, the slave was part of the family. He could worship and he was to be treated kindly.

In Pharaonic Egypt, slaves in limited numbers were employed as household domestics.² There is biblical evidence of the servitude of Israel in Egypt.

Now a new king arose over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. And he said to his people, 'Behold, the people of the sons of Israel are more and mightier than we.

¹Ibid., p. 195.

²Gelb, Cuneiform Studies in Honor of Samuel Noah Kramer, p. 201.

Come, let us deal wisely with them, lest they multiply and in the event of war, they also join themselves to those who hate us, and fight against us, and depart from the land.' So they appointed taskmasters over them to afflict them with hard labor (Ex. 1:8-11a).

So the military power of Egypt conquered the Jews and made them slaves.

These few illustrations show that slavery existed in the Ancient Near East. Slavery was the result of conquering armies retaining their captives for the purpose of performing tasks required by their captors.

Slavery in the Greek World

The Greek world always relied on slavery to staff its work force.¹ One unique aspect of Greek history was the advance, hand in hand, of freedom and slavery.² In the Greek cities, the major city being Athens, in which individual freedom reached its highest expression, slavery spread.³ It is the purpose of this section to outline the expansion of Greek slavery within the five major periods of Greek history--the Mycenaean Age, 1600-1200 B.C.; the Dark Ages, 1100-700 B.C.; the Age of Expansion, 700-500 B.C.; the Classical Age, 500-323 B.C. and the Hellenistic Age, 323-30 B.C.

¹M. I. Finley, ed., Slavery in Classical Antiquity (Cambridge, England: W. Heffer & Sons, Ltd., 1960), p. 51.

²Ibid., p. 72.

³Ibid.

The Mycenaean Age, 1600-1200 B.C.

According to Greek myths about the period, the Mycenaean kings fought each other fiercely, and the captured population was forced to provide food and labor.¹ Probably this warfare initiated slavery in Greece. The next step in the development of slavery was the result of the conquering of the Mycenaean civilization by the barbaric invaders, called Dorians, from the north.² They first entered Greece in 1300 B.C. and finally conquered the city of Mycenae in 1200 B.C.³ When the Dorians finally settled in the land, they forced the subject population to supply the necessities of life, while they devoted themselves exclusively to military activities.⁴ The Dorian conquest ushered in the Dark Ages.

The Dark Ages, 1100-700 B.C.

According to Starr, the Aegean area was isolated and the people lived on a very primitive level.⁵ However, slavery did exist. Yet the number of slaves were few, even the wealthiest chieftains possessed only a limited number

¹Chester G. Starr, The Ancient Greeks (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 95.

²Ibid. ³Ibid.

⁴Schlaifer, Slavery in Classical Antiquity, p. 100.

⁵Starr, The Ancient Greeks, p. 95.

of slaves.¹ In this period, slaves were considered as a legal form of property.²

This was the period of Homer, the poet.³ In the two works attributed to him The Iliad and The Odyssey, the background was the Trojan War (1194-1184 B.C.). The soldiers captured in the war were made slaves.⁴ Homer indicates that other sources of slavery were kidnapping of men, women and children.⁵ Homer used the Greek word δμῶς for slave.⁶

However, an event was taking place in this period which would have a profound influence on Greek slavery. This was the beginning and early development of the Greek handicraft industry. Over a great period of time, the handicraft production greatly increased the use of slaves.

The Age of Expansion, 700-500 B.C.

During this period the Greek handicraft industry expanded. Also, the use of coin money as a means of

¹Westermann, The Slave Systems of Greek and Roman Antiquity, p. 1.

²Ibid. ³Ibid.

⁴Homer, The Iliad, Vol. II of The Loeb Classical Library, trans. by A. T. Murray (London: William Heinemann, 1925), pp. 440-41.

⁵Homer, The Odyssey, Vol. II of The Loeb Classical Library, trans. by A. T. Murray (London: William Heinemann, 1919), p. 14. 264-65.

⁶Westermann, The Slave Systems of Greek and Roman Antiquity, p. 4.

exchange was introduced and spread.¹ The Greek colonists were able to purchase slaves from the native population who had obtained captives taken in intertribal wars. This additional source of slaves helped to meet the demand caused by the industrialization of the handicraft industry.

At Athens, the rulers abolished the right of a citizen to mortgage himself for a debt. This policy was widely adopted in the Greek world; therefore, slavery incurred by debt was eliminated as a source of slave recruitment until the Hellenistic period.²

Classical Age, 500-323 B.C.

This period extends from the Persian Wars to the worldwide expansion by Alexander. It was a period characterized by militarism which provided a constant source of slaves, i.e. war captives. However, slavery could be the fate of any person during this period. Aristophanes identifies the various sources of slavery.

Slave status might fortuitously be the lot of any person, whether occurring by the accident of birth or in the lifetime of one born free, by captivity in war, by kidnapping or by some misfortune which altered one's economic status.³

Along with the increased source of slaves was an

¹Ibid., p. 4. ²Ibid.

³Aristophanes, Plutus, trans. by Benjamin Bickley Rogers, of The Loeb Classical Library (London: William Heinemann, 1924), pp. 147-48.

increased demand for slave labor.¹ Westermann enumerates concerning this increased demand.

Among the causes of the increased demand for slave labor in the fifth century were the expansion in the handicraft industries, due in notable part to constant wars and the steady demand for war materials, and the withdrawal of citizen workers from the labor market both by recruitment for service in the field of war and through the increased political demands upon their time arising from the steady course of democratization.²

Thus the period is characterized by a marked increase in the number of slaves relative to that of the free population.

The Greeks identified three categories of slaves according to ownership which are public slaves, temple slaves and privately owned slaves.³ The public slaves were used in the administration of the Athenian state. There is evidence that a purchased group of public slaves were used as a police force, armed and with the power of arresting the free.⁴

This is the period in which Athens reached her democratic grandeur and yet maintained a large slave labor force. Finley reports the following slave population statistics.

What I consider to be the best computations for Athens suggest that the total of slaves reached 80-100,000 in peak periods in the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. Other places such as Aegina or Corinth may at one time or another also have had a higher ratio of slaves than Athens.⁵

The largest individual holdings of slaves in Athens were

¹Westermann, The Slave Systems of Greek and Roman Antiquity, p. 7.

²Ibid. ³Ibid., p. 9. ⁴Ibid., p. 23.

⁵Finley, Slavery in Classical Antiquity, p. 58.

the silver mines of Laurium. A record of the fifth-century shows General Nicias leased out one thousand slaves to work in the mines.¹ The remainder of the slaves were used as skilled labor in the handicraft shops of the city or as domestic help.

With the defeat of all the foreign peoples of the mideast, the Greeks developed a philosophy of national superiority.² The general view was that being a Greek was ipso facto possessed this superior culture and that a non-Greek was incapable of receiving it.³ The foreigner was to be placed in a state termed δουλεία.⁴ Thus the barbarian was only fitted for slavery and it was the duty of the Greek to enslave him.⁵ It is true that many groups were enslaved. However, the Greeks did work hand in hand with many foreigners.

The Hellenistic Age, 323-30 B.C.

According to Westermann, the slave system of this period was not oppressive or extremely brutal, either in the area of the Aegean Sea or on the Greek homeland or in

¹Philochorus, "Atthis," in Fragmente der Griechischen Historiker, trans. by F. Jacoby (Oxford: At The Clarendon Press, 1923), p. 111, B. 328.

²Schlaifer, "Greek Theories of Slavery from Homer to Aristotle," p. 94.

³Ibid., p. 95. ⁴Ibid. ⁵Ibid.

the conquered countries of the Near East.¹ Alexander avoided the enslavement of captives.² During the Seleucid period, Palestinian and Syrian captives were enslaved.

Egypt was conquered by Alexander in 332 B.C.³ However, he died on June 10, 323 B.C.⁴ Consequently, Egypt came under the rule of one of Alexander's generals, Ptolemy Soter (Ptolemy I) who reigned for forty-one years.⁵ Then Ptolemy Philadelphus (Ptolemy II) took over the rule of Egypt and held it for thirty-eight years (283-246 B.C.).⁶ He passed a law in which he released 120,000 slaves who were natives of Jerusalem.⁷

About 310 B.C., Demetrius of Phalerum conducted a census with the following results: 21,000 Athenian citizens, 10,000 residents and 400,000 slaves (οἰκετῶν in the text).⁸ The slaves of Athens greatly outnumbered the free citizens.

¹Westermann, The Slave Systems of Greek and Roman Antiquity, p. 41.

²Ibid., p. 28.

³E. J. Bickerman, Chronology of the Ancient World (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1968), pp. 208-13.

⁴Ibid. ⁵Ibid. ⁶Ibid.

⁷Josephus, The Jewish War, of The Loeb Classical Library, trans. by H. St. J. Thackeray (London: William Heinemann, 1927), pp. 11,12.

⁸Westermann, The Slave Systems of Greek and Roman Antiquity, p. 76.

The Greek philosophy concerning slavery changed in this period. The Hellenistic theorists abandoned the idea of national inferiorities and superiorities.¹ The Greeks emphasized the humane handling of slaves and laid much emphasis upon the kind of treatment which would produce the best economic return for them.²

Summary and Conclusion

This section has presented the long history of slavery from Sumeria to Greece. It did not touch any one ethnic group but spanned the entire civilization. The primary source of slaves was captives from war. These slaves performed various types of jobs--both skilled and unskilled.

In the Greek period, slavery was developed into a basic social institution. The slave population in Athens eventually exceeded that of the free citizens. Slaves were primarily used in the mines and handicraft industry of Greece. The Oeconomica sums up the life of a slave as consisting of three elements: work, punishment, and food.³

Slavery was a prevalent theme in Greek writings. Aristotle was the principal writer on the theory of slavery. He introduced the concept of natural slavery, which stated that slaves were meant to be slaves and it was the duty of

¹Ibid., p. 40. ²Ibid.

³Aristotle, The Oeconomica and The Magna Moralia, of The Loeb Classical Library (London: William Heinemann, 1935), l. 5. 1344-45.

the Greeks to enslave them.

This is the historical background for the understanding of slavery during the New Testament period. Slavery was a major institution in the Near Eastern civilization. Slavery was an inheritance Rome received from Greece.

CHAPTER II

THE IDENTIFICATION OF ROMAN SLAVERY

It is evident from chapter one that Rome did not originate slavery but inherited it from the Greeks, where New Testament slavery had its roots. Nevertheless, slavery was at its peak in the Roman period which included New Testament times.

Rome replaced Athens as the outstanding center of the exploitation of slave labor. During the Roman Republic, slaves were utilized primarily in agriculture production.¹ Throughout the Early Principate which is the New Testament Period, there was an ample supply of slave labor available for use both in agriculture and industry.

Historical Evidence

The fact of Roman slavery was well documented by the contemporary writers of that period. This section only includes a sampling of their discussion on slavery.

While Augustus was Emperor (31 B.C.-A.D. 14), he concentrated on the organization of the Empire rather than

¹Westermann, The Slave Systems of Greek and Roman Antiquity, p. 90.

the expansion of the Empire.¹ Hence the Empire lost one great source to supply the slave market--the war captives.² The Greek slaves acquired by Rome in the early wars became important figures in commercial life. From this point in history, the slaves acquired from without the Empire were mostly of an inferior culture. They could not be utilized the same way the Greek slaves were.³

According to Dio Cassius, Augustus introduced for the first time a two per cent sales tax on slaves.⁴ By the time of Nero, the slaves tax stood at four per cent.⁵ Justinian mentions in his Digest that there were tariffs on the import and export of slaves.⁶ Failure to declare such slaves for custom duties was a crime receiving punishment.

Suetonius records Augustus' policy of manumission.

Considering it also of great importance to keep the people pure and unsullied by any taint of foreign or servile blood, he was most chary of conferring Roman

¹Tacitus, The Annals, trans. by John Jackson, of The Loeb Classical Library, ed. by T. E. Page, E. Capps, and W. H. D. Rouse (London: William Heinemann, 1937), XIV. 44.

²Ibid. ³Ibid.

⁴Cassius Cocceianus Dio, Roman History, Nine Vols., trans. by Earnest Cary, of The Loeb Classical Library, ed. by T. E. Page and W. H. D. Rouse (London: William Heinemann, 1924), 78. 12. 2.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Justinian, The Digest of Justinian, 2 Vols., trans. by C. H. Munro (Cambridge, 1909), 39. 4. 16. 3.

citizenship and set a limit to manumission.¹

Yet later in his history, Suetonius recorded that Vespasian bought the freedom of outstanding poets.²

The decree of Claudius that sick slaves left to die on the Island of Aesculapius were free was recorded by Suetonius.³ Claudius also states that any master who killed a slave was liable to the charge of murder.⁴

Cato's and Varro's treatises on agriculture implies that landlords used slave labor for all types of farming.⁵ Columella, writing a handbook for the gentleman farmer under Nero, recommends the use of slaves for the home farm.⁶ But he advises the leasing of outlying properties, especially if they were arable, to free tenants.

¹Suetonius, The Lives of the Caesars, Two Vols., trans. by J. C. Rolfe, of The Loeb Classical Library, ed. by T. E. Page and W. H. D. Rouse (London: William Heinemann, 1949), The Deified Augustus, XL.

²Ibid., The Deified Vespasian, XVII.

³Ibid., The Deified Claudius, XXV.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Marcus Terentius Varro, On Agriculture, trans. by William Davis Hooper, of The Loeb Classical Library, ed. by T. E. Page, E. Capps and W. H. D. Rouse (London: William Heinemann, 1934), l. 17.

⁶Lucius Junius Moderatus Columella, On Agriculture, trans. by Harrison Boyd Ash, of The Loeb Classical Library, ed. by E. Capps, W. H. D. Rouse, L. A. Post, and E. H. Warmington (London: William Heinemann, 1961), I. 83.

Pliny¹ and Pomponius² both indicated that slave labor in the mines and quarries had become a common alternative to the death penalty during the Principate. Strabo, the geographer, identifies a mine where the mortality rate of slave labor was excessively high due to poisonous gases.³

The Gospel writers mention Roman slaves in the Bible. Matthew cites the example of the centurion living at Capernaum whose sick slave was healed by Jesus (Mt. 8:5-14). When Jesus was betrayed in the Garden of Gethsemane, one of His disciples cut off the ear of a slave owned by the high priest (Lk. 22:50). Of course, the classic biblical example is Onesimus (Phil. 16).

There are many examples of famous first century slaves. The philosopher Epictetus while still a slave of the freedman Epaphroditus studied with Musonius Rufus and eventually, after being freed, held the office of Legal Secretary under both Nero and Domitian.⁴ Verrius Flaccus,

¹Pliny the Elder, Natural History, trans. by H. Racham, of The Loeb Classical Library, ed. by T. E. Page, E. Capps, and W. H. D. Rouse (London: William Heinemann, 1938), p. 158.

²Pomponius, "Digest," in The Civil Law, trans. by S. P. Scott (Cincinnati, 1932), XL. IV. 46.

³Strabo, The Geography of Strabo, trans. by Horace Leonard Jones, of The Loeb Classical Library, ed. by E. Capps, T. E. Page, and W. H. D. Rouse (London: William Heinemann, 1928), XXII. 562.

⁴Bartchy, ΜΑΛΛΟΝ ΧΡΗΣΑΙ : First-Century Slavery and the Interpretation of I Corinthians 7:21, p. 75, footnote 267.

who was the most learned of the Augustan scholars, while a slave, taught the children of Augustus. Marcus Antonius Felix, after being freed, served as procurator of Judea where he was Paul's judge.¹ Phaedrus, the great Roman fabulist, came from Macedonia as a slave to Rome where he was educated and freed by Augustus. Polybius, Secretary for Literary Affairs under Emperor Claudius, translated Homer's works into Latin and Virgil's works into Greek while still a slave.²

Source of Slaves

In approximately three hundred years (c. 300 B.C.-1 A.D.) the Roman Legions conquered the entire Mediterranean basin. As a result of Roman conquests, the primary source of slaves was prisoners of war.³ During the time of Augustus, wars in Spain, Germany, the Alpine areas, Illyricum and Pannonia placed large numbers of prisoners on the slave market.⁴

As the Roman army reached the Hellenistic East (c. 60 B.C.), many more prisoners of war reached the slave market of the Empire.⁵ Augustus enslaved the citizens of

¹Ibid. ²Ibid.

³Hopkins, Conquerors and Slaves, p. 11.

⁴Finley, Slavery in Classical Antiquity, p. 9.

⁵Joseph Vogt, Ancient Slavery and the Ideal of Man, trans. by Thomas Wiedemann (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1975), p. 115.

Cyzicus, a Greek colony of Miletus, because they had killed Roman citizens.¹

With the cessation of the great wars of conquest after the death of Augustus, the primary source for the slaves became breeding. Under Roman law, children born to mothers who were in slavery became slaves at birth.

Up to the time of Caesar Augustus, another major source was kidnapping by pirates.² However, with the establishment of law and order by Augustus within the Empire, piracy was eliminated and the stealing of persons for the purpose of enslavement was greatly reduced. Augustus' policy was carried out by the Roman legions under the leadership of Pompey. Outside the borders of the Empire, kidnapping continued to be a means of enslaving men.³ Such slaves were taken by caravan into the Empire and sold.

Many people sold themselves into slavery. Some were enslaved for non-payment of taxes, others as punishment for criminal acts. Therefore slavery in Roman times could be the fate of any person.

Just a few years after Paul wrote to the church at

¹Suetonius, The Lives of the Caesars, The Deified Augustus, 47.

²Herodotus, Herodotus, trans. by A. I. Godley, of The Loeb Classical Library, ed. by E. Capps, T. E. Page, and W. H. D. Rouse (London: William Heinemann, n.d.), 6. 16.

³Bartchy, ΜΑΛΛΟΝ ΧΡΗΣΑΙ: First-Century Slavery and the Interpretation of I Corinthians 7:21, p. 46.

Corinth, the Jewish War (A.D. 66-70) opened a new source of slaves for the Empire. Quintilius Varus, Governor of Syria, sold the inhabitants of Sepphoris¹ into slavery. Cerealius, commander of the Fifth Roman Legion, surrounded the base of Mt. Gerizim thereby entrapping the Samaritans.² Many Samaritans died of thirst, while many others, preferring slavery to such a fate, surrendered to the Roman army. During the Jewish War, Vespasian sent 6,000 Jewish prisoners to Nero as a labor force for a canal through the Isthmus of Corinth, which became an unsuccessful venture.³

Cost of Slaves

Slaves were purchased at the slave market which most Roman cities had. Prisoners of war were sold as slaves at the slave market, with the funds being deposited in the Imperial Treasury. However, with the end of the period of expansion and the decline of war captives, the supply of slaves decreased while the demand increased. Therefore the foremost disadvantage of owning slaves during New Testament times was their high cost.

An unskilled male adult slave cost as much as would support for an average peasant family for four years, and the slave owner risked total loss should the slave die

¹The city was eventually named Tiberias.

²Josephus, Jewish War, III. 313.

³Ibid., III. 540.

suddenly.¹ Another comparison figures the cost of an unskilled adult slave around 500 to 600 denarii.² A Roman soldier had 60 denarii a year deducted from his pay for rations. Using these statistics, an unskilled slave cost eight to ten times more than the annual keep of a Roman soldier. Finley concludes correctly that the price for unskilled slaves was too high to allow for private employment.³ Therefore the majority of unskilled slaves were used in the Emperor's service.

Finley further states that skilled labor was relatively more profitable. Skilled slaves were used in agriculture as vinedressers and as craftsmen in industry and as agents for trade.⁴ However, contemporary sources indicate much larger sums were paid for skilled men. Horace quotes 2,000 denarii for a handsome boy educated in Greek.⁵ During the reign of Nero, Columella recommends paying the same sum for a trained vinedresser. L. Calcilius Jucundus, who was a banker-auctioneer at Pompeii, left accounts in his box of receipted bills which record the sale of two slaves for

¹Hopkins, Conquerors and Slaves, p. 110.

²Finley, Slavery in Classical Antiquity, p. 10.

³Ibid., p. 12. ⁴Ibid.

⁵Horace, Satires, Epistles, and Ars Poetica, trans. by H. Rushton Fairclough, of The Loeb Classical Library, ed. by E. Capps, T. E. Page, and W. H. D. Rouse (London: William Heinemann, 1926), Ep. III. 3. 6.

5,300 denarii.¹ Consequently, a skilled slave cost on the average, sixty times the annual keep of a Roman soldier.

Primary Slave Markets

Slaves captured by military conquest were the property of the Roman government and were sold through slave markets. The funds collected from the sale of these slaves were deposited in the Roman Treasury. Also individuals could sell slaves through the slavemarkets. The major slave markets were located in and around Rome.

The provinces also had slave markets. The primary slave markets for the Eastern Provinces were located at Tyre.² Ephesus also was an important slave center and maintained a slave market in New Testament times.³ No doubt Paul was acquainted with the special stone $\pi\rho\lambda\tau\epsilon\rho\alpha\ \iota\epsilon\rho\upsilon\sigma\alpha\lambda\epsilon\mu$ set close to the cattle market from which slaves were auctioned in Jerusalem.⁴

During the reign of Hadrian (A.D. 132-135), a large

¹Tenney Frank, ed., Rome and Italy of the Empire, Vol. V in An Economic Survey of Ancient Rome, 5 Vols. (New York: Octagon Books, 1975), p. 255.

²Joachim Jeremias, Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus, trans. by F. H. & C. H. Cave (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), p. 36.

³Mary L. Gordon, "The Nationality of Slaves Under the Early Roman Empire," in Slavery in Classical Antiquity, ed. by M. I. Finley (Cambridge, England: W. Heffer & Sons, Ltd., 1960), p. 170.

⁴Bartchy, ΜΑΛΛΑΘΟΝ ΧΡΗΣΑΙ: First-Century Slavery and the Interpretation of I Corinthians 7:21, p. 50, and Jeremias, Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus, p. 36.

group of Jews were placed upon the eastern slave markets. They were primarily sold at the slave markets of Hebron and Gaza.

Population of Slaves

The Roman Empire definitely can be classified as a slave society.¹ In such a society, slaves perform a major part of industrial and agricultural production. Also the slave class forms a high proportion (approximately 20% or higher) of the population.² Only two civilizations qualify in antiquity as slave societies, Rome and Athens.

Hopkins presents the following population statistics:

Chart I

The Population of Two Slave Societies³

<u>Name</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Est. Total Population</u>	<u>Estimated No. of Slaves</u>	<u>% of Slaves of Total Population</u>
Athens	c. 400 B.C.	200,000	60,000	30%
Roman Italy	225 B.C.	4,000,000	600,000	15%
	31 B.C.	6,000,000	2,000,000	35%

These figures based on ancient census illustrate the extent of Roman slavery and its importance as an institution within the empire.

¹Hopkins, Conquerors and Slaves, p. 101.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

Josephus records the number of Jews sold as slaves, or otherwise assigned to slave labor by Vespasian, during the Jewish war as 97,000 Jews.¹ The Roman Empire was capable of assimilating a large group of captives into its slave force. This one illustration helps to confirm the large slave population within the empire.

Positions Held by Slaves

The tasks performed by slaves ranged from domestic work to positions held in government. Slaves were used by the government, agriculture, industry, education and private citizens. Generally speaking, there were very few economic services which were closed to the slave class. In contrast, there were very few jobs marked as low-class labor fitting only for slaves. Westermann presents two important reasons for this unique aspect of ancient slavery.

This peculiarity is probably grounded in the two factors of ancient slavery represented by the accidental nature of slave recruitment from any social class and by the lack, in antiquity, of the fundamental race distinction which became a marked characteristic of American Negro slavery of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.²

Government

That the state should possess slaves is not surprising; war after all, was the affair of the state, and the

¹Josephus, Jewish War, 6. 9. 3.

²Westermann, The Slave Systems of Greek and Roman Antiquity, p. 11.

captives might well be state property. What is surprising is the remarkable use made of public slaves under the Empire.¹ During the time of Augustus, oarsmen on the Imperial Navy ships were slaves.² The emperor's secretaries and accountants were slaves.³ It is interesting to note that many of these trained slaves earned their freedom, became freedmen, and advanced into positions of Secretaries of State and Ministers of Finance. Pella, who became wealthy and powerful, was such an example as Secretary of State under Nero.

Roman municipalities used public slaves for the care and repair of public buildings, water systems, sewerage systems and street cleaning. One list of public slaves at Ostia⁴ records 700 slaves to maintain these services.⁵ Augustus provided 600 slaves for organized fire brigades

¹Barrow, Slavery In The Roman Empire, p. 130.

²S. A. Cook, F. E. Adcock, and Charlesworth, eds., The Augustan Ancient History 44 B.C.-A.D. 70, Vol. X of The Cambridge Ancient History (Cambridge: At The University Press, 1963), p. 236.

³A. H. M. Jones, "Slavery in the Ancient World," Slavery in Classical Antiquity, ed. by M. J. Finley (Cambridge, England: Wm. Heffer & Sons, Ltd., 1960), p. 2.

⁴Ostia was the harbour city for Rome at the mouth of the Tiber River.

⁵Frontinus, The Stratagems and the Aqueducts of Rome, trans. by Charles E. Bennett, of The Loeb Classical Library, ed. by Mary B. McElwain (London: William Heinemann, n.d.), II. 116-17.

to protect Rome against the threat of fire.¹ Frontinus, who was in charge of Rome's water supply during the time of Emperor Trajan (98-117 A.D.), wrote about the aqueducts of Rome and explained the utilization of slaves.

There are two of those gangs, one belonging to the state, and the other to Caesar. The one belonging to the state is the older, which, as we have said, was left by Agrippa to Augustus, and was by him made over to the state. It numbers about 240 men. The number in Caesar's gang is 460; it was organized by Claudius at the time he brought his aqueduct into the city. Both gangs are divided into several classes of workmen: overseers, reservoir-keepers, inspectors, pavers, plasterers and other workmen.²

Agriculture

Agriculture was prosperous in Roman Italy during the first century after Christ.³ Excavations at Pompeii indicate that agriculture played an important role in the life of this town. Many of the suburban residences on the slopes of Mount Vesuvius had been transformed into productive farms run by slaves.⁴ Literature from first century writers indicates that slave jobs in farming were well defined. Columella, discussing slave laborers, allows four days for plowing an average field three times: one day for

¹Cook, Adcock and Charlesworth, eds., The Augustan Empire 44 B.C.-A.D. 70, p. 200.

²Frontinus, The Stratagems and the Aqueducts of Rome, II. 116-17.

³Frank, Rome and Italy of the Empire, p. 171.

⁴Ibid., p. 263.

harrowing it and one and a half days for harvesting.¹ For vineyards one man can cut 100 vine props in a day.² Varro recommended thirteen slaves for operating a medium olive-yard: an overseer, a housekeeper, five labourers, three teamsters, one muleteer, one swineherd and one shepherd.³

Industry

Beginning with Augustus, there was a period of commercial and industrial expansion.⁴ The demand for raw materials and manufactured goods was enormous, requiring the employment of large numbers of slaves.⁵

The Carrara Quarries near Luna in Italy quarried marble for the building programs of Caesar, Augustus, Nero, Vespasian and Trajan. Approximately 6,000 workmen, largely slaves, were employed regularly at these quarries throughout this period.⁶ Puteoli, a town southeast of Rome, was known for its production of iron implements. Slave-labor manned the numerous smithies of the town.⁷

Within the ceramic industry, the largest shop

¹Columella, On Agriculture, 2. 12. 1.

²Ibid., 11. 2. 12.

³Varro, On Agriculture, p. 229.

⁴Barrow, Slavery In The Roman Empire, p. 99.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Frank, Rome and Italy of the Empire, p. 121.

⁷Ibid., p. 132.

employed fifty-eight slaves.¹ Such a shop usually produced both plain and decorated tableware. This type of shop would employ professional slaves who made molds, semi-professional slaves who made plain dishes and unskilled slaves who served as firemen, packers, shippers, clerks, and menial tasks.²

Canusium, on the Adriatic Sea, along with Padua and Pollentia were towns where the woolen and clothing industry was centralized. The spinners and weavers of these industrial looms were slaves.³ The factories at Pollentia produced the black wool used for the strong, cheap clothing worn by slaves.⁴ In 64 A.D., fire destroyed Rome. Thousands of slaves were bought by the brickyards outside the city in order to supply the vast quantities of brick needed to rebuild the city.⁵

In Judea and Jerusalem, Paul undoubtedly saw many slaves working in a wide variety of activities, including positions of high responsibility in the court of Herod and

¹Ibid., p. 189. ²Ibid.

³Pliny, the Younger, Letters and Panegyricus, II Vols., trans. by Betty Radice, of The Loeb Classical Library, ed. by E. H. Warmington (London: William Heinemann, 1969), 8. 190-91.

⁴Suetonius, The Lives of the Caesars, Nero, 30. 3.

⁵Frank, Rome and Italy of the Empire, p. 208.

the families of the high priests.¹ In the city, there appeared to be a great number of domestic and civil slaves, both Jew and Gentile.²

Education

The Greeks respected the teacher, but the Romans thought his job rather a low-grade one. As often as not teachers were slaves.³ However, educated slaves who could teach the young commanded a high price.⁴

Private citizens

The wealthy private citizen in the Roman empire made use of slaves for the domestic work. The numbers employed were lavish compared to modern standards. The reason for this was the abundance of slaves as a result of conquest.⁵

Tacitus records the case of Pedanius Secundus, Prefect of Rome under Nero, whose town house was served by a staff of 400 slaves.⁶ It was not uncommon for soldiers in

¹Bartchy, ΜΑΛΛΟΝ ΧΡΗΣΑΙ: First-Century Slavery and The Interpretation of I Corinthians 7:21, p. 50.

²Ibid.

³A. C. Bouquet, Everyday Life in New Testament Times (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953), p. 158.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Refer to the sections on the Source of Slaves p. 37 and the Population of Slaves p. 42.

⁶Tacitus, The Annals, XIV. 43.

the Roman Army to own a slave or two.¹

Economic Implications

Hopkins identifies two new ingredients which transformed the Roman economy during the period of imperial expansion: first, the increase in the wealth of the Roman elite and, second, the massive growth of slavery.² The hallmark of the Roman elite were land and political office.³

The land conquered by the Roman Army became the property of the state, and a portion of this land was sold to private citizens. Appian comments on this, "It was the rich who took most of this unallocated land."⁴ The outcome of this process was the formation of large estates. Pliny, in New Testament times, remarks on this process, "large estates ruined Italy."⁵ A small class of landowners controlled the wealth of the empire.

These large estates were staffed by purchased slaves and produced a surplus of marketable crops.⁶ Land owners

¹Theodosian Code, in Erganzungsindex Zu Jus und Leges, trans. by Earst Levy (Weimar, 1930), VII, XIII. 16; XVII. 2.

²Hopkins, Conquerors and Slaves, p. 8.

³Ibid., p. 90.

⁴Appian, "The Civil Wars," in Roman History, trans. by Horace White, of The Loeb Classical Library (London: William Heinemann, 1913), pp. 1-7.

⁵Pliny, the Elder, Natural History, pp. 18-35.

⁶Hopkins, Conquerors and Slaves, p. 106.

achieved this surplus primarily by raising the productivity of labor in which fewer slaves produced more food.¹ This was the primary aspect of the Roman economy.²

The second important aspect of the Roman economy was a large labor force recruited primarily by compulsion through the institution of slavery.³ The large labor force was the result of the large influx of prisoners during the period of expansion. Slaves were not only used in the large estate farms of the empire but also in the industrial shops.

The largest capital outlay for the agricultural estates and industrial shops was for slaves. Hopkins explains the economic logic of slavery as follows:

The high capital cost of slaves led to the creation of units large enough to provide them with work throughout the year. . . . Owners could afford to pay high prices for slaves, precisely because of the high productivity which could be forced out of them on larger farms.⁴

This section reveals the primary purpose of slavery which was economic exploitation.

Another important element entered the Roman economy during the Augustan Period. Emperor Augustus initiated an effective empire-wide system of taxation.⁵ The tax base was land, crops and slaves.⁶ In preparation for the tax, an empire-wide census was undertaken.

Now it came about in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus, that a census be taken of all the

¹Ibid. ²Ibid., p. 15. ³Ibid., p. 23.

⁴Ibid., p. 111. ⁵Ibid., p. 15. ⁶Ibid.

inhabited earth. This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria and all were proceeding to register for the census, everyone to his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, in order to register, along with Mary, who was engaged to him, and was with child (Lk. 2:1-5).

It is interesting to note that Rome was exempt from taxation.

According to Dio Cassius, Augustus, in A.D. 7, introduced the first sales tax on slaves purchased by Roman citizens at a modest rate of two per cent.¹ In Ptolemaic Egypt, the rate for the slave sales tax was about twenty per cent.² However, by the time of Nero, the sales tax stood at four per cent.³

Justinian indicates there were tariffs on the import and export of slaves who were bought for the sale or use of the purchaser.⁴ This tariff was imposed both at the harbor cities of Rome and at the borders of the Empire. Failure to declare such slaves for customs duties was a punishable offense.⁵

Thus slavery was a major ingredient in the Roman economy. It was the primary labor force and it produced

¹Dio Cassius, Roman History, 78. 12. 2.

²Westermann, The Slave Systems of Greek and Roman Antiquity, p. 95.

³Ibid.

⁴Justinian, The Digest of Justinian, 39. 4. 16. 3.

⁵Ibid.

the major products.

Sociological Practice

Slavery was an essential element in the social structure of antiquity. Within the Roman Empire, slavery was everywhere present and everywhere accepted. The presence of a substantial number of slaves in Roman society defined free citizens as superior even if they were poor.¹

An important minority of slaves had considerable prestige, social power and influence. Their social status conflicted with their legal status as slaves. These slaves held governmental positions in the Empire.

Other slaves were valuable to their masters because they were professional people such as doctors, teachers, writers, accountants, overseers, secretaries and even sea captains.² These professional slaves elevated themselves above a slave status. They formed close relationships with their masters, thus overcoming class barriers at their most crucial points.³ Some of them achieved freedom. Others, although legally remaining slaves in practice, became the partners of freemen in social life.⁴ Augustus honored his tutor with a state funeral.⁵ This demonstrated the emperor's

¹Vogt, Ancient Slavery and the Ideal of Man, p. 103.

²Hopkins, Conquerors and Slaves, p. 120.

³Vogt, Ancient Slavery and The Ideal of Man, p. 120.

⁴Ibid., p. 114. ⁵Ibid.

gratitude for his teacher, but it was also a public recognition of the work slaves were doing for the state.

Slaves were not exempted from enjoying many of the pleasures which the time afforded them. Social pleasure clubs and professional associations received slaves along with freedmen into their membership.¹ They could attend the theatre, the gladiatorial games and the races.² Upon occasion slaves could share in the municipal banquets.³

A primary sociological factor of Roman slavery was that slaves were not considered slaves by nature.⁴ They had no distinguishing racial characteristics.⁵ Therefore once freedom was obtained, it was easy to function as a free citizen.

Legal Provisions

From early Greek times, slavery was a legal institution founded on the theory of material proprietary rights.⁶ The slave, although a human being, was legally

¹Westermann, The Slave Systems of Greek and Roman Antiquity, p. 105.

²Petronius, Satyricon, trans. by Michael Heseltine, of The Loeb Classical Library (London: William Heinemann, 1922), pp. 47, 70.

³Dio Cassius, Roman History, 69. 16. 3.

⁴Hopkins, Conqueror's and Slaves, p. 127.

⁵Ibid.

⁶C. W. Westrup, Some Notes on the Roman Slave in Early Times--A Comparative Sociological Study (Kobenhavn, Denmark: Bainco Lunos Bogtrykkeri A/S, 1956), p. 7.

considered a thing. He was without any legal personality. Consequently he had no rights.

No other institution demonstrates better the importance of slavery in the empire than Roman Law. According to Finley, a major part of judicial law involved slavery,

As the Roman jurist Florentinus phrased it, 'Slavery is an institution of the ius gentium whereby someone is subject to the dominium of another, contrary to nature. . . . I chose Florentinus to quote instead because his definition appears in the Digest, in which slavery is so prominent that the Roman law of slavery has been called 'the most characteristic part of the most characteristic intellectual product of Rome.' Nothing illustrates more perfectly the inability of the ancient world to imagine that there could be a civilized society without slaves.¹

Hopkins suggests that Roman law was a "mechanism" for protecting the upper class property in Rome, in the Italian towns and in the provinces of the empire.²

According to Roman Law, the slave is a thing, (res), a chattel (mancipium), a mortal object (res mortales).³ Within this law, slavery is identified as an institution in which someone is subject to the dominium of another person.⁴ Dominium is a legal term which means full legal power over a corporeal thing, which gives the owner the right to use it, to take proceeds from it, and to dispose of it

¹Finley, Slavery in Classical Antiquity, p. 61.

²Hopkins, Conquerors and Slaves, p. 83.

³Justinian, The Digest of Justinian, l. 5. 4. 1.

⁴Ibid.

freely.¹ Thus a slave of a Roman citizen was a living object which could be bought, used, rented, sold or destroyed. The slave could be treated harshly.² An injured slave was damaged property.³

The Roman slave had no legal rights. If he committed a crime, his owner was required to pay the damages or give him to the injured party.⁴ The slave had access to the courts only through his master.⁵ He could not join the army. He could have no real family since any children born to a female slave belonged to her owner.⁶ In short, that which separated the Roman slave from all other employees was the totality of his powerlessness in legal principle.⁷ Yet a very interesting peculiarity of Roman law provided freedom and citizenship for slaves of Roman citizens through the process of manumission.⁸

Under the Republic, the authority of the master over his slave was unlimited by law.⁹ However during the

¹Ibid.

²William Hendriksen, Exposition of the Pastoral Epistles, of the New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1957), p. 191.

³Bartchy, ΜΑΛΛΟΝ ΧΡΗΣΑΙ: First-Century Slavery and The Interpretation of I Corinthians 7:21, p. 38.

⁴Ibid. ⁵Ibid. ⁶Ibid. ⁷Ibid.

⁸This unique aspect of Roman law--manumission is discussed in detail on pages 61-63.

⁹Barrow, Slavery In The Roman Empire, p. 46.

Principate, regulations began to appear. By the lex Petronia, masters were forbidden to hand over their slaves to fight with the wild beasts without first having the charges examined. The mutilation of slaves was forbidden by Domitian (81-96 A.D.). The Senatus Consultum (c. 100 A.D.) provided a fine for failure to surrender fugitive slaves to their master or to take the fugitive slaves before a magistrate.¹ Hadrian (117-138) forbade the selling of a slave to a gladiatorial trainer without a justifiable reason.² Antonius (138-61) forbade a master the right to kill his slave. The same emperor authorized the sale of a slave who complained of intolerable cruelty to another master. Prostitution of slaves was forbidden by Severus (225-235). This limited discussion illustrates the variety of Roman law on slavery, and also the progressive development of laws providing for the better treatment of slaves.

Slave Conditions

Slavery basically was compulsory employment. The job was performed under the threat of punishment. As stated in the previous section, Roman law did not forbid the harsh treatment of slaves by their masters.³ Slave masters could condemn their slaves to hard labor, chain them, severely

¹Justinian, The Digest of Justinian, XI. 4. 1. cf. XI. 4. 3.

²Barrow, Slavery In The Roman Empire, p. 46.

³Supra, p. 55.

lash them, brand them (usually on the forehead) and even have them crucified.¹ Barrow mentions several options which a slave meeting with cruelty could make. "To endure, to run away, to put himself to death, to retaliate, or to obtain justice."² At the time of Hadrian, a slave could obtain refuge and legal help by holding on to the Emperor's statue which was in every Roman town.³

For the farm and shop slave, the days were long and the work expected of him was rigidly specified.⁴ The domestic's task was not as difficult. And the professional slave was even in a better situation. Pliny speaks of his friendship with his slave, Zosimus.⁵ The slave's reward for obedience was the imminent release from punishment and the ultimate hope of manumission. Horace mentions this in his satire.

If a slave were to say to me, 'I never stole or ran away;' my reply would be, 'you have your reward; you are not flogged,' or 'I never killed anyone' then 'You'll hang on no cross to feed crows.'⁶

¹William Hendriksen, Exposition of the Gospel According to John, of the New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1953), p. 191.

²Barrow, Slavery In The Roman Empire, p. 54.

³Justinian, The Digest of Justinian, XXI. 1. 17. 12.

⁴Columella, On Agriculture, 11. 2. 28. 54.

⁵Pliny the Younger, Letters, V. 19.

⁶Horace, Satires, Epistles, and Ars Poetica, Epistles I. XVI.

During the New Testament period, Roman legislation guaranteed more humane treatment of slaves.¹ Also, the contemporary writers of the period voiced their concern about the treatment of slaves. Seneca stated that slaves were human beings and that their masters had a duty to treat them humanely.² Because of the inhumanity toward sick slaves, Emperor Claudius decreed freedom for abandoned, sick slaves who recovered.³ Macrobius speaks for the pagan religion when he states that Jupiter had on occasion intervened in favor of slaves. Macrobius indicates that slaves had been of value to the state and concludes as follows:

That one ought not to disregard or belittle people because they are slaves; for Jupiter cares for slaves, and it is true to say that many of them have shown themselves faithful, prudent, brave and even philosophical.⁴

Christianity definitely had a strong influence on bringing about a change for the more humane treatment of slaves.⁵ The Apostle Paul emphasizes the benevolent treatment of slaves, "Masters, grant to your slaves justice and fairness, knowing that you too have a master in heaven (Col. 4:1)." During the New Testament period, the treatment

¹Supra, p. 56.

²Suetonius, The Lives of the Caesars, Claudius 25.

³Ibid.

⁴Macrobius, Saturnalia, I. II. 46.

⁵The Christian influence on the betterment of slaves will be further discussed later in the thesis.

of slaves improved; yet, slavery continued to exist as a major institution in the Roman Empire.

Slave Masters

The ownership of slaves offered several advantages.¹ First, slave ownership conferred social status. Second, slaves could be completely controlled by their masters and forced to work. Third, the slave's usually high productivity provided wealth.

Naturally slave owners considered their slaves enemies since they were usually prisoners of war. Apparently the owners showed contempt for their slaves as illustrated by the remarks of Seneca written in 60 A.D.

I do not wish to involve myself in too large a question, and to discuss the treatment of slaves, towards whom we Romans are excessively haughty, cruel and insulting. But this is the kernel of my advice: Treat your inferiors as you would be treated by your betters and as often as you reflect how much power you have over a slave remember that your master has just as much power over you.²

Seneca exhorts the masters to be on friendly terms with their slaves.

They are not enemies when we acquire them; we make them enemies.

I shall pass over other cruel and inhuman conduct towards them, for we maltreat them, not as if they were men, but as if they were beast of burden.

¹Hopkins, Conquerors and Slaves, p. 111.

²Seneca, "On Master and Slave," in Ad Lucilium Epistulae Morales, trans. by Richard M. Dummere, of The Loeb Classical Library (London: William Heinemann, 1961), XLVII.

Despise, them, if you dare, those to whose estate you may at any time descend, even when you are despising them.¹

Roman slave masters were cruel to their slaves. However beginning in New Testament times, laws were established which eventually prevented inhuman treatment.²

As Christianity spread across the empire, the Apostle Paul exhorted Christian masters to treat their slaves kindly.

And, masters, do the same things to them, and give up threatening, knowing that both their master and yours is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him (Eph. 6:9).

Discontent Among Slaves

Slaves were not passive victims of Roman cruelty and exploitation. Mutual hostility of master and slave, which slavery inevitably evoked, showed through both collectively and individually.

Between 135 and 70 B.C., there were three major rebellions in Italy.³ These were apparently fostered by the concentration of thousands of newly enslaved prisoners of war. According to Tacitus, the slave armies were defeated and ruthlessly crushed by the Roman legion.⁴

¹Ibid.

²Supra, p. 56.

³Hopkins, Conquerors and Slaves, p. 120.

⁴Tacitus, The Annals, 4. 27.

When Augustus became emperor at the end of the civil war, he returned 30,000 runaway slaves to their master for punishment.¹ Along with running away, suicide made an appearance among the slaves during the period of the principate.² Seneca suggests that suicide was an easy avenue of escape from the hardships of slavery.³ Tacitus reports a slave revolt in the ranches near Calabria of Northern Italy around 24 A.D.⁴

By the first century A.D. most slaves had good reason to believe that they would be set free some day. This procedure was established to curtail rebellion and encourage loyalty. The unique aspect of Roman slavery identified as manumission will be discussed next.

Procedures for Freedom and Citizenship

An unusual aspect of Roman slavery was the opportunity for freedom.⁵ During the first century, the freeing of slaves became a common occurrence, both in Rome and in the Provinces.⁶ Slaves freed by Roman citizens

¹Hopkins, Conquerors and Slavery, p. 121.

²Justinian, The Digest of Justinian, 21. 1, 23. 3.

³Seneca, Ad Lucilium Epistulae Morales, 4. 4, 70. 20, 77. 14.

⁴Tacitus, The Annals, 4. 27.

⁵Hopkins, Conquerors and Slaves, p. 115.

⁶Bartchy, ΜΑΛΛΟΝ ΧΡΗΣΑΙ : First-Century Slavery and The Interpretation of I Corinthians 7:21, p. 84.

automatically became themselves Roman citizens with full privileges.¹ The legal process in which a slave became free was called manumission.²

The process of manumission was neither easy nor cheap. The slave naturally had to have his master's approval and also had to pay for his freedom.³ Funds were obtained by saving their earnings called Peculium which were paid by their master. The cost of freedom was usually the market price of a slave, thus enabling the master to purchase a younger replacement.⁴ There is evidence that third parties were involved in purchasing a slave's freedom. Beginning in the late Apostolic period, both individual Christians and congregations purchased the freedom of slaves who were Christians.⁵

According to Bartchy, the primary purpose for manumission was to provide a positive incentive for hard work.

The most important general benefit which the institution of manumission brought to the owners of slaves

¹Ibid., p. 78.

²Cook, Adcock and Charlesworth, The Augustan Empire 44 B.C.-A.D. 70, p. 429.

³Hopkins, Conquerors and Slaves, p. 126.

⁴Ibid., p. 117.

⁵Clement of Rome, "I Clement," trans. by Kirsopp Lake, in The Apostolic Fathers, of The Loeb Classical Library (London: William Heinemann, 1969), p. 5502 and Ignatius, "Ignatius to Polycarp," trans. by Kirsopp Lake, in The Apostolic Fathers, of The Loeb Classical Library (London: William Heinemann, 1959), p. 0403.

was the increased efficiency of slaves who anticipated their 'freedom' as a reward for good work.¹

However, Epictetus, the philosopher, mentions a slave who patiently longed for his liberty only to find that his freedom, once obtained, became a burden instead of an improvement.² Yet many freed slaves did advance to positions of responsibility and prominence within the empire. Pallas, the ex-slave of Emperor Claudius, became the Secretary of State under Nero.³ Some ex-slaves governed provinces. The ex-slave Felix, who judged Paul, was Procurator of Judea.⁴

Because of the large number of slaves who were being freed, Emperor Augustus placed restrictions on manumission.⁵ Passed in A.D. 4, the law stated that the manumitter must be twenty years of age and the slave must be thirty years old if the manumission was to provide Roman citizenship.

¹Bartchy, ΜΑΛΛΟΝ ΧΡΗΣΑΙ: First-Century Slavery and The Interpretation of I Corinthians 7:21, p. 88.

²Epictetus, The Discourses as Reported by Arrian, The Manual, and Fragments, 2 Vols., trans. by W. A. Oldfather, of The Loeb Classical Library (London: William Heinemann, 1928), IV. I. 30-40.

³Hopkins, Conquerors and Slaves, p. 115.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Suetonius, The Lives of the Caesars, p. 187.

Decline of Slavery

During the life span of the Roman Empire, slavery declined from a major institution to an insignificant influence in the Roman economy.¹ There were both economic² and Christian³ influences which caused the decline of slavery.

First the economic factors which caused the decline of slavery will be discussed. During the period of territorial expansion, the slave population increased significantly because of the prisoners of war. Thus slavery became a major institution. Throughout the late Republic, large numbers of slaves gained their freedom through the process of manumission. By the time of the Emperor Augustus, the Empire's borders were established and peace prevailed. Slave breeding became the main source of slaves. However, slave breeding eventually could not maintain the high demand for slaves. Therefore, the price for slaves rose drastically. With the supply of slaves dwindling toward the end of the Empire, the slave labor systems gave way to an enforced and immobile working serf class.

Westermann presents the following causes for the gradual decline of slaves in the imperial period.

¹Westermann, The Slave Systems of Greek and Roman Antiquity, p. 118.

²Ibid., p. 120.

³J. B. Lightfoot, Saint Paul's Epistle to the Colossians and to Philemon (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1959), p. 325.

The cessation of war and kidnapping which were the main source of a large and cheap supply; the high cost of slave labor as provided by the rearing of slave children and the mortality risk involved in the method of supply; and the downward grading of the mass of the agricultural population from the position of free tenants to that of coloni or adscriptici bound to the soil which they cultivated.¹

The economic analysis explains why the slave population decreased. However, it ignores the main reason for the decline and abolishment of slavery in the Roman Empire. Christianity was the primary influence in the decline of slavery. The church insisted upon the better treatment of slaves (Col. 4:1). The church broke down the barrier between the slave and his master as they worshipped together as one in Christ (I Cor. 7:20-23). As the influence of Christianity spread then slavery decreased. After Constantine was converted, he enacted broad legislation which improved the conditions of the slave.²

Lightfoot explains how Christianity influenced slavery.

But meanwhile a principle is boldly enunciated, which must in the end prove fatal to slavery. When the Gospel taught that God had made all men and women upon earth of one family; that all alike were His sons and His daughters; that, whatever conventional distinctions human society might set up, the supreme King of Heaven refused to acknowledge any; that the slave notwithstanding his slavery was Christ's freedman, and the free notwithstanding his liberty was Christ's slave; when the

¹Westermann, The Slave Systems of Greek and Roman Antiquity, p. 120.

²Lightfoot, Saint Paul's Epistle to the Colossians and to Philemon, p. 327.

church carried out this principle by admitting the slave to her highest privileges, inviting him to kneel side by side with his master at the same holy table; when in short the Apostolic precept that in Christ Jesus is neither bond nor free was not only recognized but acted upon, then slavery was doomed. Henceforward it was only a question of time. Here was the idea which must act as a solvent, must disintegrate this venerable institution, however deeply rooted and however widely spread.¹

About 312 A.D. Emperor Constantine was converted to Christianity. Now Christianity influenced government policy. According to Schaff, Constantine issued the following laws which affected the decline of slavery.² He facilitated manumission and even permitted it on Sunday and gave the clergy the right to emancipate their own slaves without governmental permission.

After Constantine, Theodosius and Justinian both encouraged the liberation of slaves.³ During the Byzantine empire, slavery was abolished.⁴ And Christianity had a direct and important influence in bringing about the downfall of slavery.

Summary and Conclusion

The contemporary and biblical writers present slavery as a typical situation in the Roman Empire. Rome had inherited slavery from the Greeks. Then Rome became the

¹Ibid., p. 325.

²Philip Schaff, History of the Christian Church, Vol. I (A. P. & A., n.d.), p. 49.

³Ibid. ⁴Ibid.

center of slave exploitation. However, slavery even existed in the provinces. In Judea slaves worked a variety of activities with a concentration of slaves in Jerusalem. During New Testament times, the Roman Empire was a major slave society with approximately 35% of the population slaves. The Roman economy demanded a large slave force.

The purpose of this chapter was to demonstrate the magnitude of slavery within the Roman Empire during New Testament times. The highlights of slavery during the period are as follows:

Historical background

The Period of the Republic was a time of territorial expansion. Vast numbers of prisoners of war entered the slave force. By the time of Augustus, which was the beginning of the New Testament period, the period of expansion ceased and the borders were fixed. Thus breeding became the main source of slaves. Only during the Jewish War were prisoners of war again a major source of slaves.

Characteristics of Roman slavery in N. T. times

Description of Roman slavery

The demand for slaves was greater than the supply of slaves needed for the commercial and industrial expansions. Therefore the cost of slaves was high in New Testament times. Slave markets in Rome and the provinces provided outlets for the sale of slaves. Slaves performed tasks in

agriculture, industry, homes, education and government.

Legally a slave was considered a possession; therefore the slave became a base for taxation. Yet a slave had no legal rights.

Unique aspects of Roman slavery

Many slaves held responsible positions such as the emperor's secretaries and accountants which were above their status as slaves. Agriculture and industrial slaves reached a rate of high productivity. Fewer slaves produced more food.

Manumission was a unique part of Roman slavery, providing the opportunity for freedom and citizenship. Also during the New Testament period, Roman legislation guaranteed more humane treatment of slaves.

Christianity's response to slavery

Christianity was influenced and successful in advocating the humane treatment of slaves. Christianity brought the slave and master together on an equal basis for worship. With the conversion of Constantine, the liberation of slaves increased. Thus Christianity abolished slavery.

Concluding observation

In this context, the biblical writers presented the doctrine of the believer being the slave of Christ, "but as slaves of Christ doing the will of God from the heart" (Eph. 6:6).

CHAPTER III

THE DISTINCTIVENESS OF JEWISH SLAVERY IN NEW TESTAMENT TIMES

Slavery existed in the Old Testament Jewish economy. In fact, Abraham brought purchased slaves with him from Haran to Palestine.¹ The patriarchs had slaves according to the Old Testament.² Also the kings of Israel had many slaves.³ These slaves were either purchased or captured in various conflicts.

In New Testament times, Israel first was a client kingdom of the Roman Empire. She paid annual tribute to Rome⁴ but governed herself internally under the Herods. Eventually Israel came under full Roman control as a province of the Empire. The purpose of this chapter is to discuss Jewish slavery in this environment of Roman control.

¹Supra, p. 23.

²Isaac: Gen. 26:25; Jacob: Gen. 32:16.

³Saul: I Sam. 13:22; David: II Sam. 2:17; Solomon: I Kings 9:21.

⁴The primary source of tribute in Israel was taxes.

Jewish Servitude Under Rome

The Roman provincial government was established to collect taxes, handle judicial matters and prevent rebellion.¹ Roman legions were strategically positioned to assist the provincial government. The title of the Roman representative was Procurator.² He resided in a Roman town located in the Province. In Judea, the town was Caesarea. Taxes were based on census records and property valuation maintained by the Roman Procurator. Taxes were collected by private individuals known as tax farmers, publicans (publicani). This briefly explains the procedures for Roman rule over the Jews.

Judea was constantly in a state of discontent. After the Jews rebelled against Florus, Procurator c. 64 A.D., King Agrippa tried to dissuade the Jews from further uprising. This speech, recorded by Josephus, advocated obedience to Roman servitude.

Granted that the Roman ministers are intolerably harsh yet it does not follow that all the Romans are unjust to you any more than Caesar; yet it is against them, against him that you are going to war. . . . It is not by their orders that an oppressive governor comes from them to us, and they cannot see in the West their officers in the East; it is not easy even promptly to hear yonder the news from these parties. . . . The wrongs which we lay to their charge may be speedily rectified; for the same procurator will not remain forever, and it is probable that the successors of this one will show greater moderation on taking office. But

¹Barrow, Slavery In The Roman Empire, p. 144.

²Ibid.

war once set on foot cannot be lightly either broken off or carried through without risk of disaster.

Passing to your present passion for liberty, I say that it comes too late. . . . For servitude is a painful experience and a struggle to avoid it once for all is just, but the man who having once accepted the yoke then tries to cast it off is a contumacious slave not a lover of liberty. There was to be sure a time when you should have strained every nerve to keep out the Romans, that was when Pompey invaded this country [italics mine].¹

Definitely, Israel was under political and economic bondage to Rome. Prior to this, she had been persecuted and enslaved by the Greeks during the Hellenistic period.²

Jewish Jurisdiction

Rome controlled the financial, legal and military affairs of the province. Therefore the Jews were permitted to rule themselves in religious, economic and educational matters. Therefore under Jewish religious law, Jewish slavery was sanctioned.

Jewish Slaves

Jewish slavery was sanctioned by the Mosaic law and practiced by the Jews. A Jewish master was not to treat a Jewish slave harshly.

And if a countryman of yours becomes so poor with regard to you that he sells himself to you, you shall not subject him to a slave's service. He shall be with you as a hired man, as if he were a sojourner with you,

¹Josephus, The Jewish War, 11. 351.

²Victor Tcherikover, Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews, trans. by S. Applebaum (New York: Atheneum, 1959), p. 175.

until the year of jubilee. He shall then go out from you, he and his sons with him, and shall go back to his family, that he may return to the property of his forefathers. For they are My servants whom I brought out from the land of Egypt; they are not to be sold in a slave sale. You shall not rule over him with severity but are to revere your God (Lev. 25:39-43).

Along with the guarantee of kind treatment, the slave was permitted to participate in the family's religious activities. Therefore the slave also benefited by the sabbath day rest.

Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath of the Lord your God; in it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you (Ex. 20:9-10) [*italics mine*].

This verse also indicates that slaves were both male and female. In addition, slaves were allowed to participate in religious celebrations such as the Passover.

Then you shall celebrate the Feast of Weeks to the Lord your God with a tribute of a freewill offering of your hand, which you shall give just as the Lord your God blesses you; and you shall rejoice before the Lord your God, you and your son and your daughter and your male and female servants and the Levite who is in your town, and the stranger and the orphan and the widow who are in your midst in the place where the Lord your God chooses to establish His name.

And you shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt and you shall be careful to observe these statutes (Dt. 16:10-12) [*italics mine*].

The primary distinction of the Jewish slave held by a Jewish master was the fact that the slave must be given his freedom on the seventh year of his enslavement.¹

¹Westermann, The Slave Systems of Greek and Roman Antiquity, p. 124.

Now these are the ordinances which you are to set before them. If you buy a Hebrew slave, he shall serve for six years; but on the seventh he shall go out as a free man without payment (Ex. 21:1).

Therefore the Jewish slave was enslaved for only a short period of time. His enslavement was not long term or permanent.

The Jewish slave retained control of his family.¹ He could only be sold to another Jew. If he lived in Judea, he was never sold outside Judea. He had the choice of binding himself permanently to his master.²

Thus the Jewish slave had the assurance of just treatment, personal rights, religious privileges and limited service with guaranteed freedom.

Jewish Law

Israel's law was unique because it was ordained and instituted by God.³ All authority rested with God and all the laws were equally binding upon His covenant people. Commenting on the law, Maston makes the following statement concerning slaves:

The Law also brought into the world new respect for human life. Special provisions were made for the socially disinherited, such as the widow, the orphan, the poor, the stranger or sojourner (Ex. 22:21-27) the

¹Ex. 21:3

²Ibid., vv. 5,6.

³Ex. 36:13 and Deut. 1:3.

slave (Deut. 23:15-16), and even the enemy (Ex. 23:4-5) [*italics mine*].¹

The Jewish slave was still legally a citizen of the Jewish nation with specific rights as recorded in the Biblical Law. These rights, privileges and responsibilities as recorded in the Biblical Law will be listed. Discussion on various aspects of the law will be mentioned in the following sections.

Rights of male slaves

If you buy a Hebrew slave, he shall serve for six years; but on the seventh he shall go out as a free man without payment.

If he comes alone, he shall go alone; if he is the husband of a wife, then his wife shall go out with him.

If his master gives him a wife, and she bears him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall belong to her master, and he shall go out alone.

But if the slave plainly says, 'I love my master, my wife and my children; I will not go out as a free man,'

then his master shall bring him to God, then he shall bring him to the door or the doorpost. And his master shall pierce his ear with an awl; and he shall serve him permanently (Ex. 21:2-6).

Rights of female slaves

And if a man sells his daughter as a female slave, she is not to go free as the male slaves do.

If she is displeasing in the eyes of her master who designated her for himself, then he shall let her be redeemed. He does not have authority to sell her to a foreign people because of his unfairness to her.

And if he designates her for his son, he shall deal with her according to the custom of daughters.

If he takes to himself another woman, he may not reduce her food, her clothing, or her conjugal rights.

¹T. B. Maston, Biblical Ethics (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1967), p. 11.

And if he will not do these three things for her, then she shall go out for nothing, without payment of money (Ex. 21:7-11).

Length of service and guaranteed freedom
with provisions

If your kinsman, a Hebrew man or woman, is sold to you, then he shall serve you six years, but in the seventh year you shall set him free.

And when you set him free, you shall not send him away empty-handed.

You shall furnish him liberally from your flock and from your threshing floor and from your wine vat; you shall give to him as the Lord your God has blessed you.

And you shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God redeemed you; therefore I command you this day (Dt. 15:12-15).

Choice of the slave to remain enslaved

And it shall come about if he says to you, 'I will not go out from you,' because he loves you and your household, since he fares well with you; then you shall take an awl and pierce it through his ear into the door, and he shall be your servant forever. And also you shall do likewise to your maidservant (Dt. 15:16-17).

Slave performance

It shall not seem hard to you when you set him free, for he has given you six years with double the service of a hired man, so the Lord your God will bless you in whatever you do (Dt. 15:18).

Slave refuge

You shall not hand over to his master a slave who has escaped from his master to you.

He shall live with you in your midst, in the place which he shall choose in one of your towns where it pleases him; you shall not mistreat him (Dt. 23:15-16).

Treatment of slaves

And if a countryman of yours becomes so poor with regard to you that he sells himself to you, you shall not subject him to a slave's service.

He shall be with you as a hired man, as if he were a sojourner with you until the year of jubilee.

He shall then go out from you, he and his sons with him, and shall go back to his family, that he may return to the property of his forefathers (Lev. 25:39-41).

For they are My servants who I brought out from the land of Egypt; they are not to be sold in a slave sale.

You shall not rule over him with severity, but are to revere your God (Lev. 25:42-43).

This is the basic law concerning slaves which not only existed in Old Testament times, but also during the New Testament--at least it existed up to the destruction of the Temple and city of Jerusalem (70 A.D.).

Biblical Law placed the Hebrew slave in a different position than the pagan slave. The Hebrew slave was a legal person capable of rights and obligations but bound by the law to render service to another. The pagan or foreign slave was the absolute property of the master.

That the Biblical Law of slavery was still functional in New Testament times was attested by Josephus. Commenting on King Herod's enactment that Jerusalem housebreakers be banished from his kingdom and sold as slaves to foreigners,¹ Josephus emphasized that this ordinance was not in accord with Jewish law which forbade Jewish slaves to be sold to

¹Josephus, The Jewish Antiquities, Five Volumes, trans. by H. St. J. Thackeray, of The Loeb Classical Library, ed. by E. Capps, T. E. Page and W. H. D. Rouse (London: William Heinemann, 1930), XVI.

Gentiles for perpetual slavery but sold to fellow Jews and released after six years.¹

Slave activity is mentioned in the Talmud. One section of the Talmud, the Mishnah, implies that the Jewish slave could slaughter his own paschal lamb.² The Talmudic law stated the property rights of slaves as follows.

[Hebrew] slaves, male or female, may be appointed as agents in commercial transactions since they are possessed of intelligence and are subject to some of the laws, whereas a Gentile [slave] may not be appointed for any transactions.³

According to Zeitlin, the Mishnah records a controversy between the Pharisees and the Sadducees in regards to slaves.⁴ The Sadducees complained against the Pharisees, the Sadducees held that a slave was an object, the property of the owner, having no status rights or liability. The Pharisees, endeavoring to raise the status of the slaves, maintained that slaves were not objects, but human beings with status. Therefore if a slave commits a crime, he should be held personally responsible.

¹Ibid.

²The Mishnah, Oral Teachings of Judaism, trans. by Eugene J. Lipman (New York: The Viking Press, 1970), Peshahim, VIII. 2.

³Boaz Cohen, Jewish and Roman Law, Two Vols. (New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1966), p. 255.

⁴Solomon Zeitlin, "Slavery During the Second Commonwealth and the Tannaitic Period," The Jewish Quarterly Review, LIII (January, 1963), p. 209.

Until the destruction of Jerusalem, the Temple and Priesthood functioned as the religious and legal center of Judaism. However, after its destruction, synagogues continued the religious and legal functions. Therefore, Old Testament law on slavery along with the Jewish interpretation continued to be followed by the Jews during New Testament times.

Source of Slaves

The two primary sources of Jewish slaves were defaulting debtors and captured thieves. If a Jew owed money, the law stated that he could sell himself to his creditor in order to work off the debt.

And if a countryman of yours becomes so poor with regard to you that he sells himself to you, you shall not subject him to a slave's service (Lev. 25:39).

Also a convicted thief who could not make restitution was sold into slavery (Ex. 22:2). Josephus comments on this procedure.

The laws ordered that a thief was to pay a fourfold fine, and, if he were unable to do so, he was to be sold, but in any case not to foreigners nor was he to suffer lifelong slavery, for he was to be released after six years.¹

Another source was Jewish girls. According to Bartchy, Jewish fathers sold their daughters as slaves.²

¹Josephus, Jewish Antiquities, XVI.

²Bartchy, ΜΑΛΛΑΟΝ ΧΡΗΣΑΙ : First-Century Slavery and The Interpretation of I Corinthians 7:21, p. 48.

However, when a girl reached twelve years old, she could no longer be sold.

Jerusalem Slave Market

There is archeological evidence which supports a Jerusalem slave market.¹ Apparently slaves were auctioned at a special stone which was located near the cattle market. The spot was called $\eta\rho\lambda\eta\ \{\gamma\chi$ ² which means the stone³ of capture⁴ which would refer back to when Israel sold captives of war as slaves prior to her subjection to the Greeks and Romans.

Cost of Slaves

The cost of Jewish slaves reflects the limitation of service. The price of a Jewish slave is given in the Talmud from one to ten mnas whereas a Gentile slave could fetch as much as 100 mnas.⁵ A mna equaled 50 shekels, and

¹Samuel Krauss, Talmudische Archaeologie (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1966), p. II, 87, 362. Also Jeremias, Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus, p. 36 and Bartchy, ΜΑΛΛΟΝ ΧΡΗΣΑΙ : First-Century Slavery and The Interpretation of I Corinthians 7:21, p. 50.

²Bartchy, ΜΑΛΛΟΝ ΧΡΗΣΑΙ : First-Century Slavery and The Interpretation of I Corinthians 7:21, p. 48.

³Frances Brown, S. R. Driver and Charles A. Briggs, eds., A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1907), p. 6.

⁴Ibid., p. 544.

⁵Bouquet, Everyday Life in New Testament Times, p. 152., footnote 2.

in Jesus' time a shekel was a coin worth about a day's wages.¹ On the average a Jewish slave cost one year's earnings while a Gentile slave cost approximately ten years' earnings. This price difference was because the maximum period for the use of a Jewish slave would only be six years whereas a Gentile slave could remain his master's property all his life.

Positions Held

In Jerusalem, slaves performed a variety of tasks involving domestic and civil functions. Zeitlin indicates that slaves held high positions of responsibility in the Court of Herod and the families of the high priests.² Outside Jerusalem slaves performed domestic and farming tasks. However, the rural slaves were few in number.³

Slave Population

An official document of the year 71 A.D., as reported by Rops, concerning a census by fiscal authorities in one area of Palestine counts three hundred and eighty-five tax-

¹Lorman M. Petersen, "Money," in The Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary, ed. by Merrill C. Tenney (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1967), p. 551.

²Zeitlin, "Slavery During the Second Commonwealth and the Tannaitic Period," p. 198.

³Bartchy, ΜΑΛΛΟΝ ΧΡΗΣΑΙ : First-Century Slavery and The Interpretation of I Corinthians 7:21, p. 50.

payers.¹ All these people together owned no more than forty-four slaves. For this area, therefore, the slave population was only twelve per cent. This is only one small illustration which indicates that the number of slaves held by the Jews in New Testament times was comparatively small. Also Tcherikover² in his work on the Hellenistic Civilization and Lightfoot³ commenting on Philemon both agree that slaves among the Jews were only a small fraction of Israel's population.

Commenting on the insignificance of slavery in the Hebrew economy, Cohen makes the following conclusion:

In later times, when Judea was practically a colony of Rome, the number of slaves was much reduced. For the chief source of slaves was the capture of prisoners of war, and a country which is in no position to wage war must carry on with a minimum of slaves.⁴

With the major source of slaves eliminated, Jewish slavery was nominal. This conclusion is further supported by the minimal number of laws on Jewish slavery as compared to the voluminous material in Roman Law.⁵

¹Henri Daniel Rops, Daily Life in the Times of Jesus (New York: Hawthorn, 1962), p. 164.

²Tcherikover, Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews, p. 342.

³Lightfoot, Saint Paul's Epistle to the Colossians and to Philemon, p. 320.

⁴Cohen, Jewish and Roman Law, p. 200.

⁵Ibid ., p. 127.

Conditions of Slaves

One of the basic distinctives of Jewish slavery was the humane treatment which the Jewish slaves received from their masters. One of the reasons for this according to Cohen was the Jewish economy itself.

En passant, it may be remarked that the position of the slave in the ancient Hebrew economy which was primarily pastoral and agricultural was much better than that of his counterpart in ancient Babylonian or Roman society, where commerce played a dominant role.¹

Also, Jewish literature emphasized the humane treatment of slaves. Zeitlin, after demonstrating that slaves existed in Palestine, summarized the Jewish writer's position on slaves.

The sages like the stoics did not condemn the institution but endeavored to ameliorate the condition of the slaves by improving their status. They strove to impress the people that slaves are human beings and should be treated humanely. The sages were opposed to the sale of Judaeans outside of Judaea.²

Jewish law guaranteed humane treatment of slaves.³ The Jewish writers advocated the fair treatment of slaves. Within the Jewish family unit, the slave was considered part of the family which enhanced his treatment.⁴

¹Cohen, Jewish and Roman Law, p. 201.

²Zeitlin, "Slavery During the Second Commonwealth and the Tannaitic Period," p. 217.

³Supra, p. 76.

⁴Lightfoot, Saint Paul's Epistle to the Colossians and to Philemon, p. 319.

Sociological Practice

Jewish and Roman slaves served within the Jewish economy. Bartchy mentions this relationship.

Around Jerusalem itself there seem to have been no industries requiring slaves nor many rural estates which used slave-labor in large numbers. But within the city, Paul saw great numbers of domestic and civil slaves, both Jew and Gentile.¹

The Jewish writers never advocated the abolition of slavery. Slavery was always a part of the Jewish economy. However the Essene community located along the Dead Sea at Qumran did not participate in slavery. But they never had a direct influence on the nation. Therefore slavery remained a social institution in the Jewish society.

Slave Masters

Jewish law required slave masters to treat their slaves humanely. "You shall not rule over him with severity, but are to revere your God" (Lev. 1:43). If a master seriously injured his slave, he had to set him free (Ex. 21:26). A master was seriously punished if he murdered his slave (Ex. 21:20-21). Also a master only had control of his Jewish slave for six years (Dt. 15:12). Since Jewish slaves had certain rights, this placed restrictions on the masters.

Bouquet claims Jews prided themselves that they

¹Bartchy, ΜΑΛΛΟΝ ΧΡΗΣΑΙ : First-Century Slavery and the Interpretation of I Corinthians 7:21, p. 50.

never treated their slaves with cruelty.¹ That, they said, was only done among the Gentiles. Rabbi Johanan claims he never ate meat or drank wine without giving some to his slave.² Rabbi Gamaliel replied to those who expressed surprise that he mourned his slave's death, "My slave Tobit was a man, he was an honest and a pious man."³

Limitation of Service

Jewish law provided that a Hebrew slave gained his freedom after the completion of six years of service.⁴ This is one of the primary distinctives of Jewish slavery. This procedure was recorded by Josephus. "A Hebrew sold to another Hebrew shall serve him for six years; in the seventh let him go free. And his wife, if he has one (Ex. XXI: 3)."⁵ This law was in sharp contrast to Roman law which stated that a slave was a permanent possession of his owner. The Jewish slave did not pay for his freedom while the Roman slave had to provide funds for his freedom through the process of manumission.

¹Bouquet, Everyday Life in New Testament Times, p. 151.

²Rops, Daily Life in The Time of Jesus, p. 165.

³Ibid.

⁴Supra, p. 75.

⁵Jospehus, The Jewish Antiquities, p. 80.

Redemption

As mentioned in the previous chapter, many Jews had become slaves in the Roman slave system. Tcherikover mentions that Jewish families and even entire Jewish communities ransomed their families and friends from slavery.¹ This policy is called slave redemption.

In the Talmudic law, this obligation was extended so as to cover non-Jewish slaves who had been taken away from Jewish households. Since most were captives of war by the Roman Army and were usually transported great distances, it is difficult to conceive that the procedure was very successful.

Gentile Slaves in Judea

It is interesting to note that Gentile slaves served in Judea. These slaves, men and women, were primarily from Syria and entered Jerusalem through Tyre's slave market.² However some slaves were also auctioned at the Jerusalem slave market.³ These slaves worked in a wide variety of domestic and civil activities.⁴ Gentile slaves

¹Tcherikover, Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews, p. 342.

²Jeremias, Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus, p. 36.

³Supra, p. 79.

⁴Bartchy, ΜΑΔΔΟΝ ΧΡΗΣΑΙ : First-Century Slavery and the Interpretation of I Corinthians 7:21, p. 50.

also held responsible positions in the court of Herod and with the high priests.¹ According to Urbach, Roman slaves were a source of proselytism and many were accepted into the Jewish faith.² The Jewish writers advocated the manumission of Gentile slaves.³

Revolt Against Rome

The Jews participated in slavery within their own economy while under the servitude of Rome. Then came the Jewish revolt with its tragic results of massive deportation and Roman slavery for the Jews. The Jewish province was utterly destroyed. This was the Roman policy for any province which turned rebel.⁴ The Jews had become a public enemy threatening the Roman peace and were liable to enslavement as prisoners of war.

For long years Rome had shown more forbearance towards the troublesome Jews than to any other of her subject races. After a history of toleration on one side and broken promises and provocation on the other, first, Hadrian enslaved thousands and then the army of Titus took

¹Ibid.

²E. E. Urbach, "The Laws Regarding Slavery as a Source for Social History of the Period of the Second Temple, the Mishnah and Talmud," Zion, 25 (1960), p. 148.

³Zeitlin, "Slavery During the Second Commonwealth and the Tannaitic Period," p. 217.

⁴Barrow, Slavery In The Roman Empire, p. 4.

ninety-seven thousand prisoners and enslaved them all.¹

The Jewish Revolt ended with the destruction of the Temple and the city of Jerusalem. Most of the Jewish population was enslaved. Thus Jewish slavery terminated at this time.

Summary and Conclusion

Even though Israel was under the domination of Rome, slavery existed in the Jewish economy. Jewish law commanded the fair treatment of slaves, gave them religious privileges and freedom after six years of toil. The slave never lost his citizenship. The Jewish slave retained control of his family. He was only sold to another Jew and never outside the land of Judea. Only the slave had the choice of binding himself permanently to his Master.

The two primary sources of slaves were those in debt and criminal punishment. The cost of a Jewish slave was approximately one year's wages. Actually the number of slaves held by Jews in New Testament times was insignificant. Most of the slaves were concentrated within the city of Jerusalem.

¹Josephus, The Jewish War, VI. 9.

Chart II

A Comparative Chart on the Major Differences
Between Roman and Jewish Slavery
During New Testament Times

<u>Jewish</u>	<u>Roman</u>
<p><u>Slavery:</u> A biblical heritage. Purpose--repayment for a debt or crime. Source--debt and criminal punishment.</p> <p>Small population of slaves.</p> <p>Non-growth in a servile society.</p> <p>Biblical law provided the Jewish slave with rights and privileges.</p> <p>Minimum laws on slavery.</p> <p>Cost of a slave--one year's earnings.</p> <p>Sale of slaves restricted to Judea.</p> <p>Ended with the Jewish Revolt (66-70 A.D.) and the Jews enslavement by Rome.</p>	<p><u>Slavery:</u> A pagan heritage. Purpose--economic exploitation for the benefit of the wealthy. Source--major: prisoners of war and breeding; minor: kidnapping, self sale, debt, and criminal punishment.</p> <p>Large slave population--approximately 35% during N.T. times.</p> <p>Substantial growth in a wealthy economy.</p> <p>At first the Roman slave had no legal rights. Eventually rights were granted by the Emperors.</p> <p>Voluminous legal material on slavery.</p> <p>Cost of a slave--up to ten year's earnings.</p> <p>Sold and transported over the entire Empire.</p> <p>Christianity was a major influence in its decline and eventual abolishment during the Byzantine period.</p>
<p><u>Slave:</u> A citizen with rights. A member of the master's family. Guaranteed humane treatment. Retained legal rights to his own family. Six years of service. The choice of permanently binding himself to his master. Did not pay for freedom and granted privileges.</p>	<p><u>Slave:</u> No citizenship and no rights. The absolute property of the master. Received harsh treatment normally. No legal family. Children born to slaves are the master's property. Unlimited time of service. No choice permitted.</p> <p>Had to provide own funds for freedom.</p>

CHAPTER IV

THE ESSENTIAL GREEK TERMINOLOGY OF SLAVERY

The Greek language had an astonishing range of vocabulary for slaves. The major Greek slave words with primary definitions are listed as follows: δμῶς-slave; δοῦλος-slave; δουλόω-to enslave; δουλεύω-to be a slave; δουλεία-slavery; διάκονος-servant or helper; θεράπων-servant; οἰκέτης-house slave; ὑπηρέτης-servant; συνδoulos-fellowslave; σῶμα-slave; παιδίσκη-female domestic slave; and παῖς-slave.

Primary Words in Early Greek Usage

δμῶς and δοῦλος

In early Greek literature, the two principal writers were Homer and Hesiod. Both writers used two basic Greek words for slave, δμῶς and δοῦλος.¹ The primary word was δμῶς while δοῦλος only appeared in Iliad and Odyssey twice.² δμῶς remained the primary Greek word for slave up to the time of the Persian War (c. 330 B.C.).³ Then the word died out quickly and survived only in poetry. Next

¹Finley, Slavery in Classical Antiquity, p. 54.

²Westermann, The Slave Systems of Greek and Roman Antiquity, p. 2.

³Ibid.

δοῦλος became the basic word and remained in the place of prominence throughout the rest of antiquity both in legal and popular usage.¹

παῖς

Also during the Homer period, παῖς was in use but the meaning of the word was young or fruit of the body.² Then the meaning of the word broadened to mean small or little. In the masculine, it meant boy.³ Later it further referred to a descendant son. Therefore the word alludes to a social position--a youth or a slave.⁴ In his plays, Aristophanes used the word παῖ (boy) in reference to domestic slaves which were acted out by mimes.⁵

οἶκος

An additional Greek word used for slave was οἶκος. Writing about 310 B.C., Tesicles recorded a census held in Athens in which the slaves were identified as οἰκετῶν.⁶

¹Ibid.

²Jeremias, Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus, p. 36.

³Vogt, Ancient Slavery and the Ideal of Man, p. 6.

⁴Jeremias, Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus, p. 36.

⁵Aristophanes, Plutus, trans. by Benjamin Bickley Rogers, of The Loeb Classical Library, ed. by E. Capps, T. E. Page and W. H. D. Rouse (London: William Heinemann, 1924), 823. 843.

⁶Westermann, The Slave Systems of Greek and Roman Antiquity, p. 76.

σῶμα

Another general word for slave came into use in the Hellenistic period when σῶμα (body) came to mean slave. It is interesting that the word was never used in a legal context.¹ According to Westermann, the papyri from Ptolemaic Egypt use σῶμα for slave, especially in wills.²

Words used for slave in ancient Greece were δμῶς, δοῦλος, παῖς, οἶκος and σῶμα. The primary word which emerged from this group was δοῦλος.

Primary Words in Contemporary

Extra Biblical Writings

Flavius Josephus utilized the following words in his writings: The translation is from the concordance on the words used by Josephus.³

δοιλεῦω --to be a slave or servant; to live in bondage, be a servant; to do slave work; to be subjected to make oneself a slave.

δοιλεία --slavery, bondage.

δοῦλος and δοῦλη --male and female slave or servant.

δοιλόω --to enslave; to suppress; middle voice--to make subject to oneself, to subjugate; passive voice--to stand or be under the influence of.

¹Finley, Slavery in Classical Antiquity, p. 54.

²William Linn Westermann, Upon Slavery in Ptolemaic Egypt (New York: Columbia University Press, 1929), p. 8.

³Karl Heinrich Rengstorff, ed., A Complete Concordance to Flavius Josephus, Vol. I (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1973), p. 521.

δοῦλεῦω

Using the verb δοῦλεῦω, Josephus documents King Agrippa's speech to the Jews. This is an excellent reference to Roman servitude.

You who in resources fall so far short of those who first tendered their submission, will you, I say, defy the whole Roman empire? The Athenians--these men today are servants of the Romans. The Macedonians--yet they submit to endure such a reversal of fate and bow before those to whom Fortune has transferred her favors. Myriads of other nations, swelling with greater pride in the assertion of their liberty, have yielded. And will you alone disdain to serve those to whom the universe is subject: It is hard to serve (χαλεπὸν τοῦ δούλεῦεῖν), you will tell me. How much harder for Greeks, who though noblest of all races under the sun and occupants of so vast a territory are yet subservient to six rods of a Roman magistrate!¹

This section from Josephus is an outstanding illustration of the meaning for the verb δοῦλεῦω--to be a slave. The strength of the Roman master is portrayed. National servitude is explained. The Greeks, the Parthians, the Jews along with many others are under national bondage to Rome. The source of the slavery is war. The loser is a slave to the victor. The individual slave is also explained. It is difficult to serve and the desire for liberty is strong.

Additional usages of the word by Josephus are as follows:

Germany--yet the Rhine sets a bound to their impetuosity and, tamed by light Roman legions, the captured are reduced to slavery (δοῦλεῦω), while the rest of

¹Josephus, The Jewish War, 2. 361.

the nation has found safety in flight.¹

And the nobility of the east may be seen in Italy, under the pretext (προφάσει) of peace, bending to the yoke. (δουλεῦσάτων).²

δουλεία

Using the adjective δουλεία (slavery), Josephus makes references to the Babylonian captivity of the Jews in the Old Testament. "ὁ λαὸς . . . ἀπαλλαγεῖς τῆς ἐν βαβυλῶνι δουλείας."³ Josephus as commander of the Jewish troop in Galilee claimed that suicide was a result of the Jew's fear of Roman slavery (δουλεία).

Why, comrades, said he, this thirst for our own blood? What is it we fear that prevents us from surrendering to the Romans? Is it not death? And shall we then inflict upon ourselves certain death, to avoid an uncertain death, which we fear, at the hands of our foes? No it is slavery (δουλεία) we fear. I shall be told much liberty we enjoy at present. No suicide is alike, repugnant to that nature which all creatures share and an act of impiety towards God who created us.⁴

This section mentions the main source of ancient slavery (δουλεία) was from war.

δοῦλος

The mention of slavery is a normal occurrence in the writings of Josephus. In Herod's court, Salome's daughter reported the following information.

Alexander and Aristobulus had threatened, when they came to the throne, to set the mothers of their other

¹Ibid., p. 471. ²Ibid., p. 473.

³Ibid., I. 70. ⁴Ibid., III. 367.

brothers to work at the loom along with the slave-girls (ταῖς δούλαις), and to make the princes themselves village clerks. . . .¹

There were Roman slaves in Herod's court. Later Herod had some of his slave girls tortured in order to obtain legal evidence. This was a normal legal procedure in Roman law.

"Τὰς δὲ δούλας χωρὶς ἐκάστην ἑρωδῆς ἐβαρυνίζεν."² Definitely δούλος is a basic word for slave in the writings of Josephus.

Primary Words in the New Testament

Principle word group

The principal word is δούλος which is supported by the usage of the word in the New Testament. Young records the number of times the word is used in the English translation.³

bond	6
bondman	1
servant	120
total	127

It is unfortunate that the English translation is servant. Goodspeed traces the historical background of this translation.

Yet δούλος was regularly rendered 'servant' by all the early translators from Wyclif and Tyndale down and 'servant' was left standing in the English and American revisions of 1881 and 1901. The modern translators

¹Ibid., I. 479. ²Ibid., p. 586.

³Robert Young, "Index-Lexicon to the New Testament," in the Analytical Concordance to the Bible (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1964), p. 66.

have used the word 'slave' very sparingly.¹
 Goodspeed recommends that δοῦλος be translated slave.²
 The writer also strongly recommends this translation based on the historical background of slavery in this thesis and also the Greek usage as presented in this chapter. Arndt and Gingrich translate the word slave as the primary meaning of δοῦλος.³ This interpretation is supported by Rengstorf.

δοῦλος, σύνδουλος, δούλη, δουλεύω, δουλεία

All the words in this group serve either to describe the status of a slave or an attitude corresponding to that of a slave. δοῦλος is a 'slave,' δούλη a 'female slave,' δουλεύω, 'to be a slave,' 'to stand in the relationship of a slave,' δουλεία 'slavery,' σύνδουλος a 'fellow-slave,' the adj. δοῦλος - η - ον 'enslaved' or 'performing the service of a slave.' The meaning is so unequivocal and self-contained that it is superfluous to give examples of the individual terms or to trace the history of the group.⁴

Webster's Dictionary indicates that servant and slave are not synonymous.

servant--1. a person employed to perform services esp. household duties, for another. 2. a person employed

¹Edgar J. Goodspeed, Problems of New Testament Translation (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1945), p. 139.

²Ibid.

³William F. Arndt and Wilbur F. Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 204.

⁴Karl Heinrich Rengstorf, "δοῦλος," in the Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, ed. by Gerhard Kittel, trans. by Geoffrey W. Bromiley, Vol. II (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1964), p. 261.

by a government.¹

slave--1. a human being who is owned as property by another and is absolutely subject to his will; bond-servant divested of all freedom and personal rights.²

The preceding chapters on slavery support and the extra biblical Greek usage substantiate that δοῦλος should be translated slave and not servant.

Additional Greek words of the same family of δοῦλος are as follows with the frequency found in the New Testament and the recommended translation.

δοῦλη --used three times--translated female slave.³

δουλεύω --used twenty-five times--the word has two primary meanings, 1. of relationship be a slave, be subjected, 2. of action or conduct perform the duties of a slave, serve, obey.⁴

δουλεία --used twenty-five times--an adjective translated slavery.⁵

δουλόω --eight times--the word should be translated make someone a slave, enslave, subject.⁶

δουλαγωγέω --one time--translated to enslave, to bring into subjection.⁷

This is the basic word group which identifies and explains slave activity in the New Testament. Slavery was a major institution in the Roman Empire during the New

¹David B. Guralnik, ed., Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language, Second College Edition (New York: The World Publishing Company, 1972), p. 1301.

²Ibid., p. 1338.

³Arndt And Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, p. 204.

⁴Ibid. ⁵Ibid. ⁶Ibid., p. 205. ⁷Ibid., p. 204.

Testament period. Therefore it is only natural to find slave activity mentioned in the scriptures.

Additional Greek words

Additional words which are part of the slave terminology of the New Testament will now be listed. The frequency of the word and the lexical meaning will be stated.

ἀνδραποδιστής, οὐ, ὁ --one time. The English word manstealer¹ is used but the word should be translated slavedealer.²

καταδουλόω--used twice. Most versions use the verb to bring into bondage³ but Arndt and Gingrich supply a better meaning to enslave or to reduce to slavery.⁴

οἰκέτης --four times--Spicq explains this word: 'It is rather difficult to translate this derivative of οἰκία, which etymologically would be the domestic, a servant being part of the family (οἰκετεῖα, Mt. 25:45). . . . The biblical and secular usages certainly make him a δούλος, but these relationships to his κύριος . . . are particular. . . . He seems closer than an ordinary slave. The οἰκεταὶ live in the house and constitute the domesticity attentive to satisfy the desires of the master. In this common daily life it is impossible that certain affectionate relationships would not develop, ones of confidence, indeed, even ones of intimacy, and these are certainly the kind of servants the centurion of Caesarea had chosen.'⁵

¹Young, "Index-Lexicon to the New Testament," p. 5.

²Arndt and Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, p. 63.

³Young, "Index-Lexicon to the New Testament," p. 76.

⁴Arndt and Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, p. 411.

⁵C. Spicq, "Le vocabulaire de l'esclavage dans le Nouveau Testament," personal translation, Revue Biblique, 85:2 (April, 1978), p. 218.

Παιδίσκη --thirteen times--This word always signifies a female of the servant class, a maid, a servant-girl, a female slave.¹ In New Testament times, the word always refers to a female slave.

Παῖς --the word is translated once maid, once manservant and ten times servant. The word emphasizes relationships.² Primarily from the viewpoint of youth. Also from the viewpoint of family-son. In the context of this paper, the word stresses social status and the word means slave.

σύνδουλος --ten times--the primary meaning of the word is fellow-slave.³

σῶμα--this word is used once in reference to slavery and is translated slave.⁴

ὑπηρέτης--four times--the word stresses service to a superior. In the slave context, it is the one who serves a master.⁵

These words provide a conclusive list of the slave terminology of the New Testament.

Summary and Conclusion

The evidence presented in the previous chapters prove that slavery not only existed in the Roman Empire, but was an important institution. Naturally words were used to identify and describe slave activity.

The Greek word δοῦλος which describes slavery

¹Arndt and Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, p. 609.

²Ibid. ³Ibid., p. 793.

⁴Spicq, "Le vocabulaire de l'esclavage dans le Nouveau Testament," p. 224.

⁵Arndt and Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, p. 850.

emerged during the Persian war and continued to be the basic word for slavery in the New Testament period. Δοῦλος was not only the primary word in popular literary usage but became the major word in legal terminology for slavery. Unfortunately most English versions translate the word incorrectly as servant when the word should be translated slave.

Greek word groups used in the New Testament for slave activity are δοῦλος , οἰκέτης , παῖς and σῶμα . These words serve to describe the status of a slave or the functions of a slave. The words do not differentiate between Jewish and Roman slavery. Only context can determine this distinction. These words provide the foundation for the next chapter on the biblical evidence of slavery.

CHAPTER V

THE NEW TESTAMENT EVIDENCE OF SLAVERY

The intent of this chapter is to investigate the biblical evidence of slavery. Even though most English translations disregarded the use of the term slave,¹ the biblical writers discussed slavery which was so much a part of their daily life.² This information becomes the foundation for the presentation of the biblical metaphor--spiritual servitude which is based on being a slave to Christ.³

Evidence of Slaves in Jerusalem

The biblical events involving slaves in Jerusalem are primarily associated with the betrayal and trial of Jesus. Our Lord had been praying with his disciples at the Garden of Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives when a group of Roman and Jewish soldiers came to take him captive. Simon Peter drew a sword in preparation to fight.

Simon Peter therefore having a sword, drew it, and struck the high priest's slave [τὸν τοῦ ἀρχιερέως δούλον], and cut off his right ear; and the slave's name was Malchus [ἦν δὲ ὄνομα τῷ δούλῳ Μάλχος]. (Jn. 18:10) cf. Matthew 26:51, Mark 14:47 and Luke 22:50.

¹Bartchy, ΜΑΛΛΟΝ ΥΠΗΞΑΙ: First-Century Slavery and The Interpretation of I Corinthians 7:21, p. 30.

²Supra, Chapter III.

³Spiritual servitude will be defined in the next chapter.

Immediately Jesus was taken to the house of Annas, who had been High Priest and was now father-in-law of the current High Priest, Caiaphas, for questioning. Peter followed Jesus to the house of Annas and waited outside.

So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest went out and spoke to the door keeper, and brought in Peter. The slave-girl [ἡ Παισίσκη] therefore who kept the door said to Peter, 'You are not also one of this man's disciples, are you?' He said, 'I am not.' Now the slaves [δὲ οἱ δούλοι] and the officers were standing there, having made a charcoal fire, for it was cold and they were warming themselves; and Peter also was with them, standing and warming himself. . . . Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. They said therefore to him, 'You are not also one of His disciples, are you?' He denied it, and said, 'I am not.' One of the slaves of the high priest, [τῶν δούλων τοῦ ἀρχιερέως] being a relative of the one whose ear Peter cut off, said, 'Did I not see you in the garden with Him?' Peter therefore denied it again and immediately a cock crowed (Jn. 18:16-18, 25-27) (cf. Mt. 26:69-75; Mk. 14:16-72; Lk. 22:54-62).

These slaves were all owned by the influential and powerful High Priest's family. The slaves performed mostly domestic functions. Most likely the High Priests possessed many slaves. Undoubtedly these slaves were Gentile and had been channeled through the Jerusalem slave market.¹

Evidence of Slaves in Galilee

Galilee was a strong Hellenistic area which had slaves during the Seleucid period and now the Roman period.² Any biblical references to slaves in Galilee would be

¹Bartchy, ΜΑΛΛΟΝ ΥΠΗΞΑΙ : First-Century Slavery and The Interpretation of I Corinthians 7:21, p. 50.

²Supra, pp. 29,30.

references to Gentile slaves.

After Jesus finished presenting the beatitudes, he went down to Capernaum. There he met a group of Jewish elders who asked that he heal a centurion's slave.

And a certain centurion's slave [δούλος] who was highly regarded by him was sick and about to die. And when he heard about Jesus, he sent some Jewish elders asking Him to come and save the life of his slave [τὸν δούλον αὐτοῦ]. . . . Now Jesus started on His way with them; and when He was already not far from the house, the centurion sent friends, saying to Him, 'Lord, do not trouble Yourself further, for I am not fit for You to come under my roof; for this reason I did not even consider myself worthy to come to You, but just say the word, and my servant [ὁ παῖς μου]¹ will be healed. For indeed I am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to this one, 'Go' and he goes; and to another, 'Come!' and he comes; and to my slave [καὶ τῷ δούλῳ μου], 'Do this!' and he does it. And when Jesus heard this, He marveled at him, and turned and said to the multitude that was following Him, 'I say to you, not even in Israel have I found such great faith and when those who had been sent returned to the house, they found the slave [τοῦ δούλου] in good health (Lk. 7:1-3, 6-10) (cf. Mt. 8:5-13, Jn. 4:46-54).

These verses indicate that Roman slavery existed in Galilee. Here was a Roman commander concerned for the health of his slave.

After the death of Herod the Great, the kingdom was divided and Herod Antipas was Tetrarch of Galilee.² He had Gentile slaves.

At that time Herod the Tetrarch heard the news about Jesus. And said to his servants, [τοῖς παῖσιν]

¹The word should be translated slave. Supra, p. 98.

²James L. Boyer, New Testament Chronological Chart (Chicago: Moody Press, 1961).

αὐτοῦ],¹ 'this is John the Baptist; he has risen from the dead; and that is why miraculous powers are at work in him' (Mt. 14:1).

It is interesting to note that both the Jewish religious and political leadership along with the Roman command owned Gentile slaves. This statement is based on the fact that Galilee has a strong Hellenistic heritage. Also Jewish slaves were not available to the Roman command.²

Evidence of Slaves Outside Palestine

Corinth was the capital of the Roman province of Achaia; therefore the city had a slave population.³ With Paul's evangelism of Corinth (Acts 18) the church was born and grew. Later Paul addresses the slave converts in his first letter to the Corinthians.

Let each man remain in that condition in which he was called. Were you called while a slave [δούλος]? Do not worry about it; but if you are able also to become free, rather do that (I Cor. 7:20,21).

Paul instructed the new converts not to change social position upon conversion. However Paul does encourage the slave to obtain his freedom if possible. This would be by means of the legal process of manumission.⁴

¹This is a reference to young slaves. Supra, p. 98.

²Supra, pp. 76,77.

³Merrill C. Tenney, ed., The Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1963), p. 182.

⁴Supra, pp. 61-63.

The classic example of slavery in the New Testament is Onesimus in Paul's letter to Philemon.

For perhaps he [Onesimus] was for this reason parted from you for a while, that you should have him back forever, no longer as a slave [δούλον], but more than a slave [ἀλλὰ ὑπὲρ δούλον] a beloved brother, especially to me, but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord. If then you regard me a partner, accept him as you would me. But if he has wronged you in any way, or owes you anything, charge that to my account (Phile. 15-18).

Obviously Onesimus was a runaway slave. Kent emphasizes that Roman law was harsh on runaway slaves and owners were given much freedom in punishing the returned slave.¹ However Philemon lived at Colosse in the Province of Phrygia.² Commenting on the law of runaway slaves in the Provinces, Coleman-Norton states as follows.

If the owner was a provincial then it seems that Paul was not obligated legally to surrender Onesimus. If this is so, any Roman citizen (as was Paul) could retain a provincial slave who had sought refuge with him. That in these circumstances Paul chose to return Onesimus to his owner redounds to his praise.³

Thus Philemon is an excellent example of slavery in the Roman Empire. It is interesting to note that the early church did not voice opposition to slavery. Paul is

¹Homer A. Kent, Jr., Treasures of Wisdom (Winona Lake, Indiana: BMH Books, 1978), p. 157.

²Ibid., p. 160.

³Paul R. Coleman-Norton, "The Apostle Paul and the Roman Law of Slavery," Studies in Roman Economic and Social History in Honor of Allan Chester Johnson, ed. by Paul R. Coleman-Norton (Freeport, New York: Books For Libraries Press, 1969), p. 173.

returning a converted runaway slave to his master. Paul stresses that he is not only a slave but now a brother in the Lord. He will now be a loyal and faithful slave working hard at his assigned task.

It can be concluded that the biblical writers wrote about slaves, and slaves were part of the normal daily life of the empire.

Biblical Illustrations Involving Slaves

Slavery was such a common practice that it became a source for biblical illustrations by the biblical writers. Jesus utilized this type of illustration in His teaching.

One day, Jesus and his disciples left the Temple and went to the Mount of Olives. While they were there, Jesus explained his second coming.

Take heed, keep on the alert; for you do not know when the appointed time is. 'It is like a man, away on a journey, who upon leaving his house and putting his slaves [τοῖς δούλοις αὐτοῦ] in charge, assigning to each one his task, also commanded the doorkeeper to stay on the alert (Mk. 13:33,34).

This is a common example of Roman slavery. The master delegates the jobs and even allows the slaves authority. A normal task for a slave is the doorkeeper. The slaves are to perform the tasks in anticipation of the master's return. In like manner, the disciples are to perform their tasks in anticipation of the Lord's return.

Therefore, be on the alert--for you do not know when the master of the house [ὁ κύριος τῆς οἰκίας] is coming, whether in the evening, at midnight, at

cockcrowning, or in the morning--lest he come suddenly and find you asleep. And what I say to you I say to all, 'Be on the alert!' (Mk. 13:35-37).

When Jesus was instructing his disciples on discipleship, he presented the following illustration.

A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a slave [οὐδὲ δούλος] above his master. It is enough for the disciple that he become as his teacher and the slave [οὐ δούλος] as his master (Mt. 10:24,25).

The emphasis is on obedience. As the slave performs his job and pleases his master, he becomes like his master.

As a means of defining forgiveness for Peter, Jesus uses the example of the master-slave relationship.

For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a certain king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves [μετὰ τῶν δούλων αὐτοῦ] (Mt. 18:23).

A certain slave owed this king a considerable amount of money (v. 24). The master ordered the slave and his family to be sold in order to obtain the repayment of the loan (v. 25). The slave pleaded with his master and his master cancelled the debt (v. 26). However this same slave refused to cancel a loan to a fellow slave and had him put in jail (vv. 28-30). When his master found out, he had the slave punished.

Then summoning him, his lord said to him, 'You wicked slave, I forgave you all that debt because you entreated me. Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow-slave [τὸν συνδούλον σου] even as I had mercy on you?' And his lord, moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers until he should repay all that was owed him (Mt. 18:32-34).

This is an excellent example of Roman slavery. Skilled slaves were often given funds to establish a business. Usually punished slaves were tortured. Thus slavery became the subject for another illustration by Jesus.

Selected Parables Employing Slaves

French defines a parable as follows:

The word, parable, means, 'something cast alongside.' A parable, therefore, is a story or a narrative from ordinary life cast alongside a spiritual truth.¹

Since slavery was a part of ordinary life in New Testament times, it should be an obvious theme for parabolic teaching.

Russell analyzes slavery in the parables of Jesus.² First, the parables indicate that the possession of slaves was perfectly normal. Second, the parables of the Wedding Feast, the Prodigal Son, and a number of other parables show slaves in responsible positions. Last, the parables of the talents and pounds indicates that some slaves were entrusted with financial responsibilities.

One day Jesus was teaching parables from a boat on the sea of Galilee to a crowd gathered on the beach. One parable dealt with a man who sowed good seed in his field and while he was sleeping his enemies entered the field and

¹Ivan H. French, "Life of Christ Class Notes," Grace Theological Seminary, Winona Lake, Ind. 1972 (Mimeographed).

²Kenneth C. Russell, "Slavery as a Reality and Metaphor in the Non-Pauline New Testament Books," Revue de l'Université d'Ottawa, 42,3 (Juillet-Septembre, 1972), p. 439.

sowed weeds (Mt. 13:24,25).

And the slaves [οἱ δοῦλοι] of the landowner came and said to him, 'Sir did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?' And he said to them, 'An enemy has done this!' And the slaves said to him, 'Do you want us, then to go and gather them up?' But he said, 'No lest while you are gathering up the tares, you may root up the wheat with them' (Mt. 13:27-29).

This parable indicates that even a farmer who does his own work has slaves.

Jesus while in the temple teaching presented the parable of the landowner (Mt. 21:33-46). The landowner owned a vineyard which he rented and left. At harvest time, he sent slaves to collect the produce.

And when the harvest time approached, he sent his slaves [τοὺς δούλους αὐτοῦ] to the vine-growers to receive his produce. And the vine-growers took his slaves [τοὺς δούλους αὐτοῦ] and beat one, and killed another, and stoned a third. Again he sent another group of slaves [ἄλλους δούλους πλείονας] larger than the first; and they did the same thing to them (Mt. 21:34-36).

The parable indicates that it is not uncommon for property owners to possess many slaves.

Jesus mentions slaves in the parable of the Wedding Feast (Mt. 22:2-14; Lk. 14:16-24). The common word for slave which is δοῦλος is used. An interesting characteristic of the slaves in this parable and the previous parables mentioned is the obedience of the slaves to their master's command.

In the parable of the talents, (Mt. 25:14-30; Lk. 19:11-27), the master entrusted finances to his slaves

depending on their abilities. This was not an uncommon practice in Roman slavery.¹ The master rewarded those slaves who made financial gains and punished the slave who did not make a profit.

The father of the prodigal son (Lk. 15:11-32) had both hired men and slaves in his household. The slaves performed domestic tasks in the parable (v. 22). In this parable both δοῦλος (v. 22) and παῖς (v. 26) are used in reference to slaves.

The parables depict slavery as it existed in the Roman empire during the New Testament period. The parables deal with rulers and wealthy land owners who own slaves. The slaves perform various tasks from domestic to financial. These characteristics of the slaves in the parables primarily portray Roman slavery instead of Jewish slavery.²

Characteristics of Slaves Identified

Spicq stresses the fact that the first virtue of a slave is unconditional obedience.³ He uses the parables as an illustration.

Certainly in the evangelistic parables, one sees slaves at the orders of the Master and immediately obeying Him, particularly the injunctions of the Father who had two sons; '. . . bring forth the best robe and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet . . .' (Lk. 25:22; all the verbs are aorist

¹Supra, pp. 43-49. ²Supra, p. 88.

³Spicq, "Le vocabulaire de l'esclavage dans le Nouveau Testament," pp. 206-14.

imperative, except φερετε , present imperative.¹

A companion characteristic is duty. This is illustrated in Luke 17.

But which of you, having a slave [υμῶν δοῦλον] plowing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come in from the field, 'Come immediately and sit down to eat?' But will he not say to him, 'Prepare something for me to eat and properly clothe yourself and serve me until I have eaten and drunk; and afterward you will eat and drink?' He does not thank the slave [τῷ δούλῳ] because he did the things which were commanded, does he? (vv. 7-9).

This duty is performed without gratitude. It is the duty of the obedient slave, the δοῦλος , to serve. Commenting on Luke 17:1-9, Spicq states as follows:

To live according to the unreasonable claims or demands of his condition or to accomplish prescribed orders, does not merit either praise nor special gratitude. It is normal that he who is made to serve, serves.²

The scriptures indicate that some slaves are given jobs with responsibility. Some slaves are intrusted with possessions of their master (Mt. 25:14). Slaves are also given authority. According to the Bible there is a hierarchy among slaves. In Matthew 24:45, a slave (δοῦλος) is placed in charge of his master's household which includes other slaves. Thus the Bible presents the characteristics of a slave as obedience, duty, and responsibility which includes authority.

¹Ibid., p. 206.

²Ibid., p. 205.

Faithful and Unfaithful Slave Contrasted

The illustrations and parables present strong emphasis on the contrast between the faithful slave and the unfaithful slave. Spicq discusses this situation.

Clearly, all slaves are not worth the same. If the centurion of Capernaum expresses his affection for his sick δούλος (Matt. 8:9) by qualifying him as precious (ἐντιμος Luke 7:2), there is 'the wicked slave' (Matt. 18:32) whom the king pardoned his debt and who is without pity for his debtor, 'the wicked and slothful servant,' πονηρὲς δούλε καὶ ὀκνηρὲς, who did not reap the goods of his master (Matt. 25:26; cf. Luke 19:22), 'the unprofitable servant,' τὸν ἀχρεῖον δούλον cast into outer darkness (Matt. 25:30), 'the evil servant,' ὁ κακὸς δούλος, who fights his fellow servant (Matt. 24:48) and robbers and fugitives.¹

Jesus, discussing his second coming, defines the faithful slave.

Who then is the faithful and sensible slave whom his master put in charge of his household to give them their food at the proper time?

Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes. Truly I say to you, that he will put him in charge of all his possessions.

But if that evil slave says in his heart, 'My master is not coming for a long time,' and shall begin to beat his fellow-slaves and eat and drink with drunkards; the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour which he does not know, and shall cut him in pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites; weeping shall be there and the gnashing of teeth (Mt. 24:45-51).

Thus the faithful slave is the slave obediently fulfilling his task even in the absence of his master. In the Parable of the Talent, the faithful slave is the slave who obtained a profit with the funds entrusted to him (Mt. 25:14-30).

¹Spicq, "Le vocabulaire de l'esclavage dans le Nouveau Testament," p. 207.

Therefore faithfulness is again associated with the proper fulfillment of the slave's task. The faithful slave who does nothing particularly heroic but merely performs his duties with devotion is a biblical concept.

Biblical Recommendations for Proper Slave Conduct

Nicoll explains the purpose for these biblical recommendations.

Many questions would inevitably arise with regard to the duties of masters and servants in a state of society in which slavery prevailed and had the sanction of ancient and undisputed use. Especially would this be the case when Christian slaves (of whom there were many) had a heathen master and when the Christian master had heathen slaves. Hence the considerable place given in the N.T. to this relation and application of Christian principles to it (Eph. 6:5,6; cf. I Cor. 7:21,22; I Tim. 6:1,2; Tit. 2:9,10 and Philemon in addition to Col. 3:22; 6:1 and I Peter 2:18-25).¹

The Christian slave was to obey his earthly master and serve him wholeheartedly. Paul emphasized this type of conduct for slaves.

Slaves, in all things obey those who are your masters on earth, not with external service, as those who merely please men, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve. For he who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality (Col. 3:22-25 cf. Eph. 6:5-8).

In explaining these verses in Colossians, Nicholson claims

¹W. Robertson Nicoll, ed., The Expositor's Greek Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, n.d.), p. 377.

obedience by the slave to the master means "undividedness of heart, without dishonesty, duplicity or false show of industry and at the same time to be fearing the Lord."¹

A Christian slave who had a Christian master might expect preferential treatment. How could the slave be equal with his master in church and yet inferior at home? Paul claims the slave is in an exceptional privileged position to have a believing master and therefore the slave should render exceptional service.²

And let those who have believers as their masters not be disrespectful to them because they are brethren, but let them serve them all the more, because those who partake of the benefit are believers and beloved. Teach and preach these principles (I Tim. 6:2).

What about the slave who has a cruel master? The scriptures never advocate revolt. Peter addressed himself to this serious situation.

Servants [οἱ οἰκέται] ³ 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 man 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 (I Pet. 2:18-20).

¹W. R. Nicholson, Oneness with Christ (Chicago: The Bible Institute Colportage Association, 1903), p. 253.

²Hendriksen, Exposition of the Pastoral Epistles, p. 193.

³The Greek term is best translated domestic slave. *Supra*, p. 97.

The biblical recommendations for Christian slaves with either Christian masters or pagan masters are total submission and outstanding performance.

Evidence of Slave Punishment

The biblical illustrations of slavery record the same type of severe punishment for disobedience as the Roman slave system.¹ The unforgiving slave was punished by his master.

Then summoning him, his lord said to him, 'You wicked slave, I forgave you all that debt because you entreated me. Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow-slave [τὸν συνδούλον], even as I had mercy on you? And his lord, moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers [τοῖς βασανισταῖς] until he should repay all that was owed him (Mt. 18:32-34).

The torturers were most likely jailers who performed the tortures. According to Lenski, the tortures applied to imprisoned debtors were: dragging chains, near-starving, hard labor and bodily torture.² In Luke, the unfaithful slave received a severe whipping.

And that slave who knew his master's will and did not get ready or act in accord with his will, shall receive many lashes (Lk. 12:47).

Peter indicates that many slaves served under harsh masters (I Pet. 2:18). The word for harsh σκολιός can also be

¹Supra, pp. 56,57.

²R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Matthew's Gospel (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg Publishing House, 1943), p. 723.

translated unjust, crooked, unscrupulous or dishonest.¹
 These slaves could expect severe punishment. The emphasis on severe punishment is further evidence that the slavery illustrated in the Bible is Roman and not Jewish.²

Biblical Evidence of Manumission

Paul refers to the process of manumission in his first letter to the Corinthian Church (I Cor. 7:21). He instructs slaves who were converted to remain slaves. However if the slaves are able to obtain their freedom, they are to take advantage of this opportunity. The process of obtaining their freedom is called manumission.³ This is a Roman legal procedure.

Biblical Recommendation for Proper Master Conduct

As indicated in the section about slave punishment, there are fair masters and severe masters.⁴ The Bible specifies proper master conduct, "Masters, grant to your slaves, justice and fairness knowing that you too have a master in heaven" (Col. 4:1, cf. Eph. 6:9). Basically the master is to refrain from the harsh treatment of his slaves. Lenski comments on the purpose of the biblical recommendations for master-slave relationships.

¹Arndt and Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, p. 763.

²Supra, pp. 56,57. ³Supra, pp. 62,63. ⁴Supra, pp. 114,115.

Each class has come to know a mighty fact, the slaves a fact that stimulates them in heart and in work and lifts them above their physical slavery; the masters a fact that restrains them from misusing their physical superiority. . . . As far as this heavenly Master is concerned you are both in the same position: 'respect of person does not exist for him,' the last phrase being emphatic.¹

The biblical writers have accepted slavery as an institution, but they have established unique principles of conduct for the slave and his master. The master is to be just, fair and kind.

Biblical Exhortation Against Evil Slave Practices

Kidnapping continued to be a source of slaves during New Testament times.² Men, women and children were kidnapped outside the Empire and brought into the Empire by caravan and sold in the slave markets.³ These kidnappers are included in a list of law breakers in Paul's first letter to Timothy (I Tim. 1:10). The Greek word αὐδραποδοῦν is translated by Arndt and Gingrich as slave-dealer or kidnapper.⁴ Therefore Paul is considering the whole process of kidnapping people and selling them as slaves as an illegal act. Kidnapping was also illegal in

¹R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles to the Galatians, to the Ephesians and to the Philippians (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg Publishing House, 1937), pp. 655-56.

²Supra, pp. 38,39. ³Ibid.

⁴Arndt and Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, p. 63.

Roman Law during New Testament times.

Christian Church's Response to Slavery

The previous sections indicate that the early church did not oppose slavery. However, the converted slave and the converted master were one in Christ. There was a spiritual equality (Phile. 16).

The converted slave was exhorted to remain a slave (I Cor. 7:21).¹ Principles of conduct and attitude were taught in order to provide a pleasing relationship to one another and to God (Eph. 6:5-9, Col. 3:22-4:1). The Christian slave-master relationship was to be a testimony to their pagan counterparts in the Roman society. This relationship was instrumental in bringing about the decline of slavery.²

Slaves' Response to the Message of the Christian Church

The fact that Paul discusses slavery in his letters is evidence that slaves were converted. Paul instructs the converted slaves of Corinth to remain as slaves (I Cor. 7:21). Onesimus, the runaway slave, responded to the gospel message (Phile. 16) and returned to his master as a faithful

¹John M. Lenhardt, "St. Paul's Recommendations on Slavery," Social Justice Review, XXXVII: 11(March, 1945), p. 369.

²Supra, p. 65.

slave. The scriptures support the fact that slaves were part of the early church.

Summary and Conclusion

Westermann summarizes slavery in the New Testament as follows:

In simple analogues and pictures such as these, drawn out of the life of their time by the apostles and Paul, slaves move in and out of the pages of the New Testament, appearing quite casually in the midst of free laborers and servants of the local Palestine area and the general East Mediterranean scene. There is little evidence of antagonism to the system itself which produced them. . . . The early Christians admitted slaves into their midst as readily as free persons.¹

Maxwell compares the Christian slave with the Jewish slave.

Christian slaves in Apostolic times had none of the religious and other basic human rights which had belonged to Israelite slaves under the Mosaic law. . . . Under a harsh master, life of a Christian slave could be one of extreme bitterness.²

Slavery is an important subject in the New Testament which is evident by the number of times the theme appears in the Bible. The Greek terms for slavery are used by the biblical writers 235 times.³

The New Testament indicates that slavery existed in Jerusalem, Galilee and other provinces of the Empire. Jesus

¹Westermann, The Slave Systems of Greek and Roman Antiquity, p. 150.

²John Francis Maxwell, "The Development of Catholic Doctrine Concerning Slavery," World Justice Quarterly, XI (December, 1969), p. 150.

³Supra, pp. 94-98.

mentioned slavery in most of his parables. The writers of the New Testament used slavery in their illustrations. The majority of the slavery discussed in the New Testament is in reference to Roman slavery.

What is the purpose for presenting slavery in the New Testament? First, slavery was part of the daily life of the people of the New Testament. Second, the biblical exhortations were intended to teach converted masters and converted slaves how to live their daily lives as believers in a slave society. Third, the theme of slavery becomes the foundation for the very important theme of spiritual servitude which will be explained and defined in the next chapter.

CHAPTER VI

THE INTERPRETATION OF SPIRITUAL SERVITUDE

Slavery was an integral part of the Roman society in New Testament times.¹ Many Jews became Roman slaves.² However, Israel even as a province of Rome also permitted slavery within her own economy.³ There was a definite terminology which existed to explain and identify slavery.⁴

The biblical writers wrote about slaves in the daily life of the Roman Empire.⁵ They mentioned slaves in their illustrations.⁶ Jesus included slavery as a primary theme in His parables.⁷ The contemporary audience of the biblical writers was familiar with a slave's life. It is from this background which the writers of the Bible present the important theme of spiritual servitude.

καὶ πῶς ἐπεστρέψατε πρὸς τὸν Θεὸν ἀπὸ τῶν
ἐῖς ὁλῶν δουλεύειν Θεῷ ζῶντι καὶ αλη-
θινῷ (I Th. 1:9).

This verse describes the Christian conversion.⁸ The

¹Supra, pp. 67,68. ²Supra, pp. 86,87.

³Supra, p. 71. ⁴Supra, pp. 89-98.

⁵Supra, pp. 100-05. ⁶Supra, pp. 105-07.

⁷Supra, pp. 107-09.

⁸Greek Exegesis Class of Dr. Paul Fink, "Letters of Thanksgiving, Correction and Doctrinal Instruction--An Outline and Exegetical Commentary on I and II Thessalonians," Winona Lake, Grace Theological Seminary, Summer 1978, (mimeographed).

Thessalonians turned to God from idols. The next word δουλεύειν is a slave term which refers to a relationship to be a slave or of an action to perform the duties of a slave.¹ The word is usually translated to serve and is a present active infinitive which in this context emphasizes purpose or result.² Thus the believer is to serve God as a slave serves his master. Spicq refers to this relationship.

'To serve the Lord' signifies that one fulfills the obligations which flow from the condition of the slave of God or of Christ. II Cor. 5:15; Rom. 14:7-9; I Thess. 1:9.³

Many of the New Testament authors referred to themselves as slaves of Christ. Several of the author's statements are listed below.

Παῦλος καὶ Τιμόθεος δούλοι χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ (Phil. 1:1).
 Ἰάκωβος θεοῦ καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ δούλος (Jas. 1:1).
 Συμεὼν Πέτρος δούλος καὶ ἀποστολὸς Ἰησοῦ (2 Pet. 1:1).
 Ἰουδᾶς Ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ δούλος (Jude 1)

Peter exhorts all believers to live as slaves of God, "ἀλλ' ὡς θεοῦ δούλοι" (I Pet. 2:16). What does it mean to be "a slave of Christ"? Utilizing the teaching of the previous chapters of this thesis, it is the purpose of

¹Supra, p. 96.

²Greek Exegesis Class, "Letters of Thanksgiving, Correction and Doctrinal Instruction--An Outline and Exegetical Commentary on I and II Thessalonians."

³Spicq, "Le vocabulaire de l'esclavage dans le Nouveau Testament," p. 210.

this chapter to identify and define this biblical metaphor of slavery-- δούλοι χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ.

The Scriptural References to Spiritual Servitude

The purpose of this section is to demonstrate that spiritual servitude is a biblical theme. The major Bible references are listed.

And whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave [δούλος] of all (Mk. 10:44).

Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves [δούλους] for obedience, you are slaves [δούλοι] of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness (Rom. 6:16)?

And having been freed from sin, you became slaves [ἐδουλώθητε] of righteousness (Rom. 6:18).

But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God [δουλώθητε τῷ θεῷ], you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life (Rom. 6:22).

For he who in this way serves [δουλεύων] Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men (Rom. 14:18).

If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant [δούλος] of Christ (Gal. 1:10).

But as slaves [δούλοι] of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart (Eph. 6:6).

Epaphras, who is one of your number, a bonds slave of Jesus Christ [δούλος χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ] (Col. 4:12).

And how you turned to God from idols to serve [δουλεύειν] a living and true God (I Th. 1:9).¹

And the Lord's bond-servant [δούλον δέ κυρίου] must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to

¹Supra, p. 121.

teach, patient when wronged, with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth (2 Tim. 2:24,25).

Every verse uses some form of the slave term δοῦλος. It is evident that the master of the slaves is Christ. The slaves are believers and they are to serve Christ. This service is primarily the duties of the slave.

The Types of Spiritual Slaves

The δοῦλος is the exclusive property of one master.

No servant [οὐκ ἔτις] can serve [δοῦλεῖν] two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other, or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon (Lk. 16:13).

For man, there is no absolute independence. His nature requires him to serve a master.¹ The two types of slaves and their masters are presented by Paul in his letter to the Romans.

Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves [δούλους] for obedience, you are slaves [δούλοι] of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death or of obedience resulting in righteousness (Rom. 6:16).

Thus there are slaves who serve sin which results in death. However, Christ purchased believers with His own blood (Acts 20:28). Therefore the believer has been freed from sin and is now a slave of Christ (Rom. 6:16). It is the purpose of

¹Handley C. G. Moule, The Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans, in the Expositors Bible, ed. by W. Robertson Nicoll (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Co., 1900), p. 636.

this section to define the functions and responsibilities of the δούλος χριστοῦ .

The Lord Jesus Christ as the Example of Spiritual Servitude

Paul, in his letter to the Philippians, explains the changes which took place when Jesus Christ became incarnate.

but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bondservant [δούλου], and being made in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross (Phil. 2:7,8)

One of the changes was Christ's position which was from equality with God to that of a slave.¹ Christ was fulfilling the Old Testament prophecies as the slave of Jehovah.² Christ spent his whole life serving others (Mt. 20:26-28). He also was obedient even unto death. Therefore, Christ established the pattern for the conduct of the slave of Christ which was obedient service.

The Identification of Spiritual Servitude

The approach to this important section is as follows: First, the master will be identified. Then the slave will

¹Alva J. McClain, "Class Theology Syllabus on Christ and the Spirit," revised by John C. Whitcomb, Jr. and Ivan H. French (Winona Lake, Indiana: Grace Theological Seminary), p. 22.

²Isaiah 42:1-12; 49:1-7; 50:4-11; 52:13-53:12. The prophecies of the servant.

be explained. Last, the characteristics of the slave will be defined.

The Lord Jesus Christ as the Master

Paul after explaining the proper conduct for Christian slaves and masters identifies Christ as the spiritual master.

It is the Lord Christ whom you serve [δούλενετε] (Col. 3:24), knowing that you too have a Master [Κύριον] in heaven (Col. 4:1), knowing that both their master and yours is in heaven and there is no partiality with Him (Eph. 6:9).

The cost for the slaves was extremely high, he offered himself, "The church of God which He purchased with His own blood" (Acts 20:28). Therefore Christ is the master of the spiritual slave--the believer in Christ.

The believer as the slave

Hendricksen indicates that Christ redeemed people by His blood and therefore owns them, hence the term δούλος referring to the redeemed individuals is entirely appropriate.¹ Scriptures support this view, "but as slaves [δούλοι] of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart" (Eph. 6:6). Δούλοι Χριστού is a prominent theme in the New Testament. Rengstorf comments on this subject.

Prominent in the theological use of the word group in the NT is the idea that Christians belong to Jesus as His δούλοι, and that their lives are thus offered

¹Hendriksen, Exposition of the Gospel According to John, p. 306.

to Him as the risen and exalted Lord.¹

The Service of the faithful spiritual slave

Roman slavery is the background for spiritual slavery in the Bible because it is the source of the majority of biblical examples and illustrations concerning slavery. However it is the biblical principles presented by Jesus and the Apostles which determine the characteristics of spiritual servitude. These principles had an Old Testament origin.

The primary purpose of οἱ δοῦλοι χριστοῦ is to be beneficial to the master, "he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work" (2 Tim. 2:21). The emphasis is on service because the slave is to serve. This is substantiated by the slave terminology of the scriptures.² This service involves performance, conduct and attitude.

Performance

The purpose of a slave is to perform a task for his master. The slave of Christ is to perform his or her task well which is emphasized in scriptures and is summarized as follows:

Unconditional service	(II Cor. 5:15)
Wholehearted service	(Rom. 12:11)

¹Rengstorf, "δοῦλος," p. 274.

²Supra, pp. 94-98.

Dutiful service	(Lk. 19:17)
Responsible service	(Mt. 24:45,46)

The believer, as the slave of Christ, is to do an outstanding job in performing the task given to her or him by the Lord. The believer is not to shirk his responsibility nor do a shoddy job.

Conduct

The Roman slave was forced into submission; but this is not a characteristic of the slave of Christ. The believer as the $\delta\omicron\upsilon\lambda\omicron\iota\ \chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\omicron\upsilon$ is to submit willingly to Christ. The slave of Christ is characterized by the following slave conduct.

Absolute dependence	(Mt. 10:24,25)
Absolute obedience	(Mt. 6:24)
Total submission	(I Pet. 2:16)
Not quarrelsome	(II Tim. 2:24)
A gentle spirit	(II Tim. 2:24)
A kindness toward all	(II Tim. 2:24)

Attitude

The Greek comedy presented the slave as one who was lazy, slothful, gossiping and obnoxious. However the scriptures present the slave of Christ as a slave whose attitude is completely opposite of the slave of Greek comedy. The scriptures indicate the disposition of the $\delta\omicron\upsilon\lambda\omicron\iota\ \chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\omicron\upsilon$ should be as follows:

Respectful	(I Tim. 6:1)
Not resentful	(II Tim. 2:25)
Sincere	(Eph. 6:5)
Humble	(Mt. 23:12)
Not expecting reward	(Lk. 17:9,10)

The δούλοι χριστοῦ is to be doing an outstanding performance without complaint in a humble way the task assigned to him or her by the Master--the Lord Jesus Christ.

ἀλλ' ὡς δούλοι χριστοῦ ποιουνῶτες τὸ θέλημα τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐκ ψυχῆς (πρὸς Εφεσίους 6:6).

The purpose for spiritual servitude

The biblical metaphor on spiritual slavery is part of the biblical instruction on progressive sanctification. Ryrie identifies sanctification as follows.

Being 'in Christ' is the basis of sanctification. Sanctification in its outworking is separation from sin and unto Christ in all the relationship of life. It is living one's position in everything.¹

Part of the believer's position is the performance of the task assigned to him by Christ. The believer is to perform his task as a faithful slave performs his task.

Positionally believers are slaves to Christ; since He purchased them with His own shed blood. Experientially, believers are either faithful or unfaithful slaves. The instruction in the Bible on spiritual servitude is to aid the believer in growing spiritually. The goal of spiritual servitude is progressive sanctification.

¹Charles Caldwell Ryrie, Biblical Theology of the New Testament (Chicago: Moody Press, 1959), p. 206.

The Ultimate Service by the Slave of Christ

The Lord Jesus Christ purchased His slaves (believers) with His own blood (Acts 20:28).¹ It was a complete and sufficient price which was paid for the slaves (Heb. 9:4-14). Therefore Christ's slaves are His possession's forever.²

The following verse states the ultimate service of the slaves of Christ:

And there shall no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His bond-servants (οἱ δοῦλοι) shall serve (λατρεύουσιν) Him (Rev. 22:3).

According to Pentecost, Revelation 21:9 to 22:5 describe the eternal state during the millennium.³ However the occupants are in their final state.

When the occupants of the city are described it must be seen that they are in their eternal state, possessing their eternal inheritance, in eternal relationship with God who has tabernacled them. There will be no change in their position or relation whatsoever.⁴

The bond-servants should be translated slaves⁵ and are identified as slaves by Lenski.⁶ During the church age, the

¹Supra, p. 125.

²Col. 1:21-23; I Jn. 2:19; Rom. 8:32-39.

³J. Dwight Pentecost, Things To Come (Grand Rapids: Dunham Publishing Company, 1958), p. 580.

⁴Ibid. ⁵Supra, pp. 94-97.

⁶R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. John's Revelation (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg Publishing House, 1943), p. 653.

slaves of Christ are to serve.¹ The slaves of Christ will also be serving during the eternal state. However, the Greek term used for describing their service is λατρεύω. Arndt and Gingrich describe this term as follows: "Serve, in our lit. only of the carrying out of religious duties, esp. of a cultic nature, by human beings."² Therefore the ultimate service of the slaves of Christ will be worship before their beloved Master--the Lord Jesus Christ. Morris discusses this worship.

The verb latreuousin has overtones of worship, and indeed NEB translates 'his servants shall worship him.' Glasson comments, this could be linked with the name on their foreheads (verse 4); the high priest in Exod. 28:36-8 had the words 'Holy to the Lord' on his forehead. Now the whole community offers priestly worship. Heaven is not a place of indolent leisure, but a place where service is done, centering on God.³

Therefore the primary joy of the redeemed--Christ's slaves--will be the service of worship they render Him.⁴ There will not be any unfaithful slaves.⁵ The service will be perfect

¹Supra, pp. 125-28.

²Arndt and Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, p. 468.

³Leon Morris, "The Revelation of St. John," in The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, ed. by R. V. G. Tasker (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1969), pp. 256-57.

⁴George Eldon Ladd, A Commentary on The Revelation of John (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1972), p. 288.

⁵Supra, pp. 111,112,123,124.

and perpetual.¹

καὶ οἱ δούλοι αὐτοῦ λατρεύουσιν αὐτῷ

The Summary and Conclusion

The Christian remains a δούλος from the viewpoint of service in the teaching of the New Testament. The scriptures present a specific slave terminology for the slave of Christ. The background for spiritual slavery is the Roman slave system which is presented in the scriptures through scenes from daily life, illustrations and the parables of Jesus. The principles of conduct for the slave of Christ have their origin in the Old Testament. The New Testament writers have developed a code of conduct for the slave of Christ which is in sharp contrast to the conduct of the Roman slave. Faithful is the slave of Christ who obeys these biblical exhortations. Christ is the example of the faithful slave of Jehovah.

Christ is the Master of the spiritual slave. He paid a high price for the slaves--His own blood. Therefore the slaves of Christ are redeemed believers.

The principal characteristics of a slave of Christ are focused on service. The slave of Christ must perform an outstanding job in total obedience with an attitude of respect and humility. The main verses of scripture are

¹Merrill C. Tenney, The Book of Revelation (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1963), p. 109.

Ephesians 6:6, I Thessalonians 1:9 and II Timothy 2:24 and 25. The purpose for the program of spiritual servitude is progressive sanctification of the believers in the area of service. The slave of Christ has a future service. He will perform his ultimate service in his glorified body. In the eternal state, the slave of Christ will worship His Master--The Lord Jesus Christ. This will be perfect and perpetual service.

CONCLUSION

THE IDENTIFICATION OF ὁ δοῦλος χριστοῦ

Historical background

Slavery existed in the ancient world. The main source of slaves was captives from war. The Greeks developed slavery into a major institution with a large slave population. The Romans inherited this slave system by conquest.

A slave is the property of another man with no citizen rights or privileges. In Roman times the slave became a base for taxation.

Etymological background

From the Persian War, the word group δοῦλος was the basic word for slavery. The word group describes the state of a slave, the attitude corresponding to a slave, the relationship of a slave and the performance of a slave. This is the primary word group used by the New Testament writers.

Slave in New Testament times

The Roman slave performed tasks in agriculture, industry, homes, education and government. Their jobs ranged from servile to responsible. The cost of a slave was high due to a decline in supply and an increase in

demand. Legally a slave was considered a possession without rights. However in New Testament times, the Roman government required more humane treatment of slaves. Slavery existed in every province of the Empire including Palestine.

In Israel, the Jewish law commanded fair treatment of slaves. The Jewish slave had religious privileges and freedom after six years. They never lost their citizenship.

The church accepted the institution of slavery. However the biblical writers recommended the fair treatment of slaves. Eventually the influence of Christianity brought about the decline of slavery.

Biblical concept explained

The biblical writers presented slavery as a typical situation in the Roman empire. The real life slaves were Roman slaves. The biblical illustrations and the parables of Jesus drew on the real life situations therefore these were Roman slaves as the examples.

It is from this setting that the biblical writers present the metaphor on spiritual slavery. Christ is the believer's Master. It is the slave's function to serve. The characteristics of a faithful slave of Christ are total fulfillment of his task, complete obedience to Christ and a humble and kind attitude to all. The purpose of spiritual servitude is progressive sanctification in the area of service. Therefore the biblical exhortation to all believers

is as follows.

As slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart (Eph. 6:6).

Ultimate service described

The slave of Christ in the glorified body will perform his ultimate task which is the worship of His Master--The Lord Jesus Christ. This will be perfect and perpetual service.

APPENDIX

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF MAJOR SLAVE EVENTS DURING ROMAN TIMES

<u>Date</u>	<u>Roman Emperors</u>	<u>Slave Events Described</u>
c. 300-100 B.C.		Romans conquered the whole Mediterranean Basin. During these wars, the victorious Romans made all their prisoners of war slaves.
137-50 B.C.		Three major slave rebellions in Italy.
c. 60 B.C.		When the Roman Army reached the Hellenistic East many more prisoners of war were made slaves and reached the slave markets of the Empire.
31 B.C.-14 A.D.	Augustus	<p>At the end of the Civil War, Augustus returned 30,000 runaway slaves to their masters for punishment.</p> <p>Wars on Spain, Germany, Alpine areas, Illyricum and Pannonia again placed large numbers of captives on the slave markets.</p> <p>When the borders were established and war ceased, the major source of slaves were lost--the Greek war captives.</p> <p>Initiated the first sales tax of 2% on the sale of slaves.</p> <p>Initiated the first Empire wide census for the purpose of taxation. Slaves were included as taxable property.</p>

<u>Date</u>	<u>Roman Emperors</u>	<u>Slave Events Described</u>
31 B.C.-14 A.D.	Augustus	<p>Provided 600 slaves for organized fire brigades to protect Rome against fire.</p> <p>Industrial expansion required large numbers of slaves.</p>
24 A.D.		Tacitus reports a slave revolt in ranches near Calabria of northern Italy.
66-70 A.D.	Nero	<p>The Jewish War--Vespasian sent 6,000 Jewish prisoners to Nero as a labor force to build the Corinth Canal.</p> <p>Army of Titus took ninety-seven thousand prisoners and enslaved them all.</p>
81-96 A.D.	Domitian	Mutilation of slaves forbidden.
98-117 A.D.	Trajan	Provided slaves to maintain and service the aqueducts of Rome.
117-138 A.D.	Hadrian	<p>Forbid the selling of slaves to gladiatorial trainers without justifiable reason.</p> <p>Provided slaves refuge and legal help.</p>
132-135 A.D.		Large group of Jews were placed on the eastern slave markets primarily Hebron and Gaza.
138-161 A.D.	Antonius	Forbid masters the right to kill their slaves.
225-235 A.D.	Severus	Forbid prostitution of slaves.
500 A.D.		Abolishment of slavery.

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SUBJECT INDEX

- Abraham, slaves owned, 22, 23
- Abrahamic covenant, provided
 - spiritual benefits for slaves, 22, 23
- Agriculture, 45
 - slave labor, 43, 45, 46, 80
- Agrippa,
 - speech on Roman servitude, 70, 71
- ἀνδραποδιστής, 97
- Annas, 101
- Apuleius, 13
- Appian, 15, 49
- Aqueducts, maintained by slaves, 45
- Aristophanes, 5, 90
- Aristotle, biography, 4
 - definition of slavery, 20
- Assurance of just treatment,
 - Jewish slaves, 76, 82
- Athens, 24, 27, 28, 31, 42
- Attitude, slave of Christ, 127, 128
- Augustus, Emperor, supported
 - Horace, 10
 - Imperial policy, 33, 34
 - introduced slave sales tax, 34, 50
 - conquest brought in captives as slaves, 37, 38
 - government use of slaves, 43, 44
 - use of slaves in industry, 46
 - marble for building, 46
 - state funeral for slave tutor, 52, 53
 - return of runaway slaves, 61
 - restrictions on manumission, 34, 35, 63
- Believers, as slaves of Christ, ix, 2, 121, 122, 125
- Breeding, a source of slaves, 38, 67
- Caesarea, 97
- Caiaphas, 101
- Capernaum, slave ownership, 36, 102, 111
- Captives of war, source of slaves, 21, 22, 25, 27, 30, 37, 59, 67, 81, 86-88
- Canusium, slaves used in woolen industry, 47
- Census, included slaves, 50, 51, 80
- Centurion, Jesus healed his slave, 102
- Ceramic industry, used slaves, 46, 47
- Characteristics of a slave, 109, 110
- Christ, a slave, 124
 - a Master, 125
- Christian church, did not oppose slavery, 117; influenced decline, 65, 66
- Christian slaves, 117, 118, 120
- Christianity, advocated better treatment of slaves, 65
 - manumission by Christian, 66
 - response to slavery, 68
- Columella, slaves, 35
 - work load of slaves in agriculture, 45, 46, 57
- Condition of slaves, 56-58, 82
- Conduct of slaves, 60, 112, 113
- Constantine, Emperor, 66
- Corinth, slaves in, 103, 115
- Corinth canal, used Jewish slave labor, 39
- Cost of slaves, 39-41, 79, 80, 125
- Craftsmen, slaves, 26, 27, 43, 46, 47
- Cruelty of slaves, 56, 57, 60, 113
- Crucifixion of slaves, 57
- Daughters, Jewish, sold as slaves, 78, 79
- Debt, source of slavery, 27, 38, 71, 72, 74, 78
- Decline of slavery, 64-66
- Defaulting debtor, source of Jewish slavery, 78
- Dio Cassius, bibliography, 8
 - mentions slave sales tax, 34, 51
- δμῶς, 89, 91
- Domestic slaves, 48, 80, 109
- Dominium, 54
- Dorians, enslaved by, 25

- δοῦλος, 2, 3, 89, 91, 93-96, 99, 101, 103, 105-110
 δοῦλεύω, 89, 91, 92, 95, 96, 120
 δοῦλεία, 89, 91, 93, 95, 96
 δοῦλος χριστοῦ, 121, 122, 129-133
 Duty of a slave, 109, 110, 112, 113
 Economic implications of slavery, 49-52
 Education, teachers were slaves, 48
 Egypt, slaves in Pharaonic times, 23, 30
 Ephesus, slave market, 41
 Epictetus, slave and later legal secretary for Nero and Domitian, 36
 Export tariff on slaves, 34
 Faithful slave, 111, 112, 126-28
 Farming, slave labor, 35, 45, 46, 80
 Felix, Marcus Antonius, a slave who became freed became Procurator of Judea, 37
 Flaccus, Verrius, Augustan scholar, a slave, 36, 37
 Freedom, 61-63, 74, 84
 Galilee, slaves in, 3, 101, 102, 107
 Gamaliel, mourns slaves, 84
 Gaza, slave market, 42
 Gentile slaves, in Judea, 85, 86, 100, 101
 Greece, slavery, 24-31
 Hadrian, Jews placed on the slave market by, 41, 86
 Handicraft industry, slaves, 26-29
 Harsh treatment of slaves, 55-60
 Hebron, slave market, 42
 Hellenistic age, slavery in, 3, 29-31, 101
 Greek words used, 90, 91
 Herod Antipas, use of slaves, 102, 103
 Herod, The Great, enslavement of house thieves, 76
 used Gentile slaves, 86, 93, 94
 High Priest, used Gentile slaves, 36, 80, 86, 101
 Homer, bibliography, 5, 6; source of slaves, 26
 Greek words for slaves, 89
 Horace, bibliography, 10, 11
 cost of slaves, 40
 rewarded slaves for obedience, 57
 Humane treatment, of Jewish slaves, 76, 82
 Imperial Treasury, increased by the sale of slaves, 39
 Industry, cost of slaves, 40, 41
 use of slaves, 43, 46, 47
 Jerusalem, evidence of slavery, 3, 100, 101
 enslavement of population, 7, 30, 86, 87
 slave market, 41, 79, 85
 Jesus Christ, betrayed, 100, 101
 heals a slave, 36, 102
 example of spiritual servitude, 124
 Jewish revolt, 6, 7, 39, 41-43, 86, 87
 Jewish servitude under Rome, 70, 71, 86, 87
 Jewish slaves, 71-73, 86, 87
 John, refers to slaves, 19
 Josephus, autobiography, 6, 7
 references to slavery, 30, 39, 43, 70, 71, 76-78, 84, 92-94
 Justinian, enacted a slave tariff, 34
 Juvenal, 11, 12
 καταδουλόω, 97
 Kidnapping, a source of slavery, 27, 38
 Kings of Israel, owned slaves, 69, 80, 86, 93, 94
 Laws on slavery, 53-56, 73-78, 83, 84, 88
 Limited service, Jewish slaves, 75, 84, 88
 Luke, refers to slaves, 19
 Macrobus, better treatment of slaves, 58
 bibliography, 17
 Malchus, slave of the High Priest, 100

- Manumission, 11, 34, 55, 61-63, 68, 88, 115
 Mark, 19
 Martial, 11
 Masters of slaves, 59, 60, 83, 84, 115, 116
 Master-slave relationship, 65, 97, 106, 112
 Matthew, reference to slaves, 19, 36, 102, 103, 106, 108, 110, 111, 114
 Mishnah, reference to slaves, 77
 Municipal slaves, 43-45
 Mycene, slavery in, 25

 National servitude, Jews, 70, 71
 Nero, Emperor, references to slavery, 12, 14, 34, 36, 43, 48

 Obedience of slaves, 106, 109-113, 129
 οἰκέτης, 97
 οἶκος, 90
 Onesimus, the slave, 104
 Ostia, use of slaves, 44

 Parables, use of slave terms, 107-09
 παῖς, 97
 παῖς, 90, 97
 Papyri, 91
 Parable, biblical definition, 107
 Paul, reference to slave, 19, 103, 104, 112, 115, 117, 122
 Peculium, 62
 Performance by the slave of Christ, 126, 127
 Persius, 12
 Personal rights, Jewish slaves, 74
 Peter, refers to slaves, 19, 113
 Petronius, 12
 Philosophy of slavery, Greek, 29, 31
 Pharisees, position on slavery, 77
 Philemon, slave master, 104, 105
 Pliny, The Elder, bibliography, 13
 results of slavery, 42
 The Younger, bibliography, 9
 Pollentia, slaves in woolen industry, 47

 Polybius, as a slave was Secretary of Literary affairs under Claudius, 37
 Population statistics of slaves, 2, 28, 30, 42, 43, 80
 Positions held by slaves, 25, 26, 43-49, 80
 Prisoners of war, a source for slaves, 21, 24, 25, 37, 39, 88
 Principate, slaves in, 33, 36, 55, 56
 Productivity of slaves, 49, 50
 Professional people as slaves, 36, 37, 43, 44, 52, 53
 Punishment, source of slaves, 39, 42, 78
 runaway slave, 61
 of slaves, 56, 57, 106, 107, 109, 114, 115
 Purpose for slavery, 19, 24, 49, 126

 Quarries, used slave labor, 46

 Redemption of Jewish slaves, 85
 Religious participation, Jewish slaves, 73
 Religious privileges, Jewish slaves, 72
 Respect, an attitude for the slave of Christ, 127
 Responsibility by slaves, 110, 111, 126, 127
 Revolts by slaves, 60, 61, 86, 87
 Roman conquest, source of slaves, 37, 38
 Rome, slave center, 33, 42
 Runaway slaves, 57, 61, 104

 Sabbath rest, Jewish slaves included, 72
 Sadducees, a slave is property, 77
 Samaritans, captives become slaves, 39
 Sanctification, ix, 128
 Second coming of Christ, 111
 Seneca, bibliography, 14
 advocate of better treatment for slavery, 59, 60
 slave discontent, 60
 Servant, 3, 89, 94-96

- Service by the slaves of Christ,
 124,126,127
 Simon Peter, cuts slave's ear,100
 Skilled slaves,43,46,47,106,107
 Slave, definition of,20,87
 Slave of Christ,129,130,133
 Slave market,40,41,78
 Slave master,59,60,83,84,115,125
 slave dealer,116
 Slavery, definition,20
 ancient,22
 Greek,23-32
 Jewish,69-88
 Roman,33-68,88
 Social activity,45
 Solomon owned slaves,69
 Source of slaves,37-39,78
 σῶμα,91,97
 Spiritual servitude,120-28
 Spiritual slaves, two types,
 123,124
 Suetonius, bibliography,8
 on slaves,34,35
 Sumerja, slavery in,21
 σύδουλος,97
 Secundus, Pedanius, Prefect of
 Rome, used slaves in town
 house,48

 Tacitus, bibliography,7
 reference to slaves,48,60
 Talmud, reference to slaves,77
 Taxation on slaves,34,50,51,70,
 88
 θεραπῶν,89
 Thieves, source of Jewish slavery,
 78
 Tiberias, citizens sold into
 slavery,39
 Titus, enslavement of the Jews,
 86,87
 Tobit, slave of Rabbi Gamaliel,
 84
 Torture of slaves,56,57,93,94,
 104,107
 Tribute,69
 Tyre, slave market,41,85

 Ultimate service of the slave of
 Christ,129
 Unfaithful slave,111,112
 Unforgiving slave,106,111
 Unskilled slaves,47
 ὑπηρετής,98

 Vespasian, made Jewish captives
 slaves,39
 used slaves in building program,
 43
 bought slave poets freedom,35

 War captives, primary source of
 slaves,21,25,27,37
 Wholehearted service, slave of
 Christ,112,126,127
 Woolen industry, use of slaves,
 47

 Zosimus, slave of Pliny,57

SCRIPTURE INDEX

Genesis

12:5	23
17:13,14	22
26:25	69
32:16	69

Exodus

1:8-11	23,24
20:9,10	72
21:1	73
21:3	73,84
21:2-11	74
21:20,21	83
21:26	83
22:2	78
22:21-27	73
23:4,5	74
28:36-38	130
36:13	73

Leviticus

1:43	83
25:39	78
25:39-41	76
25:39-43	71,72,76
25:42,43	76

Deuteronomy

1:3	73
15:12	83
15:12-15	75
15:16,17	75
15:18	75
16:10-12	72
23:15,16	74,75

I Samuel

13:22	69
-----------------	----

II Samuel

2:17	69
----------------	----

I Kings

9:21	69
----------------	----

Isaiah

42:1-12	124
49:1-7	124
50:4-11	124
52:13-53:12	124

Matthew

6:24	127
8:5-14	36,101
8:9	111
10:24,25	106,127
13:24,25	108
13:27-29	108
14:1	102,103
18:23	106
18:23-30,32-34	106
18:32	111
18:32-34	106,114
20:26-28	124
21:34-36	108
22:2-14	108
23:12	127
24:25	110
24:45,46	127
24:48	111
24:45-51	111
25:14	110
25:14-30	108,111
25:26	111
25:30	111
25:69-75	101
26:51	100

Mark

10:24,25	127
10:44	122
13:33-37	105,106
14:1	102,103
14:16-72	101
14:47	100

Luke

2:1-5	50,51
7:1-3,6-10	102
7:2	111

Luke

12:47	114
14:16-24	108
15:11-32	109
16:13	123
17:1-9	110
17:7-9	110
17:9,10	127
19:17	127
19:11-27	108
19:22	111
22:50	36,100
22:54-62	101
25:22	109

John

4:46-54	102
18:10	100
18:16-18	101
18:25-27	101

Acts

18	103
20:28	123,125,129

Romans

6:16	122,123
6:16,18,22	122
12:11	126
14:7-9	121
14:18	122

I Corinthians

7:20-23	65
7:21	115,117
7:21,22	103,112

II Corinthians

5:15	121,126
----------------	---------

Galatians

1:10	122
----------------	-----

Ephesians

6:5-8	112,127
6:5-9	117
6:6	68,122,128,132
6:9	59,115

Philippians

1:1	121
2:7,8	124

Colossians

3:22-25	112
3:22-4:1	117
3:24	125
4:1	58,65,115,125
4:12	122

I Thessalonians

1:9	120,121,122,132
---------------	-----------------

I Timothy

1:10	116
6:1,2	112,127
6:2	113

II Timothy

2:21	126
2:24,25	122,123,127,132

Titus

2:9,10	112
------------------	-----

Philemon

1-25	112
15-18	104
16	36,117

Hebrews

9:4-14	129
------------------	-----

James

1:1	121
---------------	-----

I Peter

2:16	121,127
2:18	114
2:18-20	113
2:18-25	112

II Peter

2:1	121
---------------	-----

Jude

1	121
-------------	-----

Revelation	
21:9-22:5	129
22:3	129
22:4	130

